

Time signatures such as $2 + 2 + 2 + 3/8$, $5/4$, $3 + 3 + 4 + 4/4$ and $6/4$ look promising, and some of them turn out to be fascinating. What I really miss, however, is the combination of different rhythms or time signatures which is the hall-mark of African instrumental ensemble music. Once established, for instance, on a pattern of two bars of $3/4$ followed by two of $4/4$, Brubeck and group remain fixed inside that pattern, in a way that is, oddly enough, rather *unlike* traditional jazz with its additive and over-the-bar-line phrasing. Africans would probably jump at the opportunity, if using a similar pattern, of adding up other simple groups of time units, such as two, three, or four, in a shifting pattern that would continually contrast with the regular 3-3-4-4 of the background. In fact I find the keenest appreciation of this record when creating my own background pulse, be it of two, three or four time-units, and moving regularly to mine, while taking in the other at the same time. For this reason, this new direction in jazz may lead to renewed interest in jazz dancing. Only in rare spots on the record, notably in "Kathy's Waltz", does the group create this feeling of tension between rhythms, or phrase a melody over their agreed barlines.

The record could be criticised from other viewpoints too, such as the choice of a saxophone for second solo instrument—would not vibraphone or guitar, as more rhythmical instruments, have been more suitable for experimenting with time? Nevertheless, one welcomes this sign of interest in African music on the part of jazz, because modern classicists, such as Stravinsky and Varèse, who have used the most complicated and exotic rhythms in some of their works, have yet failed to capture the spirit of African music-making, and this seems to me to be the only Africanism that jazz still retains today.

Andrew Tracey.

AFRICA, Music and Life of Today. Vol. 1. 45 r.p.m. EP, Columbia SEYJ 101 & 2. E.M.I. (South Africa) (Pty.) Ltd.

A pretty rural scene on the cover . . . inside, eight bouncing numbers of Johannesburg African jazz; the contrast, together with the claim that this *is* "African Music and Life of Today", mirrors the average European commercial approach to Africa. It is slightly ridiculous, if not shameful, that Europeans in South Africa are still able to consider this as a true reflection of what African music and life of today really is, now that we know how intense and artistic the music-making is in the South African countryside. This record is yet another proof that most of us are still in the stage of deafness to indigenous African musical talent, the standard being of course the degree of similarity to accustomed forms of European music.

The music is Johannesburg township concert music; four items are jazz numbers with the usual saxophone/trumpet/bass/drum combination, and four with penny whistles/guitar/bass. What is remarkable about the jazz numbers is that they sound so similar to African/Negro jazz from other parts of Africa and America, notably the West Indies, in such characteristics as the modal playing of the saxophone, the repetition of short, short phrases, and (to musicians) the utter unoriginality of musical invention. Enthusiasm they have, and a driving beat which appeals to the lowbrow, both black and white, but this cannot make up for lack of ideas.

The penny whistles, on the other hand, while sharing possibly all the faults of the jazz-men, yet have something which is uniquely South African and original. The effect of hearing them can be compared to hearing early recordings of New Orleans jazz: here is a new and exciting sound (I think it is the contrapuntal sound effect that is important, rather than the notes played) which, crude as it still is, has something to offer to the field of musical expression.

I wonder if the recording company was aware that what it hoped would be new hits were in fact old tunes reworked. Johannesburg music has a folk tradition of its own; very few musicians are musically literate, and the majority of music is passed on orally. Thus hundreds of versions of the same tune are possible, each given its own name by the group that plays it. "Jumping Jack Special" (SEYJ102/1/1) is actually the umpteenth recording of a song that was composed and became popular in 1955 and 6, when Sophiatown was abandoned and the inhabitants moved to Meadowlands. The words, whose melody is played by the flutes, are (in the Tswana language): "*Utlauthwa makgoa are, ariyeng koMeadowlands*" (You will hear the white men saying, we must go to Meadowlands). Similarly "Dark City" and "Bomma" (SEYJ 102/2/1 & 2) are a Xhosa school song, dating from the early nineteen forties, and a traditional Xhosa wedding song, to be sung by the old women. The words of the first are: "*Duda, dada, Nonkala, nanku Xam iyisbata*" (Dance, dance, Crab, there's Iguana getting married), and of the second: "*Walil' umntan', ublatywe ngameva. Asingomeva, yitlofuya*" (The child is crying, it's been pricked by a thorn. It's not a thorn, it's a prickly pear).

