

Book Reviews

The Kachamba Brothers' Band By G. Kubik [in German] Vienna, Osterreichesche Ethnologische Gesellschaft, 1972, Acta Ethnologica et Linguistica No. 27, 90 pp. no price indicated.

The Kachamba Brothers' Band Recorded by G. Kubik [in Chewa and English] Vienna, Osterreichesche Ethnologische Gesellschaft, 1972, Acta Ethnologica et Linguistica, Phonographica No. 1, 12" L.P. record, no price indicated.

In these two publications, a book and accompanying record, Gerhard Kubik is presenting the results of research in central African popular music. Serious studies of popular music are infrequent, and this work is a significant addition. The publication of book and record together is an ideal format for presenting a type of music which may be unfamiliar to the reader-listener. Studies of music have generally been presented in the form of a book with musical examples or else a record with explanatory notes. In this set the book and the record are fully complementary.

One drawback is that the record has been issued without any indication on the jacket that there is a book to go with it, probably because the record appears also to have been designed for the pop music market in Malawi. This study seeks to understand the position of the Kachamba Brothers' Band and their music in relation to modern music in south-east Africa in general.

The first two chapters of the book present the background of the band giving biographical information of the players. It is formed basically by Daniel and Donald Kachamba, playing the guitar and the pennywhistle respectively. In performances other people join them playing the one-stringed bass and rattles. Daniel learned to play the guitar in Salisbury. In Malawi the band played in bars or else as street performers,

which is not unlike former African *likembe* minstrels. Kubik found them in 1967 playing in the streets of Blantyre and recorded them at that time. When he returned in 1972 he found they had separated, but he got them together, made recordings, and later arranged for them to perform with him in East Africa and Europe. Unfortunately most of the research has been done only with these musicians themselves, and there is little on the social context in which they would normally perform.

Chapter Three deals with the band and its place in the music of Southern Africa. Kubik feels that modern Malawian music combines something of the South African style as well as the style from Zaire. This brings out an interesting problem in ethnomusicology. The Zairean guitar style is plucking strings individually, whereas the South African style is mainly strumming. The music on the record sounds like the latter, but the performer has told the ethnomusicologist that he conceptualizes the music in separate voice lines, more like the Zairean style. The conceptualization of the performer and the sound as heard by the listener is not always the same. The instruments of this band are the same as those popular in South Africa in the 1950s, especially those used in *kwela*. Kubik says that the Malawian music is based on *Simanjemanje* (modern African rock), but the more expensive instruments are not available in Malawi so they use the more readily available instruments.

The fourth chapter deals with the repertoire and origin of the music. Daniel Kachamba has composed some of it, but much of it is adapted from records, even to phonetic reproduction of foreign texts. The compositions are mostly topical songs, often with highly symbolic meanings which are not understandable to the outsider.

The musical instruments themselves are described in the fifth chapter. The pennywhistle (called *kwela-flöte* in German) is adapted by expanding the mouth hole and putting the lip over part of the *labium* (sounding hole) when playing. The guitar is adapted by removing the number five string. Daniel Kachamba uses a variety of tunings, with secret names for them so they cannot be copied by someone else. In addition to rattles, the one-stringed bass is often used. This is a rather large box with a pole on one side of it. A string is stretched from the top of the pole to the box, and it is plucked when playing the instrument.

Chapter Six contains specific notes about the material on the record, including the Chewa

texts and English translations made by Daniel Kachamba himself. The fifteen songs are mostly topical, dealing with love and troubles. One is in praise of President Banda. Eight songs are in Chewa (one of which is mixed with Shona), two are in English and three are Zulu, learned phonetically. Several types of music are given — *Sinjonjo*, Double-step (*Sintanje-manje*), Twist, *Limbika*, Shake-Shake and *Lumba* (Rhumba). The songs are placed on the record in the order they were recorded, but none of the 1967 recordings are included.

The strummed guitar and the string bass are heard in all of the songs. The songs have the strong pulsing beat which is so popular in urban African music today, but there is little syncopation. The one-stringed bass has some lively and interesting bass lines in some of the songs. Just listening to the record does not give a clear idea of why Kubik considered this group particularly interesting or important. The academic interest of the book overshadows the musical interest of the record.

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Indians in Uganda and Rhodesia: Some Comparative Perspectives on a Minority in Africa
By H. H. Patel Denver, University of Denver, 1973, Center on International Race Relations Studies in Race and Nations, 5, i, 35 pp. US\$2,00.

The author has written a thought-provoking, but admittedly preliminary, inquiry which he presents in two main parts. The first portion draws a community profile, concerned *inter alia* with early history, segregation and discrimination, and land and trade policies; the second discusses Indian political activity. He avoids firm conclusions, but remarks that 'the largely apolitical Indian usually has been galvanised into political action for his own interests' — except in his response to developing African nationalism. He comments also that Indians in Rhodesia enjoy what many perceive of as being a precarious existence.

The fundamental issue the paper raises is whether or not a broad community profile can be drawn to cover Indian experience in Uganda and Rhodesia. I believed that this could be done

until I read Patel's study; for it demonstrates that the variable factors are so numerous that no cohesive form can be achieved because the circumstances in which the two communities developed have been so completely different.

It is the early years which are crucial, and too little weight is given to them in this paper. Indians penetrated into Uganda when the British were weak, whereas they entered Rhodesia under the cover of Chartered Company strength. The British in Uganda had to ally themselves with segments of society in Buganda and then negotiate with neighbouring political units, a situation which led to the preservation of African rights through a series of agreements. The 1900 Uganda Agreement, by which Buganda maintained a separate identity until the removal of the Kabaka four years after the