

## The Search for Medieval Music in Africa and Germany, 1891–1961: Scholars, Singers, Missionaries

By Anna Maria Busse Berger. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. Pp. xii + 351. Cloth \$55.00. ISBN 978-0226740348.

Harry Liebersohn

University of Illinois

This is a book that may seem strange at first sight: its three parts cover the history of comparative musicology (a forerunner of today's ethnomusicology); the creation of medieval music performance by musicologists and early-twentieth-century German youth and singing movements; and missionary work in German East Africa. One may well wonder what brings together these three different trajectories. What Anna Maria Busse Berger reveals is how, on closer examination, they belong to a shared global history that circulates from Germany to Africa and back again to Germany. Comparative musicology began in the late nineteenth century as the first disciplinary attempt to understand music on a global scale, across time as well as space. The comparativists thought there were fundamental similarities between what they called the "primitive" music of the European Middle Ages and of contemporary Africa. Missionaries put the theory into practice by teaching Gregorian chant and other early European music to their colonial subjects, sometimes retaining their belief in a natural fit with African music, sometimes learning to respect African music's distinctive complexity.

The story reaches back to the early-nineteenth century and the formation in Germany of comparative linguistics. Associated with names like Wilhelm von Humboldt, Jacob Grimm, and Franz Bopp, this discipline attempted, with the aid of grammatical and lexical charts, to reconstruct an evolutionary history reaching back to an original Indo-European language; it also touted the supposed superiority of European over non-European language groups. Guided by the comparative linguists' model, Erich von Hornbostel and his circle in Berlin tried from the turn of the twentieth century to reconstruct an analogous evolutionary history of music. In Busse Berger's account, Humboldt compared languages without cultural prejudice, but it would be more accurate to characterize his approach as ambivalent, at times hierarchical, and at times equally respectful toward non-European languages. A similar ambivalence pervades the work of the Berlin comparative musicologists: amid near-universal European disdain toward non-European music, they cherished musical diversity while incompletely shedding their era's distinctions between higher and lower cultures. Busse Berger devotes a chapter to Nicholas G. J. Ballanta, a West African educated in Britain and the United States who rejected the identification of African and medieval European music, only to have his monograph dismissed and left unpublished. Two well-placed professors, Jacques Handschin and Manfred Bukofzer, were able during the interwar years to dismantle the evolutionary assumptions of comparative musicology, as did Bruno Nettl and other postwar ethnomusicologists.

During the Weimar Republic and the Nazi dictatorship, a younger generation of comparative musicologists embraced the argument that medieval music and Renaissance polyphony belonged to an epoch separate from and superior to modern European music. Scholars such as Mario Schneider, Georg Schünemann, and Heinrich Bessler pioneered the difficult work of reconstructing early music; Fritz Jöde was at the forefront of a singing movement for youth that favored medieval music. All of these figures collaborated more or less energetically with the Nazi regime. As Busse Berger emphasizes, the early music revival overlapped with an atmosphere of anti-modernism, its leaders contrasting their participatory choral

performances to the decadence of the bourgeois concert hall and its passive audiences. An ideology of *Gemeinschaft* was widespread in early music scholarship and music-making. The implications of the term are muffled, however, in Busse Berger's translation. She writes: "The central concept of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* is *Gemeinschaft*, or comradeship – being there for one another and helping one another" (109). As it derived from Ferdinand Tönnies's sociological work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, the term *Gemeinschaft* connoted not just "helping" and "being there," but resentment toward modern capitalist society and all its works. By the 1920s—contrary to Tönnies's support for the Weimar Republic—*Gemeinschaft* was widely associated with racial community.

Busse Berger gives a rich description of missionaries to East Africa, who were enthusiastic about Germany's singing movements, took up the idea of a *Gemeinschaft* expressed through medieval music, and searched, as her title suggests, for comparable music in Africa. Especially rewarding are the distinctions she makes among different missionary groups. The Moravians, heirs to a tradition of empathetic ethnographies, paid attention to local African music and sometimes tried to integrate it into their services. A chapter on the Leipzig Mission focuses mainly on one missionary, Bruno Gutmann, who had little higher education but turned himself into a formidable Africanist. He and his fellow missionaries did not use local music, as the Moravians did; Gutmann's passion seems to have been to teach his charges Lutheran (not medieval) music, such as the chorales of Paul Gerhardt. The Bethel Mission, small but notable for its compassion and cultural sensitivity, ended up with a mixture of song, African and European. The Benedictine missionaries of St. Ottilien, forbidden by a papal statement of 1903 from using local languages in Sunday Mass, tried to teach Gregorian chant to their charges. The Benedictines, we learn, "suffered severely from the Maji Maji Rebellion of 1905–7, and several of their missionaries were killed" (204). The death of hundreds of thousands of Africans in the ensuing fighting and famine goes unmentioned; in its absence, the book's account of all of the missions, Protestant as well as Catholic, is profoundly incomplete.

Historical scholarship—political history, colonial history, the history of anthropology, and historical critiques of nationalism—is underused in this book, which explores too little the effects of colonial rule and right-wing German politics on scholars, missionaries, and Africans. But there is also much to learn from Busse Berger's authoritative musical expertise and extensive archival research. Global historians, Europeanists, and Africanists will learn about a largely forgotten chapter of twentieth-history in this imaginatively conceived work.

doi:10.1017/S0008938921001564

## Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Germany

**By Itohan Osayimwese. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2017. Pp. viii + 334. Cloth \$49.95. ISBN 978-0822945086.**

Martin Kalb

Bridgewater College

Discussions surrounding Germany's Nazi past only somewhat mirror volumes on the history of architecture: much has been written about Hitler's architect Albert Speer, Nazi visions of Germania, and ongoing efforts to confront the relics of the Third Reich; German colonial architecture, on the other hand, has seen less attention. Itohan Osayimwese's volume aims to address this silence by decolonizing "the landscape of colonial memory in the