

brave enough to defy whatever puritanical dictates would tie it down. Erik Erikson talks about great men as providing leadership by demonstrating "a conception of truth in action",⁴ uniting consciousness and history by struggling with the contradictions of identity and achieving a resolution that speaks to the common experience of people in a given time and place. Manu Dibango is such a person, and *Three kilos of coffee* is an important document about a leader of the Third world, about music and about culture.

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AFRICAN STARS: STUDIES IN BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN PERFORMANCE, by Veit Erlmann, Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology, edited by Philip V. Bohlman & Bruno Nettl.) Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1991, xxi plus 214 pp., music examples, photos, bibliography, index.

Readers who are acquainted with Dr Erlmann's earlier writings will naturally expect to find again here a high level of scholarship based on rigorous research; and this book will certainly not prove a disappointment in that respect. The title seems a little surprising, however: (a) The title's initial punchline, *African Stars*, is pretty close to that of another recent publication: *African all-stars: the pop music of a continent*, by Chris Stapleton and Chris May (London & New York: Quartet Books, 1987). (b) Upon opening the book, I had expected a study of *contemporary* performers, while in fact it deals only with certain artists and groups active before the 1940s. (c) "Black South African" covers a number of ethnic groups (officially at least nine); yet the performers discussed are exclusively Zulu (apart from the Afro-Americans, in Chapter 2). How is it that the names of other major groups such as the Sotho, Tswana or Xhosa do not even appear in the Index!

Nevertheless, it is the content which counts, and this book is certainly a very significant and welcome contribution to South African culture history. Veit Erlmann's extensive theoretical and practical expertise in the field of African ethnomusicology, and especially African popular music — and the fact that his personal experience of African culture is not limited to South Africa alone (his earliest fieldwork having been done in West Africa) adds considerable depth and breadth to his handling and evaluation of the data. The culmination of this is to be found in Chapter 7: "Conclusion: South African Black music and the wider African field". One might perhaps suggest that readers who are unfamiliar with the specifically South African scenario, and wish to get it into perspective, might find it profitable to begin with this final chapter before proceeding with the main body of the work.

The research for this book began early in the 1980s when South Africa was approaching the final phase of the anti-apartheid struggle. In the Preface, the author

⁴ Erik H. Erikson: "Psychological reality and historical actuality", in *Insight and responsibility: lectures on the ethical implications of psychoanalytic insight*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1964, p.205.

states that his aim was not a complete reconstruction of South Africa's black musical history: "Rather it brings together a number of case studies...". Indeed, the main body of the work comprises five separate case studies, exploring certain aspects of black (i.e. Zulu and Afro-American) popular performance in South Africa between 1890 and 1939. Apparently the author automatically assumes that 'performance' applies only to post-traditional styles (despite the fact that genuine traditional styles are by no means totally defunct in rural areas), but so be it. There is a very long list of acknowledgements for "technical assistance of various kinds", translation, etc., and a full list of interviews appears at the end of the Bibliography.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) provides a brief survey of the South African political, economic, social and cultural context, plus a resume of past studies of black popular performing arts — notably D. Coplan's *In township tonight* (Johannesburg, 1985) from the 1970s, which "represented a timely and salutary departure, in methodology, theory and content, from the narrow paradigms of tribe and tradition". Erlmann claims to be exploring further some of the issues raised by Coplan, but also the fundamental underlying question of "the relationship between social structure and culture, between historical process and consciousness as it is dialectically constituted in performance" (p.2). He maintains that no systematic equation of musical style to cultural core can be established. "Performance idioms are not to be seen as reflections of social core groups such as classes or tribes but as resources that social actors... mobilize in the construction of the boundaries of self and other" (p.22). To justify the blanket term 'black', Erlmann invokes Blacking's earlier assertion about the "unity of cultural and musical traditions among all South African blacks" (p.17). But he gives no explanation of why all his "African stars" just happen to be Zulu.

The Introduction proceeds under the following sub-headings: "Social structure, performance, and consciousness"; "Rural-urban articulation and the symbolic reordering of heterogeneous worlds"; "Tradition, musical history, and the reconstruction of popular consciousness"; "Ethnicity and the construction of community in black popular performance"; "Hegemony and resistance: the 'popular' in South African music". Chapter 2 looks at the impact on South Africa of a particular group of Afro-American performers, Orpheus M. McAdoo and the Jubilee Singers, based on a detailed examination of South African press reports from 1890 to '98. McAdoo's concert tours "were the first link in a chain of continuing black American influences on the culture and music of black South Africans" and crucial in instigating the growth of a nascent black South African consciousness.

Chapter 3 is a study of a specific region, centred on Durban and its hinterland, yielding a rich variety of Zulu dances, songs and instrumental styles. This provides a welcome geographical diversion from Johannesburg, where most previous studies (notably Coplan's) have been focused. The chapter heading is "Cultural osmosis, ethnicity, and tradition in black popular music in Durban". Yet despite the term 'popular', there is quite a lot here about what Coplan would term 'elite' music-making, too. To refer to the "thoroughly elite composer" A. A. Kumalo as "Durban-bred" is rather wide of the mark, since he only moved there when he was 38 (see his biography in *African Music* 7/1, 1991). Erlmann notes that prosperous mission stations had been influential since the mid-nineteenth century, and syncretic blending

of styles meant that "black popular performance in Durban between 1913 and 1939 has structured social relations in the port town in ways that frequently work against an analysis of Durban's social history in class terms alone" (p.94).

