

# INTRODUCTION

From earliest times Westerners have been awed and fascinated by Africa's unique music. About 500 B.C., when Hanno the Carthaginian returned from West Africa, he wrote that upon landing on an island off the coast he and his companions had seen many fires being kindled by night and had heard "the noise of pipes and cymbals and a din of tom-toms and the shouts of a multitude." They were frightened and hastily left at the urging of their interpreters. Some two thousand years later, in the early 1620's, Richard Jobson, sent among the Mandingoes of West Africa by the Merchant Adventurers of London, reported how alien the sound of African music had been to him. In the Mandingo King's house, he said, "his drummes, the onely instruments of warre which we see amongst them," hung by his chair. "Neither," he continued, "are these drummes without dayly employment, for this is their continuall custome every night after it seemes they have filled their bellies, they repaire to this Court of Guard, making fires both in the middle of the house, and in the open yard, about which they do continue drumming, hooping, singing, and making a hethenish noyse, most commonly until the day beginnes to breake, when as we conceive dead-sleepes take them." Some believed that the noise was made "to feare and keep away the Lyons, and ravening beasts," and pointed out that virtually no village was "without such poore drums they use," and if one was without drums then "they continue the custome, through hooping, singing, and using their voyces, but when it happens musicke is amongst them; then is the horrible din."

We have learned much about Africa since Jobson's day—much, that is, of Africa's geography, economics, and politics. Culturally, however, the divide, while narrowed, is still largely unbridged. The songs in this book are therefore doubly welcome, for apart from their intrinsic interest and beauty they introduce us to aspects of African culture in Southern Africa still widely unknown to us.

Most of the songs presented here are the songs of the Zulu and Xhosa peoples. Both the Xhosa and Zulu languages, like those of all the Bantu peoples, are musically accented, abounding in rich vowel sounds which lend themselves to song. Both languages also have a wide range of consonants, including the famous "click sounds,"

which we shall explain later. In this book the songs have been provided with musical accompaniment of triadic chords based on seventeenth-century European harmony, which enables us to appreciate and assimilate sounds that would otherwise appear too unfamiliar. Melodically, most of the songs in this book are distinguished by a wide use of syncopated rhythms. Syncopated rhythm, though a common feature in African music, is not used as extensively as in American jazz music. In fact, the peculiarities in the use of syncopated rhythm are a major difference between the two types of music.

The songs are direct transcriptions of performances of African folk songs; although they represent the interpretation of one particular African artist, each is nonetheless authentic. Other transcriptions would, of course, result in different versions. But folk music is music created by a people, and not by an individual composer, and thus it lends itself to different moods, different emphases, different circumstances—and is, finally, as variable as life itself.

Miriam Makeba adds yet another element to her interpretation. The songs she sings are songs that have usually remained unwritten. They have been transmitted by a long line of African singers, each one of whom invests them with his or her own personality. Miss Makeba brings her own unique interpretation to her material—an interpretation that differs from that of most of her predecessors, not only because she has assimilated the particular experience of city life in South Africa [which in itself is a new mutation of the folk experience], but because, far more than most African singers, she has been exposed to musical influences that are largely non-African. Since her "discovery" by a movie producer who directed the social protest film *Come Back Africa*, her life has differed from that of most black South African artists. She has gained a degree of freedom they can only hope for. She has lived in the United States where she has been acclaimed by vast audiences of blacks and whites. And she has sung to African audiences, and in her travels across the continent has learned firsthand many of the variations of Africa's music found in lands other than her own South Africa. All this has broadened her understanding as an artist and enriched her singing. As those who



have heard her know, her style is marked by a strong, dynamic, and huskily compelling quality which is quite distinct and unforgettable.

Before looking at the songs themselves, we may do well to consider the historical background of African music as well as some of the types of musical instruments and song styles of Africa.

### The Historical Background

In the distant past what we now call the black African peoples inhabited not only Africa but also other regions. They were spread in a great arc, or semi-circle, which swung from East and Northeast Africa up to an apex in Southern India and Ceylon, before swinging south again across the Indonesian archipelago and into Australasia. The migrations of peoples throughout history largely erased the top of the arc and fragmented the rest. But traces of the original black-skinned race are still to be found in Southern India and in parts of the Pacific, as well as in Australia and the islands of Oceania, even though it is in Africa that the main body of the race has made its homeland.

