

REVIEWS

CONGO EN MUSIQUE by BWANTSA-KAFUNGU S. PIERRE: Louvanium, 1965.(pp. 52).

This duplicated brochure of 52 pages (8 in. by 6 in.) contains a collection of twenty popular Lingala songs recorded by five gramophone record companies in Kinshasa and Brazzaville. At the time of preparing this work, the author was reading for a degree in African Philology at the University of Louvanium near Kinshasa.

Mr. Kafungu introduces the song-texts with some notes on the popular music of modern Congo. He claims that these songs have an important influence on the moral, civic and sentimental education of the masses in the city. They afford a means, he suggests, whereby the younger generation can express its opinions openly on such topics as marriage, the necessity for "bride-price", the over-insistent demands of extended family relations on the earning of workers in the capital.

The texts reflect vividly the attrition of ancestral cultural values in a modern city:

Kinshasa is rotting; children become chiefs . . .

as well as the ubiquity of drunkenness and prostitution:

You drink champagne, I drink beer,
But what's it matter? We both try to get drunk.

Why stay at home when I'm still an unmarried girl?
Where shall I find my clients?

I must dress myself up to catch some fool or other . . .

There is a useful linguistic introduction describing the orthography used for the Lingala texts. The author is to be congratulated on his use of seven vowel signs (for it is impossible adequately to represent Lingala with five only) and also on his tonal notation. It is a pity that he was unable to give us the musical notation of the songs, though one realises that this would have meant a much more expensive presentation. But given the accurate tonal transcription of the texts one would like to compare tonal values with the sung melodies. On this point the author states:

In the song, tones (some tones) are often deformed. Since we know that in some areas of Congo tonal values of semantic elements impose themselves on sung melody so that the latter becomes little more than the sung tonal patterns of the words used, it would be interesting to see a further study from Mr. Kafungu on this point. Perhaps cases where there is little deformation of semantic tone by the melody may be correlated with the geographical area from which the composers come?

There is certainly a marked difference in the grammatical forms of Lingala used in the texts. Some show the strong influence of Kikongo and especially its lingua franca form: Kituba that is noticeable in Lingala-speakers from the capital, while other texts (they are in the minority) are in the Upper River dialect.

J. F. CARRINGTON

* * * * *

"OS INSTRUMENTOS MÚSICAIS DE MOÇAMBIQUE", by MARGOT DIAS in GEOGRAPHICA, Ano II, No. 6. April, 1966.

Margot Dias' article, published by the Geographical Society in Lisbon is a very instructive monograph on musical instruments in Moçambique. With detailed descriptions and the help of 23 photographs (six of which are in colour) she introduces the reader to the great variety of instruments in Portuguese East Africa, which is among the musically most active areas in southern Africa. Mrs. Dias' main source is her own research carried out since 1957, particularly among the Makonde in the north as well as among many tribes of southern Moçambique.

Moçambique seems to be an area particularly rich in idiophones of all kinds, i.e. xylophones and mbiras. While in the south instruments similar to the Chopi xylophones are widespread, a sudden change can be noticed after crossing the Zambezi. Northern Moçambique is an area of log-xylophones. Mrs. Dias publishes a beautiful colour photograph of the Makonde *Dimbila*, a typical example. Among the numerous kinds of mbira, board mbiras with a gourd resonator seem to be most widespread. On the other hand the *Libembe* type (an instrument with a box resonator and a characteristic cut section in the upper part of the corpus), so well known from the Congo and adjacent areas, is entirely absent in Moçambique.

Among the chordophones there exist various types of musical bows, three of which are shown by photographs. In the north one can also find the *Bangwe* zither, well-known in the Rovuma and Nyasa regions. The one-string fiddle and the flat-bar zither are instruments particularly well-known on the coast of northern Moçambique.

There exist numerous kinds of drums. Some of the most impressive ones are the small *Singanga* drums of the Makonde, which are pierced in the sand. Margot Dias points to the relative rarity of drums with two membranes in Moçambique.

Among the aerophones there can be found some remarkable kinds of flutes. Especially worth mentioning are the globular flutes played by boys of the Chopi tribe.