The interesting thing about the first song "*Utlauthwa . . .*", is that the melody follows the speech tones of the words, and as such is immediately recognisable by any Tswana who hears it. The flutes in the background can even be heard to be "saying": "*KoMeadowlands . . . koMeadowlands . . . koMeadowlands . . .*" The melody of "*Duda, dada . . .*", being a school song, does not follow the word tones, so here the song is recognised simply from its melody. The words, and tune, of "*Walil' umntan'*" are used as a background over which a flute counterpoint is woven. Some of the ideas are clever, some funny, but in general the enthusiastic playing has to make up for much unoriginality in musical ideas. No doubt

it does this for many people, and for record companies; musicians, however, will look forward to the time when African penny whistle music develops to a similar degree of artistry as that of traditional African instrumentalists.

Andrew Tracey.

MUSIC OF AFRICA SERIES No. 17: "More African Stories"—GALP. 1111*
 No. 18: "Music from the Roadside—South Africa"—GALP. 1110*
 No. 19: "Songs from the Roadside—Rhodesia"—GALP. 1113*
 All recorded and presented by Hugh Tracey.

Here are three more 12 inch L.P. records for the *Music of Africa* Series.

I will consider Nos. 18 and 19 first. The titles are evidently intended to appeal to the tourist market: "*Music from the Roadside—South Africa*" and "*Songs from the Roadside—Rhodesia*". The fiction is that the ordinary tourist will hear such musical material while driving around the country in a hired car—though most of us find it requires long association with the Africans and days and nights spent in their villages (which the Government doesn't encourage), and the experience and persistence of a Hugh Tracey to hear much African music first-hand. (The Valley Tonga recordings were made in villages now 200 feet below the surface of the Kariba lake—hardly "by the roadside"). However, such records will provide the tourist with a wealth of material to use with his films and transparencies (made or bought) when he gets back home; and it may deepen his feelings towards the country, if he knows something of what is being done in it behind the scenes, and what could have been heard by him if he had been lucky enough to hear it.

Actually, these discs can be regarded as a selection or anthology of some of the best recordings made by Hugh Tracey in the countries of South Africa and Rhodesia, and we look forward to an extension of the series to cover other areas—whether tourist-ridden or not. Many of the items are already familiar to us from previous records, but some are made readily available here for the first time. "Ntsikana's Bell", for instance, is immensely popular from Mr. Tracey's lectures, but has never before appeared on a commercial disc.

In the South African record, there are selected items from Xhosa, Mpondo, Baca, Sotho, Zulu, Swazi, Shangaan and Venda areas, taking you along the Garden Route and up to the Kruger National Park. And here we have a unique feature in a recording made by C. H. Haagner of Potchefstroom, of animal noises and bird songs—a lion, a laughing dove (which your tourist *will* hear), heron, hyena and hippopotami splashing in the water and chuckling together like toothless old men.

The Rhodesian record shows, I think, a greater variety than the South African one, and includes more pieces by named performers. From the beginning you see the contrast between the antique and remote Venda Pipe Dance—eleven performers putting in their pipe notes one at a time like bell-ringers; and the sophisticated George Sibanda of Bulawayo, teasingly offering his girl "*amabanzi, iziwichi, le banana*" ("buns, sweets or bananas") which he hides behind his back. A good drumming piece for a film would be the Lozi dance recorded in the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum (No. 6). Something else to look out for is the magically evocative beauty of the friction bow (No. 12).

Both records have attractive and informative envelopes, providing valuable musical and anthropological notes on the various numbers. The front of the Rhodesian envelope shows a picturesque map indicating the sources from which the material was drawn. The South African envelope promises us such a map, but unfortunately does not provide it; instead, we have a powerful cubistic cover design.

The third record under review (*Music of Africa* Series, No. 17) gives us seven African folk stories charmingly told by Hugh Tracey. His previous collection of stories has achieved such popularity all over the world that little need be said about these—except that they are as captivating as ever. One moves in an enchanted world where animals and birds talk and act like human beings, all with the most whimsical humour. Here are African versions of the neolithic Persophone and Pygmalion legends; and new Uncle Remus tales—as when Rabbit (? "Brer Rabbit") contrives to arrange a grand tug-of-war between Elephant and Hippo . . . H.T. is a real actor, and makes each animal speak (and sing) in character even when it comes to a tipsy crocodile. This record will have an equal appeal for children, and for all grown-ups who have not destroyed the child-like folk element within their hearts: and "of such is the kingdom of heaven".

Brian Kingslake.

THE MUSIC OF AFRICA: WILD LIFE SERIES Nos. 1 and 2. Birds of the Kruger National Park. Recorded and introduced by Clem Haagner, edited by Hugh Tracey. 45 r.p.m. 7", XTR 1/7044 and XTR 2/7045. International Library of African Music, P.O. Box 138, Roodepoort, Nr. Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa.

At last South Africa can fall in line with most other western countries with the sale of their own bird calls on record. Both Mr. Hugh Tracey and Mr. Clem Haagner are to be congratulated on these fine productions.