

may be found in the constitution of the human body and in patterns of interaction of human bodies in society. Thus all music is . . ." (p. x). Key words are used in a somewhat promiscuous fashion: "An African 'folk' song is not necessarily less intellectual than a symphony . . ." (p. 113) — one knows what he means (that the process of generation may be very complex), but 'intellectual' is patently *not* the right word.

One consequence of the lack of rigour is that the argument tends toward inconsistency. On the one hand Blacking takes the trouble to show that music cannot meaningfully be understood abstractly, apart from its social and historical situation; on the other hand, he treats certain musical and other categories as abstractly as possible, by simply removing them from their historical and social context and regarding them (in the absence of any declared evidence) as though they were universals. Thus, for example, all music is 'a metaphorical expression of feelings'; all music is made by 'the composer', and always the feelings relate to his 'experience of his environment'. And evidently it is permissible to speak of "the complexity of the mind of man", as something in itself, apart from society (p. 35). Throughout the book, too, there is a harping on a somewhat mysterious 'biology'; music has 'biological' foundations, and 'biological' processes are at work in its creation. And so there may be; but Blacking is never explicit enough about what these are, or what his evidence is, to enable us to decide.

A bibliography would have been an advantage.

CHRISTOPHER BALLANTINE

DANCES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. Produced and filmed by Gei Zantzinger, edited Conley Benfield, sound Ruth Zantzinger. 16 mm. colour, 53 minutes, commentary Dr. Hugh Tracey, interview with Andrew Tracey. Distributed through Pennsylvania State Psychological Cinema Register, Audio-Visual Department.

The film offers a program of recreational dances performed by groups of people who work on the South African and Rhodesian mines. Nearly all of the dozen or more dances are performed principally by men who represent various tribes. In a brief introductory conversation with Zantzinger, Andrew Tracey states that his interest in recording dances and their accompanying songs includes revealing their meaning to Africans and to the Western world. While this film does not in any ostensible way deal with interpretation of the dance phenomena, there is much in this film to recommend. The dances are inventive, varied and enthusiastically performed. Particularly spell-binding are the intriguing Xhosa shaking dances, sensational high kicking Ndlamu dance of the Zingili Zulu and somewhat humorous tumbling dance of the Ndau.

Primarily, the film is important for two reasons. First it contributes strong evidence of the abundance, variety and distinctiveness of African dances. Secondly, for the dance ethnologist, it is a resource for the study of social change as reflected in choreographic transformations. While most of the dances appear to be based on or related to stamping as a main choreographic motif, there is much evidence of group and individual style and structure change partly due to the use of Western dress, shoes and modified traditional costumes (many of them provided by the mine authorities). Compared to the high energy level in the vigorous stamping Gumboot Dance of the Baca, the Yao tribe's Malipenga featured an almost dream-like restraint in the gentle tapping of the foot, almost a touching of the foot to the ground without transference of weight. The Bakumba step dance of the Shona/Karanga dancers presented another version of stamping dances. In this dance, especially as performed by a young woman, an intricate audible rhythm beaten out by the shoes, as the dancer moved toward and away from her dance companions, formed a main theme over which a kinetic harmony in the whole body flowed. Sometimes, it seemed unmindful of the music but always somehow belonging to it.

In making this film Mr. Zantzinger was concerned with reporting each dance as completely as possible so beginnings and choreographic continuities could be studied. It is appropriate, therefore, to comment on the filming of continuous sequences of movement uninterrupted by non-choreographic close-ups. The sequences are of sufficient duration to facilitate recognition of recurring themes as distinguished from chance improvisations. Ground patterns, kinetic shapes, space patterns, effort flow and rhythmic configurations are clearly discernible to choreologists who wish to transcribe the dances into Labanotation or into another system of movement notation. This kind of motion picture might well help to fill a gap in the archives of available transcriptions and analyses of African dance music which so often record tonal and rhythmic structures in the music but neglect the very essential role of the dancing body as a prime instrument in the total music performance.

Certainly contraposition of polykinetic elements in the choreography and polyrhythmic configurations in the music can provide some new insights into the dances of African people. It may also help to illuminate the uniquely African-American phenomenon called Jazz Dance.

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