

## BOOK REVIEW

Moyle, Alice M., comp. A handlist of field collections of recorded music in Australia and Torres Strait. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1966. (Occasional Papers in Aboriginal Studies Number 6, Ethnomusicology Series No. 1.) xvii, 227 pp., maps. \$2.50, paperbound.

Alice Moyle's Handlist is primarily a catalogue of Australian aboriginal music recorded on cylinder, wire, magnetic tape and disc. The primary list of 176 entries is presented in chronological order (1899-1965), followed by a condensed list for quick reference. Three other indexes refer to the main entries: a list of collectors, a locality index and an index of languages or tribal groups mentioned in the entries. Although one of the main purposes of the Handlist is to act as a guide to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies for future field collections, the list also covers collections housed by other institutions and those held solely by individuals. Completeness is not claimed for the list, but the volume of material it contains ensures its usefulness as a general reference to sound material available for musicological research in Australia and Torres Strait.

The information given in each entry is particularly comprehensive. The date of the recording, the name of the collector, and the locality in which the recording was made are indicated. Each tribal area is represented by a letter symbol referring to a tribal area map located at the front of the book. Other information includes the present location of the original recording, the recording medium (cylinder, tape, disc, etc.), a quality rating, duration of the recording and an indication of the contents — sound components, song names and speech. The availability and location of tape copies and disc recordings, and an indication of published and unpublished material relating to the collection completes each entry.

Apart from the main list Moyle has included several other sections. Disc recordings, both commercial and non-commercial, are listed separately, and one list refers to discs available in the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Historical Library together with valuable critical comments by Moyle or with collector's notes. Of further historical interest are four maps showing localities in which

music was recorded during the following periods: (a) 1901-1939, (b) 1940-1949, (c) 1950-1959, (d) 1960-1965. An additional foldout map shows musical regions and the distribution of sound instruments.

It is a truism that research workers, teachers and students are often frustrated by the lack of comprehensive knowledge of the availability of material on the subjects of their disciplines. For the ethnomusicologist the problem goes beyond knowledge of publications and unpublished theses to the knowledge of what has been recorded and what is available on discs. Alice Moyle's Handlist compares very favorably with other attempts to fill this gap, for example, the UNESCO catalogues of holdings in specific archives of recorded music. Its comprehensiveness and clarity of organization offers an example worthy to be emulated by workers in other areas.

It seems, however, that there are several ways in which the value of the book could be increased in future editions. Although it may have been beyond the original scope of the work, there seems to be no more appropriate place for a complete bibliography of published material on Australian aboriginal music. The number of publications would not make the task prohibitive in terms of the work involved or the space it would occupy in the Handlist. The use of the term "non-ceremonial" for recordings made under camp conditions, but not during a ceremony, is misleading, although the terminology is defined in the Introduction. "Non-ceremonial" music (in the Handlist's terminology) may in fact be ceremonial music in its generally understood meaning, even though it is not recorded at a ceremony. The term "camp-interview" may perhaps be a less confusing alternative. Page numbers should be indicated in the Locality Index and the index entitled Languages and Tribal Groups, as they are for the other indexes.

The Handlist is an excellent catalogue of field collections and commercial and non-commercial discs of Australian aboriginal music, and the first of its kind. Several implications clearly emerge. In the first place, it focuses attention on the areas which have not yet been adequately, or even minimally, covered as far as collecting music is concerned, and it points to the directions in which studies could profitably be made. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it indicates that a single comprehensive study of aboriginal music in Australia could now be made. The Handlist greatly facilitates such a task. It is hoped that further publications in ethnomusicology by the Institute will conform to the high standard of this work.

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