CODIFICATION AND TEXTBOOK PROJECT

A primer of practical suggestions for field research for the Codification and Textbook Project has recently been published by the Library.

It was written and compiled by Dr. Hugh Tracey, Andrew Tracey and Gerhard Kubik. The primer in itself, makes interesting reading for those who are in any way concerned with African Music. It is intended to be a guide for private individuals Universities and other institutions which are interested in making a contribution towards the Codification Project. In addition to a description of the scheme, subjects covered include:

Preparation for work in the field; how to make contact with African musicians; effective methods of collecting music; recording techniques, etc. There are practical discussions on the type of notations to be used, as well as the various methods of transcribing African as opposed to Western music. This leads, naturally, into the more technical aspects of musicological analysis.

Copies are available at the Library, upon request, at R2.00 each.

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Taking the chance for a week in Java in January, 1969, I was able, thanks to the kindness of Surya Brata, the Indonesian musicologist, to hear and play some of their *gamelan* (i.e. orchestral) music, and, comparing it with African music, to form some kind of an opinion on the old Indonesia — Africa question beloved of Jones, Jeffreys *et. al. The music on first, or indeed any hearing, sounds and feels* completely un-African, and on this aesthetic level I can find no similarity; yet, when observing the construction of (1) some of the instruments such as *gender* and *gambang kayu* and (2) the two interlocking parts of the nuclear theme of a tune, I noticed a mysterious feeling of rapport creeping over me. Another thing I happened to notice with amazement was a decorative head carved out of the end of a large rice stamping block which was identical to the (non-functional) design of the two ends of the Chopi xylophone spacers.

To take the instruments first: *gender* is a metal-keyed xylophone (I find this misnomer more descriptive than metallophone, which could be anything from a jew's harp to a "lagerphone"), the keys having individual bamboo resonators, and being supported on strings which in turn are carried by "spacers", which occur between every two keys (cf. those in "Chopi Musicians" by Hugh Tracey, Oxford 1948). The spacers rest on the frame itself. I took a photograph of an ancient *gender* at the Sultan's palace at Djogjakarta which would convince anyone of the similarity, if not of the actual historical connection.

Gambang kayu is a large, many-keyed xylophone proper, box-resonated, the keys resting on the padded sides of the box and held in place by small pins.

As for the interlocking instrumental parts, I would like to reproduce here, in the number notation used in Java, one of the three tunes I learned. The scale is *slendro*, in which there are five different tones, numbered up the scale 1, 2, 3, 5, 6. (The figure 4 is not used in *slendro*.) A line over or under a figure means up or down an octave. A fullstop means do not play on that pulse. G means *gong*, which marks the last beat of phrases.

Saron is a small, box-resonated xylophone with six heavy metal keys, numbered left to right: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, $\bar{1}$. *Bonang*, whose main function seems to me to play *on the off-beat*, certainly in the tunes I learned, is a low horizontal wooden rack supporting ten separate inverted brass "kettles", which give these notes: $\underline{2}$, $\underline{3}$, $\underline{5}$, $\underline{6}$, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, $\bar{1}$ in this arrangement: 6 5 3 2 $\bar{1}$

1 2 3 5 6

Except in the introduction, *bonang* plays mostly in parallel octaves. In the written notation that I saw, only the introduction and the *saron* part were written out; it is assumed that anyone hearing the *saron* part would know how to fit the *bonang* to it.

Here is the tuning and the names of the notes of the *saron* which I played, which was part of one of the *gamelans* at Surya Brata's house in Djakarta. It is almost an exact equitonal pentatonic scale. The octave is tuned sharp intentionally. I noticed this as a general feature of octaves on many other instruments.

			v.p.s.	cents.
$\bar{1}$	Singgul	1098	0	1224
			254	
6	Barang	948	254	970
			244	
5	Kenong	824	498	726
			230	
3	Panelu	722	728	496
			250	
2	Bem	624	978	246
			246	
1	Singgul	542	1224	0

Gending (tune) Kebo Giro.

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                S:                           5 .
        Intro:  B: 5 . 6 1 2 1 3 1 2 1 6 1 5 5
                   -   -               -   - .
                                             G

        S:      6 . 5 . 3 . 2 . 3 . 2 . 6 . 5 .
        B:      . 5 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 5 . 5 . 5

        S:      6 . 5 . 3 . 2 . 3 . 2 . 6 . 5 .
        B:      . 5 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 5 . 5 . 5

        S:      6 . 5 . 2 . 1 . 2 . 1 . 6 . 5 .
        B:      . 5 . 1 . 1 . 1 . 1 . 5 . 5 . 5

        S:      6 . 5 . 2 . 1 . 2 . 1 . 6 . 5 .
        B:      . 5 . 1 . 1 . 1 . 1 . 5 . 5 . 6

        S:      1 . 6 . 3 . 2 . 3 . 2 . 6 . 5 .
        B:      . 6 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 5 . 5 . 5
                                            G
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The whole tune is repeated over and over (thereafter leaving out the intro.) until it is desired to stop, when a ritardando takes place, starting at about half way through the tune. By the time you reach the end you are going . . . very . . . very . . . slowly, the *bonang* holds back his last note before the *gong*, and then with a flourish all play the last beat together.

Another application of the same duple interlocking principle was the use of two high-pitched *sarons* to create a very fast moving resultant melody, which one person alone, with the one mallet only that is used on the *saron*, could not possibly achieve. This technique is said to be particularly characteristic of Balinese music.

It will be interesting for readers to compare this transcription with those of Gerhard Kubik for the Kiganda xylophone, in this Journal.

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"The Folklore Division of the National Museum of Man in Ottawa, wishes to locate and, if possible, procure sound recordings of music, either vocal or instrumental, which are said to have some effect on the growth of plants. If any member has information of this kind, would they kindly correspond with Dr. Pearl Weinberger, Associate Professor of Botany, University of Ottawa, Canada."