

Why not use the musical instruments and techniques that we already have in Africa, the xylophone, the mbira, the drum? The answer is that these should and must be used, but how far have our schools gone in encouraging them? Perhaps the steel drum can lead the way back to a little more Africanness in our institutional music, giving plenty of fun as it goes. If, however, you doubt the fun of spending a week of arm-breaking hammering at an old oil drum, try taking a breath of Pete Seeger's enthusiasm, which has already done so much for American folk music in the United States.

There remains one thing, I think, which must be improved upon in the steel drum before its final acceptance as a fully-grown musical instrument, that is the preponderance of discordant overtones. 40 per cent overtone to 60 percent note, while giving the steel drum its mellow tone, does not permit enough harmonic clarity completely to satisfy the western musician. Perhaps Africa could add one of its old techniques to the making of the steel drum, that of weighting different parts of the note with wax?

The Folkways record (I have only heard the first) which accompanies the instruction book is as clear a recording of steel drums as I have heard, steel drums being notoriously difficult to record because of their overtones. Each instrument is brought into prominence in turn, which should be of great help to those who want to learn basic West Indian styles of steel band playing.

Andrew Tracey.

POESIA SUDANESE. *Museum Combonianum*, No. 12, by LIVIO TESCAROLI. Editrice Nigrizia, Bologna, 1961. pp. 117.

This small volume written in Italian is an anthology of 101 indigenous Sudanese poems drawn from the Shilluk, Dinka, Zande, Balanda Bor, Feroge, Ndogo and other tribes. A short but useful introduction is followed by the poems grouped under Religion, Funerals, War, Love, Satire and Miscellaneous subjects. The vernacular text is followed by translations and notes. The poems should of course be sung, and a good many of them are provided with their music; there are 30 pages of music transcriptions which are well done and provide some valuable information about tribal "harmony" in this region. We find singing in parallel 3rds., 4ths. and 5ths: moreover 2nds., 6ths., and even 7ths. also occur, mostly in combination with a third voice, which suggests that they arise from a simultaneous singing, for example, of a 4th and a 5th, which would produce parallel 2nds. On page 97 contrary motion occurs in the penultimate bar. The most interesting entry is the 4-part song on page 106, where the women's and men's voices are mostly in canon, the two women also being in canon with each other, which is quite remarkable. The bass clef printed on the second women's line ought presumably to be a treble clef.

It is a pity that the author, while acknowledging his sources in general, does not indicate them specifically; it is thus not possible to know who is responsible for what, an omission which certainly needs correction in future editions.

A. M. Jones.

AFRICAN MUSIC AND THE CHURCH IN AFRICA by HENRY WEMAN, trans. Eric J. Sharpe, Swedish Institute of Missionary Research, Domkyrkoplan 2, Uppsala, Sweden, 1960. pp. 296 (31 pp. musical transcriptions) Sw. Kr. 32.50.

It is probably unique for a European cathedral organist to apply himself to the musical needs of the African mission field: but in so doing, Dr. Weman has given us an important and a charming book. Hitherto the available literature, consisting of articles in journals and passing references in books, has been inaccessible to many. Dr. Weman has not only read very widely, but has, in two recent visits to Africa, both experienced the problems and also attempted some solutions himself. The result is the first book to be devoted wholly to the subject of African Church music. In it the author, in his lucid, flowing, and compelling style, and aided by a very good English translation, while discussing his own theories, experiments and conclusions, distils the essence of practically all that has been written, and finally gives an inclusive bibliography. Without any doubt, this book must be read by everyone who is concerned with hymns and music in the mission field in Africa: and not only by the musicians, for—perhaps skipping the musically technical pages—there is so much that is stimulating and inspiring even for the unmusical; one is taken right into the musical consciousness of the African.

To lay the foundation, Dr. Weman describes the principles underlying ordinary African village music, with an excellent summary of the ethos of African music (pp. 17-21), and the place of folk-music in African social life and in the Shembe sect—the Church of the Nazarites. All students of African music will find this first section of the book very useful. He passes on to music in African schools, the singing of European part-songs and the effort—or lack of effort—shown by educational policy to give African music its due place. He next deals with the present state of Church music in Africa with special, but not exclusive, reference to the Lutheran Church, and from this he proceeds to his experiences and musical experiments made in the field, and gives an account of experiments made elsewhere in Africa. Lastly, two chapters discuss the future, with constructive proposals for introducing into worship African music both vocal and instrumental: the synthesis of the two elements claiming a place, the Christian heritage of liturgical music on the one hand, and the African's contribution on the other; the evangelistic scope

of African musical forms; and the means of disseminating all these ideas, with the overriding need of centralized schools of Church music. The book includes over thirty pages of music transcriptions.

