

A.M.S. EXHIBITION OF AFRICAN PAINTINGS

The Society has long been interested in the development of painting as a new art amongst Africans. Until recently the only indigenous picture making was in the form of murals of which perhaps the best examples are to be found in the northern Congo and in South Africa.

It was with great satisfaction some years ago that we noted the establishment of three or four schools or groups of painters in widely separated regions—Uganda, French Equatorial Africa, Belgian Congo and Southern Rhodesia. The groups which have become most significant from a creative point of view have undoubtedly been those where the white mentor has succeeded in evoking the artistic and pattern making talent of his group rather than in teaching art technique from the European standpoint.

Two years ago, the Society acquired over 70 representative pictures from the two groups of painters at Brazzaville and Elizabethville and with the co-operation of two Johannesburg Clubs for African boys and girls, framed and equipped the pictures for permanent exhibition around the country. Up till that moment few people in the southern end of the Continent had had the opportunity of seeing any representative collections of original African paintings, the public having to be content and not very impressed with 'schooled' paintings in styles adopted directly from Europeans. The impact of the present exhibition has been most encouraging, with constantly favourable reactions of surprise, delight and admiration for the work of these African pioneers, most of whom are young men under the age of 25.

The exhibition has already been shown in these towns . . . Salisbury, Bulawayo, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Kimberley, Luanshya, Nchanga and Livingstone. It is due to be shown also in several towns in the Cape Province, including Port Elizabeth and East London and enquiries have already been received for its staging both in America and Malaya as well.

The Committee of the African Music Society is prepared to consider applications from responsible bodies for their inclusion in the rota of the Exhibition's itinerary and details of the conditions under which it can be loaned, may be obtained from the Honorary Secretary.

One of the pictures of a market scene painted by a Brazzaville painter, Bandila, has been excellently reproduced in full colour and is available from the Society (10/6d. plus postage) size 12" x 14".

The following extract from our correspondence gives typical response to the exhibition
 ". . . . Judging from comments drawn from a cross section of the Africans who attended the exhibition it is interesting to note the following:—

- (1) A genuine interest and admiration of the work.
- (2) Particular interest because it was by African artists.
- (3) Amazement at the skill of the "finger painter".
- (4) Suggestion that younger men should be given the opportunity to study the art, should they show aptitude.
- (5) Again an African teacher be engaged to teach the children in Welfare a 'lost art' ". . .

MUSIC FESTIVALS IN AFRICA

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF ADJUDICATORS

These notes are not for the expert. It sometimes happens however that people with little or no experience in adjudication find themselves involved in judging at a local festival, for the simple reason that there is no qualified person in the district. It is for such that these suggestions are made. They may also be of assistance to choirmasters since they show the kind of criterion by which an adjudicator makes his judgements.

An adjudicator can do much to help or hinder the success of a Music Festival. Some adjudicators have a happy way of putting competitors at their ease and enabling them not only to enjoy themselves but also to sing better because of this. A word to the competing choirs before they sing is not out of place since this may help to create a spirit of festivity and to remove any sense of the occasion being rather like an examination. At a recent Festival in Nairobi, the winning choir mounted the platform in a body to receive their trophy and sang again their African song in triumph, and the losers for sheer gaiety joined in the clapping accompaniment of the song. That is the sign of a successful occasion.

Audience reaction should never be allowed to influence the adjudicator's better judgement since the popularity of any particular performance may be due to a number of reasons completely unrelated to music. The leader of the song may be something of a comedian, there may be a member of the choir who is very tall or very short, and so on, and it is the duty of the adjudicator to ensure that musical considerations come first.