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EDITORIAL

THE prevalent notion that African music is dying, dies hard and is as false as ever it was.

The African Music Society is viewed in some quarters as a body which is solely interested in preserving specimens of an outmoded art which must give place entirely to the 'modern' music of the west. Yet as the years go by the Society's recording unit amongst others continues to bring to light new and complex examples of African music which are representative of the vitality of present day indigenous composers and whose lyrics reflect the evolving scene around them.

Change in music is endemic in Africa as elsewhere, whether it be change for the better or for the worse. Music composed in either town or country away from the influence of western musicians still bears the stamp of an active art, one which has real meaning and is directly related to the social needs and views of the community. The music which passes for African in many industrial regions of this continent may be popular enough but does not yet bear the impress of originality.

The wind of change may bend the tree and influence its shape. In the end it is not the wind but the tree which matters. Where the folk music roots have been loosened by the hurricane the tree itself may be in a poor way. But with each succeeding year the labours of the Society have been steadily strengthening the whole root system of African music with increasing knowledge of its nature, its social function and its value to future generations. Given the right soil and the right husbandry, let the wind blow.

THE EDITOR