

ILAM DIGITISATION and INTERNET SOUND ARCHIVE PROJECT

ILAM is currently involved in a project with the Norwegian aid agency, NORAD, through NRK, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, to digitise and make accessible our sound archive. The object of the project is to preserve the recordings, and to make them available to the rest of the world. ILAM will thus become one of the first 'virtual' sound archives.

We intend to make the recordings available in MP3 format for download and purchasing, while previews will be in Real Audio, of a lower quality for 'live listening' only, not downloadable.

Currently, we offer online our catalogue, which is being edited daily, and we hope to have some digitised sound available before the end of the year. Information in Hugh Tracey's well-known 'Sound of Africa Series', for instance, along with other facets of ILAM, can now be browsed using our online catalogue.

We encourage ethnomusicologists and people with an interest in African music to use these facilities.

The URL is: **<http://ilam.ru.ac.za>**

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FILMS ON AFRICAN MUSIC

Digitally remastered

The original 16mm films made by Andrew Tracey and Gei Zantzinger from 1975 to 1980 in Mozambique (Chopi *timbila*) and Zimbabwe (Shona *mbira*) have recently been painstakingly restored and remastered digitally from the original footage and audio tapes by Gei Zantzinger and Michael Bailey, with audio tracks reprocessed into stereo. This means that they are now available in VHS video format (NTSC or PAL), looking and sounding far better than they ever did in the original format. This is particularly the case in the *timbila* films, where the original optical soundtracks, which conveyed very little of the big, rich sound of the Chopi orchestra, have been replaced by Curt Wittig's original field recordings.

The videos are now available, for Africa, from

International Library of African Music

(see inside front cover for address)

and for the rest of the world, from

Constant Spring Productions

P.O.Box 2, Devault, PA 19432, U.S.A.

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CHOPI

Mgodo wa Mkandeni, 45 mins.

Mgodo wa Mbanguzi, 45 mins.

These are real-time, two-camera documentations of two complete performances of the *mgodo*, the famous and magnificent Chopi dance with xylophone orchestra, filmed respectively in the villages of Mkandeni and Mbanguzi, near Quissico, Inhambane District, southern Mozambique in mid 1973. They were the first filmed record of the complete *mgodo* in its home surroundings. They are also the last documentations of the large-scale, well-rehearsed, chiefship-sponsored performances typical of the pre-independence Chopi. The major political and economic turbulence in Mozambique since independence in 1975, including the abolition of chiefship, has had its effect on this music/dance form, which today is much reduced in every way.

There is no commentary, but subtitles are given at the first appearance of each song line, first in Chopi, then in English. The movement names and composers are also identified. For full information the videos are accompanied by an extensive book "Companion to the Mgodo wa Mkandeni and Mgodo wa Mbanguzi" (Tracey, A. & Zantzinger, G., ILAM; 1976, order direct from ILAM), which gives the social and musical background including the complete words and explanations of the songs, transcriptions of the basic xylophone part of each song (for Mbanguzi), and Labanotation for some of the typical dance movements.

The Mkandeni film was made to give an idea of the spirit and mood of the *mgodo*; it was filmed with high speed film in the village's normal dancing ground in the shade of a large tree. One of the effects of the digitising of this new version of the film is to penetrate the high contrast caused by filming black faces in the shade against a sun-lit background outside the shade of the tree. The Mbanguzi film, on the other hand, was made in full sunlight, contrary to the usual Chopi way, but on the other hand it is able clearly to show the structure of the performance, the dance movements and the xylophone technique.

The Chopi *timbila* dance, 40 mins.

The xylophone orchestra *timbila* dance is complex, and can be confusing to the uninitiated. This analytical film, written and narrated by Andrew Tracey, was made with the intention of introducing some key features such as the instruments used, the cyclical structure of the music (demonstrated with animation), the control of the flow of the performance with signals, individual versions of a tune, the words, and some of the dance movements. The 11-man orchestra, the 14 dancers, and the compositions are those of master Chopi musician Venancio Mbande, and it was filmed on a specially constructed Chopi village set in Rustenburg, South Africa, where the Mozambican performers were contract miners at the time on the Wildebeesfontein platinum mine.