

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4500

Negro Folk Music

ZULU | ETHIOPIA | NIGERIA | SUDAN

of Africa and America
| EQUATORIAL AFRICA | ZANZIBAR | BRAZIL | HAITI | COLOMBIA | CUBA | PUERTO RICO | TRINIDAD | ALABAMA | MISSISSIPPI

NOTES BY RICHARD WATERMAN AND HAROLD COURLANDER

Negro Folk Music of Africa and America

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4500

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4500

- Band 1. SOUTH AFRICA (Zulu): INGANE KAMALUME
- Band 2. SOUTH AFRICA (Zulu): SHAYISA INKASA
- Band 3. FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA (Badouma): MUSIC OF BOATMEN
- Band 4. NIGERIA (Yoruba): ORIN MURITALA ALHAJI
- Band 5. NIGERIA (Ibo): BARA SANABO BARA
- Band 6. SUDAN: TRAVELING SONG
- Band 7. SUDAN: FESTIVAL SONG
- Band 8. ZANZIBAR (Swahili): BINA ADAMU
- Band 9. ERITREA (Tigrai): BALLAD
- Band 10. ETHIOPIA (Amhara): BALLAD
- Band 11. BRAZIL (Bahia Region): 'JESHA CULT SONG
- Band 12. COLOMBIA: COWHERDS' FESTIVAL
- Band 13. HAITI: WORKSONG
- Band 14. HAITI: JUBA DANCE
- Band 15. HAITI: NAGO DANCE
- Band 16. HAITI: MERINGUE -- CHERE MAMAN
- Band 17. PUERTO RICO: GALLINITA TOMA TU MAIZ
- Band 18. CUBA: LUCUMI SONG
- Band 19. TRINIDAD: AJO AJO
- Band 20. TRINIDAD: BELI DANCE
- Band 21. THE UNITED STATES (Alabama): WHAT SHALL I DO TO BE SAVED?
- Band 22. THE UNITED STATES (Alabama): DIDN'T YOU HEAR MY LORD WHEN HE CALLED?
- Band 23. THE UNITED STATES (Mississippi): MY NAME HAS BEEN WRITTEN DOWN
- Band 24. THE UNITED STATES (Mississippi): MOVE MEMBERS MOVE

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. R 59-61

© 1959 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE Corp.
701 Seventh Ave., New York City
Distributed by Folkways/Scholastic Records,
906 Sylvan Ave., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

Negro Folk Music of Africa and America

ZULU | ETHIOPIA | NIGERIA | SUDAN | EQUATORIAL AFRICA | ZANZIBAR | BRAZIL | HAITI | COLOMBIA | CUBA | PUERTO RICO | TRINIDAD | ALABAMA | MISSISSIPPI

NEGRO FOLK MUSIC of AFRICA and AMERICA

EDITED BY HAROLD COURLANDER

FOREWORD BY RICHARD ALAN WATERMAN

The influence of musical traditions stemming from Negro Africa on the musical styles of the new world has, except for the work of a few specialists, largely gone unrecognized. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, it is only recently that African music has been made easily available to people of European and American background; lack of knowledge that Africa possesses a well-structured musical style in several basic respects related to, yet strikingly different from European music, has permitted general acceptance of the notion that the possibilities of African contributions to the musical culture of the Americas were extremely limited. In the United States, particularly, Negroes as well as others have been for many decades conditioned either to think of Africa as a continent without culture, or to feel that under the pressures of slavery the last vestige of African tradition had been irrevocably eradicated.

Furthermore, abundant and pertinent data -- data that in other circumstances would have pointed inevitably and decisively to the fact that in the case of the Negro in the United States as in that of participants in the acculturative processes of any other theater of culture-contact, certain aspects of the original cultural tradition have exhibited a remarkable resistance to change, while items borrowed from culture-patterns of the dominant social group have in many instances been remolded and reinterpreted in conformance with underlying values of the "base-line" culture -- have rendered meaningless and the whole problem short-circuited by the Layman's assumption, more than occasionally documented by half-thought-out pronouncements of academicians, that elements of African behavior and values observed to persist in the new world are biologically ("racially") rather than culturally determined and transmitted.

