

Yet some of these very musicians connive with record companies to record and sell their comrades' compositions without paying royalties! (p. 66).

*Roots Rocking in Zimbabwe* does address itself to issues other than these machinations. But the latter dominate the book, making it a chronicle of the bare-knuckle brawl that the music industry seems to be today. I empathize with the small man caught between the companies on the one hand, and an ineffectual politicking union on the other. The book could have gained considerably from a reproduction or two of the one-sided contracts which our musicians allegedly enter with the record companies. Zindi's enormous amount of knowledge of the shady goings-on in this industry is bound to disarm readers, as will his first-name-first 'Reference' section of the book which implies his intimate knowledge of the profession, the personalities and the industry that he is writing about. The gloom that envelops this publication must be alleviated by the knowledge that

music is the first of the fine arts, by which every mind is moved. But music, however crude and simple, speaks to every human heart, and this, with dance, constitutes nature's general festival throughout the earth; for the music of a nation in its most imperfect form and favourite tunes, displays the internal character of the peoples (J. G. Herder).

One hopes that all concerned will realize this and give our music due respect.

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**The Traditional Medical Practitioner in Zimbabwe** By M. Gelfand, S. Mavi, R. B. Drummond and B. Ndemera. Gweru, Mambo Press, Zambezi 17, 1985, x, 411 pp., illus., Z\$43.70 (p/b), ISBN 0-86922-350-X.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the principles and practice of the traditional healer. In this part the authors describe how individuals in Zimbabwe become traditional healers, the various methods used in Zimbabwe in carrying out a diagnosis, witchcraft beliefs, preventive medicine, midwifery, psychiatric practice, and some of the commonly treated illnesses. The second part is focused on the plants used by traditional healers in the treatment of various illnesses. This second part of the book is further divided into sections. The first section consists of an alphabetical list of complaints, symptoms and other reasons for which traditional healers in their sample were consulted, and under each heading the plants prescribed are listed, also in alphabetical order. The number of traditional healers interviewed for this second part of the study was 250. This section is followed by a table with the same list of plants but indicates in some detail how these plants are often used by traditional healers. The next section is a comparison of plant remedies used in Zimbabwe and other African countries. In the last section some poisonous plants that are sometimes used by traditional healers are described.

In the preface (p. ix) Gelfand says that the first part of the book contains, 'a

more detailed general survey of the practice of the *n'anga* than attempted hitherto'. I do not agree. The material presented in this part of the book is superficial. There is nothing here that Gelfand and others have not said before about traditional medical practice in Zimbabwe. Some of Gelfand's own books, published before the present one, contain more detailed information than presented here. Much of the information presented in this part of the book was obtained from small surveys conducted by the authors. In the first survey only thirty-four traditional healers were included in the study; we are not told when this survey was carried out. The second survey was conducted in 1980; fifty traditional healers were included in this survey. These traditional healers were mainly from the Greater Harare area. Another survey was conducted in a rural area called Seke. Only nine traditional healers were interviewed. The samples drawn up for these three surveys were obviously too small: it was an unrepresentative sample. Information gathered by the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association indicates that there are about 30,000 traditional healers in Zimbabwe. I am not suggesting, however, that the findings of the present study are always wrong; many of the findings support those of several previous studies. People interested in traditional medical practice in Zimbabwe should read other studies in addition to the present one in order to get a better understanding of this subject.

The second part of the book is rather different. A lot of work went into the preparation of it, and the material presented is extremely valuable. Although much work still needs to be done, the authors have given us a record of the plants commonly used by traditional healers. This record is important for two main reasons. The first is that some of the plants used by traditional healers are becoming extinct. One aim of the study, therefore, was to make a record of these plants before this valuable information is lost. Secondly, it is true that knowledge of the various medicinal plants is being gradually lost each year in Africa as people become more and more dependent on Western medicines; the authors have attempted to preserve this knowledge. It is also interesting to note that 60 per cent of the plants said to be of medicinal value in Zimbabwe were also used in other African countries to treat the same sort of complaints as in Zimbabwe. This information will make the work of other scientists much easier because if a plant is being administered for a similar reason by traditional healers in different countries, it deserves further scientific investigation. Experimental research is now required so that the pharmacological properties of these various plants may be recorded. Some work has already begun in a number of African countries.

The book as a whole is an important contribution to our understanding of traditional medicine not only in Zimbabwe but in many other African countries as well. It should be read by persons interested in the field of illness and health.