

KPURANI OI (O My Country), a Zande war song, text and music by Fil Gero. 12 pp. Lire 250. Editrice Nigrizia, Via Meloncello 3/3, 40135 Bologna (Italy).

The last issue of this Journal carried (pp. 102-4) a typical example of counterpoint in African music, a song of the Zande sorcerer, from the book of the same author of this song. It is not surprising, albeit rather a phenomenon, to have here a song that may compare favourably, as a serious analysis shows, with pure African music. We can do nothing better than follow the author's jottings, for an accurate description of this work.

'The movement of the song is martial, and the song embodies the technique used by a Zande minstrel with the help of treble voices he has taught beforehand, as he does whenever he wishes to introduce a new song.

'The song opens with the soloists' introduction. Already in number two, the soprani adorn it with a light counterpoint of one note only, and of two notes in number three. Their musical phrases or adornments are repeated again and again and form the leitmotive from which will emerge subsequent developments. In number four, the soloist adds to the initial theme which children and women repeat. Then come the men who, in a maze of short variations of the theme, take over to set free the soloist and the soprani. Number five is but a development of the refrain (in one and three).

'In number six, women and boys break up the refrain into new motifs while the men, guided by the soloist and the soprani, expand in a varied counterpoint. At this time, no less than seven voices go their different ways.

'In number seven, the women and the boys are heard with their trills of joy typical of the Sudanese, while the soloist with the soprani transpose in their song the call to war sounded by the drum, a call which urges to attack and explodes in a cry of victory (E: Ndurol) which galvanises the warriors and ends in an eruption of insults and invectives, of maledictions with magical connotations, against the enemy.

'With the nine to twelve-voice *finale*, tension increases to the breaking point. The call is made to all the nation, in remembrance of the country where God lives, in the exuberant trills of the women and the boys, through an absolute unison of the male voices which rise in their song to "up there in heaven".

This is the way the Zande sing in communal rejoicings. To hear them is an experience one cannot easily forget. As the author also notes, the chord combinations used in this song ("as the Africans do") exemplify the author's theory based on African drums and developed in his *MUSICA AFRICANA* published some years ago. (N.B. This reviewer has been informed that an English translation is in preparation.)

The author calls the drum "wooden bell" which is true of the drum of the Azande. But he adds, "or tam-tam": this is the first time the author uses the word in connection with African drums, and it may lead to confusion since the tam-tam belongs to Asia and is unknown in Africa.

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