

*Journal of the
American Musical
Instrument Society*

VOLUME IX • 1983



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Jennifer Lindsay. *Javanese Gamelan*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979. xi, 59 pp.; 32 color, 18 black-and-white plates. \$8.95.

Haags Gemeentemuseum. *Traditional Musical Instruments of Japan*. Foreword by Onno Mensink. Buren: Frits Knuf, Ltd., 1979. 64 pp.; 4 color, 24 black-and-white plates; plus a 7-in. 45-rpm recording. Hfl 30.

Jennifer Lindsay, who learned to play gamelan from teachers who are among the most respected in Java, and who played gamelan among Javanese for five years, wrote this small book primarily for visitors to Indonesia who desire some understanding of Javanese gamelan music to enhance their listening pleasure. Overall it is a very good introduction for laymen, presenting brief information on historical background, the instruments, tuning and notation, the structure of gamelan music, and the gamelan in Javanese society. This is supplemented by a list of recordings, notes on pronunciation, a glossary, and suggestions for further reading. The quality of the plates is adequate; that of the drawings of instruments, together with their measurements, is excellent. In the opinion of this reviewer, Lindsay's most notable achievement is in presenting the viewpoints of the bearers of the tradition without being patronizing.

In comparison to the good features, the weaknesses are relatively minor. There are a few technical inaccuracies, probably owing to simplification for a nonprofessional readership. The statement that in "the soft-playing ensemble . . . the *bonang* is not used" (p. 6) is an over-generalization, for in the majority of "soft-playing" ensembles available on recent commercial recordings (including both discs issued in the United States and cassettes issued in Java) the *bonang* is used. The description of the tone quality of the female singer as "very nasal" (p. 37) is an impression from an English speaker's viewpoint. The description of the *suling* (p. 17) lacks essential detail, and that of the *saron* as "a xylophone with bronze bars" (p. 11) could have been worded to avoid the inherent contradiction with the meaning of *xylos* (wood).

A few items will be confusing to the intended readership: the use of two different names (*siyem* in fig. 3 and *suwukan* in the text referring to it) without mentioning that both names are commonly applied to the same instrument; some inconsistencies in orthography; and the italicizing of the English plural suffix *s* when applied to Javanese nouns. The reference to "the photographs . . . Chapter 1" (p. 13) should be to

color plates 5, 6, and 7 in chapter 2. The spelling of *ngrasakke* as *nra-sakke* (p. 39) and *serat* as *cerat* (p. 40) are probably typographical errors.

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Traditional Music Instruments of Japan is a special-interest museum catalogue. The twenty-nine instruments shown in good-quality color and black-and-white photographs are all from the holdings of the Haags Gemeentemuseum. Onno Mensink states (p. 6) that they were selected for the beauty of the instruments themselves and/or their decoration, rather than for a representative survey of traditional Japanese instruments (ten books for further reading are suggested for the latter). He acknowledges that the material on historical background and genres is based largely on *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* by William P. Malm (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1959). Eight quotations from *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon*¹ are included to give the reader a perspective on the perception of music and musical instruments in the Heian Period (794–1185). Mensink suggests that the book be read in conjunction with another in the Haags Gemeentemuseum's picture-book series, *Japanese Woodcuts with Music* (Buren: Frits Knuf, Ltd., 1975), which presents an Edo Period (1615–1868) perspective.

A limited-edition 7-inch disc recording, intended for 45-rpm play-back (though this is not indicated on the disc or in the book) and bearing the Nonesuch Explorer Series logo, is housed in a flap in the back cover. It is included to give "an idea of how traditional Japanese music sounds" (p. 7). The six bands are of four of the instrument types pictured (*koto*, *shamisen*, *shakuhachi*, and *biwa*—the latter with voice) and two ensembles (*sankyoku* and what is labelled "folk music ensemble," though it sounds more like a modern arrangement or composition than traditional Japanese folk music). All six examples are excerpts from longer compositions, though no indication is given of title, genre, performer's name(s) or *ryū* (school). Except for the *biwa* example, in which the beginning is too soft unless the volume control is raised, clarity and ambience are satisfactory.

Not all the instruments included in the book are considered "musical instruments" by the Japanese, though all are valued in relation to their

1. Ivan Morris, trans. and ed., *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967). Not published by Oxford University Press, as stated by Mensink on page 7.

context (religion, theater, music) and all but one (a dancer's prop listed as an "imitation drum," p. 45) for their timbre.

The text is written in Dutch and English. Neither the occasional awkwardness in the English wording nor the misspelling of common words will cause readers much trouble. However, the English-language designations for instrument types which do not follow scholarly practice—e.g., the longest of the lutes, the *biwa*, is designated as "short lute" (p. 49) instead of short-necked lute; and both shorter lutes, the *shamisen* and *kokyū*, are called "long lutes" (p. 53) instead of long-necked lutes—limit the book's usefulness to some potential readers. Nevertheless, it is recommended for scholars interested in the ornamentation of instruments, in museum collections per se, or in owning a complete collection of books about Japanese sound-producing instruments.

BARBARA B. SMITH

Bjørn Aksdal. *Med Piber og Basuner, Skalmeye og Fiol: Musikinstrumenter i Norge ca. 1600–1800* [With pipes and trombones, shawn and fiddle: musical instruments in Norway, ca. 1600–1800]. Trondheim, Norway: Tapir, 1982. 159 pp. Kr. 85.

The author's stated intention in producing this handbook is to give a systematic overview of Norwegian musical instruments in use until 1800. The book is organized conventionally by type of instrument: stringed instruments, wind instruments, and percussion. The various subdivisions within each classification (e.g., under wind instruments: bagpipe, shawm, oboe, bassoon, clarinet, recorder, flute) are treated briefly, first from a historical perspective, and then with a glance at individual specimens. There is little new information about the instruments themselves, but Aksdal's discussions are well documented and provide a good introduction to the subject.

The value of this book lies in its inclusion of iconographical and historiographical data. Aksdal has examined a number of original sources in Norwegian libraries, including seventeenth- and eighteenth-century descriptions of local history, culture, and musical life. References to these sources are interspersed in his text and make for interesting reading in conjunction with his summaries of recent scientific studies of Norwegian instruments. Aksdal also provides photographs of musical instruments, as well as many illustrations of painting, sculpture, and folk art—generally borrowed from works on Norwegian art and iconogra-