There is thus a reason for the many similarities between black Africa and Indonesia. That species of coastal palm tree which is regarded as so peculiarly African is the same as that found in Indonesia, where scientists believe it originated. As with peoples and plants, so with music. The late ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs commented that, in Uganda, one of the Ganda peoples "divide the octave into five, in principle equal, steps of around 240 cents, which corresponds to the *salendro* gender of Java's and Bali's *gamelan* orchestras." The Bapende and Chopi peoples of Southern Africa, he also observed, give their xylophones an "arrangement with even steps of about 171 cents in an octave, which amounts exactly to the current genders of Siam and Burma"—a striking coincidence, if coincidence it is.

Yet another hint of a relationship between Indonesia and Africa is provided by the drum. Today, of all instruments, it is regarded as the most characteristically African of all musical instruments. In his essay on the origin of African civilizations, the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius wrote as early as 1898 that, "By far the larger part of African drums consist of a log





scooped out, one or both ends covered with hide. I do no more than state the fact that the Indonesian method of bracing drums reappears on the West African coast."

The next significant influence in African music was the Arab invasion of Northern Africa in the seventh century. Though strongest in North and West Africa, and down the East African coast, the Arabic influence has nevertheless penetrated as far into the heartland of the continent as Rwanda-Burundi.

Beyond any doubt the European influence of more recent times has been of major significance in today's African music. Yet a close comparison between African and European music raises doubts as to whether *all* the similarities with European music stem from recent contact. Strong similarities, for example, are found between European and African folk music, both of which share diatonic and pentatonic scales, certain kinds of polyphony, and other characteristics.

### **The Musical Instruments of Africa**

Normally the African folk songs in this book are accompanied by hand clapping, but drums or other traditional African instruments may join in the accompaniment. As the popular impression is that the drum, and the drum alone, is Africa's musical instrument, we may consider what instrumentation has, in fact, been in use on the continent.

Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel—the latter also an ethnomusicologist—divided instruments into four types: idiophones, or instruments whose bodies vibrate to create sound; membranophones, or instruments with a vibrating membrane; aerophones, or instruments that permit a column of air to vibrate within themselves; and chordophones, which have vibrating strings. Log drums, bells, and rattles would thus be classed as idiophones; skin drums, with a single or double drumhead, as membranophones; trumpets, horns, and flutes as aerophones; and harps, lutes, zithers, and bows as chordophones.

As we have indicated, it is above all the membranophonic skin drum that has, from early times, always appeared to Westerners as the most characteristic African instrument, perhaps on account of the skill with which African

musicians have handled it. In fact, however, the birthplace of the drum is unknown. Whereas some instruments appear to have emerged, or have been discovered, independently in various places, the skin drum is believed by ethnomusicologists to have originated in one place. The fact that it is found well-nigh everywhere is taken as evidence that it was one of the earliest instruments known to man.

Skin drums, in Africa, are usually beaten either with the hand [using only the fingers, or the fingers, the fist, and the palm] or with a curved stick. Frequently drummers form a "drum choir," each taking different parts. A typical Ghanaian drum is the *gangan* or *dundun* drum, which is shaped like an hourglass, the membranes at each end being joined to each other by numerous strings. In this way it is possible for the drummer to vary the pitch by holding the drum under his arm and squeezing it with his elbow, thus tightening the drumheads. Drum music of great variation can thus be created even by a single drummer, beating the drum as he walks or dances along. Drumming, however, has reached its greatest complexity in Western Africa, while in Eastern and Southern Africa the drum is more likely to be supplemented by other instruments.