A realistic approach to the specifically musical aspects of the problem has been further sidetracked by a scholarly red herring in the form of an implicit assumption that American Negro music must be derived either entirely from Africa or entirely from Europe. Acceptance of this fallacious postulate leads necessarily to a curious position where logically, since the music actually is, for the most part, a blend of both the African and the European idioms, the answer to the question of derivation depends largely on the initial direction of approach to

the problem. Thus, Negro spirituals have been pronounced by some scholars to be derived solely from Europe because they contain a great many Euro-American elements; the problem of the provenience of Jazz, on the other hand, has been muddled by proclamations by certain writers who, discerning Africanisms in that form of music, insist that Jazz is purely African.

The musical examples in the present series may serve to clear up some of these difficulties through their demonstration not only that African music of considerable purity exists and functions in the culture of Negro populations in many parts of the new world, but also that traits of African musical style have become intertwined in a wide variety of ways and in many different places with elements derived from Europe to produce a series of well-integrated, vigorous, and peculiarly American hybrids.

INTRODUCTION BY HAROLD COURLANDER

The twenty-four selections included in "NEGRO FOLK MUSIC OF AFRICA AND AMERICA" provide a wide sampling of the musical styles characteristic of the Negro cultures on the two continents. There are many elements of the music of Africa and America which unmistakably demonstrate common sources. Comparison of the west African pieces with those of Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, and Trinidad, for example, leave little doubt of the carry-over of African musical traditions into the new world.

On the other hand, the diversity in Africa itself is very great. There is a style that can easily be identified as belonging to the large majority of Negro cultures of that continent. But in addition, one encounters the styles of North Africa and East Africa which have been deeply affected by the music of the near East. The Islamic influences are obvious on the mediterranean and Indian Ocean coasts. Ethiopia -- which is a "Negro" culture only in a generic sense -- has developed a musical style which, like its people, is a blend.

But to speak in general terms of the music of any large region of Africa is only a matter of convenience, and leads to many misconceptions. A single part of the continent, like West Africa or Ethiopia, contains, a wide range of musical idioms. Even close neighboring peoples sometimes have styles which are highly local, and quite distinct from each other -- albeit with the most basic similarities. The music of the Yorubas of Nigeria, for example, can be readily distinguished from that of their neighbors, the Ibos.

The impact which the music of Africa has had upon other parts of the world is only lately coming to be understood. Spain and Portugal in past centuries absorbed some of the musical contributions of Africa, and passed them on in another form to Latin America. But the most recognizable African aspects of the new world Negro music came directly with the Negro slaves.

In some parts of the Americas it is possible to find old African songs and dances that are still known in almost identical form in local African communities. In some instances the original verbal language survives along with the melodies. The staying power of this music has been very great. One African song recorded in Bahia, Brazil, has been found also in Cuba.

But acculturation and hybridization are doubtless characteristic of all music. The history of the music of West Africa, like other areas, is a history of interchange of styles and influences. Local styles are created and persist. The story of folk music is a story of conflict between resistance to outside influence and a receptiveness to new ideas. Folk music is always protecting itself against change and at the same time hungrily absorbing what is new. There is never any "final" result. The conflict never ends.

To a great extent the direction of the development of a style is dependent upon non-musical factors -- the social setting, the struggles and stability of the culture, and the stress and flux of moral, religious, and esthetic values of the place and times.

In the United States the folk music of the Negro is unmistakably a Negro creation. It has much in common with the Negro folk music of other regions of the world. And yet it is something quite different from West Indian and African Negro music.

