

SOUTH AFRICAN MUSIC ENCYCLOPEDIA. *Volume II, E to I.*

Ed. by Jacques P. Malan. Cape Town; Oxford University Press; 1982, pp. 513, illus., music.

Published under the auspices of the Human Sciences Research Council, the *South African Music Encyclopedia* is designed to comprise four volumes, two of which are now available in print. Both volumes contain articles on African composers, music in African schools, but the general bias of the encyclopedia is unmistakably towards Western music, thereby reflecting the dominant 'white' culture and the way in which it wishes to present itself. It is in the logic of this bias, for instance, that one Hubert Du Plessis, pianist and composer is entitled to an entry of six pages, while R. Caluza, one of the most influential and innovating African composers in South Africa only qualifies for 67 lines. No entries at all seem to be planned for such eminent black musicians as Todd Matshikiza, Dollar Brand, or Kiepie Moeketsi.

With 243 pages the entry "Indigenous Musics of South Africa" cannot remove this bias, but it is probably the longest single article in the encyclopedia itself, and the only readily available, general source of information on African music in South Africa to date. Shorter articles of an introductory nature were published previously by Blacking (1980a), and *The New Grove* (Adams 1980, Blacking 1980b, Johnston 1980, Rycroft 1980).

Under the sub-editorship of John Blacking, five authors contributed the following sub-entries:

- I. Introduction: Indigenous musics of South Africa (John Blacking) pp. 265–267
- II. The musics of the Black races of South Africa (Percival Kirby) pp. 267–294
- III. Some principles of composition in the indigenous music of South Africa (John Blacking) pp. 294–301
- IV. The relationships between speechtone and melody in Southern African music (David Rycroft) pp. 301–314
- V. Zulu and Swazi music (David Rycroft) pp. 314–344
- VI. Music of the Pedi (Yvonne Huskisson) pp. 345–374
- VII. A note on the music of the Sotho (Yvonne Huskisson) pp. 375–376
- VIII. Notes on the music of the Tswana (Thomas Johnston) pp. 376–381
- IX. Music of the Shangana-Tsonga (Thomas Johnston) pp. 381–418
- X. Music of the Venda-speaking people (John Blacking) pp. 418–508

Each sub-entry is preceded by a table of contents and concluded by a bibliography.

It is beyond the scope of this review to comment in detail on the individual sub-entries. All are based on their authors' previous publications and present hardly any new material. This may be legitimate and indeed inevitable in an encyclopedia, but in any case it makes further comment redundant on work whose merits and shortcomings were amply discussed in *African Music* and elsewhere. Furthermore, between the date of conception of the article around 1970 and its publication in 1982, some authors revised and enlarged on some of their earlier work.

Personally, I like the inclusion of chapters on "musical terms and concepts" in Rycroft's, Johnston's and Blacking's articles on Zulu and Swazi, Tswana and Venda music respectively, but I also agree with Blacking that chapters VII and VIII "are inevitably inadequate" (p. 267). I would, however, seriously question the inclusion of chapter II by Kirby. If there is "evidence for different interpretations" of Kirby's "views on the evolution of music, musical stratification and the origins of scales from natural harmonics, and his contention that four-part music is not genuinely Black African" (p. 266) — and, one might add, of his view that the East African xylophone "originated in Indonesia" (p. 274) — why then present them at all and reprint them for the umpteenth time? Kirby, it seems, never changed his views on the evolution of music since he initially published them in his early articles in *Bantu Studies* during the 1930's. In a publication of 1982, however, after ethnomusicology has seen the rise of Alan Merriam's cultural

relativism and, say, Hugo Zemp's cognitive ethno-theories, they are definitely out of place.

As a piece of editorial work, both the encyclopedia and the article (it is difficult to tell where Malan's responsibility ends and Blacking's and the authors' starts) reflect the whole dilemma of cultural studies and ethnomusicology in South Africa. Terminology, for example, is one of the problem areas in a language sensitive country as South Africa, and Blacking, in his general introduction (chapter I), is at pains to show that "'indigenous' seems to be the best word to describe the musical practices which are discussed in the following pages". (p. 265). Yet, both Blacking and Kirby also speak of "Black African music", and in volume I of the encyclopedia "Bantu", the official term of the 1960's, is used for the entry on music education in African schools. Such terminological jumble not only tells of the official double-speak, but it is also confusing for the non-South African reader.

It is particularly unfortunate that the editors did not succeed in avoiding the logical pitfall fostered by official policy that *apartheid* and interest in traditional African music are two sides of the same coin. The jacket of the *South African Music Encyclopedia*, for instance, bears the colours of 'white' South Africa (orange, white, blue), but in the article, on page 270, a map is shown which, although untitled, claims to "give the reader an idea of the general distribution of the various peoples referred to" (p. 269). In reality, it shows the major South African 'homelands' and this links the project of ethnomusicology to government policy. Orange-white-blue South Africa for 'Whites' and the 'homelands' for 'Blacks', Western music for 'Whites' and traditional Zulu music for Kwa-Zulu. The 'homelands' as the only legitimate guardians, the *sine qua non* of traditional African music!

Writing in 1970, Blacking correctly considers "the descriptions of indigenous musics" in the article as "hopelessly inadequate" (p. 266) and concludes that it "will be years before we have anything approaching a complete account of even one indigenous musical system of South Africa". (p. 267). While this latter statement may well describe the state of ethnomusicological research in South Africa around 1970, it becomes obsolete in 1982. Both the Universities of Natal and Cape Town, for instance, since 1981 created full-time lectureships in ethnomusicology and offer degrees in this discipline. The study of African music has become less of "a luxury which Black African teachers and musicians can as yet ill afford" and some of the work produced by these scholars in recent years was published by I.L.A.M. which, in 1980, initiated a series of annual symposia on ethnomusicology (Mthethwa 1981). The editors would have been well-advised to update the original contributions, if only by enlarging the bibliographical sections at the end of each sub-entry. Both Deirdre Hansen's and Charles Adams' studies on Xhosa and Sotho music, for instance, are now available in print (Adams 1975, 1980; Hansen 1982), and studies on urban music have recently been published by Johnny Clegg (1981, 1982) and David Coplan (1979, 1980, 1982). Some of Blacking's, Johnston's and Rycroft's later publications should also have been cited as further contributions towards an expanding ethnomusicology in South Africa.

A full discography of music in South Africa may be beyond the scope of an encyclopedia and indeed the subject of a more specialized publication, but the least the editors could have done is to refer the reader not only to *Merriam's African Music on LP* (p. 266), but also to Hugh Tracey's catalogue of the I.L.A.M. record series (Tracey 1973).

Printing errors are numerous and cross-references not always exact. The author of chapter IX is not T.S. as given on p. 418, but T.J. (Thomas Johnston), and the *leko* discussed on p. 370 is not illustrated in plate 3, p. 354, but in Figure 3, p. 353. I also find it confusing that few of the headings given in the general table of contents on p. 265 correspond with the actual chapter headings in the article. "Music" frequently becomes "musics" and vice versa, "South Africa" becomes "Southern Africa", and Y. Huskisson's chapter VI, announced as "Music of the Pedi", later becomes "Music of the Pedi (Northern Sotho)" (p. 345).

It may generally be the fate of encyclopedias to be outdated when they are finally published,

but in this particular instance the editors could have easily updated their material. Thus, the general reader, who may find the article useful because of the accessibility of information otherwise scattered in journals, is partly misled by the relative antiquity of views in some of the sub-entries (Kirby) and by the incomplete idea it gives of ethnomusicological research in South Africa in the beginning of the 1980's.

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