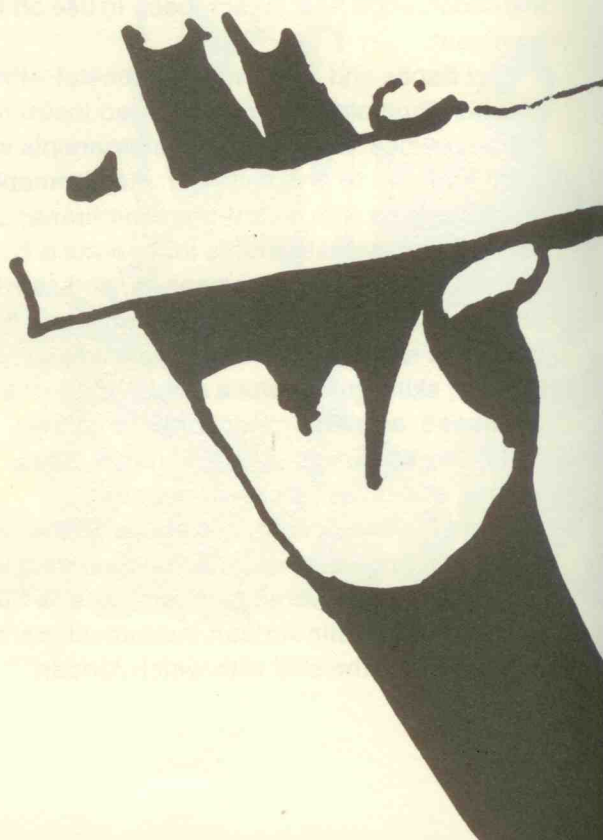
The open grazing lands and wide treeless plains of South Africa have conditioned the music of the South African people in various ways. The absence of forests and thick vegetation has made the thick hollow logs necessary for typical African drums—which are found in the Congo forests or in West Africa—hard to come by. Hence South African drums are of a different type. Among the Khoi Khoi, or Hottentots, the drum is customarily made of a pot or a calabash over which a skin is stretched. Among the Xhosa of the Transkei, a dried ox hide is fastened to poles planted in the earth, so that the surface of the hide is about three feet from the ground. The upper surface of the hide thus forms a drum, upon which the musicians play with beaters engraved with ornaments. The Venda, Pedi, Tswana, and Sotho peoples of the same region construct their drums from a conical resonator of any material—usually soft wood—covered with a hide pegged into the drum while wet, with hide strips afterward being laced between the pegs.



One other element distinguishes the music of Southern Africa: women, too, are often allowed to play the drums. In other parts of Africa this is generally unthinkable, the traditional role of the women being to clap their hands rhythmically in accompaniment to the music, or else to provide a chorus or counterpoint.

African drum lore is quite variegated. In some parts of the continent certain drums are regarded as being of divine origin, and their sound is identified with the voices of the gods themselves. Elsewhere the drum is a symbol of power. Certain drums can be beaten only when war is declared. In Rwanda, among the Watusi, only the Mwami, the traditional ruler, or else the Queen Mother, is allowed to possess a set of drums. Among some peoples drummers have particularly high status, the drummer's skill being passed on from father to son after arduous training. The long hours of ceaseless repetition, with never the slightest mistake being overlooked, are evidence of the importance of drum music, which is also reflected in the magnificent decorations of some drums. These take the form of elaborate carvings, bead decorations, or embellishment with the skins of zebras or other striking animals. In Southern Africa, however, in recent times, drum-makers, without suitable wood to hand, have had to use the debris of modern technology—jettisoned gasoline cans, oil drums, and similar improvisations.

Among idiophones, rattles, clappers, and bells are widely used. Although the xylophone came originally from Indonesia, it has by now also become strongly identified with Africa, where it is found from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. In South Africa, as well as further north, xylophone ensembles are not uncommon, being composed of anything from a trio [treble, alto, and bass] in South Africa to a xylophonic quintet in Equatorial Africa, and larger groupings in Western Africa and Southern Mozambique. The xylophones vary greatly in complexity, some being relatively simple instruments made of slats laid across two felled trees, whereas in others, supported on a wooden frame, resonating gourds hang below each bar. In the Southern Congo the Luba people play *malimbe* xylophones which are paired together in male and female forms—the male xylophone having sixteen bars, and the female





nine. Some xylophones are small enough to be portable, being suspended from the player's neck by a cord so that he can make music during a procession, or, together with other musicians, as part of a "minstrel" orchestra.

Related to the xylophone is the "sansa," or thumb piano, which is also found throughout the continent. Under different names it appears throughout West, East, and South Africa. It clearly originated on the continent, since it is found nowhere else in the world, except where peoples of African descent have taken it, i.e., mainly in the Americas. In South Africa, in the wooded areas of the Northeast, it is widely used by the Venda and the Chopi. The "sansa" consists of a number of metal tongues attached to a sounding box that is usually rectangular, although it also appears in other shapes. Individual tongues of the instrument are struck by the player to produce a sound which, like that of the xylophone, is soft, but whose tone somewhat resembles that of a plucked instrument.

Flutes, horns, trumpets, ocarinas, and panpipes—all aerophones—are found all over Africa, and can quite appropriately be used to accompany the songs in this book.

