

AFRICAN MUSIC

JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN MUSIC SOCIETY

VOLUME I

1954

NUMBER 1

EDITORIAL

THE advent of a Journal, in place of the annual Newsletters which the Society has published during the first six years of its existence, is an occasion to be noted. When the Society first started in 1948 it was freely admitted that it would take half a dozen years for the investigation of African music in its proper context to become established as a recognised branch of African studies.

The period of probation is now over, and two events emphasise the fact, the recent establishment of the International Library of African Music and the publication of this Journal.

African music without a reference library must necessarily remain the toy of any prejudice which stalks the countryside and at the mercy of those varieties of cant which so frequently bedevil African studies.

The first essential towards a proper classification, and therefore a fuller understanding of the humanities behind this special form of music, is the continual collection of a representative selection of African compositions by the most practical means at our disposal, phonographic recording. This will be the concern of the Library.

The second essential is the spread of information through the publication of the results of all work on African music including that of the Library in the form of pressed recordings, and by the printing of monographs, articles and text books for all students, administrative officials and social workers. The Journal, we hope, will become the forum for all those who are eager to learn or are capable of supplying accurate information upon this much neglected aspect of African life.

Sir Joshua Reynolds once remarked that "the real character of a man was to be found out by his amusements." He referred to England, but it is equally true of Africa. The study of indigenous music in its social setting will help Africans to understand themselves and others to appreciate more fully the essentials of African character wherever it may be found, both in this continent and outside.

It is in the belief that African music, properly encouraged, will increase materially the chances of happiness and well-being throughout the whole continent that we dedicate this Journal to all our fellow-members of the African Music Society.

THE EDITOR.