

NOTES AND NEWS

The Headquarters of the African Music Society recently had the pleasure of welcoming Dr. Graham Hyslop, from Kenya, who was on a round Africa tour on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation of New York. Dr. Hyslop is investigating the situation regarding the teaching of music and musical research throughout the whole continent. Our members will look forward with interest to the outcome of his report as we believe that so much more activity in African music should and could be taking place, if a number of enthusiastic expert musicians were to take the matter more seriously. Our good wishes go with Dr. Hyslop for the success of his investigations.

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TALKING-GONGS AND INDEPENDENCE DAY IN CONGO

by DR. JOHN CARRINGTON

During the Independence crisis in the former Belgian Congo, I was living at Yakusu, some fifteen miles down-stream from Stanleyville, on a mission station between two Lokele villages and within drumming range of villages of three other tribes. I was fully prepared for and looking forward to a special night of joyful conversation on the numerous gongs of the region as Independence Day drew near and finally dawned. Just as a local message had described a European government officer before Independence as:

bolimo wosilela ato — the spirit that destroys people,

I expected that the gongs would indicate some of the political aspirations of the new Republic about to assume its own government.

We were surprised when the talking-gongs were completely silent on the night of June 29th, 1960. It was as though everyone was afraid of what was happening to the country and no-one dared to be responsible for interpreting on a musical instrument the feelings of his people. In the well-populated Yakusu area it is very rare for a whole night to pass without some message being transmitted within hearing of the mission. The eve of Independence was such an occasion. We know that there were a lot of superstitious rumours passing from mouth to mouth at this time, such as, for instance, that the dead would rise to greet the dawning Day of Independence and for this reason old graves had been cleaned up and the surface soil loosened to permit of an easier bodily resurrection. The silence of the talking-gongs is a further expression of this fear of the political change brought so suddenly on the Congolese people.

An interesting side-light on the influence which Patrice Lumumba wielded over young people in the Stanleyville area is shown by a conversation I had with some old boys of the Yakusu school. They invited me to provide a gong-name for their political leader. I suggested the following:

<i>bofulufulu wa lifoka</i>	giant of riches
<i>wa lisokusoku</i>	of surpassing greatness
<i>bole konda likeleenge liboke</i>	living in the village
<i>lya ainatende la shanga sha ilonga</i>	of the Baena people (Stanleyville)

The young men said that this name was incomplete and insisted that I add the phrase:

<i>wa olimo bokasekweleke likolo</i>	the spirit that came down from heaven.
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The only other context in which I have heard this latter phrase used by Lokele gong-beaters is when Christians refer to Jesus Christ.

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ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN BRITAIN

Ethnomusicology featured for the first time among the sciences in Great Britain when it was granted a full morning session in the Anthropology Section of the 124th Annual Meeting of the *British Association for the Advancement of Science*, held in Manchester from August 29 to September 5, 1962. Dr. K. P. Wachsmann (*Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, London*) who took the Chair for the session provided an introduction to the study of "other people's music". Two papers, with musical illustrations, were presented: Professor Mantle Hood (UCLA, California): "The significance of music in social configuration"; and Mr. David Rycroft (SOAS, *University of London*): "African music south of the Sahara".

Dr. Wachsmann and Mr. Rycroft serve on the Ethnomusicology Committee of the *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, as Chairman and Secretary, respectively. Earlier in 1962 the Committee organised a three-day Symposium: "Music and History in Africa and Asia", at the Institute in London, from March 19th to 20th. The Symposium, which was the first of its kind to be held in Britain, was intended to serve as a focus for participation by scholars from several different disciplines

such as history, archaeology and music history, as well as by ethnomusicologists. Average attendance was approximately thirty. Main papers were presented by Professor Mantle Hood (UCLA), Professor K. Nketia (Ghana), Professor P. R. Kirby (South Africa), Dr. Eta Harich-Schneider (Vienna), Mr. John Blacking (Johannesburg), M. Gilbert Rouget (Paris), Dr. A. A. Blake, Dr. A. M. Jones and Dr. K. P. Wachsmann. Communications from Dr. F. R. Allchin, Mr. N. A. Jairasbhoy, Dr. J. Marr, Mr. J. O'Kell, Mr. D. Rycroft and Dr. E. Westphal were also presented. Dr. J. Fage and Mr. A. Christie provided concluding surveys of the African and the Asian evidence respectively. The papers are at present being prepared for publication by the R.A.I. under the editorship of Dr. Wachsmann.