An awareness of the power of Negro music -- like all other music genuinely rooted in a way of life -- to perpetuate itself and transmute itself may give us more insight into the variegated basis of the folk and popular music of the United States.

This Anthology does not attempt to give examples of all the styles of Negro music in Africa and America. Nor are the examples of various areas necessarily "characteristic" or "typical" of those areas. In the process of selection there has been some accent on the similarities. But there are wide aberrations from the common stem, and these are represented by such pieces as the Swahili Song (which is predominantly Islamic), the Ethiopian and Eritrean examples, the Haitian Meringue (Chere Maman), the example from Colombia, and the Alabama and Mississippi spirituals.

There is no attempt here to "prove" musical genealogy. "NEGRO FOLK MUSIC OF AFRICA AND AMERICA" simply presents materials for comparison, study, and pleasurable listening.

1. SOUTH AFRICA (Zulu): INGANE KAMALUME
(singer recording) -- male voices, with Drums, Rattle.

The Zulus, who spread over a large area of South Africa during the early nineteenth century, are at present one of a number of Bantu peoples inhabiting the Southern part of the African continent. The policy of the South African government to keep the Africans segregated has not prevented a good deal of change -- and even degeneration -- in the indigenous music in the areas

with large European concentrations. Boer and English influences have penetrated deeply. Few examples of pure Zulu music are available in recorded form. This piece, and the one following, were acquired by the editor in Durban, South Africa, in 1942.

2. SOUTH AFRICA (Zulu): SHAYISA INKASA
(singer recording) -- male voices.
(see above).

3. FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA (Badouma):
MUSIC OF BOATMEN (recorded by Andre Didier, Ogoue-Congo Mission, 1946) -- instruments: Sansa (thumb piano), Horn, Rattles, stamping tubes. The Sansa is a small flat instrument about the size of a cigar box, to which thin forged metal or bamboo strips of varying lengths are attached. It is held in both hands, and the strips are plucked with the thumbs. The Sansa survives in the new world in the enlarged form of the Cuban Marimba. It is found in Haiti and other Caribbean Islands as well. The stamping tubes are usually lengths of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck on the ground or other hard surface. Tone differences are effected by different lengths. The bamboo stampers survive in Haiti under the name Ganbos (Loango name: Dikanbo), in Venezuela, and elsewhere in the Americas. Other examples of stamping tubes can be heard in Ethnic Folkways Library Haitian Albums 1403 and 1907. Other music of this area of Africa is contained in Ethnic Folkways Library Album 1402, MUSIC OF EQUATORIAL AFRICA.

4. NIGERIA (Ibo): BARA SANABO-BARA (Odeon-Parlophone recording) -- male chorus with drums. The Yoruba or Nago culture of Nigeria was, prior to European colonization of the region, one of the most highly developed in West Africa. Nigeria covers a very large area and includes a number of cultural and linguistic groups. The Yorubas and their neighbors the Ibos are among those who have contributed cultural influences to the new world. The presence of Yoruba survivals has been established in Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, the United States, and other parts of the Americas.

5. NIGERIA (Ibo): BARA SANABO-BARA (Odeon-Parlophone recording) -- male voices with drum, sansas, sticks. (for description of sansa, see #3, above). The light ethereal quality of this music is in sharp contrast to the Yoruba selection. While the contrast is not universally characteristic of the differences between Yoruba and Ibo music, it is noteworthy that Ibo music found in Haiti possesses this light, gay, sweet quality. The hybridized Ibo music of Cuba, called Abakwa or Carabali, also is distinguished in this respect. However, this example mainly is intended to demonstrate another facet of African style.

6. SUDAN: TRAVELING SONG (recorded by Harold Courlander, 1942) -- male voices with "harp" and drum. This piece and the one that follows were recorded in Eritrea bordering on the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The performers

were a group of Sudanese itinerant laborers, most of whom were country people from south of Khartoum. They described this piece as a song to be sung while traveling.

