

BOOK REVIEWS

A. M. DAUER: "STIL UND TECHNIK IM AFRIKANISCHEN TANZ". Betrachtungen zu den Weltfestspielen afrikanischer Kunst in Dakar 1966. SONDERBEILAGE zur Zeitschrift AFRIKA HEUTE, Nr. 24/67, 15. Dezember 1967, Bonn.

The study of techniques in African dancing has been a rather neglected child in our attempts to understand the arts of this continent. For many Africans, however, the only proof whether *you*, a student of African music, really understand this music, is the way your body reacts to it. A. M. Dauer in his books and articles has often stressed the psycho-physical experience of motion (*psycho-physisches Bewegungserlebnis*) in African Music. As a player you are expected to convert music into motion and the reverse.

As to the study of dancing there is at present some fresh wind coming from Germany. Since the appearance of Helmut Günther's article "*Die Tänze Afrikas*", which appeared in *Deutsche Zeitung*, 10/11. August 1963, we have become accustomed to the term "polycentric" (polyzentrisch) in connection with an essential feature of many African dances.

A. M. Dauer goes a step further in his present article. Dauer who holds a position in the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film, Göttingen, has daily acquaintance with African dancing from sound films preserved in the scopicus film library of this institute. (See Index 1966 *Encyclopedia Cinematographica*). From this experience Dauer comes to the demarcation of several dance-style areas in Africa. "The distinction of different style areas" writes Dauer, "is splendidly brought about by observation of the essential centres of motion . . . The detection of the motion centres themselves is relatively easy: for they are always specially marked: either they are set off visually by colour, clothing or decoration, or plastically exaggerated by appendages, apparatuses, coachwork or artificial formations of all kinds, or they are indicated by noise, noisy objects and noisy instruments in a way that cannot be ignored."

GERHARD KUBIK.

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DRUMS IN THE AMERICAS. The history and development of Drums in the New World from the Pre-Columbian Era to Modern Times . . . by DR. JOSEPH H. HOWARD. Oak Publications. New York, 1967. 319 pp. Many figures and illustrations. \$15.00.

This work is perhaps the most comprehensive study of drums to have been issued of recent years. Although primarily concerned with drums in the New World, of necessity it refers constantly to drums and drumming in Africa, from where so many American drums originated. The author, Dr. Joseph H. Howard, has travelled extensively in the Americas to obtain his data but appears to have relied mostly on others for his African material and comments. In this he has been inclined to accept the somewhat romantic point of view with its popular appeal especially from those who like their Africa to be cult-ridden, and magnificently mystical. This I find quite unnecessary in a work which could well stand on its own as a practical book of reference for musicians and for drummers in particular.

This apart, the range and thoroughness of the book ensures it an important place in the library and its illustrations and text figures are of particular merit. The author has taken great care to have excellent photographs of a wide range of drums of such consistently high quality that one must conclude that they are the work of Dr. Howard himself, though apparently no acknowledgement is made to the anonymous photographer.

There is a good glossary of terms connected with drumming, and an unusually wide and comprehensive bibliography. In other words, this is a scholarly and most acceptable book which deserves wide recognition by all those interested in drums (to whom it is dedicated) and particularly in African drums which, over the centuries, have been one of Africa's more notable exports.

H. TRACEY.

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WATOTO WA MUNGU, Vol. II. Kitabu cha Mwalimu. FR. LEO VAN KESSEL and BENEDICTINES OF NDANDA-PERAMIHO. Ndanda Mission Press, 1966. pp. 240. n.p.

This is a Teachers' Handbook for lessons of Christian instruction written entirely in Swahili. It is the second of two volumes, the first of which I have not seen, but which one presumes follows the same line.

For readers of this Journal the book is noteworthy for the following reason: many of the lessons include a song (with, of course, Christian words), with the music in staff notation. While a few of these songs are western hymn tunes or adapted plain-song, the great majority are African tunes in traditional style: in the one hundred and four lessons, there are no less than thirty-three African melodies, some with harmony consisting mostly of a mixture of fourths and thirds — chiefly the latter.

It is, so far as I know, the first book of its kind, with the definite aim of including African music as an integral part of religious instruction. The rhythm of the tunes is not always as clearly indicated as it might be, though the words for the most part take care of this. Nevertheless it is all very well done and is worthy of note by anyone who is engaged on compiling similar courses.

A. M. JONES.