

starting point. We find we can learn a great deal about history and musical practices from resources created by others.

Mayr's motivation for studying Zulu music and making the recordings were indeed, of his time. He was concerned with vanishing cultures just like other folklorists, budding anthropologists and explorers such as Walter Fewkes and Alfred Cort Haddon. Mayr claimed: "It is certainly high time for such a study, as European music is rapidly penetrating into every part of the country, and harmonicas, concertinas, etc., are taking the place of the original primitive instruments" (p.21). The editor of *Anthropos*, Father Wilhelm Schmidt, suggested that Mayr be sent a phonograph to assist him with his documentation of musical traditions, in order to preserve them for future generations. Scholars today are often quick to pass over resources compiled during earlier periods, assessing them as colonialist or imperialist. In many respects political and ideological motivations have, thankfully, become more equitable. We are, however, still taken with similar concerns. The historic collections of the Phonogrammarchiv were included into the world register of UNESCO's Memory of the World programme in 1999. Stemming from the concern that "everyday irreplaceable parts of memory disappear forever", the programme aims "to guard against collective amnesia calling upon the preservation of the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world ensuring their wide dissemination".³ Scholarly research based on archival materials is still highly relevant and this publication is an excellent example of what can be achieved.

Janet Topp Fargion, British Library Sound Archive

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Poetry and Languid Charm, 2007: Swahili Music From Tanzania and Kenya – From the 1920s to the 1950s. Topic Records Ltd. - TSCD 936. Compiled by Janet Topp Fargion, Curator, World and Traditional Music Section, British Library Sound Archive. One compact disc. Booklet (15 pp.) with notes by Janet Topp Fargion and photographs.

In keeping with its aim for a wide dissemination of the music and information held in its considerable archive, the British Library Sound Archive presents a compilation of Swahili music from Tanzania and Kenya recorded from 1920 to 1950. The name of the compilation – *Poetry and languid charm*, as explained in the booklet text, is taken from a direct quote from recordist Hugh Tracey's article "Recording Tour, May to November 1950 East Africa". published in the *African Music Society Newsletter*. After a particularly successful tour to East Africa in 1950 during which Tracey recorded over 1000 tracks (six of which are included in the compilation), he stated that he was impressed with the musical feeling of the Swahilis and that "Mombasa, like Dar es Salaam, proved to be a place of poetry and languid charm" (Tracey 1951:50). This is a fitting title as the CD is mainly a collection of the popular genre of Swahili music called *taarab* which features

³ http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1538&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (Accessed 20 June 2007)

the performance of sung poetry accompanied by various sizes of ensembles that include Arabic and Indian instruments.

The introduction to the booklet clarifies how and when the recordings in the compilation were made: firstly by the Gramophone Company (1928) and then Columbia (1930). After the Second World War Gallo Records, with Hugh Tracey, continued to record Swahili music (1950) and when ILAM (The International Library of African Music) was established in 1954, Gallo developed its activities in East Africa calling itself Gallotone.

Of the 16 tracks, four feature the legendary female singer Siti binti Saad, the “*mother of taarab*”, and her group of male instrumentalists (tracks 3, 4, 9 and 10). In her music she brings together features from Arab, Indian and African heritage which could, according to Fargion, be seen as symbolic of Zanzibari society (p.7). An interesting analysis of track 3 “*Wewe Paka*” (You are a cat), performed and composed by Saad, includes, together with other information, a transcript of the lyrics with an English translation. As Fargion explains, the lyrics clearly demonstrate how *taraab* is a tradition that gives reflection on the social conditions of the time.