On the whole, while forming such a valuable summary of the subject, the book does not break much fresh ground: perhaps this is hardly fair criticism, for the needs of the situation are well known to musical missionaries, and the ground which has to be broken is conservatism and lack of knowledge on both sides—of the European missionary and also of the African congregation. Thus Dr. Weman is forced by present Church customs in Africa to provide 4-part harmony for many of his experiments, though he obviously does not like it, least of all for strictly liturgical music. In so doing, he is compelled to violate the ideal (of which he is well aware) of the tone-tune relationship, where the melody follows the rise and fall of the spoken word, though he regards his music as an interim measure to help the African to realize what his Church music could be, if only he would compose it himself. Yet though he uses *motifs* from African folk-music, he does not appear to have secured this tone-tune agreement even in the treble in his new compositions. But it is a *tour de force* on the part of a European to do this at all.

Though he certainly has precedents, one would question his use of the word "scale" to mean not only the total series of notes at one's disposal, but also the particular notes selected on which to build a given melody. In the absence of any conscious theory on the part of the African, this view may be right, but also it may be wrong. Perhaps we need a new word to describe the theoretical content of a melody. However, in the tuning of the *Mbira* (pp. 40 and 41), the scale which emerges is not due solely to musical aesthetics. The African can apprehend the exact difference of pitch between two adjacent notes much better than he can two notes widely separated. Thus his fourths and fifths will be good, but the tuning of his octaves will usually be only approximate. Again, for a *Mbira* to be comfortable in use, the edges of the metal prongs must be in line or on a smooth curve. If one key projects, the thumb trips on it and the player may push it up (thereby sharpening its pitch), making a compromise between correct intonation and ease of playing—though a first-class player would be likely to refuse to play on an instrument which needed this treatment. One has to remember this in assessing his "scale". Moreover, the whole question of the origin of scales, on which Dr. Weman writes so attractively, is after all only a hypothesis: it does not really matter *how* they started.

The parallel singing in some tribes in thirds, rather than in fourths or fifths, is attributed, following F. Bose (p.47) to possible European influence. Your reviewer has strong grounds for denying this ascription and for maintaining that the thirds were brought from Indonesia by Indonesian colonists in the early centuries of the Christian era.

Gregorian music (plainsong) is commended for use by Africans (p. 186) because of the tonality of the modes and the free-rhythm of the melodies. But the "free-rhythm" of Africa is to a large extent vastly different from that of plainsong, because it is so often only apparently free, and is, in fact, strictly though irregularly metrical, being tied to a regular hand-clap or clap-pattern: there is here an essential and basic difference. Again, while we agree that the sixth mode (with flattened fourth degree), the seventh and the eighth modes are especially congenial to Africans, we have never heard Africans able to sing in the fourth or fifth modes, whose tonality is more foreign to them than is our major diatonic scale. Your reviewer, while a great admirer of plainsong, has always found it extremely difficult for Africans: they insist on Africanizing it in various ways.

With great courage Dr. Weman tackles the modification of European hymn tunes in order to come to terms with African word-accent. Here indeed is a profound dilemma: if we alter the actual rhythm of a tune, can we say that it is still the same tune: Is it still the musical gem we inherited and wish to pass on? The tactics of our own nineteenth-century hymnbook editors—their ironing out of the hymn rhythms to a dull and regular common time—is an example of how to murder a good tune. Yet, as Dr. Weman so rightly maintains, unless we do this in Africa, the words are unsingable. We agree with him that it can only be *faute de mieux*: it is, in fact, a musical *impasse*. Yet one should add that the question of stress in African speech is still an open one among linguists, who distinguish "apparent" stress, i.e., what we think we hear from real stress, the latter being often too subtle to be detected by mere listening.

The book primarily concerns the Lutheran Church. In future editions will Dr. Weman help non-Lutherans a little more in dealing with the Lutheran Rite? What, for example, is the *Laudamus* to which he often refers? Is it the second section of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, or something different? And is the *Hallelujah* (p. 132) which he puts before the *Graduale*, actually sung in that position, or does it, as is normal in the Western Rite, follow the latter?

Those who know what the African can and cannot sing, will welcome Dr. Weman's new tunes: they are obviously eminently singable by Africans even though, as he indicates, they are a hybrid—a pointer by a European to the African, to show how he himself can use his music in Christian worship. And their use will work a revolution in the Church. Incidentally, in his transcriptions, he nowhere gives metronome marks—an omission which needs rectifying.

The general impression which the book leaves on the mind is this: what is the ordinary overworked missionary to do about it all? Obviously, sensitive, musical leadership is needed. Dr. Weman's very last suggestion seems to be the only answer. We simply must establish schools of Church music. But he omits to mention that a start has indeed been made. For some years Mr. Graham Hyslop, the government Music and Drama Officer for Kenya, has been conducting courses of Church music with specially composed tunes, very much along the lines suggested.

