

BOOK REVIEWS

Central African Guitar Song Composers, the Second and Third Generation. *Field recordings 1962-2009.* Gerhard Kubik and associates. Department of Musicology, University of Vienna, Vienna Series in Ethnomusicology 3, 2009. 49 pp. CD 25 tracks, booklet, photographs.

Gerhard Kubik should be hailed for his perseverance in presenting his unique and original point of view. Already the most-published researcher in our field, long may he continue to write up his wide discoveries. If he is also idiosyncratic, no one so original could fail to be. This CD with booklet follows up on a small family of his previous publications on central African guitarists, always nourished in the background by his close relationship with the Cewa guitar music and musicians of Singano Village, Chileka, Malawi, and spreading from there to every country in central Africa.

Seven countries are represented here with guitar songs by finger-style soloists from Didier Mwenda, son of the renowned Jean Bosco Mwenda, to Acooli singer Faustino Okello to Daniel Kachamba of Singano and eight others. The continued inventiveness of acoustic guitarists is amply proven, still surviving after 50 years of competition from the electric guitar. What is also proven is Kubik's ability to found new areas of study and theory, justified by years of fieldwork on the spot.

Andrew Tracey, International Library of African Music

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Ancient Text Messages of the Yorùbá Bâtá Drum Cracking the Code. Amanda Villepastour. 2010. Farnham: Ashgate, SOAS Musicology Series. 173 pp. photos, transcriptions, CD. ISBN 978-0-7546-6753-7 hb, ISBN 0754667537 pb.

In 1960 and 1963 when I spent several months of fieldwork in Oshogbo and Iragbidji (a smaller town nearby), mostly working on the *áló* story-telling Yorùbá tradition, *bâtá* drums were hard to come across, the tradition was considered to be almost extinct. It was the article by the Timi of Ede, Laoye I "Yorùbá drums" which appeared in the journal *Odu*, 7 (1959): 5 – 14, that set the pace to a reversal of historical trends, and the tireless work by Ulli Beier, resident in Oshogbo, and Duro Lapidó who later became well-known with his theatre plays. It is not by chance, therefore that Múráínà Oyèlámì, one of the young men originally associated with Duro Lapidó's Mbari Club would be invited to the Iwalewa House, in Bayreuth (Germany) founded by Ulli Beier, to carry out studies of *dùndún* and *bâtá*; and Iwalewa House published his book *Yorùbá Bâtá Music: A New Notation with Basic Exercises and Ensemble Pieces*, in 1991.

Amanda Villepastour took her first *bâtá* lessons in 1998 from Múráínà Oyèlámì, but she was critical of his work using TUBS notation (p. 127). A year later she travelled to Nigeria working in a variety of places, especially Èrín-Òsun, and making acquaintance