Tracks 1 and 2 feature the Jauharah Orchestra, founded in the early 1950s and still performing today. Both performed in the 1950s, the tracks clearly demonstrate the variety of influences that Swahili music draws from. Track 1 has a distinctly Latin American feel which, Tracey pointed out, was as a direct result of sales of Brazilian gramophone records on the Coast. Track two is based on an Arab *maqam* (a set of notes with a habitual relationship defining their melodic development) and is more reminiscent of ensembles recorded in the 1920s and 30s. The *maqam* in “*Makunganya (Hizjaz kar)*” is performed on the ‘*ud*, *udi* in Swahili, (lute) and the violin which constitute the musical core of *taraab* music. Other instruments used in ensemble work during the first half of the 1900s are included in track five, recorded by Hugh Tracey and performed by the Egyptian Musical Club. Tracey’s catalogue notes list various instruments including an *udi*, an Arabic guitar, violins, mandolin, a *kayamba* flat grass rattle, and a *rika* (a tambourine drum) amongst others. Track eight, by the same group and recorded a few years later by Gallotone, includes a full string section featuring violins and a cello.

Tracks 6, 7 and 12 are not in the *taarab* style but are also wonderful examples of Swahili musical genres. Track 6, “*Taksim nahwandi*” is an example of simple instrumental improvisation on the *udi* and flute while track seven is classified by Hugh Tracey as a *Kasida* (Muslim chant or hymn) and is beautifully performed by children of the El-Hasanain Koranic school. Track twelve in a violin solo in the *nahawand maqam*.

Layla Maulidi (her first name spelled in three different ways in the booklet) is featured in tracks 11 and 13. She sings love songs chastising a cheating lover and in track 13 (“*Hayana Ukomo*”) sings in a mix of Arabic and Swahili. The last three tracks are all about love and one can hear the passion in “*Nimekwisha swalitika*” (track 14) recorded

in 1931 and “*Iwapi risala?*” (track 16) recorded in 1954/5.

Beautifully presented, the information booklet includes, along with a wealth of information, further listening and reading lists for scholars and interested individuals to turn to should they need or want more in-depth details. Janet Topp Fargion includes a page on the British Sound Archive with the website details and also a small selection of photographs including the front cover photo from the ILAM photograph archive.

In addition to its value as a compilation of early *taarab*, I highly recommend the use of this CD as a teaching and listening aid that demonstrates music that is derived from various cultural influences. This is not only a compilation for scholars of the genre, but also an excellent collection of tracks demonstrating the origins of what continues to be an extremely popular east African style.

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Hip-Hop Colony. DVD. Michael Wanguhu, director, 2007. Chatsworth, CA: Emerge Media Group.

Michael Wanguhu’s documentary film *Hip-Hop Colony* explores the rise of hip-hop – the music and its concomitant styles of dance, dress, and self-presentation – to the apex of national popular culture in the East African nation of Kenya. Wanguhu and his main collaborator, Russell Kenya (credited as the film’s writer), trace the beginning of this process to the mid-nineties, when hip-hop performed in Swahili and Sheng (Nairobi’s slang mixture of Swahili, English, and other languages) began to appear on national radio and television. They focus in particular on Kalamashaka, the first nationally recognized rap group to make extensive use of Swahili. Musically and lyrically influenced by U.S. gangsta rap, Kalamashaka helped to found a tradition of social realist rap in Kenya that continues to this day, though it has been eclipsed (in terms of popularity) by other hip-hop-influenced genres that tend to be less socially conscious and more melodic and danceable.

The title of *Hip-Hop Colony* is taken from a central statement of the film: that hip-hop constitutes “a new breed of colonisation”, one more positive and enabling than British colonialism for its ability “[to connect] youth across race, ethnicity, income, and geographic boundary” (DVD Chapter: “New Colonization”). The metaphor is somewhat ironic in the Kenyan context, given that some of the country’s hip-hop artists (including Kalamashaka) claim to be inspired by Kenya’s famous anti-British insurgent leaders. One questions whether rappers who liken themselves to the Mau Mau freedom fighters would want to be described as “colonised”. Indeed, it is the narrator (a disembodied voice that, for some strange reason, floats over an ominous piano vamp), not any of the artists or producers interviewed, who articulates this metaphor.

Fortunately, the positive aspects of the film tend to compensate for the awkward