Though excellently produced, the book shows haste in proof-reading and there are too many mistakes: the page references in the text have been left blank; Dr. John Rycroft should be Mr. D. K. Rycroft; Fr. Jones was at S. Mark's (not S. Augustine's) College (p. 187); in footnote 48 on p. 62, the "preceding page" are wrong; on p. 142, the fifth bar of the English Hymnal tune should have three crotchets, A, B flat and C; p. 169, "and was young Alexander" for "and *also* . . ."; and there are more.

A few infelicities appear in the translation: p. 73—"the main worship service": the notes of a xylophone are wooden slats not wooden "pegs" (p. 69); p. 157 and 137, "melism(s)" for *melisma(ta)*; and on p. 193, the "Improvers" for Good Friday (Latin—*Improperia*) should of course be called the "Reproaches".

But it would be quite unjust to end on this critical note. The whole mission field in Africa is indebted to Dr. Weman. The book is a notable achievement; it fairly breathes the African atmosphere and it abounds in arresting and apt quotations. "There is no country in the world"—he quotes from E. A. Asamoah—"which can claim that its national customs and festivals were originally Christian. In the course of centuries Christian contents have been put into what were originally pagan customs which have now been adopted by Christianity. What is needed is to transform the pagan contents with Christian ideas. In the same way, you cannot prohibit African drumming or dancing without disturbing the soul's life. But you can give a new outlook and content to drumming and dancing through Christian influence". And that is the sum of the matter.

A. M. JONES.

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MUNTU: AN OUTLINE OF NEO-AFRICAN CULTURE, by Janheinz Jahn. Translated by Marjorie Greene. Faber and Faber, London, 1961. Ill. 30s.

In recent years the world has become more and more conscious of the great and increasing contribution to literature and the arts which has derived and continues to derive from "black" Africa, either directly, or indirectly by way of the Caribbean countries and South America. In literature the movement has, at the moment, its most articulate expression in the writings of the *Présence Africaine* group in Paris, mainly of west African provenance, though there also exists a substantial and important body of writings by African authors from other parts of the continent and from the West Indies. In painting, sculpture and, especially music, Africa has long significantly influenced the West. This "neo-African culture", especially in literature, is booming, and it is to be hoped that it will continue to do so and at the same time to grow and develop. What is characteristic of it is that it is something new, to be identified neither with the traditional art forms of Africa nor with the new Western culture which has so radically affected the old Africa, nor even with any simple mixture of these. Nevertheless, it owes its distinctive character to traditional African concepts and values, and these have for the most part been but little understood or appreciated by Europeans.

The task which Mr. Jahn sets himself in this well-informed, perceptive and occasionally obscure book is the highly ambitious one of determining whether there exists something which can be called a specifically "African" culture, and if so, what its distinctive features are. The problem is a valid one, though it needs very much more precise formulation, and up to a point Mr. Jahn's approach to it is the right one. He does not attempt any sort of formal, "external" classification of the various art forms on the basis of styles or periods; rather he undertakes an exposition of African achievement in the arts as an expression of African ideology, values, and "philosophy". This is a tall order indeed, and if Mr. Jahn's thesis is not in all respects completely convincing, his work has real importance both as a pioneering attempt at synthesis and as a repository of authentic and sensitively-comprehended information about modern African culture.

In his first chapter Mr. Jahn sets out the problem as he conceives it and the method which he proposes to adopt. Since African culture "appears as a unity" it makes no difference from which African cultures or languages the key concepts for its understanding are derived, and in fact the author selects his basic categories from two widely separate and very different contemporary African cultures. In chapters 2 and 3 ("Voodoo" and "Rumba") the fundamental concern of African thought with "powers" or "spirits" ("since everything is force or energy" is developed, and mediumistic cults, especially in Haiti and Nigeria, are discussed with remarkable insight, especially their connection with dancing. "In 'possession' man takes these forces into himself, intensifies his own nature", and at the same time the spirits themselves are thereby strengthened, sustained, and in a sense "created" too. Mr. Jahn is particularly interesting on the diffusion of earlier African dance forms, beginning with the *sarabanda* in the 16th century. In chapter 4 the "four categories of Bantu philosophy", all taken from the Ruanda tongue of central Africa, are identified. These are "Muntu", intelligent force; "Kintu", things in their passive not their active aspect; "Hantu", space and time; and "Kuntu" form or modality. And in chapter 5 "Nommo", "life force", expressed through the power of the word ("the word alone rules the world"), is added to the battery of African ontology, this time borrowed from the language of the West African Dogon. Chapter 6 deals with "Kuntu" ("style"), and contains an interesting discussion of drum rhy-