

Ifoafoa a wind instrument. A hole is bored into a globular fruit and is blown into or across; a type of whistle.

Ifium a whistle or flute, sometimes made of a crab's claw.

Ikpok Ikut. The dried carapace of a large tortoise. The base end is struck with a stick and is used to set the rhythm of the music.

Ikesu. The xylophone. It is made by placing two banana or plantain stems on the ground with one set of ends converging. Laths of hard wood are laid across and beaten by the player with a drum stick in each hand.

Iokodok. A wooden gong carried in canoes to control by its beat the rhythm of the paddlers. (See *Ntokrok*.)

Manina the Ibibio name for the *Nkong*.

Mbumbu. An onomatopoeic name. A short wooden hollow drum having only one opening over which is stretched a skin. Used in local plays and dances.

Mbutu. A musical instrument made of a small shallow wooden box on which slips of bamboo are fixed with their ends projecting over a wooden cross-piece. These bamboo slips are of different lengths and so, when struck with the thumbs, give out different notes. This instrument is known elsewhere as the *marimba*.

Nádo is a musical bow. A thin stick is used to strike the string while one presses lightly or heavily with the palm of one's hand on the string to alter its note.

Nkong. A musical instrument made of iron. It is funnel-shaped, about 18 inches long, with a handle at the end. The open end of the funnel is struck with a stick. This instrument is used in the dances of the Egbo society. (Fig. III.)



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Nsak. Rattles, made by placing pebbles in dried empty calabashes.

Nsing, a short, small wooden split-gong.

Nting. A long barrelled wooden drum beaten at a war dance and at an *ikepo* or wake of a man who has slain an enemy in battle.

Ntokrok. A small wooden gong used by the town crier to announce messages for communal work. It is struck with a stick. (Fig. IV.)

Obudum. The large wooden split-gong made from a trunk of a tree. The name is onomatopoeic as this gong gives out deep booming notes. It is beaten in cases of alarm, for instance if houses are on fire, to summon the townspeople. It is played with a heavy stick in each hand, and is used to send toned messages.

Obukpong, the horn or oliphant. A hole is cut in the side of a horn or an elephant's tusk and it is then blown.

Oti. A funnel-shaped iron musical instrument with a stick inside to act as the tongue of a bell.

RECORDING IN THE OLD DAYS

by A. M. JONES

I came home on leave from Northern Rhodesia in 1934, determined to further the interests of African music. This led to my meeting for the first time Dr. (now Professor) A. N. Tucker, the linguist. I found that he had already been recording in the Sudan on a very simple apparatus made for amateur home-recording called a Fay Tone. He lost no time: he took me to a radio junk shop in a small street off Leicester Square and made me buy a Fay Tone; I also bought another red-coloured record-cutting head which had a diamond cutting point. The whole bill was, I think, around ten shillings.

I went home and experimented. The Fay Tone had a small vertical metal horn about nine inches high sticking out of the cutting head, down which one spoke: the records were six inch aluminium discs. The tracking device was unsatisfactory. The result was a small rather distant fairy tone, promising indeed, but I was not satisfied.

I then discovered Cairns and Morrison, a private recording firm in Old Compton Street off Charing Cross Road, who had put on the market a much better tracking gadget for clipping on to the spindle of a gramophone turn-table. This could deal with their 10-inch aluminium discs. I also bought a double-power Garrard gramophone motor. These were the days before tape recorders and anyway, up-country, there was no possibility of using electrical devices. The recording had to be straight from voice to disc.

Cairns and Morrison's tracker had a metal arm (screw-threaded) which extended over the record: the cutting head had a hook which engaged in this and was drawn across the record when the arm revolved. But the hook did not work well. So, having seen a commercial model made by the Marguerite Sound System (used by the B.B.C. at one time for outdoor recording), I took an idea from it, and cut a nut in

half, mounted it on a little swivel and fixed this to my red-coloured cutting head and let the nut ride on the threads of the metal arm with complete success. I could now make quite fair recordings of a single voice — though I always had a good deal of surface noise through using aluminium discs. But how was I to record typical African songs with cantor and chorus — let alone drumming?

