

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.

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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*.

Similar studies have been undertaken in other parts of Africa and America. The worship, organisation and life of these sects have been examined. A significant question is, how far do the sects represent an adaptation of Christianity to African ways of life, worship and music? Some of the most successful answers are found in the MaNazarena community near Durban. Another question is, How far are the sects a continuation of or a return to ancient paganism?

On the latter question Professor Simpson seems to think that there ought to be pagan elements in the sects, but he has difficulty in discovering evidence. He says in one place, "Jamaican revivalism is polytheistic" (p. 417), but later he admits that there are no African gods worshipped. (pp. 345, 435). His contention that there is polytheism arises from the fact that many saints and angels are invoked in the prayers and worship of the Jamaican revivalists. But these are nearly all Biblical and Christian beings and have no clear connection with the old pagan gods of Africa.

In some other parts of America there are indeed to be found groups of descendants of the old slaves who still remember the names and, at times, worship some of the old African gods. Writers such as Verger, Herskovits, Bascom and Turner have remarked upon this. Old African beliefs and cults may still be traced in the Voodoo of Haiti, and in societies in Trinidad and Brazil. But Professor Simpson produces no evidence that such beliefs are now found in the area of Jamaica that he studied. He appears to strain himself to suggest pagan parallels, by quoting very frequently from the above writers about African gods remembered or worshipped elsewhere in America, but never once does he show that any African god is evoked in Kingston. Superstitions are mentioned, such as magical stones, belief in witchcraft and ghosts, and spirit possession. But these have been found in many a Christian country.

On the other hand this writer gives very little attention to the obvious Christian background of the sects. He admits that the Bible is prominent in their cult, that great store is set by baptism, that preachers carry shepherds' crooks, and preach in the name of Christ. Yet on page after page he reverts to Dahomey and Trinidad and hardly refers at all to the clear derivation of the sects from the revivals of the 18th. and 19th. centuries in Europe and the United States. He says that there was no widespread missionary teaching till 1820 in Jamaica. But Professor Latourette tells us that Baptists were numerous in Jamaica from 1738, and the Methodists sent missionaries from 1789. It was these evangelical missions which brought Christianity to the slaves, often being persecuted for so doing, and imbued them with ideas of the dignity of man.

Professor Simpson gives some details of the music of the revivalists which will interest readers of this Journal. "Singing and (spiritual) dancing in Jamaican revivalist groups are accompanied by the instruments which are most important in West Africa, that is drums and rattles. To these another percussion instrument, the tambourine, is often added." But there is no mention of the West African calabashes, gongs, xylophones or string instruments. The many different types of drums found in Africa are not discussed.

Again he says, "The emphasis on rhythm, the tendency of introduce polyrhythms and the anti-phone between leader and chorus in singing are ubiquitous. The swaying of the body, handclapping with cupped hands rather than with flattened palms, and other motor behaviour while singing, are African." Of course, but there is no discussion of the dance steps.

This is an interesting field of research, but it is not very well covered in this study which hankers after invisible pagan cults, and is marred by jargon such as "dysfunctions", "responsorial" and "adjustive-escapist."

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