Musical bows are also common throughout Africa, and are even pictured in the ancient rock paintings found in the Sahara. In South Africa itself bows are almost the only chordophones known. Usually the bow is designed exclusively as a musical instrument, although in earlier times some hunters—for example, the Abathwa [Bushmen] in the Kalahari Desert—used their bows both as weapons and as musical instruments. In the absence of materials to resonate the feeble string sound emitted by the shooting bow, the hunter's mouth serves the purpose adequately. When the string is plucked, it produces a fundamental note which persists as a drone throughout the melody. By changing the shape of the mouth over the persistent drone of the fundamental, the musician-hunter can sound different harmonic series needed for his melody. Farther north other chordophones are found, such as the zither. In East Africa and the Nilotic Sudan, for example, lyres, known as "kissars," are used. The body of the "kissar" is often made of a gourd, or a turtle shell, and in earlier times, during the tribal wars, even the skulls of slain

enemies were used for this purpose. Arched harps and zithers are also used in these regions, while in areas that have been subjected to Arab acculturation, lutes are found. But in South Africa, from where our songs are drawn, the bow is, as we have said, virtually the only chordophone in common use.

### **The Role of Music in African Life**

In Africa, music has always been more directly related to daily life than in Europe. European children are usually taught songs from fairy tales or from history, whereas the songs of African children more often deal with the familiar and immediate—with the lagoon they know, with poverty, or with the circumstances of birth. Only when it comes to songs connected with the games they play do African and European children share a common theme.

It is, then, from music that the African child mainly learns about life. Whether it is—as in this book—a song about a wayside medicine man, a song to encourage warriors going into battle, a love song, or a lament, the African song is usually drawn from and related to everyday life. Work songs, boating songs, puberty rite songs, marching songs, cowherding songs, harvest songs, drinking songs, hunting songs, war songs, funeral dirges, ceremonial songs, wedding songs, cradle songs, ritual songs—in every instance music and song are interwoven with African life.

One has only to hear the song of reapers mowing grass to the sound of a flute, a bagpipe in the West African savannah lands, the song of paddlers on an African river, or the thunder of drums and the joyful chorus of voices at an African dance deep in the night to realize the pervasive quality of music in African culture. Even communication becomes fused with music, as in the sonorous sounds of the famous "talking drums" of Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, and elsewhere, which tap and roll out their speech symbols from valley to valley and through the forest groves.

As all over Africa, the folk song in South Africa is a repository of poetry, history, ballads, epics, and stories of all kinds. The folk song recalls historical events such as wars, famines, severe droughts, epidemics, coronations, and



weddings. The song "Mayibuye" in this book is a notable example of a song depicting incidents of historic interest. It is a Xhosa patrotic song intended to inspire the oppressed African people of South Africa by reminding them of their past glories.

Varied as they are, the songs in this book may be broadly classified in three main groups:

- (1) Genuine traditional songs
- (2) Folk songs of recent origin
- (3) Songs composed by modern African song writers

The notes accompanying each song suggest the category in which they belong.

Among the traditional songs are those which strive to teach the ancient African ideals of physical fitness and bravery—ideals that reached their greatest influence during the days when Shaka Zulu welded together the great Zulu nation out of many disparate tribal groups. A song which seeks to instill courage is "Jikele' Maweni." It describes dances and sham fights among the Xhosa youth of South Africa.

Other songs provide an accepted way to criticize the rule of tyrants or despotic chiefs—a means of airing grievances that was permitted not only by the Zulu, Xhosa, Venda, and Tsonga of South Africa, but also by the Nyoro and Ganda of Uganda, and the Watusi of Rwanda and Burundi. This freedom of expression also finds an echo in the tolerance accorded not only to the sayings but also to the doings of the "griots" of West Africa. [The "griot"—minstrel, buffoon, and magician in one—while of low social status, had the right to mock and insult anybody and to indulge in behavior punishable in others.]

