

nor their distribution are yet fully known; but he considers that it will be useful for future researchers if he places before them what has been learned up to the present.

Mr. Maquet therefore gives us a documented outline of the work accomplished by some fifteen authors, after which he discusses afresh the classification of the instruments. Of special interest is his close analysis of the various types of xylophone, with and without resonators, as they are found in the Congo, together with particulars of their distribution; and of the instruments commonly called "sansas", among which he notes specimens with tongues of copper and brass, as well as of iron.

The author's description of various types of flutes is, unfortunately, rather "sketchy", and gives us little information as to their use or the nature of the music performed upon them. True, he refers to the works of other researchers, which doubtless amplify his own observations; but without referring to these one cannot obtain any clear idea of the instruments which he describes. This is notably the case in his account of the pan-pipes, although in this instance he does give an example of the music played upon the instrument. And in discussing the transverse flute he alludes to the measurement theories of the late Erich von Hornbostel and of Curt Sachs, saying that it is desirable that these should be verified so far as the Congo flutes are concerned. But he makes no attempt at such verification.

The paper, as the author himself frankly states, is a rapid review of the musical instruments of the Congo, and therefore one can hardly expect to find in it the details for which one longs. For these one must await the complete study.

A series of five Plates contains a large number of clear line drawings of instruments; but in the nature of the case the performers are not depicted. A bibliography of eighty nine works is a useful addition, and also a list of recordings of music performed on various instruments in the Congo.

Percival R. Kirby.

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LES INSTRUMENTS DE MUSIQUE AU BAS-CONGO ET DANS LES REGIONS AVOISINANTES: Par BERTIL SODERBERG. Stockholm: Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, monograph series, publication No. 3, 1956. Pp. 284; 26 plates; 25 text-diagrams; 1 map. 60 kroner.

(Reprinted with the kind permission of the Editor of Africa, the Journal of the International African Institute.)

In the writing of this detailed and carefully produced ethnographical study, the author has been able to combine experience in the field as a missionary of the Svenska Missionsförbundet and as holder of a bursary from the Institut d'Etudes Centrafricaines (Brazzaville) with some years of study during a term of office at the Royal Ethnographical Museum of Stockholm. He has thus had the advantage of being able to do research work in the area described (under conditions of acceptance by the people because of his position amongst them) and also of having facilities for library and museum studies. The result is a further valuable contribution to the growing number of ethnographical monographs on Africa being produced in Sweden.

In a short introductory chapter the author delimits the area of his study and gives a brief account of the history and geography of the Lower Congo, together with a description of the peoples living there. Then follow chapters in which the musical instruments of the region are described under the successive heads; idiophones, membranophones, cordophones, and aerophones. There is a concluding chapter treating of the ornamentation of the instruments found and also of the appearance of musical instruments, in the plastic art forms of the region. The appended bibliography of some 500 items is noteworthy in giving many Swedish papers which are not commonly available to musicologists. In the 26 plates there are 155 photographs of musical instruments described in the text and of African musicians using them.

Included in the description of each instrument is an account of the role played by it in Lower Congo tribal life. The author has not, however, attempted to describe the music associated therewith; he rightly maintains that a discussion of note frequency, melodic intervals, rhythm and musical phrasing belongs to the domain of musicology rather than ethnography. He also excludes from the present study all European instruments imported into the Lower Congo within recent years because "they are not incorporated into the indigenous civilization" (p. 14). On the other hand, he is ready to recognize European influence on some of the instruments he describes as culturally indigenous to the area (trumpets, bells).

The classification generally adopted is that of von Hornbostel and Sachs: *Systematik der Musikinstrumente* (1914). The author points out, however, that some of the instruments found in this area are difficult to fit into classificatory systems. He ranges hand-clapping, for instance, under concussion idiophones, the sounds made by girls and women beating the water-surface while bathing under percussion idiophones, and the remarkable instrument known as the *nkumbi* (Weeks' Hunting Fetish Drum) is described as essentially a scraping stick (idiophone par râpement).

For some of the instruments described, the author is content to give an account of the form met with in the Lower Congo area. He realizes, however, that a knowledge of the form and function of these instruments outside the area studied could throw light on their nature and use within the area and so he gives, in most cases, a summary of such information available in the literature consulted.

