

Notes and News

African Music

THE African Music Society was founded in 1948 by Mr. Hugh Tracey for the purpose of stimulating the systematic investigation and recording of African music and establishing this as a recognized branch of African studies. Since that time, the work of Mr. Tracey himself, and that of his collaborators, has become widely known, and African music is now being studied in most parts of the continent. The collection of gramophone records assembled at the Society's headquarters at Roodepoort, Transvaal, and the periodic annotated catalogues of these are of particular value. Up to date the Music Society has issued several publications by Mr. Tracey and others and has published annual Newsletters; it has now started a journal, the first number of which appeared in May of this year.¹ The volume is introduced in a foreword by the Governor of Kenya, President of the African Music Society, and contains articles on the music of Bantu Africa, of Nigeria, Gold Coast, and Belgian Congo, as well as shorter articles not specifically concerned with music, correspondence, notes and news, book reviews.

The scope of the journal is defined, in an invitation to prospective contributors, as including sociology (the social setting, content, and background of songs), linguistics (in relation to music), musicology, dancing, aesthetics, use of African music for religious purposes, and the relation of the music of Africa to African music elsewhere.

While some of the longer articles are specially written the number contains a rather high proportion of reprinted articles. This, however, will no doubt cease to be the case when the journal becomes established as a forum for the discussion of African music and related subjects and recognized as the only periodical concerned entirely with this richly rewarding field of study. It is largely due to Mr. Tracey's enthusiasm and devotion that the serious study of African music, combined with the analysis of its form and structure and of its role in society, has developed so rapidly in recent years. The journal of the African Music Society should be warmly welcomed.

Records of African music at the Musée de l'Homme

A RECENT catalogue of the collections of records available for sale at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris, includes a series of 30 records representative of the different peoples of Madagascar selected by André Schaeffner and Gilbert Rouget from 800 recordings made by M. Henry Clérisse in 1938. Among them are songs and chants used at circumcision ceremonies and fertility rituals, exorcisms, praise-songs and war-songs, and examples of Moslem ritual music. Another collection, also edited by M. Gilbert Rouget, consists of 29 records from collections made by himself and M. André Didier in Ogooué-Congo (A.E.F.) in 1946. This includes examples of the music of 23 African peoples in Moyen-Congo, Oubangui-Chari, and Gabon, and of two groups of pygmies in Moyen-Congo, and consists of instrumental music (flutes, *sanga*, bows, xylophones) as well as songs with and without instrumental accompaniment. French West Africa is represented by two recordings made by Mme Dieterlen in 1953 among the Bambara (Soudan français) of recitations by a griot accompanied by rhythmical beating of a calabash; other West African collections include recordings made among the Toma, Malinké, and Kono peoples (French Guinea), Hausa and Songhai (Niger), Fon (Dahomey).

¹ *African Music*: Journal of the African Music Society, vol. i, no. 1, pp. 96. Johannesburg. Price 10s. 6d.; \$1.50. Annual subscription to the Society, 21s.; journal supplied free to members.