

NOTES AND NEWS



The Republic of Guinée has issued a set of stamps showing the playing of local African musical instruments. The stamp is cleverly 'overprinted' with the white silhouette of the instrument in each case: The denominations are:

3 F. Koni	Lute.
2 F. Kora	10 string vertical bridge lute.
1F. 50 Koni	Lute.
1F. Flute	Transvuse Flute
0.50 Bolon	Harp.
0.3 Boté	Drum and Bell.

This example might well be followed by other African countries.

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TINA MAY HAVE BEEN A NYASA*

from W. Kasawira, P.O. Box 20, Kasungu.

(Press Cutting from 'African Mail' P.O. Box 1421, Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia.)

After consulting some people, I have come to the conclusion that Tina, whose story appeared in the Mail of December 6 was from Nyasaland.

It is possible that she might have changed the words. Mr. Tracey, who translated the song, may have made mistakes because it was not his language. Nevertheless the words are similar to the Chewa language. The words an old woman suggested to me are:

*Eya tarumba bambo wace Dazi
Yai ndiye kuti mai muranda
Ndikbale kuti kwari O!
Ndikbale kuti mai oye.*

This can be translated:

Be praised father of Dazi (name);
I can go nowhere, mother,
poor I am where can I stay? Perhaps if can —
where can I stay, mother?
Nowhere.

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* This refers to the article on "Tina's Lullaby" by Hugh Tracey, African Music Vol. II No. 4.

GEORGE BYRD, AMERICAN MUSICIAN ON UNESCO MISSION TO ETHIOPIA

George Byrd, an American from North Carolina, has been entrusted by Unesco with a very unique mission.

Upon the Ethiopian government's request he will spend five months in Addis-Ababa to help develop a school of music, a national orchestra, and to train music teachers.

The Royal Theatre, which has a seating capacity of 1,800, already has a corps de ballet and the nucleus of an orchestra made up of 28 string instruments, Mr. Byrd said. He plans to complete it with military band players. But he is less concerned over this than he is about the Ethiopian weather which could have devastating effects on instruments.

His aim, as he explained it recently at Unesco headquarters in Paris, is not to help Ethiopia copy Western musical tradition, but to enable it to develop its own which is particularly extensive.

Mr. Byrd began his musical career at 14 as a singer when he teamed up with his twin brother. He later studied harmony and conducting at the Juillard School of Music in New York and at the Paris Conservatoire National de Musique, from which he was awarded a Professional Diploma. He also worked under Herbert von Karajan at the Lucerne International Music Festival and later with the Opera of Milan, and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Since 1951 he has been a guest conductor in 11 countries of Europe, and since 1955 he teaches voice, musical theory, harmony and composition privately.

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We hear from a most reliable source that Africa's most famous dancers and drummers, the Ntore Dancers of Ruanda, no longer exist as the new regime looks upon them as a mirror of the old order. How many have been murdered or driven away from their homes is not known and information concerning their welfare would be welcomed. The Ntore was performed both by Tutsi and by Hutu men at several centres in the country, and was perhaps the most beautiful of all African dances. It would indeed be national folly if political considerations were allowed to put an end to so excellent an art form.

The I.L.A.M. Library has published a number of Rwanda recordings in the "Sound of Africa" Series (TR-34, 57, 58 and 181) which contain in addition to Tutsi songs, dance tunes for the Ntore played on the horn and drum band, recorded at Chief Biniga's village.

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A film shown recently on television by the BBC in London, of violence in the Kwilu province of the Congo, remarked upon the types of action taken by indigenous police in subduing persons suspected of plotting against the authorities.

The commentator said that "the police forced suspects to sing songs of praise of the Police and the Army, dancing as they sang. In the final scene, the police forced their victims to fight each other." He added that "about half the population of a village was killed in this way."

"What was remarkable about this was that the Police were convinced what they were doing was normal and were not ashamed of it."

It is interesting to note that in 1951 a Congo policeman from the Uele Province recorded a piece of music to which he said he made arrested persons dance and sing on their way to the police station.

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Over the past twenty years, more than 2,000 undergraduate students at Michigan State and Indiana Universities have taken courses in "American Folklore", "Introduction to Folklore", and "Ballads and Folk Poetry".