Chapter 4 explores the transformations of the Zulu migrant-workers' *ingoma* dance style in the 1930s, and argues that "this process was part of the dialectic of hegemony and resistance". To state (on p.101) that "the *umzansi* dance originated in the Ndwedwe and Mapumulo areas on the coast south of Durban" is seriously wrong, geographically. Those areas are in fact inland, and northwest of Durban — on the kwaZulu side: which is why that dance "is often referred to as *isiZulu* or *indlamu*" (as Erlmann rightly states); but this would not make sense if it came from the south coast!

Chapter 5 will be warmly welcomed as a long-overdue biographical contribution — though Erlmann humbly calls it just "an attempt — possibly the first — at a serious biography of one of South Africa's most colourful black composers, Reuben Caluza...". Certainly R. T. Caluza (1895-1969) is justly revered as the foremost and most influential Zulu composer and innovator of his time. Erlmann presents a wealth of biographical information besides citing the texts of some of his songs and musical extracts from three of them. Relying upon others for transcripts and translations is not always foolproof, however. On p.121, the third line of the *Hail, Your Majesty* (in honour of the Prince of Wales's visit to South Africa in 1925) should correctly translate, not as "Rule us, your children!" but as "Your children greet you". And on p.124 the detached transcript from the text of Caluza's famous song, *Ixegwana*, does not exactly match the (correct) wording in the musical score excerpt, shown above it: the second line should end with "*ingutshana*" (not *ingubo*), rhyming with the first line's "*ixegwana*". And the English translation does not tally accurately. Though no great harm is done, anyone intending to quote these texts would be well advised to get fresh translations done.

Chapter 6 examines the early history of a particular style of migrant performance — *isicathamiya* — and its transformation in the wider context of social and economic changes in South Africa. Various known by other names such as *ngom' ebusuku* or *mbube* or "bombing", this style of Zulu male choir music reached international acclaim in the late 1980s through the efforts of its most successful current exponents, the group known as Ladysmith Black Mambazo. In my experience, such music was generally rejected as barbaric, except among its makers and their ilk — until the 1970s, when urban-born blacks, in quest of their 'roots', latched onto it as a relic of their long-lost black heritage. According to Erlmann, "the argument here is that this performance genre, while reflecting the increasing articulation of migrants' heterogeneous worlds, served to mediate between disparate social realities and to provide for symbolic spaces in which disjointed social relations were reconstructed".

Regarding presentation, the illustrations, throughout, could have been better if the photos had been printed on art paper instead of as 'figures' set amongst the text. And the glossy paperback covers have a perpetually annoying tendency to bend outwards (or spring open). But there are remarkably few typographical errors, which is highly commendable.

As a final personal comment, the present reviewer would like to add the observation that African historical studies in general, during the past few decades, have displayed a strong swing away from the earlier concentration on post-Western contact — or colonial history — towards earlier, purely indigenous history. In studying popular culture history, on the other hand, there often seems to be a tendency for evidence of early local cultural roots to be disregarded. As an excuse for this, some writers find it convenient to raise a smoke-screen by questioning homogeneity between present rural culture and eighteenth and nineteenth-century practices (see Erlmann, p.9; and also Coplan, 1985, p.33). But there is a fair amount of relevant documentation on tribal culture, some of it dating back to early last century, which surely needs to be consulted. What about the extensive *James Stuart Archive*, for example, to mention but one source? I think the matter of 'roots', syncretism and continuity calls for more serious consideration in the future. But enough of this nit-picking. It's a very good book!

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SHABA DIARY: A TRIP TO REDISCOVER THE 'KATANGA' GUITAR STYLES AND SONGS OF THE 1950s AND '60s, by John Low, Acta Ethnologica et Linguistica Nr.54, Ed. Engelbert Stiglmayr, Series Musicologica 4 Series Africana 16, Wien-Föhrenau, 1982. *Co-eds*: Franz Födermayr, Anna Hohenwart-Gerlachstein, Gerhard Kubik, 125 pp., photo, music examples, bibliography, discography.

This book relates the details of the author's solitary trip in 1979 to Shaba in Zaïre — partly on foot, with back-pack and guitar — to learn about the 'Katanga guitar finger styles' that dominated East and Central African record sales during the 1950s and '60s. Three of the best-known guitarists of the period are introduced: Jean-Bosco Mwenda, Losta Abelo, and Edouard Masengo; and some of their songs and finger styles are discussed in depth.

The author, John Low, was born in Kenya and lived there until the age of 14, so he has a good command of Swahili which stood him in good stead for his field work. This book covers only the first part of his extensive eight-month East African expedition through Shaba, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Burundi and Kenya, lasting from August 1979 to April 1980. John Low's interest in African guitar styles stems initially from listening to Hugh Tracey's recordings, which he encountered in England. He took pains to learn to sing and play some of these guitar songs, notably those of Mwenda, partly checking his efforts against transcriptions published in *African Music* Vol. 2/4, 1961 and Vol. 3/1, 1962.

The first 102 pages of the book contain edited transcripts from John Low's diary — very intimate and chatty accounts of his various experiences in Zaïre which make fascinating reading. He was eminently successful in his main quest: to meet and take lessons from Jean-Bosco Mwenda in person. In fact, for nearly a month he lived as a guest in the large house of Mwenda and his wife Kiembe, in Lubumbashi, with their nine children. Here he was able to make direct, intimate and detailed studies of