### The New African Music

With the coming of the white man, and more particularly with the growth of towns and cities in Southern Africa, African song underwent a transformation to what has been called "neo-folk music." "It was about the year 1940," writes A. M. Jones, author of *Studies in African Music*, "that we in Northern Rhodesia became aware that a new sort of music was coming into the country, though it had been generating elsewhere decades before that. It quickly captivated the young

Africans in schools and the young men and women in mine and town compounds..." Originally of South African origin—as was clear from the fact that the words of the new songs were usually in Sindebele—the music quickly became acclimatized in the Central African region. Before long the new style had spread to both East and West Africa, where it is mainly known as "High Life." At once completely African and completely modern, it represents a new departure in folk music—an adaptation, in effect, of African culture to urban life. As a neo-folk tradition it is now deeply rooted across the African continent and has virtually displaced the more traditional African forms, just as in Europe the old medieval folk songs have been displaced by "popular" music. "It seems," to quote A. M. Jones again, "as if for some unknown reason the impact of American jazz and Western four-part harmony have suddenly produced more or less all over Africa a simultaneous urge to create the same sort of derivative music." Among the songs in this book one may note "Into Yam," "Langa More," and "Thanayi," which have grown out of urban South Africa and combine both non-African and African elements. A characteristic of such songs is the so-called "Umbagonga" rhythm, which possesses jazz elements. The songs can be heard at Gumba-Gumba African parties in the cities of South Africa—"night club" parties completely alien to the traditions of African village life.

A few songs in this book, usually those with political overtones arising from the tragic racial conflict that divides the peoples of South Africa today, have been composed by modern South African songwriters. One of these songs, "Ntyilo-Ntyilo," paradoxically contrasts phrases of lamentation over the "doomed land of South Africa" with a jubilant melody. "Magwalandini" ["You Cowards"] is a brave man's exhortation to his countrymen to awake, rise up from their shameful torpor, and regain their dignity. What the song lacks in text is made up for by its tune, which is reminiscent of the traditional Zulu warrior songs. Melodically wistful, on the other hand, is the song, "Cameroon," which, by implication, contrasts the peace and freedom of that presumably idyllic land with the harsh racial confrontation that has become the main fact of life in South Africa today.



Among the traditional songs in this book are songs that are sung purely for entertainment on social occasions. One such song is "Qongqothwane," or the "Click Song," as it is usually known, which has been made famous by Miriam Makeba's recordings. Patriotic songs such as "Zenizenabo" and "Amampondo," which begin with simple swinging melodies, become rhythmically broken toward the end. This is a common technique in African music. As most African songs are accompanied by dancing, African music usually starts with simple rhythms which gradually, as in the normal dance pattern, build to a complexity toward the climactic end.

Story songs such as "Dubula" and "Ngoma Kurila" are sung while telling a tale, and they are typical of African fireplace entertainment of young family members by their elders. Sometimes such songs do not merely appear in the middle of a story as a diversion. They may be sung stories, such as "Dubula," or they may be ballads, in which case they tend to be technically difficult.

African music abounds in love songs with simple lyrical texts, such as "Woza," "Into Yam," and "Nomthini." They are innocently outspoken and honest, suffused with a passionate restraint that is typically African.

As we have said, the language of the Bantu people of South Africa is musically accented. It includes the "click sounds" *c*, *q*, and *x*, and the lateral sounds *dl* and *hl*. Such consonants occur frequently in the songs in this book, with the exception of the *c* click, which appears more rarely—as in the songs "Mayibuye," "Into Yam," and "Cameroon."

In order to pronounce *c* in the languages of the Bantu people, place the tip of the tongue against the ridge of the palate just behind the teeth. Press hard, and release it suddenly.

The letter *x* appears frequently in the following songs: "Jikele' Maweni," "Thanayi," "Olilili," "Mayibuye," and "Magwalandini." To produce *x*, place the end of the tongue flat against the palate, with the tip lying behind the teeth, and then release the tongue suddenly.

The letter *q* appears frequently in the "Click Song," in "Qhude," in "Mayibuye," in "Zenizenabo," and in "Umqokozo." The shape to be assumed by the sound passage while pronouncing this letter is given in the description of

"Qongqothwane," or the "Click Song."

The lateral *hl* has been used extensively in the following songs: "Nomeva," "Ntyilo-Ntyilo," "Thanayi," "Woza," "Mayibuye," "Nomthini," "Ngoma Kurila," and "Khuluma." In pronouncing this lateral, the rim of the tongue is placed against the ridge of the palate, leaving two slight openings on each side of the tongue, with air being breathed out through the openings.

The lateral *dl* appears in "Langa More" and the "Click Song." This lateral is pronounced in the same way as *hl*, except that while breathing out, the voice is introduced.

