

"COUNTERPOINT IN AFRICAN MUSIC¹," by FR. F. GIORGETTI, F.S.C.

Here is a practical example of true counterpoint in African music. It occurs during the sorcerer's dance which goes on all day long, with various intervals of rest: (*here follows the music: see pages 103 and 104*).

This song, based on a chord of 13th and with its theme less than pentatonic, is genuinely polyphonic in texture². The initial theme is of extreme simplicity. But during the repetition that follows the addition of two or three notes makes the song attractive; and when afterwards the chorus has caught on the theme now in duet form and with variations, the song reaches unexpected heights.

... The dance of the sorcerer goes on. Each dance sequence has a new verse, the movements of the dancer occasionally repeat themselves but always with some slight variation a non-initiated may not notice.

A most important variation is effected by the eyes (of the sorcerer) now giving an expression of courage and earnestness, or of fury, or satire, or passion, or disgust, now staring in fear or in wonderment, or in a relaxed and satisfied smile.

... Suddenly the sorcerer closes his eyes, then looks up at the assistants and smiles with satisfaction: He is the victor! Death shall not cut down any victim. Although it has left the ill person alone and abandoned, it has spared him: this he announces in a song which is together one of lament and of rejoicing.

¹ Translated from the Italian by Brother Basil, S.C., from "Technique of the divination dance of the sorcerer", in LA SUPERSTIZIONE ZANDE (cf. book review above).

² "I heard it from old Zingisi, an ex-sorcerer over 80 years of age. The variations transcribed here are his as he sang them to me in Yubu, accompanied by a piano and two drums played by my helpers and a discreet chorus of children attracted by the rhythm of the drums insolently married to a piano.

Translator's note: The piano accompaniment as given in the above example is evidently incongruous in African music *per se*, and Father Giorgetti is well aware of the fact as he notes it himself, but referring to his book MUSICA AFRICANA (reviewed in the Journal of 1959, pp. 90-91) it will be seen that this accompaniment is consistent with the theory developed and protusely illustrated with musical examples in his book.

CORRIGENDA

Vol. IV, No. 4, 1970. Thomas Johnston, "Xizambi friction-bow music of the Shangana-Tsonga".

Page 82—3rd para, 1st line: replace this sentence with "The vibrating *nala* emits the fundamental."

Page 83 and in all subsequent musical examples: add the indication "8ve up" to the resonated tones (not the fundamentals).

Vol. IV, No. 4, 1970. Andrew Tracey, "The matepe mbira music of Rhodesia".

Page 47, top right column of the diagram should be headed "Length to bar, ins.", not Length to bridge, ins.

Page 41—3rd line, the G should be underlined.

Vol. IV, No. 4, 1970. Corrigenda.

Page 136, under Vol. III, No. 1, 1962, 1. 6: Notes 7 and 8, not 7 and 9.