Although the author excludes from his study the general question of the relationship between melodic intervals and tonal changes of linguistic material associated with the instruments examined, yet he is obliged to discuss this matter when dealing with the function of slit-gongs (here described as "wooden drum") as instruments serving to transmit messages. From his own work among the Sundi he finds that only some "three or four drum-messages are still generally in use" (p. 68). The reviewer had hoped to find a discussion on the relationship between linguistic tones and the two distinct musical notes produced by other instruments such as the double bell and the side-blown flute which the author describes as being used for signalling. It is well known, however, that the tonal structure of the Kongo language seems to be more complex than that of languages associated with signalling on musical instruments in the Middle and Upper Congo areas; we must await a further elucidation of this problem when the tonal system of Kongo has been adequately compared with that found elsewhere among peoples with a highly developed signalling practice.

In these days of voluminous publication on all scientific questions, it is easy to overlook material published during the preparation of a work such as the one under review. But it is a pity that the recent monograph on Belgian Congo slit-gongs: F. De Hen, *Tamtams in Belgisch-Kongo*, Universitair Instituut voor de Overzeese Gebieden; Antwerp, 1954-5, was not available to the author, especially as it describes the very rich collection of these instruments in the Brussels (Tervuren) Museum.

We welcome this book as providing a well-documented monograph on the Lower Congo musical instruments. It should serve to stimulate comparative work on musical instruments found in other areas of Congo and provide the ethnographical basis for much-needed musicological investigations.

J. F. CARRINGTON.

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BLACK ORPHEUS. No. 1 September 1957, 52 pps. Ministry of Education, Ibadan, Nigeria.

It is with particular pleasure that we note the appearance of a new journal devoted to contemporary African literature, and see in its first edition contributions of such high standard. It should provide an excellent medium for mature writers on African artistic matters through which to express their observations on the integrities of African artistry. While it cannot replace literature in the vernaculars which must of necessity remain the most fluent medium for indigenous imagery within their privileged circles, a journal in English will reach a wider public which is still lamentably ignorant of the pattern of African thought but which is most anxious to learn from genuine artists and writers.

We have suffered far too long from poor translations by back writers, and it will be most encouraging to those in other territories to learn that a start has been made by gifted writers on art subjects in Nigeria to avail themselves of this opportunity of reaching a wider public. The point of view of the foreign writer, however sympathetic and learned, can never wholly take the place of the indigenous. In other words African literature can only be written by Africans, and if they can master an international language with skill and ease, as the present Nigerian contributors have done, and present their views alongside the most constructive commentaries of sympathetic and knowledgeable non-Africans as this first edition demonstrated, then we predict a bright future for Black Orpheus.

The African Music Society will specially welcome the appearance of articles such as the first in this edition by Adeboye Babalola which throws light upon the lyrics of this continent from an inside point of view. The adequate translation of lyrics has long been one of the most difficult aspects of local musical research, one which requires not only a high degree of sensitivity in the foreign translator, but also a sympathetic knowledge of the symbolism employed by African poets.

The *ijáldá* type of song described by this writer, is found in many African territories to the south, and mature readers in Bantu Africa will find it easy to make comparisons with their own variations of 'ijáldá' through translations such as those by Adeboye Babalola.

Our one regret on the appearance of this journal is in the choice of title. It was, we feel, quite unnecessary to use a title indicating colour. African artists, writers and musicians must surely achieve universal recognition by the validity of their work and not in any degree by recourse to a qualification of skin pigmentation. The African Music Society has already revealed through its studies and recordings, enough of this continent's music to know that no such special dispensation is necessary in presenting the compositions of the folk composers and a few others of applied musicianship whose work, like good wine "neds no bush".

H.T.

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JAMAICAN REVIVALIST CULTS. Social and Economic Studies, Vol. 5, No. 4. December, 1956.

Professor G. E. Simpson of Oberlin College, Ohio, spent seven months in Jamaica in 1957, doing research into revivalist sects in West Kingston. The results of this work are given in an entire number (132 pages) of the Jamaican quarterly review Social and Economic Studies devoted to his paper.

The importance of the study of the sects that have broken away from the older churches and missions has been realised ever since the publication of Bengt Sundkler's book, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*.