Required to submit collections of folklore materials, these students have gathered over 60,000 items of folklore from their families, friends, and communities. Their typed and hand-written manuscripts now constitute the Indiana University (IU) Division and the Michigan State University (MSU) Division of the Indiana University Folklore Archive. A major portion of these collections contains folksongs in the English language. Of the four remaining divisions of the Archive, two contain English language folksong materials. (From the Archivist. Vol. VI No. 1, Spring 1963)

What an example for African undergraduates to emulate!

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The programme for the January Seminar of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Indiana, to be held in January 1964, included the following speakers and subjects . . .

Professor Alan P. Merriam *The Sound of African Music*.

Professor Willard Rhodes *Contemporary African Music as an Index to Social Behaviour*.

Mrs. Gertrude P. Kurath *Behaviour Patterns in African Dance*.

Dr. Robert P. Armstrong *Contemporary African Poetry and Drama*.

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STRIKING A NEW NOTE

From time immemorial man has tried to transmit thoughts, ideas and emotions in poetry and prose, through drama and song, and by the use of a host of musical instruments. In recent times there has been increasing interest in the field of African music, and in particular, African music as it can play its part in the worship of the Church. The whole field of music can open up a new world of expression; it calls for individual effort on the part of the composer, for working together as a group in a choir, or for interpreting the insight of another as a musician. Behind all this, however, lies an "understanding of the theory of music, and a sharing of the material available. To this end we are indebted to the:

ALI. AFRICAN CHURCH MUSIC ASSOCIATION

of P.O. Box 1192, Kitwe or P.B. P. 7024 Umtali, Southern Rhodesia for publishing a number of booklets on the subject.

The Association has published two booklets as part of a study course, entitled:

"THEORY OF MUSIC — WRITING, READING AND LISTENING"

Grade One (36 pages) and Grade Two (28 pages) (in duplicated form), at 1/6d. per copy. There are fourteen lessons in Grade One and ten lessons in Grade Two.

A step-by-step progression in learning for both European and African music. The emphasis is on Staff Notation, but this is learned in relationship to Tonic Sol-fa, as many Africans are familiar with this type of development of African Church Music, the technique of committing it to paper so that traditional songs can be preserved and used must be mastered. Without this there is the risk that a priceless heritage may be lost. At the end of each lesson written exercises have been set.

Other booklets published by the Association include:—

"AFRICAN CHURCH MUSIC

Hymns from Many Countries

"This is an attempt to show that African music is a suitable medium for Christian worship, not only in its local language and setting, but in a language and form suitable for the entire continent and the world at large."

There is an introduction to the "Missa Luba" (a product of the Congo), and the Kyrie, Sanctus and Agnus Dei follow. A translation of meaning is given in all the hymns; Congo, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, Liberia, Tanganyika and Nyasaland are all represented in this collection.

"NDWIYO DZECHECHI DZEIVU"

(Church Music of the Soil)

They are based on traditional songs such as hunting or threshing songs, or songs celebrating the various events of the chiefs.

"MUSIC FOR CHURCH CHOIRS"

Various parts of Africa are now setting down their own sacred songs. Amongst these mention can be made of:

"TUNES FROM NYASALAND"

produced for the Overtoun Institution of the Livingstonia Mission, and available from the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Livingstonia, Nyasaland. All the hymns in this book are English translations of hymns which were originally composed in the Ngoni (Zulu) or Tumbuku languages, and were introduced to the people of Northern Nyasaland by a branch of the Zulu people who broke away from the rule of King Chaka before finally settling in that region. The tunes are designed for unaccompanied congregational singing led by a precentor, and sometimes with a two-part chorus. Tonic sol-fa is used for the different parts; the words are in English, and the melody (not harmonised) is shown in staff notation at the bottom of each page.

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MISSA LUBA PERFORMED IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The "Missa Luba" was recently performed at the Holy Trinity Church near Washington, D.C. by their choirs and the choirs from the Church of our Lady of Perpetual Help. African and bongo drums and a split bamboo shoot were used in the accompaniment.

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The third of a series of symposia on "The African Creative Artist" co-sponsored by AMSAC and NIGERSAC, took place in May at the University of Ibadan. Participating in the panel discussion of "African Music . . . Traditional and Modern" were the Nigerian musicologist, H. H. The Timi of Ede, Berylle Kari Kari of Ghana, Dr. Olumbe Bassir of the University of Ibadan and Calvin H. Raulerson, Director of the AMSAC Cultural Centre.

