

scientific techniques. Must this amount of westernism make the whole scheme west-serving? All through we tried to stress the paramount importance of African values, and of practical application in Africa. I agree with you absolutely that the codification is for Africans primarily, and also that we have to be careful lest westerners introduce irrelevancies or false assumptions based on lack of understanding of the true needs of the situation.

ANDREW TRACEY.

GRUNDPHÄNOMENE UND GRUNDBEGRIFFE DES AFRIKANISCHEN UND AFRO-AMERIKANISCHEN TANZES. (Basic phenomena and concepts of the African and Afro-American dance) by HELMUT GÜNTHER, Universal Edition, Graz 1969.

It is rather unnerving to a non-participant to find that such joyous and spontaneous motions as those of African and Afro-American dancing lend themselves to such meticulous, and even pedestrian, analysis. The dance as Günther sees it is no "wit's offspring and the work of art Image of concord and of comeliness"; it is a combination of carefully-specified bodily movements, a matter of buttock and knee, shake of breast, rotation of pelvis, walk, run, jump; polycentric motion implying bending of the upper body, tapping of toe, ball or heel of foot as contrasting allocation of the weight, employment of the knee "consciously and actively as a technical device" (*bewusst und aktiv als technisches Mittel*). One's first surprise that this work should have been entrusted to an anatomist for review falls away, and one would be tempted, did the triviality of the fundamental premises not repel one, to consider it in the first place as an ergonomic study.

Indeed, such value as it does possess lies entirely in its unoriginal but nonetheless competent treatment of the details of bodily motion. The author is at his best when most elementary: the blending of head accents into single swings or rolls, the five directions in which it is possible to thrust the hips, the isolation, in more than one sense, of upper arm, forearm, palm, thumb, fingers and phalanges. His talents appear to lie so emphatically in the treatment of the particular that it is unfortunate that he has so often been impelled to generalize. So frequent are his references to cinematic representations of African dances that one receives the impression that his first-hand knowledge and experience of Africa are probably slight; an impression that is reinforced by such statements as: "No-one can contest the fact that the dance represents the foundation, centre and peak of black African culture" (*Niemand aber kann die Tatsache bestreiten, dass der Tanz Grundlage, Mitte und Gipfel der schwarzafrikanischen Kultur darstellt*) or, referring to the almost agonizing movements of the female breast in some dances, "These motions have possibly also an erotic meaning" (*Diese Motionen haben möglicherweise auch einen erotischen Sinn*). Assertions of this kind, so unblushingly banal in their inaccuracy, abound: Beat, Soul and Pop, on the very first page, do not derive from, but "demonstrate", a "pure African style" (*zeigen rein afrikanischen Stil*): "education in dance, life and sex coincide in Africa" (*Tanz-, Lebens- und Sexualerziehung fallen in Afrika zusammen*): "dance and music in Africa form an indivisible whole" (*Tanz und Musik bilden in Afrika eine untrennbare Einheit*). Can anyone who has actually watched men laugh scornfully and without excitement at the ludicrous flapping on a Sena female torso, who has listened to young men returned from the city compete with their elders on the drums, who has heard the hush of *cinamwali* initiation among the Ntumba or met a solitary *mbira*-player on a lonely path, take any of these statements seriously?

Even the list of references with which the study closes contrives to give a somewhat deadeningly trite impression. The author cites such works of his own as "*Schwarzer Tanz und weisser Traum*" and "*Die Jugend unserer Lokale tanzt afrikanisch*", the very titles of which emphasize the superficial and journalistic in his approach: both, as it happens, appeared in daily newspapers. Of the concluding forty-odd books listed, barely more than half are actually quoted in the text, and the rest are of little, if any, relevance.

What one misses most in Günther's work is any sense of the reality of the dance, any hint that it can be enjoyable to watch or perform. One cannot deny that he shows an interesting analytical ability; but this is not enough in a matter of aesthetics. "Time the measure of all moving is And Dancing is a moving all in measure": in no art can the universal be dismissed with a wiggle of the shoulder-blades, a rude contortion of the abdominal muscles, and a shrug of the knees, however eloquent.

G. T. NURSE.

NEUE MUSIK IN AFRIKA, ASIEN UND OZEANIEN. DISKOGRAPHIE UND HISTORISCH-STILISTISCHER ÜBERBLICK (New music in Africa, Asia and Oceania. Discography and historical and stylistic survey), by WOLFGANG LAADE, published by the author, Heidelberg, 1971.

GEGENWARTSFRAGEN DER MUSIK IN AFRIKA UND ASIEN, eine grundlegende Bibliographie (Contemporary enquiries into the music of Africa and Asia, a basic bibliography), by WOLFGANG LAADE, Verlag Valentin Koerner, Baden-Baden, 1971.

