

and increasingly so now that it has become the darling of the South African film industry, viz. "The Naked Prey" and other films. Nothing does this better than knowledge. This must be one of the most completely documented and explained (in terms of Venda life) descriptions of an African initiation school ever made. As the author says, the purpose of his paper is "to draw attention to the human and intellectual achievements of the *domba* dance, and particularly of the words of the soloist." This I believe he certainly does, and has thereby rendered the Venda a great service. The question, of course, of whether those people who stand to gain most by this insight will ever read this paper, is another matter.*

Continuing on our voyage of exploration and coming to the music, the analysis of which is dealt with in some 20 pages, the question here is one of navigation. I was left, having read it, with more knowledge than I had before but also with more confusion, in spite of the author's formulation of no less than 85 "rules applying to the performance and structure of the *domba* song". Does the author really understand the principles which he formulates himself? I was happy to note his statement "... if anyone wishes to use this material for a demonstration or refutation of theories about . . . musical structure, he is most welcome to do so". Happy only because this reflects so tellingly the dilemma of any ethnomusicologist faced with such a complex music and with the agonising question of whether or not he has projected the right theoretical framework onto it.

The framework which Blacking has found is the overall presence in much Venda music of the melodic and harmonic patterns of the *tsbikona* reed-pipe dance, their national dance. This was also the theory advanced in his book "Venda Children's Songs" (reviewed in *African Music*, Volume 4, No. 2). There, as here, *tsbikona* itself was not analysed, but the overall pattern was presented as an abstracted series of "chords" which show that it can be considered as consisting of a descending series of seven notes in a heptatonic scale, each note accompanied by its "companion" note a fifth lower (or a fourth higher). From this pattern can be generated any number of different melodies. The great *domba* song itself is closely related to *tsbikona*, particularly the part of it called *kehulo*, in which the *domba* participants sing and yodel fragmented pieces of melody in polyphonic style, in very much the same way as the individual reedpipe parts of *tsbikona* are combined. This we have to take on trust, because the actual construction of *tsbikona* is not demonstrated. In view of its evident importance in Venda musical life one might have thought it essential to explain it first so that one could then assess the relationship for oneself.

This study of the music of *domba* is particularly interesting to me as it shows so many similarities with Shona music, such as the use of yodelling, the low-pitched "*u bvumela*" parts (Shona — *kubvumira*), the tendency for contrary motion in vocal music, and in general the existence of a single harmonic/melodic regulative principle (i.e. that of *tsbikona*) which seems to underlie much Venda musical thought. I have found something very similar in Shona music, particularly for the many varieties of *mbira* (see my article in this number). In fact one particular sequence of notes used in *tsbilalelo*, the "dismissal" song of *domba*, which Blacking describes as being very common in Venda music, is perhaps also one of the most typical sounds of Shona music; in *tsbilalelo*: b' — d' — g' — b' combined with b' — a' — g' — f#. These notes, if extended by a final chord of b' with e' (which *tsbilalelo* in fact does, though not included by Blacking as being "typical"), are found in many Shona songs and are almost a model of the chord sequence or part of the chord sequence most commonly used on the Shona *mbiras*. I have also heard the same chord sequence on the Venda *mbira*. Another of the *domba* songs, No. 25, seems to show the same type of sequence. This would perhaps indicate a wider musical relationship than dependence on *tsbikona* alone.

Blacking's use of so many western musical terms, such as "tone-row", "dominant", "tone" instead of "note", standard key signatures (although he claims that something that looks exactly like a key signature is not intended to represent a key signature!), his special usage of "mode" and "scale", "tonic" and "keynote", all of which tend to move one's theoretical associations away from the music instead of towards it, are merely reefs that complicate the navigation and the understanding. With perseverance, however, one may reach the clear waters beyond and recognise this as an important work of original observation. And one which, incidentally, should get rid of this sort of thing:

"... and now, our senses sated with ceremony, with the smell, sight and sound of primitive, sensual Africa, we took leave of the proud Bavendas in their mountain fastness and returned to civilisation . . ."

ANDREW TRACEY.

"THE BANTU COMPOSERS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA", by YVONNE HUSKISSON, South African Broadcasting Corporation, P.O. Box 8606, Johannesburg, South Africa; 1969; pp. 335, illus.

Dr. Huskisson, who is Organiser of Bantu/Indigenous music for Radio Bantu, the African language service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, has compiled biographies of 315 African (known as "Bantu") composers of South Africa, and three from South West Africa, giving portrait and such details, in English and Afrikaans, as life history, education, titles composed, hobbies, a classified list of birthday dates, etc. This is primarily intended as a teaching aid to complement the series of African language school broadcasts initiated by the S.A.B.C. in 1964. It is an outgrowth of the "Composer"

* What they would certainly do, if they were able to get hold of this scientific journal, would be to look at the pictures. I question the rationale of publishing 32 pages of pictures of bare-breasted girls in the course of a paper which is probably designed to correct the type of attitude exemplified in the sentence with which I start this review.

lessons which Dr. Huskisson has prepared for broadcast over a period of years and of her long association with many of the composers. Her aim, she says, is to enrich the Bantu School music lesson.