7. SUDAN: FESTIVAL SONG (recorded by Harold Courlander, 1942) -- male voices with "harp" and drum. (see above).

8. ZANZIBAR (Swahili): BINA ADAMU (Odeon-Parlophone recording) -- mixed voices with bowed instrument (rebab) and drum. The vocal technique as well as the accompaniment here is distinctly middle eastern rather than African. The island of Zanzibar, off Africa's east coast, has been thoroughly Islamized, like the coastal areas of Kenya and Somaliland. The Swahili are traditional seafarers, and their contact with the mainstream of Islamic culture further north is very old.

9. ERITREA (Tigrai): BALLAD (recorded by Wolf Leslau, 1947) -- this ballad, sung to the accompaniment of a masonquo, or lyre, is typical of the Tigrai province of Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. The masonquo has a leather-covered sound chamber, and the strings are stretched to a framework of sticks. (for more on musical instruments see manual for Ethnic Folkways Library album 1405, FOLK MUSIC OF ETHIOPIA; also, Courlander, "notes from an Abyssinian Diary", MUSICAL QUARTERLY, July, 1944.) The style is closely related to that of the Amhara in central Ethiopia. The strong influence of the near east is readily apparent.

10. ETHIOPIA (Amhara): BALLAD (Odeon-Parlophone recording) -- male voices with begenna. The begenna is a large harp characteristic of central Ethiopia. This style of singing is distinctly Ethiopian, although, as in the previous piece, the influence of the near east is obvious. It is also somewhat closer related to the music of the Somal coast. Other examples of Ethiopian and Eritrean music are contained in Ethnic Folkways Library album 1405, FOLK MUSIC OF ETHIOPIA, and Ethnic Folkways Library album 1201, RELIGIOUS MUSIC OF THE FALASHAS.

11. BRAZIL (Bahia region): 'JESHA CULT SONG (recorded by Melville J. and Frances S. Herskovits, song number 61A) -- leader and chorus with drum, calabash rattle and iron gong. This piece is one of a large number of recordings made in Brazil by Dr. and Mrs. Herskovits in 1941 and 1942, during a field expedition under the auspices of the department of Anthropology of Northwestern University, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. The 'Jesha Cult or "Nation" is one of a number of West African groups which maintain their identity in Brazil. In the notes accompanying their Library of Congress album of Brazilian Cult music, Melville and Frances Herskovits say: "Today the 'nations' most widely represented (in Brazil) are the Ketu and 'Jesha groups of Southwestern Nigeria, belonging to the Yoruba tribe, the Gege of Dahomian origin ... and the Congo and Angola groups whose ancestors were derived from

the southern and eastern fringes of the Congo Basin." This song is an invocation to Oshun, the Goddess of fresh water, who is the "particular deity" of the 'Jesha Cult. For more on the Cult songs of Brazil, see pamphlet for Library of Congress album XIII, AFRO-BAHIAN RELIGIOUS SONGS FROM BRAZIL.

12. COLOMBIA: COWHERDS' FESTIVAL (Fuentes recording) -- this piece is predominantly Indian in style, but the drumming and rattles indicate an intrusion of African influence. The performers -- Colombian Cowherds -- were said to be of mixed Indian and Negro blood. This selection is not a "typical" example from Colombia, but rather an example of a special hybrid development. As in Peru and Venezuela, Indian, Spanish, and Negro musical influences have combined in the folk music in varying proportions. Pure Spanish music, pure Indian, and a certain amount of African music can be found in Colombia also. This piece, with African percussion influences and Indian pipes, demonstrates how unlike elements combine to produce a new style.

13. HAITI: WORKSONG (recorded by Harold Courlander, 1949) -- sung by a laboring crew at work in Port-Au-Prince. A song like this one may be sung for hours at a time. When the singers tire of it, the singing leader composes a new one, or selects an old one from a large repertoire. The African character of this performance is clear, as is its relationship to Negro gang singing in the United States.

