

FOLK AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF THE WESTERN CONTINENTS by Bruno Nettl.  
Prentice-Hall, History of Music Series, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, revised edition 1973  
(original edition 1965).

Nine regions are covered in this work; four chapters are devoted to Europe, four to the Americas; there are also two introductory chapters in which the author describes his approach to the folk, tribal and national musics of these regions, all of which have been in near or distant contact with the music of the west, or have been within its 'sphere of influence'.

The chapter which refers to Africa will be most likely to interest readers of this Journal (pp. 125-156). Its sub-sections are: The uses of music in Africa, Instruments of Africa, Music and language in Africa. General characteristics of African forms, Melody, Rhythm, Polyphony, Regional variation in black African music, Bibliography and discography.

The book is written for westerners, in the western music-school tradition. Various aspects of African music are considered in turn, with widely varied examples, and conclusions reached. Nettl does try to avoid the pitfall of a catch-all work like this — of over-simplifying or over-generalising — but, nevertheless, he falls into it often. In discussing African 'rounds': "... if leader and chorus use the same tune, the chorus may become overanxious and fail to wait for the leader to finish his turn, and a round of sorts is born". In a discussion of African scales: "... we must content ourselves with the generalization that African scales are varied but that as a group they seem to be closely related to those of Europe". (Yet in another part of the book he mentions "a considerable number of deviations from Western scales (or rather, differences between African and Western scales) that African musics exhibit").

African musicians might find it hard to recognise their music in this: "... the accompaniment of singers on a harp, a xylophone or a *mbira* may have nothing to do melodically with the tune of the singers". Here and elsewhere Nettl does not seem to be aware of any of the ground-breaking new work done in the last ten years or so. Much of his data is drawn from out-of-date or inaccurate earlier works. This does not seem to be the case in the other chapters of the book, which seem more extensively and confidently handled, such as those on Latin America and Afro-America.

There can be little excuse for the neo-racialist attitude to African music, described as that of 'Black Africa' any more than one would describe Chinese and Indian music as 'Yellow' Chinese or 'Brown' Indian music. Nor can there be any justification for the vilification of African musicians who, in one context, are quaintly described, among other shortcomings, as 'impotent' and 'adulterers'.

In the bibliography the omission of any reference to most of the many authors who have contributed to this Society's annual Journal over the past eighteen years may well explain his reliance on other less authoritative sources. A detailed listing of errors is not the purpose of this reviewer, who welcomes all contributions to the study of African music, but, nevertheless, must record the fact that this chapter, however excellent the other parts of the book, only partly succeeds in conveying the spirit and *raison d'être* of African music.

HUGH TRACEY

PAREDON P 1002 — ANGOLA: A VITORIA É CERTAI VICTORY IS CERTAIN! Songs of the Liberation Army of M.P.L.A. 12-inch mono L.P., with 16 page booklet edited by Pat Payandeh. Produced by Barbara Dane. "Recorded in the liberated zones by members of the Liberation Support Movement." Paredon Records, P.O. Box 889, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202, U.S.A. \$4-50 in U.S. \$5-00 elsewhere by I.M.O.

Paredon is a small leftist record company issuing music of revolutionary movements in various parts of the world. This record features songs arising from the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (M.P.L.A.).

The first side consists of field recordings of peasants and guerrilla fighters. Aside from an opening track of "Shouts, Drums and Singing", it is devoted to unaccompanied vocal selections, sung in solo, duet, trio, and choral performances. Languages heard include Portuguese, Umbundu, Chokwe, and Kikongo. Most tracks are fragments or shortened versions of longer songs, though almost all are long enough to give a fair idea of the entire song. Most lyrics are presented in transcriptions (not always complete) and English translations, often including lyrics of omitted sections. A few songs have obviously westernized melodies, including an Umbundu song set to "Onward, Christian Soldiers".

The second side "is taken from a record made in Congo-Brazzaville by developed artists", singing in Kimbundu in a popular cabaret style. The songs by Van-Loy are more tradition-oriented, while those by the female singers, Ana and Mambo, are more poppish, sounding almost Caribbean at times. Backing instruments include piano, guitars, and percussion. Again, several seem to be excerpts.

The booklet is more concerned with the M.P.L.A., its history and activities than with analyses of the music itself, though the music's social context is considered. The first side makes this an important musical document as well as a political one.

TOM BINGHAM