

theme. "Someone's Going to Mistreat You," a rhythm-and-blues; "I Hate to See You Go" and "Leaving You Behind," both "jump blues"; and "Ain't This Cold, Baby," with idiomatic 1940's jazz instrumental and vocal phrasing of the blues formula, are all reflections on man-mistreated-by-woman. T-Bone evidences a relaxed but husky quality of the vocals, generally complemented by the "wailing" guitar in a richly textured background featuring Arvanitas on piano, Singer on sax, Samson on bass and Leary on drums. The two instrumentals on the album are designed to showcase a major strength of the album--the well-blended talents of the ensemble.

The title song, "I Want A Little Girl," and "Baby Ain't I Good to You" fill out this beautifully balanced collection. Both counter the "dirty mistreater" theme with a "pretty baby" theme, featuring T-Bone in the slow, relaxed tempo established by the ensemble. To be sure, this collection has the most limited range of the three, but for most listeners it compensates by being the most professional.

As a unit these three albums provide a good starting point for those who wish to begin developing blues collections, or a qualitative addition to the album repertoire of those who already have.

Music from an Equatorial Microcosm: Fang Bwiti Music with Mbiri Selections.
 One 12" 33-1/3 rpm disc. Recorded and annotated by James W. Fernandez.
 Descriptive note, 11 pp., map, photos.
 FE 4214. Folkways Records, 701 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10036,
 1973. \$7.95.

Reviewed by Ruth Stone.

James Fernandez's recording is somewhat unique among ethnic music discs. Rather than being a sampling of many types of music from a particular country or culture, it consists solely of songs used in the Bwiti and related Mbiri cult of Gabon, West Africa. And Fernandez brings good credentials to the task, as he has studied and written extensively about these cults in the past.

As explained in the notes, the Bwiti cult is a syncretist religious cult combining aspects of the Fang ancestor cult and Christianity. The related Mbiri cult is more specific in purpose and directed towards curing. While the Bwiti cult was well established by the 1920's, the Mbiri cult appeared after World War I. The psychotropic plant, known as eboga among the Fang, is used in small amounts during ritual cycles and in large doses during initiations when initiates experience visionary reunions with ancestors.

Stylistically, the music provides a fascinating example of call and response with solo and chorus each having long segments. Also, as the notes indicate,

these parts frequently change, presenting a variety of melodic and textual material. Other songs in the cycles consist of intricate, overlapping ostinati (repeated melodic and rhythmic patterns) which are particularly characteristic of Sub-Saharan African music. From a Western analytic perspective there appears to be a rich array of Western, Sub-Saharan African, and Arabic elements that certainly deserve in-depth study. However, it would have been important, and interesting, to know how the Fang conceive of their own music; but this kind of information is not provided.

The introductory notes are pertinent and sufficiently detailed for a variety of study purposes. In addition to a description of the Bwiti and Mbiri cults, Fernandez details a ritual cycle of Bwiti and the associated symbolic meanings, giving many Fang terms. Description of musicians and their role and the use and symbolism of musical instruments is included, as well as a short section on musical style.

The organization of selections proceeds logically from the beginning to the end of the ritual cycle. The information on individual bands of the recording include partial and full texts with translations, with explanations of the meaning associated with the music. It is quite helpful that the place, date, and principal performers are included. It should be noted, however, that neither the band titles nor the notes always distinguish which cult the songs belong to. Also, it is not clear whether these recordings were made in the context of an actual Bwiti or Mbiri ritual or not. The sound quality is good throughout, though at times balance between solo and chorus makes close scrutiny of individual parts difficult.

This album is an important contribution to African music, especially as an example of a recently developed type of music exhibiting syncretism. And the notes offer a fine perspective for listening to the music.

Fiddlers of the Tennessee Valley. With Sam McCracken, Lena Hughes, Bob Douglas, Frazier Moss, Richard Blaustein, Bud Meredith, J. T. Perkins, Bill Mitchell, Bill Northcutt, Dick Barrett.
20 selections, instrumental, stereo, notes.
DU-33004. Davis Unlimited Records, Route 11, 16 Bond Street, Clarksville, Tennessee 37040, 1973. \$3.00.

Reviewed by Dennis Coelho.

At many of the larger fiddle contests around the United States, it has become customary each year to issue a "souvenir" album made up of selections played by winning contestants, "cuts" from notable jam sessions and perhaps a tune or two from more-or-less local stage talent. Galax, Virginia and Weiser, Idaho provide two well-known examples.

Fiddlers of the Tennessee Valley is a collection of "cuts" (two per fiddler)