

made of the two songs on the album by the "Jolly Two." "Guitar Stomp" and "Railroad Stomp" are both incredibly subtle guitar duets, the former being an excellent ragtime-styled number, and the latter, a rhythmically intricate stomp. And, as most cuts on this disc, the two stomps are placed in excellent spots in the album's chronology, each being the first song on either side, good instrumental lead-ins to the vocals which follow.

Bessie Jackson's performances range from lower-key, softer blues vocals (as in "Sweet Patunia" and "Levee Blues") to later, more forceful tunes, like "Jump Steady Daddy." Her prize performance on the album, however, is "They Ain't Walkin' No More," which deals with the raised consciousness of a prostitute. Without knowing who was responsible for the euphemistic title, it is audibly obvious that the key line to the song is not, as the title indicates, "...they ain't walkin' no more..." but "...tricks ain't walkin' no more..." "Barbecue Bess" is another truly fine cut, utilizing the sexual imagery of "...wild about my barbecue..." to bring it across.

Along with having a sensitive selection and arrangement of material, this re-issue album boasts excellent liner notes; rather than running on in journalistic superlatives, the notes devote themselves to stylistic considerations of artists and individual songs, describing meters, keys, and formats, within the blues context.

If there were some possible way to increase the fidelity of a reissue of this sort, which gets lost in the attempt to filter out surface noise, the recording industry would have discovered a major breakthrough. Unfortunately, this particular recording suffers in a few places from this filtering process (case in point, "Jim Tampa Blues"). Some other cuts are half-inaudible due to wear on the original 78 recording.

This technological problem notwithstanding, the people at Yazoo did an admirable job in the compilation, notation, and the entire reissuing of the performances of these two important blues artists, who, in these times of nostalgic attention being paid to the "stars" of the Depression Blues Era (such as Bessie Smith), might otherwise have been overlooked.

Ritual Music of Ethiopia.

Recording and descriptive notes by Lin Lerner and Chet A. Wollner, 4 pp., map, musical transcriptions by Toni Marcus, photos.
FE 4353. Folkways Records, 701 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10036, 1973.
\$7.95.

Reviewed by Ruth M. Stone.

Since there have been, until recently, only a few commercial recordings of Ethiopian music available, this new recording increases the availability of recorded sound from the region. Ritual Music of Ethiopia, collected in the summer of 1973, offers sound samples from various Ethiopian peoples: Wallamo,

Hanafa, Gemu, Tigre, Adjuran, Gidole, Falasha, Borana, Buragi, and Konso, most of whom live in the southwestern part. The songs are for weddings, a Falashim Sabbath service, greeting, introduction of a man to a woman, entertainment after work, plowing, and watering animals. It should be noted, however, that the use of the word "ritual" in the title of this album is not explained in the notes. So it is unclear as to what meaning is intended or in what ways the individual bands of music are associated with ritual.

While the introductory notes briefly describe music and musicians of Ethiopia, they generally treat the multi-faced musics of this area as if they were quite homogenous, and only touch on the diversity present in the music of different groups. While the sample presented includes music of many different peoples living over an extended geographical area, it is difficult to judge just how representative the songs are of the area's musics. Also, musical sound description terms are not used precisely. For example:

Talking and chanting in call and response pattern, the leader tells the story of either an historic event or myth or something funny that happened to him today while his friends respond in antiphonal fashion.

(Call and response is not the same as antiphony, antiphony implying two equal-sized groups of singer alternating and call and response involving a leader and chorus singing in alternation.)

A few musical transcriptions are included, but they are difficult to follow, especially in an example that indicates noteheads for pitches without using a musical staff.

In general, the notes accompanying the individual bands offer little specific information about the circumstances, context, or meaning of the particular song recorded, but rather deal with the general category of music (wedding, work, etc.) represented by the sound in the particular band. Included, in a few cases, are performers' names, and in most cases, location of recording. There are a few paraphrases but no song texts.

Despite these problems in documentation, the sound quality of the disc is quite good. And for this reason, the listener has a fine audio reproduction of music that exhibits Arabic, Sub-Saharan, and uniquely Ethiopian characteristics. There are intriguing instrumental sounds, especially those played by various flutes and horns. Voice disguise is ubiquitous, appearing in multiple shades of sound and varieties of rhythm.

Since the sound reproduction is fine, it is all the more regrettable that the notes do not provide the listener with more information about the specific circumstances of musical performance.