In its way, this book reflects the type of interest in African music of the educated African. Perhaps only one of the composers listed can be considered as composing traditional African music, the famous Princess Constance Magogo; the majority are composers of church, choral, light-vocal, instrumental, jazz styles, etc., that is, the more or less non-African types of music that are predominant on African radio stations, and in school music syllabuses.

The composers occupy most of the book, but perhaps more interesting to readers of "African Music" will be the sections at the beginning and the end. In the preface Dr. Huskisson gives a useful review of the development of the various types of European-affected musics in South Africa, paying particular attention to the part of the missionaries in turning African musicality away from tradition: "The pattern the missionaries set the Bantu for achievement paid no heed to the merits of Bantu indigenous culture. The advancement of the "indigenous" was arrested and the ball of acculturation set in motion. Bantu individuality became unidentifiable, immersed in the inculcation of the essentials of Western civilisation." That something is wrong with the present state of African music-making in South Africa is acknowledged in the words of a Xhosa composer — I have often heard the same sentiments myself — "MUSIC is derived from the word MUSA — 'inspiration'. It is never too late to mend . . . go back to our forefathers and find out where we went wrong".

The last 35 pages contain a list of the African instruments found in "South Africa, S.W. A. and neighbouring territories". Its value lies in the extensive comparative lists of vernacular names for the various types of instruments. However, I feel that the whole section should either have been briefer, making less attempt to be comprehensive, or expanded into a full-length book in its own right with the inaccuracies corrected. To call the mbira family of instruments "finger-piano", to call their reeds "pens" (a word taken from Afrikaans), to say that the Karanga of Rhodesia play a xylophone called "ambira/bela", that the African xylophone is "undoubtedly of Malay origin, brought to Mozambique by early traders", and to identify a Tswa marimba xylophone as a "Chopi mbila", are surprising in this day and age.

Dr. Huskisson mentions that among her composers is a school of thought that would turn to folk music for inspiration, but that the main obstacle to this remains ignorance of the music itself. Is this not true, in varying degrees, of the whole of Africa? The encouraging feature is that at least some African musicians of South Africa, where African culture has been the most heavily overlaid by the west, are at last starting to catch up with their fellows in other parts of Africa where African culture is accepted in theory if not everywhere in practice as the basis for modern African living. The clue to the solution seems to be knowledge, coupled with "the almost magical propensities" of the printed word. South African traditional music has still barely been studied and analysed to a point where it can be put to full use in schools, which in the meantime continue to base their syllabuses on "elements of choral singing", i.e. "Fair Phyllis", the "Messiah", etc. If Radio Bantu is indeed encouraging this kind of musical development it is to be congratulated. The aims would be identical in many respects with those of the programme of research advocated for years by the International Library of African Music in its "Codification Project", which is gaining increasing support in all parts of Africa and America.

ANDREW TRACEY.

AN INTRODUCTION TO EAST AFRICAN MUSIC FOR SCHOOLS by S. MBABI-KATANA. Milton Obote Foundation. Kampala, Uganda.

Mr. Mbabi-Katana needs no introduction to East African readers. His reputation as teacher, composer and collector of traditional songs is already established, and he is highly respected by many educationalists for his wide knowledge of African music. Any new publication by him is, therefore, of importance, not only for its direct impact on his students but for its wider influence on musical policy in the educational field.

Following his three volumes of "Songs of East Africa" (Macmillan, 1965, 1966 and with the publishers), each containing the words and music, as transcribed by the author, of some fifty songs from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, Mr. Mbabi-Katana has now produced a companion volume, "An Introduction to East African Music for Schools." His twofold aim is stated in the Preface — (1) (to provide) "East African teachers and students with background knowledge of musical elements based upon examples drawn from their national songs", and (2) to produce a "music text book" that "will be widely used throughout the East African countries." The work must, therefore, be judged in both capacities.

The writer's concern with "musical elements" removes any misconceptions that may arise from the title. While others may consider that an introduction to any African music should contain at least some account of the different types of music performed, the instruments used or the settings and occasions of performance, Mr. Mbabi-Katana has restricted himself to the reading and writing of vocal music. Beginning at the most elementary level with the signs used to represent notes of different length and their corresponding rests, he proceeds to explain pitch names as they appear on the staff, the meaning of tones and semi-tones, the idea of a key signature and the working of tonic sol-fa notation. Chapter 3, devoted to "Time", explains the use of a time signature and distinguishes simple, compound and other types of musical time, including syncopation. Chapter 4 deals with intervals in greater detail, while Chapter 5 explains musical scales and modes. A short Chapter 6 gives some examples of drum rhythms