“Understanding African Music is a splendid volume of musical treasures from cultures and countries of sub-Saharan Africa, one that celebrates the diverse and complex nature of expressive practices found among Hugh Tracey’s field recordings. The book successfully accomplishes its aim to orient readers to the vast expanse of music and musicians, to ways of thinking and behaving musically and to the human capacity for cultural-artistic-social expression.

There are critical lessons to be learned about African music and culture through the activities carefully framed by the author in the reading and listening that leads to them. There is nothing like it in the field. It is a textbook, a guide to deep listening, a study of the innovative musical ways of the human mind and body. The book is a shining realization of ILAM’s hope to fulfill Hugh Tracey’s 1960s vision for repatriating the music he recorded to its communities of origin by creating textbooks designed to teach African music in the schools.”
— Patricia Shehan Campbell, University of Washington, Seattle

“This in depth, beautifully illustrated exposition of the music practices and thinking of sub-Saharan Africa will be a rich resource. Mandy Carver has assimilated and presented the cultural material in accessible language and presents an impressive selection of recordings from across the continent, drawn from ILAM’s collection of field recordings. Her expansion of the ‘elements’ of music captures the signifiers of music in indigenous African cultures.”
— Emily Akuno, The Kenya Polytechnic University College, Nairobi

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