

catalogued collections in archives, libraries and universities. Unlike standard bibliographies of written materials, the present volume fills an important gap in concentrating upon "unpublished" sources.

Altogether the book includes four main sections; a main catalogue of collectors and repositories, cross-indexed by country, culture group and subject. The preface explains the coding and listing procedures and samples of survey questionnaires. The bulky, computerized format may appear somewhat forbidding at first, but finding what you need becomes relatively easy after a few trials. Most readers will probably want to refer to the indexes for the countries or culture groups they are interested in first. These will refer them to the catalogue of collectors and repositories, where more detailed information about the content of recordings will be found along with its location and the restrictions on its use.

On the critical side I think the authors could have usefully prefaced the subject index with an alphabetical list of the subject categories employed. On one occasion I attempted to find collections of the music of African separatist churches. While I was not surprised to find that this category did not exist in the survey as such, it required several tries to discover that the only category which could possibly include such music was that labelled "hymns". A subject list would have revealed this situation immediately. In addition, the referents of some of the categories and subcategories are not entirely clear, due perhaps to the vagueness of the "subject" entries on the original questionnaire. For example the subject listings for Charles R. Adams' collection of Swazi music include "dance-social, social-dance". What precisely the difference is between these two is not apparent, and the content of the rather large category labelled "social" is not further explained.

Despite their slight tendency to vagueness, the compilers have placed an invaluable new resource for the study of African music in our hands. One hopes that the catalogue will not only encourage scholars with mutual interests in this field to communicate and share materials with each other, but also to contribute to the survey if they have not already done so. The study of African music should thereby draw vastly increased material benefit from the long term efforts of collectors and musicians throughout the continent.

DAVID B. COPLAN

LES MENDZAN DES CHANTEURS DE YAOUNDE: Histoire – Organologie – Fabrication – Système de Transcription, by Pie-Claude Ngumu, No. 34, Acta Ethnologica et Linguistica, Vienna, 1976, pp. 81, photos, diagrams.

Directeur-fondateur de la Maîtrise des chanteurs à la croix d'ébène de Yaoundé, l'auteur de ce livre, Pie-Claude Ngumu, nous introduit progressivement dans la culture musicale des xylophones du pays Beti (Ewondo), du Cameroun. Nommé vicaire et maître de chapelle à la cathédrale de Yaoundé, le père Ngumu fonde la Maîtrise et l'ensemble des *mendzan* pour lequel il compose plusieurs morceaux en fonction des cultes religieux. Le présent ouvrage traite surtout des xylophones qui sont en usage dans la dite Maîtrise.

Dans une première partie, il nous présente les musiciens de son ensemble, tandis que, dans la deuxième, il décrit en détail la technique de fabrication des *mendzan* par un de ses instrumentistes. Le texte (souvent dans un style trop narratif) est illustré de dessins et croquis qui montrent les différents stades de fabrication.

Une troisième partie est consacrée aux noms des xylophones *mendzan* Beti, à leur rôle et à leur relation interne dans l'ensemble musical. L'auteur distingue le *omvek*, l'*akuda-omvek*, le *nyia-mendzan*, l'*endum* et l'*ololong*.

La partie intitulée "Problèmes ethnomusicologiques" la plus importante de cet ouvrage, nous explique d'abord l'échelle et la place successive de chaque lame des différents *mendzan*, pour arriver aux intervalles utilisés et aux mesurages des tons en v.p.s. et cents (Jones; Kubik).

Ensuite, une partie importante est réservée à la "Transcription" pour laquelle l'auteur se base sur le système Kubik qu'il intitule la "Vedette pionnière de ces transcriptions". Il donne quelques exemples de transcriptions d'un morceau de *mendzan*, d'une batterie Beti (tambours, hochets) et

d'un chant d'*esani* (danse mortuaire).

Finalement, il consacre une dernière partie à la description d'autres instruments de musique Beti, tels que le *mvét*, le tambour à membrane *mbe*, le tambour à fente *nkul*, le hochet *nyas* et la cloche *nkeng*.

Ce livre peut être conseillé aux organologues qui s'intéressent aux xylophones de l'Afrique. Il est dommage que l'auteur-compositeur prive le lecteur de quelques vraies transcriptions, lesquelles pourraient montrer la relation et la fonction musicale des *mendzan* Beti.

JOS GANSEMANS

KIDAN DARAN SALLA: MUSIC FOR THE EVE OF THE MUSLIM FESTIVALS OF 'ID AL-FITR AND 'ID AL-KABIR IN KANO, NIGERIA by Fremont E. Besmer, published by the African Studies Program, Indiana University, 1974, pp. 84, \$2.00.

Although not published until 1974, this monograph is based on Dr. Besmer's early research into the court music of Kano, northern Nigeria. His short introductory section places the musical event firmly in its social setting, the Emir's palace and environs of the old walled city, and locates its performers, titled royal musicians, as a sub-group of the professional musician class engaged in carrying out their craft. The event itself – music performed on the eve of the Muslim festivals of *Id al-Fitr*, which marks the end of *Ramadan*, the month of fasting, and of *Id al-Kabir* – is described first in outline, so that the reader has an overall picture of what takes place, before being analysed in detail. Besmer distinguishes three segments – the first within the royal palace, the second at the house of an important official, the *Madaki*, while during the third, omitted because of research difficulties as well as for the absence of a regular pattern, musicians go their various ways about the city. The palace segment is further sub-divided into four performing areas, each with its prescribed group of musicians and sequence of activities. This highly organised and complicated structure presents difficulties of description only slightly less than those facing anyone attempting to describe what happens when a western symphony orchestra plays a piece by Stockhausen, yet Dr. Besmer's lucid exposition brings it clearly before us, and all that is lacking is a plan of the palace.

The second part presents a theoretical model of the event through analysis of its components in increasing detail with separate specifications for participants, musical instruments, venue, musical behaviour, non-musical activity and time placement, each of which is further sub-divided. Thus the Musical Behaviour specification gives examples of the music performed by each instrument within a group, together with the words (in Hausa and English) "voiced" by the instruments or sung by acclamators. Even this, we are reminded, is obviously "a mere fraction, albeit a representative one, of the totality".

In the final section Dr. Besmer analyses three types of praise-song structure – litany form, refrain form and a complex three-part form – setting out for each type its formal conditions (specifications for singer, scale, drum accompaniment, situation, instruments, etc.) and lexicon (musical and linguistic), together with examples of musical excerpts and their constituent structure in the form of a tree showing interrelated branches. The model is drawn from generative linguistics, that is, it deals not only with actual songs but potential ones in the sense that "a limited number of syntactic rules and formal conditions or features are capable of producing an infinite number of structures . . . within a particular song type" (p. 36).

The second and third parts thus present two different levels of analysis, one covering relations between the different musical groups taking part in the event, the other between components within separate aspects of performance. "The present model," concludes Besmer, "is yet to be completely developed as regards its effectiveness in describing the relationship between separate levels in so complex an event as *Daran Salla*, but it is felt that its potential for doing so is great" (p. 73).

This bald outline does less than justice to Dr. Besmer's ambitious scheme and its theoretical implications. One has only to compare his method with more orthodox analyses limited to the components of musical sound with a passing reference to the setting to realise the great advance