14. HAITI: JUBA DANCE (recorded by Harold Courlander, 1949) -- mixed chorus and drum. Performed by the Ayida group of Port-Au-Prince. The Juba dance in Haiti is semi-religious in character, and, while very buoyant, is frequently associated with festivities celebrating the departure of the spirit from the body of a person recently deceased. The Juba dance of Louisiana was probably in its earlier days very similar to this.

15. HAITI: NAGO DANCE (recorded by Harold Courlander, 1949) mixed chorus and drums. Performed by Ayida group of Port-Au-Prince. This is an invocation to the Loa (deity) Legba. (for other similar Haitian recordings, see Ethnic Folkways Library albums 1403, DRUMS OF HAITI, and 1407, FOLK MUSIC OF HAITI.

16. HAITI: MERINGUE -- CHERE MAMAN (recorded by Harold Courlander) -- sung by a blind street musician, playing own guitar, accompanied by young boy with Chachas (small rattles).

17. PUERTO RICO: GALLINITA TOMA TU MAIZ (recorded by Ricardo E. Alegria) -- male voices, drums. Puerto Rico, like other islands of the West Indies, felt the full influence of African music during the centuries of the slave trade. As elsewhere in central and south America, Iberian music and African music have combined in various ways to produce a wide range of styles. This piece, although hybridized is close to the West African style.

18. CUBA: LUCUMI SONG (recorded by Harold Courlander, 1949) -- male voices, drums. The Yoruba, or Nago, people of Nigeria were well represented among the early African population of the new world. They came to Brazil, Haiti, Cuba, the United States and other slave markets. In Cuba the present-day religious cult following Yoruba traditions is called Lucumi, after the name of an old cult center in Nigeria. It is one of a number of Afro-Cuban cults and societies, including the Abakwa, the Arada, and the Kimbisa, all representing various west African cultural survivals. For other recordings of Afro-Cuban music, see Ethnic Folkways Library album 1410, CULT MUSIC OF CUBA.

19. TRINIDAD: AJO AJO (recorded by Melville J. Herskovits, song number 100A) -- Trinidad, like many other parts of the new world, contains sharp reminders of the impact of west African life. This song was sung by members of the Shango cult:

Ajo Ajo,
Ajo mi re,
Kini l'awa o?
Ajo mi re.

Journey Journey,
This my journey,
What are we?
Journey Journey.

20. TRINIDAD: BELI DANCE (recorded by Melville J. Herskovits, song number 21B2.)

21. THE UNITED STATES (Alabama): WHAT SHALL I DO TO BE SAVED? (recorded by Harold and Emma Courlander, 1950) -- sung by dock reed. This piece and the three that follow were recorded during a field trip sponsored by the Viking Fund, Inc. for other examples of music from this region, see Ethnic Folkways albums 1417 and 1418, NEGRO FOLK MUSIC OF ALABAMA. See also the various excellent albums of Negro Folk Music in the United States published by the music division of the Library of Congress.

22. THE UNITED STATES (Alabama): DIDN'T YOU HEAR MY LORD WHEN HE CALLED? (Recorded by Harold and Emma Courlander, 1950) -- sung by Rich Amerson and Earthy Anne Coleman.

23. THE UNITED STATES (Mississippi): MY NAME HAS BEEN WRITTEN DOWN (recorded by Harold and Emma Courlander, 1950) -- sung by Rosie Hibler and family.

24. THE UNITED STATES (Mississippi): MOVE MEMBERS MOVE (recorded by Harold and Emma Courlander, 1950) -- sung by Rosie Hibler and family.

Recordings of Brazil and Trinidad from the collection of Dr. Melville J. Herskovits who reserves the right of their use to the contents of this album only; for other uses written permission from Folkways is required. The other recordings are from the record collection of Harold Courlander.
Editor - Harold Courlander
Production Director - Moses Asch