Not willing to accept defeat, I cast around and found the key to the solution. This was a seed-sower made by the well-known English seed firm of Carters — a little conical tin vessel about three inches high and four inches in diameter. I cut off the point of the cone and soldered on a collar which fitted the neck of the cutting-head into which its horn was normally mounted. I then, on the flat top, made a hole in the middle and about six holes in a circle near the edge and soldered similar collars to each. In the centre one I inserted my Fay Tone horn, and in the others I fixed similar sized horns made of cartridge paper (for lightness). This gadget weighed at least some three to four ounces, so, to counterbalance it, I fixed a rod on the back end of the gramophone arm with a sliding weight at the end of it.

At first I still used aluminium discs, but later I graduated to discs with an aluminium base coated with acetate — very superior indeed, but introducing an awful complication, namely how to prevent the swarf from winding round Cairns and Morrison's tracker and bringing the turn-table to a stop when recording. The solution proved simple — I continuously swept it clear with a paint brush.

Imagine now one of my recording sessions. Standing round the gramophone are six African boys each with his mouth as close as possible to one of the cartridge paper horns which he had to follow as they moved inwards during recording. Outside the ring of boys was a stool on which stood my cantor, Robert Kabombo, who had to lean right over the other boys and place his mouth close to the central Fay Tone horn which he, like them, followed as it moved towards the centre of the turn-table. But this is not all: for I had to crouch and squeeze myself inside the ring of boys so that I could not only start and keep an eye on the apparatus, but also work away desperately with my paint brush clearing the swarf. If I missed the swarf for a fraction of a second the record was ruined. Comic? Well, I only wish we had photographs of the process: but it worked.

As a result I sent some of the aluminium master-records to Cairns and Morrison who processed them, making normal pressings. Later, when using acetates I found another firm, Will Day Ltd., also I think in Old Compton Street or near by, who dubbed them and so made a small number of copies available.

I still possess both the aluminium masters and the pressings and dubbings. Very poor quality of course, but still serving as a permanent record of African music of over 30 years ago made on a mission station right out in the African bush.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From: COOTJE VAN OVEN, International School, P.O. Box 2651, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

I made two more trips in my vacations in Sierra Leone since I wrote to you last — the second one with much better equipment as I had inherited some money in Holland and had thus been able to buy an Akai X-IV. By that time I was gradually getting worried because my full-time school teaching job just never left me time to digest and analyse the material I was collecting. I very much wanted to produce a short illustrated textbook for Sierra Leone schools, with accompanying gramophone record. And as my second contract with the Sierra Leone Grammar School was due to expire in 1967 I began to look out for other work, more in the research line. A research fellowship was advertised in the Institute of African Studies at Sierra Leone's University, but the position was later "frozen" as part of Sierra Leone's economy drive. I received a letter saying that my application would be retained and would be considered again if and when the post would be opened again. Other attempts to find suitable work in Sierra Leone all came to nothing. On completing my contract with the Sierra Leone Grammar School I came to Dar es Salaam to stay with my sister who lives here. From this Tanzanian base I kept searching Africa for work, and finally a solution presented itself in the form of part-time employment. I am now teaching music at the International School in Dar es Salaam, and in my spare time I work on my Sierra Leone material. Although I am a very slow worker I am still hoping that in the course of this school year I may get that school textbook written and the gramophone record made. By that time there may be a research opening in Sierra Leone — or elsewhere, although I should particularly like Sierra Leone because so little has been done about its music so far.

I am still transcribing my field notes into record cards that can be used for study. I am therefore likely to pester you from time to time with classification queries, etc. You may remember that I had the record cards printed after the model of your field cards, and that at the back of each card, under the continued "Remarks", I paste a photograph illustrating the item in question. I have sent a tape containing 55 of the recorded items, together with duplicates of the corresponding 55 record cards, to Professor Merriam of Indiana University, with whom I have had some correspondence, and I hope the material will be of use to him. I had intended to send copies to several other people as well, but I find that copying all the record cards, etc. takes up such a lot of time and I feel that at the moment I should press on with all the unfinished work and with the school textbook. Maybe the material I sent to Professor Merriam can be passed round to other interested people later on, when he has finished with it. The