

ART COMPETITION ANNOUNCED FOR AFRICAN ARTISTS

"AFRICAN ARTS", a quarterly American magazine devoted to graphic, plastic, performing and literary arts of Africa, has invited high level artists from all over Africa to compete in its 1968 and 1969 competitions. The competitions are classified as follows:

1969 COMPETITION (closing date: March 1, 1969).

One Prize of \$1,000 (approximately R709).

Areas of Competition: Drama and cinema scripts;
completed films produced since January 1, 1967.

One Prize of \$1,000 (approximately R709).

Areas of Competition: *Music and Dance*, produced since January 1, 1967.

Entrance application forms may be obtained from the U.S. Information Service, American Embassy, Pretoria.

The magazine "AFRICAN ARTS", is a recent publication with the sole purpose of recording the art of the African past, providing an outlet for the contemporary African artist, and to stimulate creative arts in Africa.

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Extract from a recent letter to Dr. Tracey from Father Corbeil of the Serenje Catholic Mission:

"You advise me in your letter to study the structure of the instruments in my collection. I have already started the drums' structure and I can now make "ukubamba" (to stretch a skin on a drum) in the bush way. It is not easy. To get the best vibrations of a drum you must find the proper skin which matches with the kind of wood . . . After stretching the skin on the cylinder you have also to find the right time to fix it with straps or wooden pegs . . . It is very interesting.

Last week, we had 25 visitors here at my museum. Today the teachers following the refresher course at the Serenje Training College, will come in groups to hear something about Zambian culture and music."

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FILMS FOR LOAN OR PURCHASE

Dr. A. M. Dauer of the Department of Ethnology Institute for Scientific Cinematography writes:

"I am sending you a list of films available in this institute on subjects of African musicology, choreology and general folklore.

Perhaps this information is interesting enough for our colleagues in the branch, so that it deserves publication in one of the forthcoming numbers of the AMS Journal.

Films with the reference letter "E" are conceived as mere research documents, and if they are sound motion pictures the sound has been recorded synchronously by way of a pilot guided system (NAGRA III), thus making the films useful for analytical research and/or transcriptional practices.

An increasing number of films will have accompanying papers with information pertinent to the subject(s) documented, as well as general background material.

Our latest documentation film expedition to the Ivory Coast has just been terminated, with a number of approximately 35 to 40 sound films mostly in colour, on subjects of masks societies, secret societies' public performances, professional and recreational dancing groups, singing and musical performances, and the like. The films should become available in early 1969.

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INSTITUTE FOR SCIENTIFIC CINEMATOGRAPHY, GOETTINGEN, WEST GERMANY

Films are available for loan and purchase on subjects pertaining to ethnomusicology, ethnochoreology and general folklore.

All films are of 16 mm size, 24 fps, and can be borrowed by University or High School institutions without charge, except for postage and insurance. Films with the reference letter "E" are available also from the American archive of the Encyclopaedia Cinematographica, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802, U.S.A. Price lists and additional information from either there, or the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film, Nonnenstieg 72, Goettingen, Bundesrepublik Deutschland (IWF).

Sound motion pictures have light sound tape; a number of silent films have a separate magnetic sound tape suitable for tape recorder 33/4 ips.

Films are listed with their reference letter, reference number, full title in German, author and/or producer, year of publication, length in minutes, brief annotations. Unless otherwise stated, the films are b/w and silent.

For further information write direct to the Institute for Scientific Cinematography, Goettingen, West Germany.

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MOÇAMBIQUE - GUATEMALA

While in Chicago in November, 1967, with our show "Wait a Minim", I met Jose Bethancourt, the marimba virtuoso from Guatemala, and heard him play. He was terrific, whether using two sticks for rhythmic passages, or up to six for harmonic! He is a charming little old man, and thinking he would be interested in seeing our Chopi *timbila* (how often have these been reported in the press as Hopi *timbila*, or even Chopin pianos!), I invited him to see our show, and to come and look at the instruments afterwards. This he did, and was fascinated at the *timbila*, remarking how similar they were to the Guatemalan "Indian" marimba de arco. But when I showed him the *makosi*, the tiny buzzing membranes over the

resonating gourds, he shouted with delight, and immediately dug into his pocket and produced a little bottle full of spare membrane, *tela* he called it, that he said he carried round with him everywhere he went. Well, I thought, you can always tell a true *timbila* player! Chopi players whom I have met always have a spare roll of *mokosi* membrane tucked away somewhere for emergency, usually in just such a little bottle.

