

RELIGIOUS MUSICAL PLAY

"MAZUVA EKUPEDZISA" by ABRAHAM MARAIRE. (Old Umtali, Rhodesia)

During the year an innovation in religious musical plays was introduced at Old Umtali, Rhodesia, using exclusively indigenous music.

An African critic of the play commented:

"The work is entirely original and all the subtleties of Shona thought forms and patterns are lavishly conspicuous right through the play. The overtones, the undertones, the idioms, the expressions and all in all, it was African.

"Deserving special merit is the fact that while this Holy Play was purely African, the music, contrary to fears, was appropriately devoid of any popular music element. This gave it due reverence, and specialness with exceptional grace and dignity. Those who feared that African music could not be used for Church worship were proved wrong by the Nyadiri group which performed the play."

The group of actors and choir was drawn from 50 students of the Nyadiri Teachers' Training College.

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REVIEWS

THE STUDY OF FOLKLORE, edited by Alan Dundes: Prentice-Hall, Ind., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. 482 pp. with 35 illustrations and drawings, six musical illust. and 15 comprehensive maps. No price given.

In this selection of thirty-four essays, many of which "appeared originally in professional journals and periodicals that are not widely available to-day, even in university libraries," no less than five essays expatiate on the definition of folklore; seven on its origin; seven on its form; five on its transmission from individual to individual, from culture to culture, from generation to generation; five on its functions, and five are selected studies offered as models of research work to the folklorist. So much diversity could lead to tedious repetitions if not to some confusion, but diversity here becomes a kind of catalyst to produce a greater unity, and it opens so much broader a view over a field that is almost limitless. Summed up, these essays expound a general theory and the methodology of folklore, occasionally debatable on lesser issues, giving credit to the past but always excitingly modern in spirit and approach.

The scope of this Journal does not warrant an extensive review of this excellent book, but one contribution, however, deserves to be singled out; the more so that, in the five Selected Studies illustrating some of the issues faced by the folklorist this same contribution likewise singles out an example in African music research, Dr. Hugh Tracey's "Tina's Lullaby" (pp. 369-73). We can do no better than quote the editor of *The Study* in his introduction to Dr. Tracey's:

"In this brief study, Hugh Tracey, an authority on African ethnomusicology, attempts to track down the origin of an American Negro lullaby. In order to hypothesize even an approximate location in Africa from which the lullaby may have been brought, Tracey had to take both tune and text into account. The complete study of folk music requires considerable knowledge of both music and language. The working back from the American Negro folksong to a possible East African child's song shows, in miniature, the problems, and some of the techniques employed in solving them, found in the historical study of folksong. Tracey's study also demonstrates the remarkable stability or oral tradition in that 'meaningless' words were transmitted from one generation to another with surprising accuracy."

The reader may find both text and tune of "Tina Lullaby" in Vol. 2, No. 4 (1961) of this Journal, where it was originally published.

BROTHER BASIL.

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1. LE KALINGA, Tambour Enseigne du royaume et de la dynastie des rois Banyiginya du Rwanda, by Marcel Pauwels, W. F.; pp. 221-256, 17 illustrations and one map.
2. LA MUSIQUE ET LES INSTRUMENTS de la Musique des Noirs de la région de Baudoinville (Congo), by Joseph Weghsteen, W. F.; pp. 85-112, 25 illust. and 15 songs. Both reprints from *The Annals of the Pontifical Missionary Museum of Ethnology*, Vatican City, Vol. XXVI, 1962, and Vol. XXVIII, 1964, respectively. No price given.

Although Father Pauwels' extensive study of the royal drums of Rwanda is strictly confined to the field of ethnology, it should be welcome by any student of African music if only to understand better the importance of the drums in the organization of the life—and by way of consequence, in the music life—of the African of Central Africa. Suffice it to say that, according to the author, the word 'Rwanda' is a corruption of 'Rwoga' whose origin may be traced back to a royal drum of the 13th century rulers; that the word 'drum (ingoma) may alternately signify king, or reign, or kingdom; and that the royal drums are hused even to-day in special quarters of their own, under the care of the royal drummers. Six fine photographs and eleven line drawings illustrate the text. The text, however, would have gained considerably had a greater attention been given to punctuation throughout.

