

## FOLKLORE ACTIVITIES OF THE *MUSEO DO DUNDO*

by

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The Dundo Museum (Lunda) of the Angola Diamond Company is continuing, through its musical section, the defence of the traditional folklore of the native populations of the district in which it develops its mining exploitations, and of the surrounding areas. As is known, the Museum is situated at the headquarters of the mining field, the town of Dundo on the River Luachimo, an important tributary of the Cassai.

Speaking generally, it may be said that this activity has two forms: the first, or direct, consists in the action of the Museum on the folklore of the inhabitants of a large area around Dundo, which is the most populous of the district; the second, in the systematic collection of musical pieces in regions situated far away, where direct action is materially impossible.

This action is carried out by means of assistance to folklore groups organized many years ago under the auspices of the Museum. The groups belong to different villages, and are related to various tribes, of which the principle are the Chokwe, Lunda and Luba. The assistance is effected in various manners, useful for the maintenance and activity of the groups of players and dancers. For instance, entertainments and festivals are frequently arranged, with prizes, one being a great annual meeting at which nearly 10,000 inhabitants of the district gather. During this, at nightfall, a folklore spectacle is held, always enthusiastically applauded by those present. It represents, nowadays, a revival of a great meeting of tribal times, and terminates with group dances and songs and a sumptuous banquet for which the Company habitually supplies many oxen for roasting whole, and other foodstuffs appreciated by its guests.

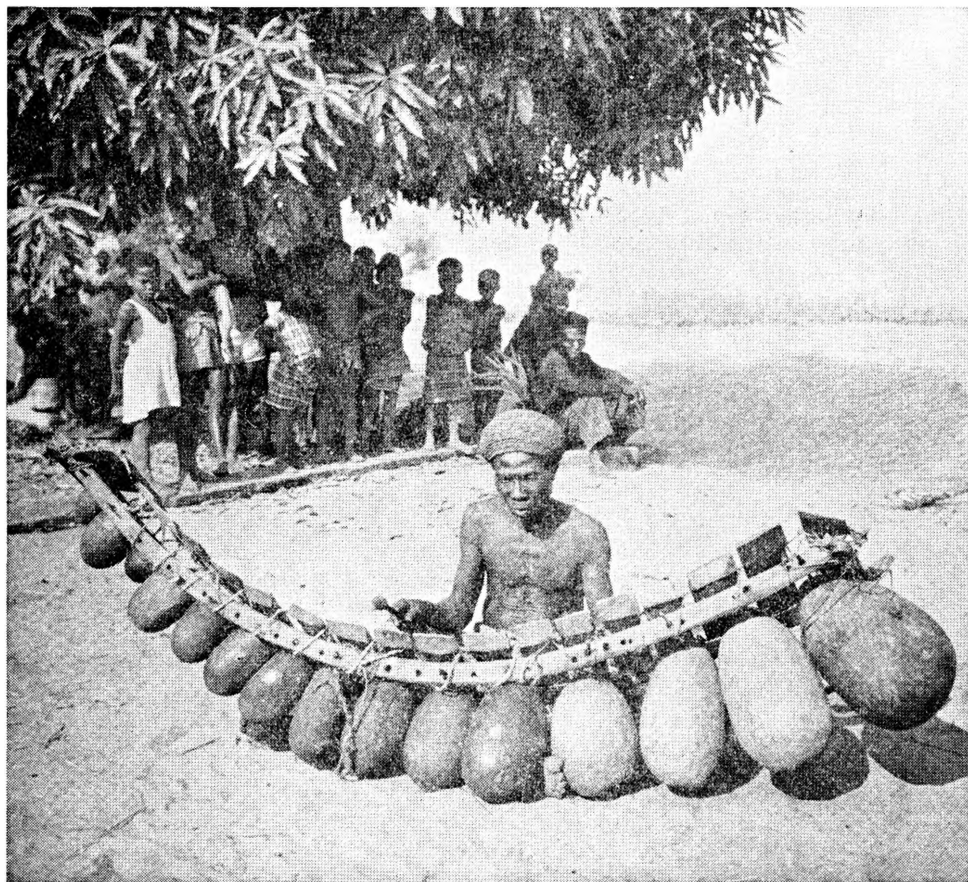
These and other facilities keep the natives faithful to their musical tradition, even although, owing especially to the influence of radio, certain uses alien to these people are creeping in, such as dancing in the European manner, that is, in pairs. On the other hand there is to be noted a tendency to abandon the "*Quissange*" in favour of the European guitar, which, by the way, they play excellently.

Indirect action is exercised, as we said, by the collecting of folk music, and is carried out by the "Collecting Mission" of the Museum, with headquarters established in one of the galleries of the Dundo Museum. This gallery, always visited with great interest, possesses a collection of native musical instruments, and a library of the speciality. The original collections of discs and tapes of the Mission recording are also preserved there.

Up to the present, this Mission has collected 1,400 songs or musical passages from 20 peoples or tribes of the Districts of Lunda, Alto Zambeze and Moxico, but the majority of these, that is the older ones, were made still with acetate discs. The recordings are contained in 260 discs and 20 magnetic tapes.

Collecting work in the bush will recommence next Spring and part of it will be dedicated to a zone of South Angola, considered as still possessing good folklore.

The recordings are primarily intended for the ethnomusical section of the Dundo Museum, but considering the interest that this activity may have for specialists and students of this branch of knowledge in various countries, the Company has had made available a certain number of copies of the discs and magnetic tapes to be offered to Portuguese and foreign institutions. This distribution, to be commenced by copies of



Old xylophone player (Lovua-Lunda District)

the tapes, is to be initiated in 1960 only, as there was a lot of previous desk-work to be done. In fact, every group of tapes will be accompanied by a printed handbook, giving explanations of a general order, ethnographic and folklore data on the various peoples or tribes, information about the instruments used by them, words of the songs and comments. All these elements are translated into English, including the words of the songs. As concerns the last, phonetic rules were strictly observed.

Naturally, one of the institutions to be presented with a collection of copies is the African Music Society (International Library of African Music) whose action we follow with appreciation and admiration.

The Company has also the intention of itself having a study made of the results of its collections, thus initiating, in its well-known Cultural Publications, a series of works on musicology relating to the Lunda peoples.