

FROM THE EDITOR

The journal *African Music* was founded by Hugh Tracey (1903-1977) in 1954, the same year that he founded the International Library of African Music (ILAM) at Msaho, near Roodepoort, South Africa. Tracey edited *African Music* until his passing in 1977. Thereafter the journal continued publication from 1977-1999, with Prof. Emeritis Andrew Tracey, as editor.

In his Editorial published in Volume 1, Number 1 (1954:7), Hugh Tracey speaks of the first essential in the study and understanding of African music and “the humanities behind this special form of music” as the need to collect and classify it using recording technology. He then goes on to identify the second essential as the “spread of information through the publication of the results of all work on African music including that of the Library in the form of pressed recordings, and by the printing of monographs, articles and text books...”. I am reasonably sure that ethnomusicologists and musicologists who study African music as well as scholars in various related disciplines are aware of the significant archive of field recordings amassed by Hugh Tracey in the span of his 50-year career dating from the late 1920s. This collection and his photographic and film collections are housed at the International Library of African Music, which was relocated to the Rhodes University campus in 1978 in order to assure a secure environment, given the political uncertainties of the time.

The entirety of Hugh Tracey’s field collections, including the thousands of acetate, 78rpm, and LP recordings he published, is now in the process of being catalogued in compliance with international archiving standards. In addition, the collections are being preserved through two digitising projects funded by the South African National Research Foundation (sound recordings) and the National Heritage Council (photographic and film collections). Because of these on-going projects, the ILAM archive is increasingly accessible to researchers and interested individuals. The Editor welcomes research proposals and wishes to encourage students and established scholars to make use of ILAM’s invaluable Hugh Tracey collections.

It is my great pleasure, on the 30th anniversary of Hugh Tracey’s passing, to be in the position to re-launch this prestigious journal with Volume 8, Number 1. *African Music* has the distinction of being the only journal published in Africa that is devoted to African music. Additionally, it is the only journal devoted to African music published anywhere in the world. As such, there is an urgent need for its continuation. Articles in this issue are intentionally in keeping with the original nature of the journal. An innovation exists in the inclusion of a CD compilation, produced in ILAM’s studio, containing examples of the music discussed in each of the articles.

Certainly, scholarship of African music has grown exponentially in recent years, and it is hoped that this journal will again serve the thousands of Africanist/Africana scholars

throughout the world. As from its inception, its intention is to increase understanding of African music in all its forms, from the indigenous (and popular) music of Africa which Hugh Tracey was devoted to documenting, preserving, disseminating and understanding during his time, to the many eclectic and diverse African influenced popular forms that now proliferate the world.