Both of these competent volumes are concerned with the establishment of temporal base-lines for the study of the music of Africa and Asia. As such, they serve a very useful purpose and are of particular value as works of reference. One may quibble at the vastness and lack of strict interrelation of the subjects of the first book, but a certain connecting thread is to be found in the impact on all the areas

studied of "Western" or "European" music, whether in its more popular or more highly evolved forms. This is particularly interesting in the sections on Japan, where the national genius for wedding eclecticism to conservatism has, in music as in much else, led to a bewildering variety of styles and combinations; and in the association of Turkish music with that of Iran rather than of Arabia. In both of these countries acculturation appears to have occurred at a level other than that of folk-music, and has accentuated the growing distance between the intelligentsia and the populace served by the streams of stylistically somewhat unvaried music emanating from Radio Ankara and Radio Tehran.

The question of musical acculturation is thoroughly and economically handled in the terminal section of *Neue Musik*. The author emphasizes the importance of compatibility (*Vereinbarkeit*), following Merriam, but makes the additional point that this does not remain static, but is itself subject to temporal change, so that native musical evolution may itself facilitate, or make less likely, the acceptance of influences from outside. Acculturation is a two-way process: acceptance of the "new" can often mean its reduction to and confinement within the limits of the "old". There may be compensation and adaptation in the employment of essentially local techniques of instrumentation or performance. Musical change may occur for non-musical reasons: as traditional functions decay so do the musical forms, associated with them. Resurgence of national or local consciousness, sometimes due to the activities of single individuals, can have considerable bearing on the selectivity of the acculturation process.

It is possible to regret, in a Journal devoted to African music, that the information in the African section is somewhat sparse and superficial; but to expect comprehensiveness in any one part would scarcely be fair. The arrangement of the superabundant material has been so competent that one can only marvel that so much has been fitted into so small a compass. The clear style and well-expressed purposes of the author succeed admirably in serving to convey neither more nor less than was intended.

The second book is, likewise, modest and well arranged. A bibliography may be criticized for its omissions, but a bibliography which has no pretensions, and whose scope is explicitly a limited one, can only be commended for its clarity.

G. T. NURSE.

MBIRA MUSIC OF RHODESIA, performed by ABRAHAM DUMISANI MARAIRE. 12-inch Stereo LP, with 12 page booklet — "Mbiras and Performance in Rhodesia" by ABRAHAM DUMISANI MARAIRE, introduction by ROBERT KAUFFMAN. University of Washington Ethnic Music Series, UWP-1001, ROBERT GARFIAS, General Editor, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1971.

A unique and enlightening production. To take the recorded part of it first, Side 1 consists of performances of four traditional Shona mbira songs, and Side 2 of four songs composed by Maraire in the traditional style. As an introduction to a musical style, as indeed it has already been to many American music students whom Mr. Maraire has been teaching in the last few years, it is excellent. The songs are learned from, or in the style of, Jege Tapera, a *karimba* mbira player who taught for some years in Bulawayo at the Kwanongoma College of African Music (and about whom an article by the present reviewer appeared in *African Music*, Vol. 2, No. 4). Maraire's playing and singing remind me vividly of old Tapera. His performance, however, seems to be in a more deliberate form, not so flowing as the old man's. Perhaps this merely reflects the more conscious approach of the trained musician and composer.

What is of maximum interest to the student of African music is the written part — "Mbiras and performance in Rhodesia". Much as I would like to reproduce the whole thing, I will have to limit myself to merely describing it. Kauffman says in his introduction, "We have . . . assumed that an uninvolved, detached, and objective view is somehow more accurate and scholarly. Actually, the inside view may well be more relevant than the detached approach, and this is the view that has most often been neglected, particularly in African studies." What we have here is the first "inside view" of any literate mbira player on his music, and in a mere nine pages Maraire adds a whole chapter to our knowledge of the mbira and its music.

He starts with a description of the traditional way of making iron and forging it into mbira reeds, then describes his own particular type of mbira, the *nyunga nyunga*. (This incidentally is a type that I have generally heard named *karimba*, *mbira*, *chisansi* or some other more general name; the *nyonganyonga* as I have met it is a large type of mbira with 30 reeds or more played by the Barwe and Sena of Mozambique). He gives Shona terms for the notes, for 'tonic', for 'octave', and then starts to describe the sound of the mbira. From this point he reveals himself as a sensitive musician very much personally linked to his mbira. He obviously knows its sound, its overtones, its "echoes", the "overlapping tones", from long hours of communication with it. The next section 'The structure of *nyunga nyunga* songs' introduces an abstracted pattern of the sequence of performance of an mbira song: Preparation, beginning, basic pattern, development, variations, successful completion, basic pattern, ending, tail. This is only a guide; not all these steps are necessarily present every time. He describes the kind of feelings that mark each stage, and continually stresses one point — that the mbira gives him back at least as much as he puts into it.

"To me a *mbira* is a lively instrument. It amazes me whenever I hear all these different things coming out without any change in my way of playing. This is not because I am playing different patterns without knowing what I am doing, but because, as I give the *mbira* more, I get more from it . . . What more can one say of such an instrument but that it is a friend indeed?"