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CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC

A conference of African Traditional Music was held at the Makerere University College, Department of Extra-Mural Studies in December, 1963.

At the time of going to press, the Society had not received a report on the proceedings but the programme issued by the joint organisers, Mr. Gerald Moore and Mr. George Kakoma included the following lectures and demonstrations . . .

Lectures

The Music of Africa: M. Charles Duvelle, with examples from West and Central Africa.

Evolution of Songs in East Africa: Mr. S. Mbabi-Katana.

African Religious Music: Mr. Graham Hyslop (Recorded).

Social Uses of Traditional Music: Mr. Okot p'Bitek.

Impressions of Uganda's Traditional Music: M. Charles Duvelle.

Demonstrations

Music by H. H. the Kabaka's Musicians: (Which section is not stated).

The Music of Acholi and Lango: Mr. Okot p'Bitek.

The Music of Bunyoro and Toro: The Runyega Dancers from Kyegegwa.

The Music of Bugisu.

The Music of Teso: The Hon. E. Isiagi, M.P. and Mr. Ochiengs Wellborn.

The Music of Ankole: Mr. G. N. Kirinde and Mr. B. K. Mubangizi.

The Music of West Nile: The Hon. A. Lobidra, M.P. and Mr. Ernest Oluo.

The Music of Kigezi and Ruanda: Mr. Gashegu.

The Music of Busoga: Mr. G. W. Kakoma.

The Music of Buganda: Mr. G. W. Kakoma.

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KENYA'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

Details of the tune which from December 12 will be Kenya's National Anthem were announced by the Government. The tune itself is a genuine Kenya song traditional to the Pokomo country.

The National Anthem was prepared by a five-man commission headed by the Kenya Music Adviser, Mr. Graham Hyslop. The other members of the Commission were Mr. G. W. Senoga-Zake, Mr. Kalume, Mr. Kibukosya and Mr. Omondi. The Director of Music, Kenya Police, Mr. F. A. C. Thornton, orchestrated the anthem for military bands.

This method of preparing a national anthem is a completely new one in Africa. It is the first time a group of local musicians have been given the task of preparing an anthem for the consideration of the Government.

In presenting the anthem to the Government, the Commission said: "It was felt beyond all possible doubt that the music was of the very first importance, particularly as a National Anthem is far more often played than sung.

"Such music must reflect the idiom of the traditional music of Kenya. Many tunes from various parts of the country, were considered, and it was by no means easy to find those which would fulfil all the demands made in the context of their use as a National Anthem.

"The tune had to be of the right length and of a stirring quality, yet possessing the necessary dignity. It had to be of such a character that would make the writing of suitable words manageable and this was complicated by the fact that the Commission set out to provide words both in Swahili and English.

"The tune also had to lend itself to appropriate harmonisation and orchestration for performance by a military band, without impairing the original tonality of the melody.

"Another important factor which had to be borne in mind was that the musical ability of the peoples of Kenya varies considerably, and the tune must be such as could be sung by everybody everywhere, without difficulty.

"So far as the words of the Anthem are concerned, the aim was that they should express the deepest convictions and the highest aspirations of the people of Kenya as a whole. Words have immense power both to unite or divide, and great care had to be taken to choose the right words to ensure that the Anthem would become an indisputable unifying factor in the life of the nation.

Referring to the tune, the Commission said: "It is quite remarkable how such a simple tune has taken on a really robust character in its new context. It is normal in African music, where a number of people sing together, that there is a leader and chorus. This pattern has been maintained.

"So far as the words are concerned, it may well be a sign of the authenticity of the African idiom of this Anthem that the English version of the words presented considerable difficulty. It is usual when setting words to music to begin with the words. On this occasion the process was quite deliberately reversed.

"Because of this neither in Swahili nor in English can the words be regarded as *mashairi* or poetry. They take their rhythmic interest from the music to which they are set."

When members of the Cabinet visited the home of the Prime Minister, Mr. Kenyatta, at Gatundu recently to decide on the final version of the Kenya National Anthem, they heard three alternative tunes.

After hearing the Kenya Police Band play the tunes over and over again, members of the Cabinet were still unable to make up their minds.

In the end, the Prime Minister appealed to about 600 children who had gathered round the garden to decide for them.

The tunes were played once more — and every child unanimously raised his hand to choose what is now to become the Kenya National Anthem.