

*Journal of the
American Musical
Instrument Society*

VOLUME II • 1976



Copyright by the [American Musical Instrument Society](#).
Content may be used in accordance with the principles of fair
use under [Section 107 of the United States Copyright Act](#).
Content may not be reproduced for commercial purposes.

selves) that it can lead us to. Ultimately it will be judged on how complete its coverage is, and no one can know that until we have all used it for awhile. Under Chicago, for example, I note that they do not list the small group of Civil War band instruments owned by the Chicago Public Library (perhaps there are not enough instruments there to comprise a "collection," or perhaps the instruments are not of sufficient interest). But that omission must be balanced against the fact that I learned about several collections in Chicago that I had not known about before, including one in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, in the building just next to the one in which the Department of Music is located. Doubtless many users of the survey will find other omissions, and they should surely communicate their new information to the compilers of this book, for we should hope that from time to time new editions will be made—such directories obviously can no more be completely accurate than a telephone directory—and that eventually we shall all regard the Lichtenwanger (*et al.*) survey as the organological equivalent of the Blue Guide or the handy green Michelins, to be packed automatically whenever Fortune leads us to Port Chilkoot-Haines (Alaska), Aptos (California), Saguache (Colorado), Culdesac (Idaho), or Peru (Indiana).

HOWARD MAYER BROWN

Karl Gustav Izikowitz. *Musical Instruments of the South American Indians*. Wakefield, Yorkshire, England: S R Publishers Ltd., 1970 (first ed. Göteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri Akiebolag, 1935). 433 pp., 265 fig.

Karl Gustav Izikowitz, a follower of Baron Erlan Nordenskiöld, professor at the University of Göteborg, is the author of a book dedicated to the comparative study of the musical instruments of the aborigines of South America. A unique book of its kind, it was first published in 1935 and was out of print for many years.

Izikowitz used, in the writing of his book, documentation from museums, archives, and libraries of Europe and America. Izikowitz considers, in his introduction, that comparative ethnographic stud-

ies can be carried out "either 1) on a single tribe, or in a limited area, and the origins of the different cultural elements found within that area traced, or else 2) by studying similar elements and groups of elements, like basket weaving, mythology, etc., in a certain number of different cultural areas. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages, but, in their totality, they are complementary." Izikowitz used the second method which "requires considerable knowledge on the part of the researcher of the internal characteristics of the different areas under study" (p. 1).

Izikowitz considers that in order to carry out these studies—of musical instruments, in this case—the researcher should first be familiar with various cultures, since otherwise he would never be able to discern the elements which converge in one culture in particular; but, by the same token, he would be unable to begin comparative studies without a complete familiarity with each particular culture. Thus the author studies each instrument within its cultural complex, and he is concerned not only with its appearance, but with its function; and the function generally has a bearing on the instrument's ornamentation, which in turn often has a ritual function. In addition, he is concerned with the instrument's origin and dispersion, which in every case is linked to other elements of the culture under study.

In this regard the author was not always able to carry out his wishes, since he worked with material from museums, often with incomplete or deficient documentation. Undoubtedly this conditioned the design of his work, which was unable to include musical aspects properly speaking. As a result he can tell us nothing about the performance of these instruments, or about the music or playing techniques. Neither was he able to measure the sounds they produce because, although he traveled with a Strobococonn, he would have found a great difference between the playing of an instrument by an organologist, an ethnomusicologist, or an orchestral player, compared with the playing of the Indian or folk musician, because the Indian knows the traditional technique which allows him to obtain from his flute, for example, sounds undreamt of by the professional flautist. And if this is the case with a simple flute, which can be sounded by blowing, a researcher confronted

with a series of strange instruments would often not even know how to tune an instrument and prepare it for playing. This was, beyond a doubt, Izikowitz's great problem; it forced him to rely on the texts of chroniclers and anthropologists, or to make his own descriptions of museum instruments, and sometimes to dispense with the technical musical aspect.

The author's control of documentary sources is truly exhaustive, but limitation stems from the very documents themselves. *In situ* work is needed—work which can only be undertaken by numerous specialists, who will travel, as a part of a broader scheme of musical research, to research the different groups of aborigines who still make and play autochthonous instruments. (This is being carried out by the Instituto Interamericano de Etnomusicología y Folklore, which I direct. When Izikowitz undertook his work, he couldn't do other than what he did.)

For the systematic classification of the material, Izikowitz follows the model of Hornbostel and Sachs, adapting it to the South American material.

In conclusion, we can say that the work of Izikowitz achieves the goal sought by its author: namely, to make a historical study and a dispersion study of the aboriginal musical instruments of South America. Therefore, no new work on this material can be undertaken without taking this book as a point of departure.

It should be noted here that the book is copiously illustrated, which permits the recognition of the instruments dealt with. It contains useful pictures about the tribes possessing certain types of instruments and the authors who describe them or the museum where they are found, all complemented with a bibliography which is, for all practical purposes, exhaustive.

ISABEL ARETZ

Translated by Mary Lusky