

Another contribution to the study of Negro music in Latin America is *'Musica Popular Brasileira'* written by Oneyda Alvarenga. In this work the Brazilian musicologist studies the music, dances and instruments of Brazilian folk, upon whom the Negro has exerted considerable influence. It was published in Mexico in 1947.

For the student of Negro music in Latin America—a theme that is of great interest nowadays—your correspondent wrote, in 1949, an Appendix to the Spanish translation of the *Dictionary of Music* by Andrea della Corte and Guido M. Gatti, entitled *'Musica y músicos de America'*. In this Appendix the author included brief data about Negro songs, dances and instruments in all three Americas, but especially in Latin America. The book was published by Ricordi Americana, of Buenos Aires. These few works are essential to the study of Afro-Latin American music.

Among the studies of Afro-North American music there is a great quantity of books, among which we can mention *'Negro Slave Songs in the United States'* by Dr. Miles Mark Fisher (New York, 1953); the excellent *Bibliography of Jazz* published by Dr. Alan P. Merriman with the assistance of Robert J. Benford (Philadelphia, 1954); and the *Encyclopedia of Jazz*, by Leonard Feather (New York 1955). Finally, books by the present writer include:— *'Panorama de la Musica Afroamericana'* (Buenos Aires, 1944) *del Jazz'* (Buenos Aires, 1951) *'Historia del Jazz'* (Buenos Aires, 1952) *'Perfiles del Jazz'* (Buenos Aires, 1955) and the booklet entitled *'Instrumenti Musicali degli Afro-Americani'* (Napoles, 1953).

Buenos Aires, May, 1956

Nestor R. Ortiz Oderigo.

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DIEUX D'AFRIQUE by PIERRE VERGER. (Paul Hartmann, Editeur, Paris, 1954) 192 pp., 160 plates.

In view of Monsieur Verger's statement "... l'auteur confesse que toutes les photos publiées ont été prises au cours de cérémonies publiques tant au Brésil qu'en Afrique et qu'aucune des scènes présentées ne révèle de secrets étranges. . . ." it is a courageous undertaking to attempt a comparison between the natives of West Africa and Brazil. Slaves were transported from Dahomey and Nigeria to Brazil and took with them their customs, but of all Nigerians the Yoruba is to the European the most extroverted and although there is distinct similarity in many of Monsieur Verger's examples there is I think too much "wishful thinking". It is perhaps unfair to criticize Monsieur Verger's original negatives as many of the highlights have been lost in printing, but I would be interested to know if these pictures were taken with a miniature camera or a reflex; in some photos the audience is obviously conscious of the photographer.

Michael Lane.

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LES HOMMES DE LA DANSE. by MICHEL HUET AND KEITA FODEBA. (Editions Clairefontaine, Lausanne 1954), 135 pp., 162 plates.

Surely it is delightful to describe an invitation to the dance by these imperatives:—

Travailler pour la collectivité.

Jouer des fruits du labeur commun

Honorer les dieux qui protègent l'homme

au cours de sa vie et le sauvegardent après la mort.

Extérioriser les causes et les effets de ces

activités par le chant et la danse.

The major art in a book of photographs hinges on continuity of interest and technical excellence. How many books have we seen with either but lacking one falling short of the ideal. From "La vie d'un village africain de la savane. . ." before the village awakes to its dance with the sun showing us a silhouette of leaning thatched roofs to the final grotesque discarded mask this book carries those two attributes to make a work of real interest, of beauty and excitement. Members of the Society who have woken to smell wood smoke and see the sun pouring its way through a mud doorway in the dawn of an exciting day will know conclusively that the man who took these photographs was not just a photographer but also a man with the awareness of mystery and the intense emotional excitement that surrounds African village life at these times. Each picture is beautifully reproduced and beautifully taken, and the artistic placing of the central figures is so remarkable good in view of the difficulties with which the photographer had to contend that I can only unreservedly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in African festival life as being a "must" for their bookshelf and to those who have never been to Africa as one of the finest true invitations.

Michael Lane.

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DOCTORS, DRUMS AND DANCERS. by ANDRAS D. LASZLO, M.D. (Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1956), 286 pp., illustrated. 18s.

"Why does one go to strange places, wild and lonesome? Why does one expose himself to inconvenience, to being bitten by bugs, to freezing at night,

sweating in the daytime, getting hungry when there is only water to drink, thirsty where there is only food to eat, and having thirst and hunger often when neither water nor food can be got?"

thus does Dr. Laszlo start his book and in continuing he gives an understandable answer. Among the peoples of Portuguese East Africa Dr. Laszlo finds customs, practices, doctors, drums and dances which he tells about in a series of almost unrelated chapters. To those who know other parts of Africa the tales he tells will be an amplification of tribal rites which have been found elsewhere. It is perhaps the first word in the title which gives the reader an insight to this book for Dr. Laszlo naturally has a medical approach to most things, particularly to such rites as circumcision and puberty. Very few have been privileged to see many of the tribal festivals described in this book, but it is disappointing to find medical details given prominence over things which would, I feel, have intellectual significance and I would like Dr. Laszlo to add more details of those moving emotional sights he must have seen leading up to and away from the nucleus of the investigation he has reported. The photographs are poorly reproduced and are disappointing but this is not a book which a serious student should consider as part of his library.

Michael Lane.

RECORD REVIEWS

Extract from "Nights at the Round Table" by W. A. Chislett (The Gramophone).

In September, 1954, I reviewed a group of Decca records in the *Music of Africa* series during which I drew attention to awards to be made each year by the Dr. Tom Osborn Memorial for the best recordings of native African music. Among the records I then reviewed was one containing eight of the prize winners for 1952. Twenty prize winners for 1953 are now offered on LF 1224 and 1225, but so far I have only received the second of the two discs. As might be anticipated, of the ten items on this record, six have been recorded by the indefatigable and apparently inexhaustible Hugh Tracey, the Director of the International Library of African Music. These include dances and songs from Kenya, Tanganyika, Mocambique, and Basutoland. The Central African Broadcasting Corporation are responsible for the other four, three of which come from Northern and one from Southern Rhodesia.

Some instruments that I do not remember to have heard before are introduced, including the Lalumbu bow, a one string bow resonated by a calabash which is held against the body to vary the sound, the Orotu lute and the Mlanzi flute. It would be idle to pretend that this is a record for everybody but those interested at all are likely to be fascinated. My own favourites are "Awu mungoya" (Gogo tribe) which as the excellent sleeve note points out, has a vague affinity with Gregorian chant, "Muka Nakayongo" (Tonga tribe) a drinking song, and "Monene Kobo" (Southern Sotho tribe), a work song sung during the operation of softening hides, the singers pulling and twisting the skins in time with the music. The quality of the recording varies a little as is inevitable when the tapes were made under varying conditions, but is extraordinarily good.

Another record in the same series will have a wider appeal, for it contains five traditional stories from the Fort Victoria district of Southern Rhodesia, told and sung by Hugh Tracey (LF 1174). So far as it is possible Mr. Tracey has translated these into English, but occasionally, particularly in the songs, the original defies translation and when this is so the original words are used and they are followed by a brief translation or explanation. This is a thoroughly enjoyable record and will appeal to children as well as adults. The stories are "The Great Baboon" who saves a girl from cattle thieves; "The Snake who bit a Girl", thereby making a lot of trouble for himself; "The Lion on the Path", from whose jaws a man and his wife were saved by music and the timely intervention of a rabbit; "The Bird of the Valley", who turned himself into a young man; and "Tsimbarumi the hardened Bachelor", who ultimately found himself so many wives that in gratitude he shared his good fortune with his friends!