The consonant sound *Ng* is pronounced like the last two letters in our word "sing." Where *Ng* is followed by a *g* [*Ng'g*], the second *g* is hard, as in "gun." The other consonant sounds are similar to those in English.

In these songs it has not been possible to show the variations in the vowel sounds of most Bantu languages. As a general rule, however, the vowels should be pronounced like those in Spanish, which have the following English equivalents:

- A like the a in "father"
- E like the ai in "bait"
- I like the i in "machine"
- O like the oa in "boat"
- U like the oo in "boot"

A simple rule will be of help in pronouncing song titles: Place the accent on the next-to-the-last syllable ["Nom-thí-ni," "Khu-lú-ma"].

### The Ballad Singer and Poetry-Making

The African singer, accompanied or unaccompanied, may sing or declaim a dramatic poem in an impersonal tone. The subject is often a tragic love story or a recital of death in battle. Frequently the traditional musician will use his instrument to compose poetry. To a foreigner the result appears merely as an integration of speech and rhythm. But to a person conversant with the language of the poem the result is profoundly beguiling. Rhythmic sounds from the instrument not only accompany the poet's words but spur him on toward ever more imaginative improvisations. He may muse on the uncertainties of life, quoting the misfortunes and successes of friends or well-known figures. To the



accompaniment of a harp, he may narrate episodes from the history of his tribe. Since the attainment of political independence by various African countries, the emergence of political parties has not escaped the curious and roving fancy of the poet-musician. The victories or defeats of such parties have consequently been added to his repertoire.

*Poetic Duets.* Poetry improvisation with instrumental accompaniment attains its greatest success in contests between two musicians. In this particular form the two poet-musicians improvise upon the same topic with the same musical accompaniment. One recites a verse, whereupon the other adds a complementary verse, maintaining the same musical beat. Their topic may be love, war, tribal disasters, or any other important event.

*The Poet-Musician and a Group of Singers.* To the accompaniment of a musical instrument, usually a harp, the poet-musician may declaim or sing a verse while a group of singers, or his audience, sings a refrain to his poem. The topic may, again, be love or war, or else poverty or wealth, disaster or success, and, of course, current or historical events.

*Love Poems.* Musicians all over Africa improvise love poems to the accompaniment of a harp. A poet-musician may narrate verse at great length idolizing his love and extolling her beauty. In Western Uganda this type of poem assumes a stereotyped pattern of three parts. In the first part the narrator sets the scene, describing the place where he met his love. He also describes her beauty in great detail. Without delay he accosts her and proposes marriage. The proposal is immediately rejected. The second part is melancholic. He is unable to speak, eat, or drink. His parents, relatives, and friends are concerned. He attempts suicide. The third part is full of excitement, laughter, and jubilation because at last his love has been fulfilled.

*The African Epic.* This is a long narrative poem, recited immediately after a chorus of singers has performed; it is cultivated by the Cushite Bantu of Western Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi,

as well as by the Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Venda, and Tsonga of South Africa. The words of the song have no bearing upon the ensuing poem, which is usually narrated by an old man of the village or community. The poem is generally composed around a hero who represents the ideal of an entire cultural epoch. Every effort is made to build up the image of the hero. He is the descendant of a whole line of heroes. He is a favorite of the gods. All his heroic deeds are quoted—as are some of his own words. In spite of the usual repetitions, this type of poem is dignified and exalted. Most of these epics are very old and have been handed down orally, while others are new and contain sentiments belonging to recent cultural epochs.

*Song Texts.* In most forms of African songs, words play a significant part. Indeed, it is usually the words that generate the music of the songs because most of the languages of the songs are musically accented. Both singers and audience listen for the meaning of the words of the song, which often convey a message. It is to be expected therefore that the greatest African traditional musician is also the greatest poet, historian, and storyteller in his part of the country.

*Oral History of the African Song.* When the Wanyamwezi of Tanzania, the Luo of Kenya, and the Bakiga of Uganda, to mention only a few, sing their long unending songs, they are in fact relating stories of historical interest. Here the musician fills the vacuum created by the lack of literature and the general illiteracy still existing in most of Africa. Thus the African folk song serves as an important repository of history, poetry, and tradition in general.

### **Part Singing in Responsorial Style**

Part songs are not uncommon in Africa. The prototype of two-part singing is the responsorial style in which the solo enters before the end of the chorus part with a free contrapuntal tune.

