

RECORD REVIEWS

"MUSIQUE DU BURUNDI" — OCR 40, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. Disques OCORA, Maison de l'Office de Radio-diffusion Télévision Française, 116 Av. de Président Kennedy, Paris.

Some first-class music recorded in Burundi in April/May, 1967, by Michel Vuylsteke, and reproduced with first-class quality.

The performances themselves are obviously by virtuosi. Two of the tracks are of types of music I had never heard before — the song with an "Inanga" trough zither, performed in a deep, husky, whispering tone, which sounds extraordinarily dramatic when combined with the deep bass notes of the zither. Another is the track of "Ubuhuha" (lit.: to blow), performed by women at wakes. The hands are cupped together and played trumpet fashion, the different pitches being obtained by the position of the hands and the tension of the lips. Two other outstanding tracks showing great vocal skill are those of "Akazehé" girls' greeting songs. These employ a very rapid yodelling break in the voice, and sound almost as if they were being played on pan-pipes, ocarina, or some other wind instrument. There is also a long recording of the "Ingoma" group of 25 drums — one of those sounds whose stomach-shaking effect is beyond the power of any loudspeaker to reproduce. Nevertheless, the record gets as near as is possible. Their rhythms are not so intricate or perhaps so exciting as those of the similar drum group of Ruanda, but make up in *joie de vivre* what the other has in formality.

Another excellent record from Ocora issued as usual with a book-type cover, with pictures and full information about each track.

ANDREW TRACEY.

* * * * *

LUBA-SHANKADI VOCAL MUSIC No. 2 in a series of African music recordings issued by the Royal Museum of Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium and the Belgische Radio en Televisie, 1969. 12-inch disc with pamphlet in four languages, pp. 83.

A disc of recordings made by Father Tempels from 1944 to 1950, with musicological notes by Jos Gansemans.

Probably only a Luba would find it interesting. One is so used to present-day fidelity that these old recordings with their lack of balance and near complete lack of any audible consonants make tiresome listening. The songs themselves are relatively simple and unvaried — vocal duets, soloist or two soloists with chorus, work songs, all unaccompanied but for three or four which have a stick pattern. Abbreviation of the items would have been preferable.

One must presume that the reason for this production is the historical value of the recordings, but if it is, their value is almost lost with the lack of information in the notes. These consist of brief musicological descriptions of each song, describing the ambitus of the parts, modal structure, form, etc., but there is almost no mention of the origin of the songs, social setting, identification of the performers, translations, etc., due apparently to the inadequacy of Father Tempel's original notes. The musical analysis itself, helpful as it is in deciphering what is going on behind the background noise, puts a European interpretation onto some African musical facts. For instance, the transcriptions are written 'at pitch', which involves the use of superfluous sharps and flats, and hearing the Luba tuning "into" a western scale; when there is a clap pulse it should be mentioned as providing some sort of metrical framework; in Side B, No. 3, the chorus does *not* adapt itself to the length of the soloist's verse, but comes in regularly.

Could the Tervuren Museum not find some more contemporary material for its able ethnomusicologists to work on? It is a great pity that so much editorial work and expense have been devoted to so little purpose.

ANDREW TRACEY.