In contrast, Father Weghsteen's contribution is, in part one, a mixture of questionable material and, in part two, quite good ethnomusicography. The mixture, on what is purported to be African Music, should have been left aside altogether, since in the words of the editor "the author was unable to give the desirable attention to his notes." Of the fifteen musical transcriptions given, six (Nos. 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14) seem genuine, but the remaining nine leave one perplexed over the melodic line, or over the accompanying voice in thirds throughout, including the part of the soloist; what with several inaccurate or false assertions concerning rhythm, syncopation, the melody, cadences and "harmony" . . .

The good part of it consists of the descriptions, accompanied by 25 precise line drawings, of the musical instruments and their use in tribal life. This comes as a valuable addenda to the study of Father Pauwels, who is also the editor of Father Weghsteen's notes.

BROTHER BASIL.

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WATOTO WA MUNGU, Benedictine Fathers, Peramiho, Ndanda Mission Press, via Lindi, Tanganyika. 218 pp., paper back. No price given.

This being a teachers' guide for religious instruction in Primary Schools, the fifty-two hymns disseminated in the text might appear only incidental to teaching, but knowing the importance given to singing in religion classes in African schools generally, one cannot minimize the impact these hymns may have on children and adults as well. Moreover, it is refreshing to discover that thirty-four of these hymns are African in structure, all composed by Father Stephen Mbunga: they are reminiscent enough of his "Misa Yetu" reviewed in this Journal last year, and here again Dr. Mbunga tries to crystalize his concepts of a genuine African church music as expounded in his excellent book "Canon Law and Church Music" (cf. Journal, Vol. 3, 1963), and his efforts are rewarding. A certain uniformity of forms, however, would be avoided by allowing more freedom of response between cantor and turba: a good example in point is No. 48, "Dhambi".

The remaining eighteen hymns, all Western or westernized tunes with African words added, alike to similar hymns which have been used long enough now as some kind of ill-fitting false teeth, the African smile does not need them at all, and the sooner they go the better.

BROTHER BASIL.

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MESSA ZANDE in Style Modale Africano: Filberto Giorgetti, F.S.C. Voice partition and organ accompaniment, with chimes and trumpets ad libitum. Editrice Nigrizia, Via Meloncello, 3/3, Bologna. No price given.

One may well imagine that, aware of the ease with which Italian boys could sing has Zande Mass (cf. Journal, 1964) and desirous of complying with the new regulations concerning the singing of the mass in the vernacular, the author saw that the next step was to set this work to an Italian text. In any case, it was a natural step to take, for the original Zande themes used have an undeniable plainsong flavour. But it is not a mere warmed-up dish which is offered, for the added organ accompaniment as well as the second voice in the response of the congregation is based on African drum chords and is meant to illustrate the principles developed in the author's "AFRICAN MUSIC—Its Technique And Its Acoustics." Few modern ears will find any of these chords really aggressive.

Short organ preludes and transitions may be given to chimes or trumpets, but it seems to us that such devices can only mar the simplicity, the relaxed flow and the haunting charm of the melodic line so convenient to congregational singing for which this Mass is destined. This, however, in no way minimizes the intrinsic merit of the work: in the difficult problem of adaptations Father Giorgetti has gone full circle with outstanding success.

At this point, a footnote might not be altogether irrelevant, at least with the psycho-musicologist: some years ago, less than one year after this writer had written a Mass on the Latin text for an African choir he received Fr. Giorgetti's Mass in the original version, only to discover that the main theme recurring in both Masses was the same theme. Yet, some thirty years and thousands of miles had separated the two composers.

BROTHER BASIL.

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A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MUSIC IN AFRICA, by L. P. J. GASKIN, compiled at the International African Institute, under the direction of Professor K. P. WACHSMANN, Institute of Ethnomusicology, African Studies Centre, University of California, Los Angeles. London International African Institute (1965). 83 pp. (45s. net).

This well organized, up-to-date, and quite complete bibliography has been eagerly awaited for some time by all African specialists. It should be a helpful tool to any library, museum, or institute which might have the need to consult a basic reference source on African music, musical instruments, or dance.

The organization is as follows: general sources (encyclopaedias and dictionaries, history and pre-history, tribal music—general, and classification), Africa (general), African music geographically arranged, musical instruments (general, geographically arranged, and instrument types), dance (general and geographically arranged), catalogues, bibliographies, periodicals, and abbreviations. The indexes include authors names, and geographic and ethnic entries.