In some songs, solo and chorus sing different contrapuntal melodies at the same time, with the chorus always maintaining an ostinato type of



melody. Musical progression is maintained by the solo part with its variations and adventures into new pitches in free counterpoint with the ostinato chorus. The ostinato chorus may be in multi-parts, in which case we hear more than two parts.

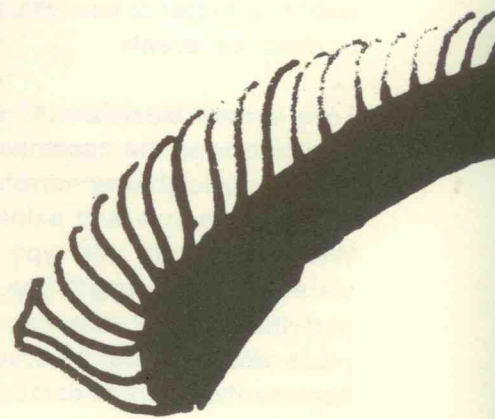
*The Two-Part Responsorial Form of Song.* In this common form of song the two parts are performed by a soloist and a chorus of singers. The solo part is both interesting and difficult. The chorus merely repeats the same refrain throughout the song. The soloist, on the other hand, must be an expert musician. He bears the burden of singing the entire unwritten text of the song. Melodically his part undergoes several variations, whereas the chorus sings the same melody. At times he is called upon to enter before the chorus part ends, so that the two parts run together in free counterpoint.

*Responsorial Style in Three-Part Form.* This type of song is more advanced than the two-part. The soloist's part is onerous. Not only is he expected to sing the entire unwritten text, but he also in effect assumes the role of conductor of chorus and instruments. The music consists of a two-part responsorial form repeated after another contrasting two-part responsorial form, thus representing an A-B-A formula.

*The Canonic Type of Part Singing.* The canonic style of singing is common among the Giriama and some of the Luhya tribes of Kenya. The music is very advanced from the folk-song medium and cannot be sung without a conductor.

## Form

We have already noted that African music in general is highly functional, and that, indeed, there is no social function that is not served by music. While it is beyond the scope of this Introduction to analyze in detail the forms of a variety of functional songs, an example of form may be cited. Among the Baganda of Uganda the installation of the heir to a public figure is an intricate ritual consisting of music, dance, and feasting. Songs for the occasion consist of long and often interesting texts. Musically, the responsorial form of this kind of song is cast into two contrasting





parts of the text, thus forming an A-B formula.

The story song is too vast a subject to treat here—to analyze the forms of story songs of even a single tribe would occupy volumes. We have noted that ballads and stories of all kinds are sung in a declamatory style by African musicians. In addition to this declamatory style, there are song stories in which the tune and words are of equal importance. Such songs are usually long and the musical form is complex. This type of song is common among the Giriama and Luo in Kenya, the Wanyamwezi in Tanzania, and the Bakiga in Uganda.

different pitch, and A is the same melody at the original pitch. These are examples of complete and smooth modulation from one tonal center to another, with complete melodic change. This progression occurs particularly in a number of story songs.

*All peoples, we are told, love that which is familiar to them. It is my hope that, as South Africa's music becomes better known, it will cease to appear alien or strange and instead form a cultural link between the peoples of Southern Africa and the rest of the world.*

SOLOMON MBABI-KATANA

### **Rhythm in the African Song**

What is true of the form of the African song is equally true of its rhythm—the subject is too vast to be treated here. We will only mention that a single song is multi-rhythmic. It consists of the rhythmic flow of singing, of hand-clapping, and of drums. The drums by themselves would be multi-rhythmic—as would be the singers in the case of songs sung in parts.

Within the same song there may be a change in the regularly recurring accented beat, thus causing a change of time signature. There are of course numerous odd-time signatures that are rare in European music, except in the contemporary style.

### **Musical Scale of the African Song**

On this subject again there exists a wealth of material. Here it will suffice to say that there are songs of five-note scales, six-note scales, and seven-note scales within the range of one note and its equivalent above. Each of these scales appears in songs in different modes.

### **Tonality**

In several monophonic songs there appear sequential repetitions, some of which are of complete melodies. Such repetitions may appear at intervals as great as a major third. They create an overall change of the tonality of the song. In several cases there are restatements of the melodies in their original tonality—a procedure which can be expressed in the formula A-A<sub>1</sub>-A, where A is the melody, A<sub>1</sub> is the same melody at a