

scientific techniques. Must this amount of westernism make the whole scheme west-serving? All through we tried to stress the paramount importance of African values, and of practical application in Africa. I agree with you absolutely that the codification is for Africans primarily, and also that we have to be careful lest westerners introduce irrelevancies or false assumptions based on lack of understanding of the true needs of the situation.

ANDREW TRACEY.

GRUNDPHÄNOMENE UND GRUNDBEGRIFFE DES AFRIKANISCHEN UND AFRO-AMERIKANISCHEN TANZES. (Basic phenomena and concepts of the African and Afro-American dance) by HELMUT GÜNTHER, Universal Edition, Graz 1969.

It is rather unnerving to a non-participant to find that such joyous and spontaneous motions as those of African and Afro-American dancing lend themselves to such meticulous, and even pedestrian, analysis. The dance as Günther sees it is no "wit's offspring and the work of art Image of concord and of comeliness"; it is a combination of carefully-specified bodily movements, a matter of buttock and knee, shake of breast, rotation of pelvis, walk, run, jump; polycentric motion implying bending of the upper body, tapping of toe, ball or heel of foot as contrasting allocation of the weight, employment of the knee "consciously and actively as a technical device" (*bewusst und aktiv als technisches Mittel*). One's first surprise that this work should have been entrusted to an anatomist for review falls away, and one would be tempted, did the triviality of the fundamental premises not repel one, to consider it in the first place as an ergonomic study.

Indeed, such value as it does possess lies entirely in its unoriginal but nonetheless competent treatment of the details of bodily motion. The author is at his best when most elementary: the blending of head accents into single swings or rolls, the five directions in which it is possible to thrust the hips, the isolation, in more than one sense, of upper arm, forearm, palm, thumb, fingers and phalanges. His talents appear to lie so emphatically in the treatment of the particular that it is unfortunate that he has so often been impelled to generalize. So frequent are his references to cinematic representations of African dances that one receives the impression that his first-hand knowledge and experience of Africa are probably slight; an impression that is reinforced by such statements as: "No-one can contest the fact that the dance represents the foundation, centre and peak of black African culture" (*Niemand aber kann die Tatsache bestreiten, dass der Tanz Grundlage, Mitte und Gipfel der schwarzafrikanischen Kultur darstellt*) or, referring to the almost agonizing movements of the female breast in some dances, "These motions have possibly also an erotic meaning" (*Diese Motionen haben möglicherweise auch einen erotischen Sinn*). Assertions of this kind, so unblushingly banal in their inaccuracy, abound: Beat, Soul and Pop, on the very first page, do not derive from, but "demonstrate", a "pure African style" (*zeigen rein afrikanischen Stil*): "education in dance, life and sex coincide in Africa" (*Tanz-, Lebens- und Sexualerziehung fallen in Afrika zusammen*): "dance and music in Africa form an indivisible whole" (*Tanz und Musik bilden in Afrika eine untrennbare Einheit*). Can anyone who has actually watched men laugh scornfully and without excitement at the ludicrous flapping on a Sena female torso, who has listened to young men returned from the city compete with their elders on the drums, who has heard the hush of *cinamwali* initiation among the Ntumba or met a solitary *mbira*-player on a lonely path, take any of these statements seriously?

Even the list of references with which the study closes contrives to give a somewhat deadeningly trite impression. The author cites such works of his own as "*Schwarzer Tanz und weisser Traum*" and "*Die Jugend unserer Lokale tanzt afrikanisch*", the very titles of which emphasize the superficial and journalistic in his approach: both, as it happens, appeared in daily newspapers. Of the concluding forty-odd books listed, barely more than half are actually quoted in the text, and the rest are of little, if any, relevance.

What one misses most in Günther's work is any sense of the reality of the dance, any hint that it can be enjoyable to watch or perform. One cannot deny that he shows an interesting analytical ability; but this is not enough in a matter of aesthetics. "Time the measure of all moving is And Dancing is a moving all in measure": in no art can the universal be dismissed with a wiggle of the shoulder-blades, a rude contortion of the abdominal muscles, and a shrug of the knees, however eloquent.

G. T. NURSE.

NEUE MUSIK IN AFRIKA, ASIEN UND OZEANIEN. DISKOGRAPHIE UND HISTORISCH-STILISTISCHER ÜBERBLICK (New music in Africa, Asia and Oceania. Discography and historical and stylistic survey), by WOLFGANG LAADE, published by the author, Heidelberg, 1971.

GEGENWARTSFRAGEN DER MUSIK IN AFRIKA UND ASIEN, eine grundlegende Bibliographie (Contemporary enquiries into the music of Africa and Asia, a basic bibliography), by WOLFGANG LAADE, Verlag Valentin Koerner, Baden-Baden, 1971.

Both of these competent volumes are concerned with the establishment of temporal base-lines for the study of the music of Africa and Asia. As such, they serve a very useful purpose and are of particular value as works of reference. One may quibble at the vastness and lack of strict interrelation of the subjects of the first book, but a certain connecting thread is to be found in the impact on all the areas