

OBITUARY

The African Music Society, and African musicians everywhere have suffered a great loss this year (1961) in the sudden death of the composer Ba Joseph Kiwele in Elizabethville, Katanga. At the time of his death (it is understood from heart failure) he was Minister of Education in the Katanga Government of President Tshombe.

Owing to the political disturbance in the Congo the Society has been unable to make contact with his family and friends for further details of his life and work but from our own knowledge of him we write these short observations, which we hope will be enlarged and, if necessary, corrected later.

Joseph Kiwele was a Tabwa by birth and was educated at the St. Jean Mission in Elizabethville, Katanga Province of the Belgian Congo. He showed early promise of musical originality which under the keen and devoted tuition of Father Lamoral who recognised his worth, blossomed into maturity during the late 1940s.

His first composition of a magnitude to bring him recognition outside his home territory was the *Missa Katanga* which he based largely upon the style of canoe and other folk songs of his people. In this work he used drums for Christian worship, perhaps for the first time, and special dispensation from the Bishop had to be obtained for their use in the Elizabethville Cathedral when the Mass was first performed. It was subsequently recorded by a Belgian recording company and issued by them in an album of 78 r.p.m. discs. Subsequently on the 5th. July, 1949, it was again recorded, this time by myself for the African Music Society. These records were issued in South Africa together with his two hymns "Salve Regina" and "In honour of the Little Martyrs of Uganda", all of them sung by his choir "Les Petits Chanteurs de la Croix de Cuivre".

A list of fourteen of his early works, including several based upon folk songs was published in our Journal Vol. I, No. 1, p. 84.

Shortly before his death Joseph Kiwele, we understand, had composed a new national anthem for Katanga.

There is no doubt that the name of Ba Joseph Kiwele will long be remembered as one of the first pioneers in authentically African Christian music.

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It is with deep regret that the Society records the death on July 9th., 1961, of Mrs. E. M. Dougall, who for many years has been a good friend of the African Music Society through her interest in and work for the Tom Osborn Memorial.

Members will recall the Osborn Awards which that organisation have given for outstanding recordings of authentic African music, all of which were published in recorded form in the Society's collection "The Music of Africa" series.

Mrs. Dougall's unflagging interest in the work of African composers was largely responsible for the creation of these awards, and the composers and performers who benefitted directly will share with the Society its sincere regrets at her passing.

H.T.