We compared our first aid bottles together, and sure enough, it was the same stuff, the peritoneum or fine skin that covers a cow's small intestine, dried and rubbed to give a fine sharp sound when you crinkle it near your ear. A good membrane makes a Guatemalan marimba buzz to life just as it does a Chopi *timbila*. The Chopi make them relatively larger, thus more "vocal", while the Guatemalan smaller buzzer gives a more "nasal" tone. Jose said that he had long since ceased to use membranes on his marimba, because the buzz was annoying to American ears. But he still carried his little bottle with him from long habit, just in case!

Andrew Tracey.

NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE TRINIDADIAN STEEL DRUM

The "Steel drum", or "Pan" of Trinidad, made from 44-gallon oil drums, has become well known since its invention about 20 years ago. Following a continuous series of improvements and refinements there has been a remarkable development in the last few years — they have discovered that it is possible to tune the first overtone.

Each note, or panel, on the pan is normally tuned to the note required by tapping, up or down, on or around its centre. Having tuned the fundamental, the new method is, roughly, to tap around the edges and in the corners of each panel, which is apparently where the overtone is sounded. This natural, discordant, overtone sounds somewhat over an octave, so it has to be brought down to exactly one octave. What a difference when you get it there! The pan starts to "sing" like the early ones never did.

Their preponderance of discordant overtones, which Pete Seeger reckoned to be as much as 40% unwanted noise, gave the early steel bands much of their "noisy" sound, and also, I think, limited their repertoire to numbers with relatively simple harmony. The state of refinement in tuning is now such that the pan can hold its own with any orchestral instrument in the world. While in Trinidad recently I heard some of the top bands, and the range of dynamics, tone colour and rhythmic intensity really impressed me, not to speak of the virtuosity and the unanimity of the players and their wide repertoire. A truly remarkable invention to be made from a waste product.

Andrew Tracey.

EFIK NAMES OF SOME MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

by M. D. W. JEFFREYS

Calabar is a river port on the Cross river of south eastern Nigeria. It was once the administrative centre of the Calabar province. While there in 1919 I obtained the following names for some of their musical instruments.

Akang-kang. This name is clearly onomatopoeic. It is a musical instrument made locally of iron and consists of two metal funnel-shaped bells joined together. (See Fig. I.) Each is about 15 inches long. It is also known as the double mouthed gong and is a characteristic of peoples with tone languages. By means of the *Akang-kang* messages can be intoned. The open ends are struck with a stick. This instrument is part of the equipment of local diviners known as *abia idiong*. It gives two different tones.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Ebua ekpři akata = The dog of the little *akata*. *Akata* is the generic name for the bull-roarer which is regarded as sacred by these peoples. As a consequence, beyond the name, no information about it was obtainable. (See *Enang ekpři akata*.)

Ekene. A musical instrument made of iron and similar in shape to one of the funnels of the *Akang-kang* but broader and shorter. (Refer to *Nkong*, see Fig. II.)

Ekperekpe. The war gong. It is one of the wooden slit-gongs with two lips carved from the trunk of a tree. It has a deep tone. (See *Nkong*.)

Ekomo. A short wooden gong used for sending messages.

Enang ekpři akata = The cow of the little *akata*. It, like the *ebua ekpři akata*, is regarded as sacred. It is a much larger bull roarer than the *ebua* and may be used only by members of the *Ekpo* secret society. *Ekpo* = ghost and this society holds its revels at night and the wailing of the *enang ekpři akata* is regarded as a ghostly voice. The officiants are usually maskers.

Ibit. A long drum consisting of a hollowed out tree trunk open at both ends. One end is covered with a skin and is struck with the hands. Often two *ibit* are placed side by side and played with both hands. Also used for summoning the people to assemble, e.g. if a fire breaks out.