Visitors to Britain

Ethnomusicologists who visit London at any time, are urged to get into touch with the Ethnomusicology Committee of the R.A.I. Members of the Committee are eager to meet overseas workers, both for the exchange of ideas, and where possible, to arrange for talks by visiting ethnomusicologists while they are in London. It would be appreciated if at least one month's notice could be given when a talk is offered. Intending visitors should contact the Secretary, Ethnomusicology Committee, Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 21, Bedford Square, London, W.C.1. England. Telephone: MUSEum 2980.

D.K.R.

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INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL

The Sixteenth International Conference of the International Folk Music Council will be held at Jerusalem, Israel, on Monday, August 5th to 12th, 1963, in conjunction with the Conference on East and West in Music, organized by The Israel National Council of Culture and Arts, in co-operation with The International Music Council of UNESCO, the National Committee of UNESCO in Israel, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Israel Association of Musicologists, the National Music Council, the Israel Broadcasting Service and the Israel Tourist Corporation.

Theme and Subjects of Discussion will be: The general theme of the Conference will be "Regional versus Universal Trends in Music." The discussions will be grouped around the following subjects, each of which will form a section of the Conference:

- (1) Ethical and aesthetic criteria of value in contemporary music.
- (2a) Preservation and renewal of folk and traditional music (including folk dance).
- (2b) Folk and traditional music as a creative element in modern music.
- (3a) Polyphony in folk and traditional music.
- (3b) Polyphony in modern music.
- (4) Improvisation in Eastern and Western music (including folk dance).
- (5) *Ornamentation in Eastern and Western music.*
- (6) The migration of musical instruments.
- (7) Ways and means of tone production in contemporary music and their resulting notational problems.

Nos. 2a, 2b, 3a, 4, 5 and 6 will be of direct concern to members of the International Folk Music Council.

For further information apply to:

The Secretary,
International Folk Music Council,
35, Princess Court,
LONDON, W.2.

or:

Dr. Y. Spira,
East/West Music Conference,
Kol Israel,
Jerusalem, ISRAEL.

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CHURCH MUSIC WORKSHOP

(Being an extract from the "Mindolo Newsletter")

Excerpts from the "Missa Luba", an African folk-mass from Katanga, sounding magnificently from twenty African throats to the accompaniment of African drums, formed part of a Sacred Concert in the big white Church built by L.M.S. Missionary, Mike Moore, at Mindolo during the early 1930's. The Concert, part of which had been televised, was one of the highlights of a Workshop in Church Music conducted by Robert Kauffman from Old Umtali Methodist Mission, Southern Rhodesia. He was assisted by his wife, Marjory; Miss Ingham, also from Umtali, and Mr. L. Williamson from the Rhodesian Academy of Music, Bulawayo.

The object of the course, for which teachers, pastors, social workers and clerks (all African), from six African countries, had sacrificed their Christmas holidays, was to encourage and develop the use of African music in the Church. The course itself consisted of:

- (a) basic training in theory of music, choir conducting and vocal techniques, and
- (b) a survey of the various worship traditions in the Christian Church and the contribution of music to these traditions;

Asked what the achievements of this four-week course were, Mr. Kauffman listed the following:

- the adaption of a number of African folk songs for use in Christian worship;
- improvement in knowledge of the fundamentals of music writing, vocal techniques, and the organization and conducting of choirs;
- learning and surveying of a sizeable number of new hymns and anthems, both African and European for use in the Church;
- learning some of the principles involved in the translation of hymns from a European language into an African language.

One of the most significant results of the course was the spontaneous decision of the participants to form an All-Africa Church Music Association. The following extracts from their constitution gives an idea of the aims and procedures of this new Association:

Preamble:

We, the students of the 1962/63 Church Music Workshop sponsored by the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, having been deeply inspired by our experiences in this workshop, and being convinced that this type of study should be continued in the life of the Church in Africa, propose that a permanent organization be established for this purpose.

Purpose:

- (1) To encourage the development of indigenous African music in relation to the worship of the Church.
- (2) To be meaningful, music in worship, in both rhythm and harmony, must be appealing to the worshipper. The integration of African music and the stimulation of its production for the worship of the Church would enrich the worship life of the Church and make the Christian Religion more appealing to the masses of Africans.
- (3) In case of the development of plans under discussion for a top level conference of musical experts, this group would function to put into practice in the African Church music those principles set forth by such expert leadership.
- (4) One of the divisive factors in the life of the Church is in the differences in worship forms and music inherited from the parent Churches of the West. The development of indigenous Church music and its adoption by the various African Churches would give a common medium of worship which would then pave the way for growing Church unity.

Procedures:

- (1) In view of the vision and leadership of the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in planning, executing and supporting this initial workshop, we recommend consultation with Mindolo concerning the development of this idea.
- (2) In view of the organization of the permanent All-African Church Conference, with its avowed purpose to strengthen the life of the African Church in every way, and of its potential resources of leadership and of outside financial assistance to the Church in Africa, we recommend that we explore the possibility of relating the organization to the All-Africa Church Conference as a part of the growing Ecumenical movement in this continent."

