

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY SECTION

30th May, 1966

Dr. Ian Hogbin,
Department of Anthropology,
University of Sydney,
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Dr. Hogbin,

I am very interested in the proposed New Guinea Encyclopaedia and since receiving your letter have given some thought to the musical topics mentioned.

As you are well aware the literature pertaining to the music and musical instruments of New Guinea is both slight and remote. Contributors are either Dutch or German, notably the late Dr. Jaap Kunst. The work of a young German, Dieter Christensen, author of *Die Musik der Kate und Sialum* (1957) and *Melodiestile am Mittleren Sepik* (1963), is confined to early (wax cylinder) collections housed in the Berlin Phonogram-Archiv.

As far as I know there has been no recent ethnomusicological field work done in New Guinea.

Elkin's New Guinea recordings (on Sydney University discs), Ray Sheridan's field recordings (on Wattle and ABC discs) are well known to me. I also have copies of field recordings made by Colin Simpson (ABC), Ralph Bulmer, Bob Glasse and Don Laycock. Only last week I listened (in Canberra) to samples of what appears to be a large collection of songs recorded by Mr. Straatmans of the New Guinea Research Unit, A.N.U. My own work on the music of New Guinea may have developed more noticeably had it not been for necessary entanglements with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

In regard to the instruments you have listed I suggest that these might be divided into the usual four classes: idiophones, aerophones, membranophones and cordophones. This would bring flutes, pan-pipes, and various "trumpets" together under the same heading (aerophones) and thus avoid terminological embarrassments. Also, it would accommodate the bull-roarer which is classed as a "free aerophone". I think your headings should be retained, however, and linked with the above four classes by means of cross references.

In answer to your queries my suggestions are as follow:

1. That New Guinea first be divided into zones or regions. The music collections, as I know them, might be divided into four zones; West, North-east, Central and South. It remains to be seen, of course, whether such divisions could be profitably sustained.
2. Three publications by Jaap Kunst on the music of West New Guinea are now being translated into English with the view to re-publishing the material in one volume. I understand this work is being carried out in the Institute of Ethnomusicology, U.C.L.A. A contribution on music of the West zone might be sought from this quarter. (In the meantime I shall write to Mrs. Katy Kunst for further information.)
3. If asked, Dieter Christensen may be able to compile a "digest" of the material published in German, together with a bibliography and list of recordings. His address is: Dr. Dieter Christensen, Staatliche Museen, Museum für Völkerkunde, Musikethnologische Abteilung, 1 Berlin 45-Lichterfelde, Gardeschützenweg 71/101, West Germany.
4. Ray Sheridan was working in Government Stores at, I think, Port Moresby. His recordings by now should be extensive. If he can be contacted he may be able to contribute descriptions (and photographs) of musical instruments and a list of recordings.

Depending on the amount of space available (and the final date of publication) I may be able to contribute general articles on

- (a) The music and musical instruments of the Central Highlands (with bibliography and list of recordings)
- (b) A general article on the music of New Guinea comparing it with the Aboriginal music of Australia.

The second article (b) would depend on material which can be gathered from West, North-east and South zones, or from whatever divisions on which you may ultimately decide.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) Alice M. Moyle
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