

Tessmann, Gunter

1913 *Die Pangwe, Völkerkundliche Monographie eines westafrikanischen Negerstammes*, Berlin.

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MAKING MUSIC: MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN ZIMBABWE PAST AND PRESENT, by Claire Jones, Academic Books, Harare, 1992, 183pp, photos, transcriptions, diagrams.

Making music is a teacher's handbook intended as a source of information for Zimbabwean music teachers both at primary and secondary levels who want to make their music lessons constructive, practical, informative, interesting and relevant to young Zimbabweans.

Although the focus of the book is on instruments (in particular those indigenous to Zimbabwe) and their construction, a big effort is made to put the information into its social and historical context.

A prefatory glossary clarifies technical words used in the main body of the text and the appendices provide information in concentrated form on the science of sound and the reading of the tablatures used in the book.

There are extensive notes at the end of each chapter, acknowledgements to both researchers AND performers and a bibliography which gives teachers ample opportunity both to check the accuracy of the information and to further their own research.

The strength of the book lies in its thoroughness and attention to accurate detail, understandable considering the author's background in science education. When it comes to *mbira*, for example, there is a full description, with line drawings and measurements, of how to make a *karimba*; there are descriptions of all the major *mbira* (and less widely-known ones) found in Zimbabwe with various names, playing techniques for each instrument and its social uses. This approach is followed through for each of the major instruments.

The different ethnic groups in Zimbabwe are given balanced representation. It is surprising how many Ndebele names the author has unearthed especially as Ndebele traditions are largely vocal and the focus of the book is on instruments. Every attempt has been made to find terms in as many of the languages as possible for each instrument and the materials used in constructing them. Most of the time we have at least the Shona and Ndebele terms but there are also Tonga, Ndau, Sena, Zulu, Kalanga and Chopi names as well.

The book has some weaknesses. The editing is sometimes poor and the typographical errors and inconsistencies in the book are numerous. Many of the line drawings are good but the photographs are grey and indistinct; for example on p.66 the string in the *chipendani* picture is hardly visible. The photography is generally

adequate but often the pictures lack style and personality and they cheapen the appearance of the book. The presentation of the pulse-line transcriptions is poor. Often a transcription finishes half way down the page and the rest of the page is taken up with empty staves. In the chromatic scale on p.178, the accidentals are incorrectly written and there is no clef.

As regards language and style, there is evidence that the author had difficulty in deciding at what level to pitch the book. For example, the language in chapter 3 is rather simplistic, that in chapter 8 is suitable for a general adult readership whilst the appendix on sound is often dense and technical. This may be the biggest problem with the book: its approach to its readership. It is meant as a guide to all music teachers in Zimbabwe but the level of knowledge of music teachers in this country differs greatly from school to school. In one institution, the music teacher may have a thorough grasp of western music and is simply looking for a source book to provide detail relevant to the Zimbabwe context; in another school, the teacher may have a detailed knowledge of African music but have had little or no formal training in the subject.

Nevertheless, the general balance of the book is good though the author has tried to take a holistic approach which, whilst understandable, means that the quality of the chapters is uneven. The author seems to know that in many areas her book may be almost the only suitable source material available and so she tries to cover every angle relevant to the subject.

Then again, if there are areas in the book which are difficult to follow, one should remember that the text is meant to act as a complement to working with musicians who would describe and explain their work and perhaps provide assistance with the building of instruments.

But, when all is said and done, it is a pleasure to have, at last, a comprehensive, well-researched, scientifically accurate resource book on an important part of Zimbabwean music which is of practical use for most music courses in this country. Even so, we still need a lot more books like it!

Keith Goddard, Kunzwana Trust, Harare

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SOSIO-ETNIESE DANSE VAN DIE VENDA VROU, by Cora Burnett-van Tonder, HAUM, Pretoria, 1987, 155pp, 62 line drawings, 23 colour plates, music and dance transcriptions, Tshivenda glossary, index, Afrikaans text..

Burnett-Van Tonder explores the social environment of Venda traditional dance in this book. She treats dance as a cultural microcosm, and provides a detailed explanation of its social functions. Her discussions are supported by line drawings, colour photographs, musical transcriptions, and choreographical analyses.

While the title of the book indicates a discussion of women's dances, Burnett-van Tonder in fact provides a relatively detailed discussion of Venda traditional dance