The following office-bearers were elected for 1963/64:

Chairman: Mr. S. M. Gumbie (Southern Rhodesia); *Vice-Chairman:* Mr. A. P. M. Monaledi (South Africa); *Secretary:* Mr. M. F. Sikatana (Barotseland); *Treasurer:* Mr. G. Mhango (Northern Rhodesia); *Committee Member:* Mr. F. Nafwenga (Tanganyika); *Director:* Mr. R. Kauffman; *Trustee:* Rev. J. Oglethorpe (M.E.F.).

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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF AFRICAN CULTURE

Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia. August, 1962

When this Congress was first mooted some years ago it was commonly agreed that no conference on African culture could be complete without considerable reference to the aural arts, to African musics, dancing, poetry and the unwritten literature which form the chief recreational activities of this continent.

The plastic arts have always been collector's pieces, and present little difficulty to the organisers of such a congress save that of overcoming the natural reluctance or inertia of potential contributors and the problems of transporting an adequate number of representative works of sculpture and painting to the Gallery in distant Salisbury and, of course, their imaginative display. In this the Director and his staff have been eminently successful and indeed, no such collection of the work of African carvers, sculptors and painters has ever before been seen under one roof on this continent.

African music on the other hand was a very different matter. How to present the relative position

and magnitude of the aural arts of Africa was clearly beyond the scope of the present Congress however well organised and financed. Music must be heard and when accompanied by dancing must be seen as well to be appreciated and although a few musical instruments were on display and a large number of authentic recordings were made available, the impact of the wide range of musical genius to be found throughout Africa could scarcely have been felt, especially in the face of the popular accent upon the musical clichés of Afro-American origin.

The one outstanding exception was the fortunate appearance of a group of Chopi musicians and dancers from the Zavala District of Mocambique through the generosity of the Portuguese authorities of the territory. These forty men were drawn from the *Timbila* xylophone bands of four villages, from Zavala, Nyakutowo, Mavila and from Zandamela, whose chief, Wahosi Felizberto Mablatini, accompanied and directed the performances. It can be claimed with assurance that nowhere in Africa are there more skilled xylophone players than the Chopi. They present not only an insight into present-day African instrumental techniques, but in a certain degree a glimpse into the traditional musical talents of their people who so deeply impressed the travellers and explorers of the sixteenth century on the East Coast. Description of their Chopi dances and the words of two of their songs were the first ever to be written down over four hundred years ago.

Most writers of the present century have been notably superficial in their descriptions and presentation of African folk music as a lively art. Recordings and films tell only half the story and the bare stage of an all-purpose concert hall does little justice to the exuberant skill of African musicians and dancers away from their natural setting unless considerable professional knowledge and skill is available in their presentation. The tendency is to leave the impression that what is presented is merely the simple rustic pastime of semi-naked forebears, now well on its way out, the very antithesis of the standard set in the presentation of African plastic arts at this Congress.

It is certainly easier to present to a conventional audience what is popularly called Neo-African music and dancing, adapted for stage performance. In this category fell most of the other examples of African singing, dancing and drumming both from the Ivory Coast and from the Federation. The Ivory Coast dancers, the success of whose performances depends for much of its effectiveness in sheer weight of numbers, felt the reduction from their original eighty who recently performed in Paris to the eleven who travelled to Salisbury. Even the genius of that internationally famous couple, Miss Pearl Primus and her husband, could not be expected to bring out the verve and vitality of Rhodesian indigenous dancing with the most willing but sadly earthbound groups of local performers. The one exception was the Changana/Ndau team who come from a people with a reputation for dancing anywhere and at any time, regardless of artificial limitations such as those offered by a stage.

The highly professional performances of the Steel Band from Trinidad on those most original and perhaps newest of all musical band instruments, the indented ends of steel petrol drums, were superb of their kind but can scarcely be called Neo-African. Their origin, skill and genius is essentially Caribbean, and the music they play apart from the established "creole" style of calypso is exclusively western in form.

From a musician's point of view, perhaps the most significant contribution to the musical side of the Congress came from an elderly Muzezuru *mbira* player, Jege Tapera, and his white pupil whose musical insight had enabled him, not only to learn from Tapera this most Rhodesian of all music but to play duets with him in the authentic manner. This resulted in an analysis of the techniques of *mbira* playing from the composer's and performer's point of view. Similarly, it was the degree to which the discussions on the plastic arts revealed the African sculptor's and painter's intentions and their considerable achievements that marked the success and the benefit which was derived from the whole Congress.

Hugh Tracey.