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RICHARD KATZ, MEGAL BIESELE, MARJORIE SHOSTAK

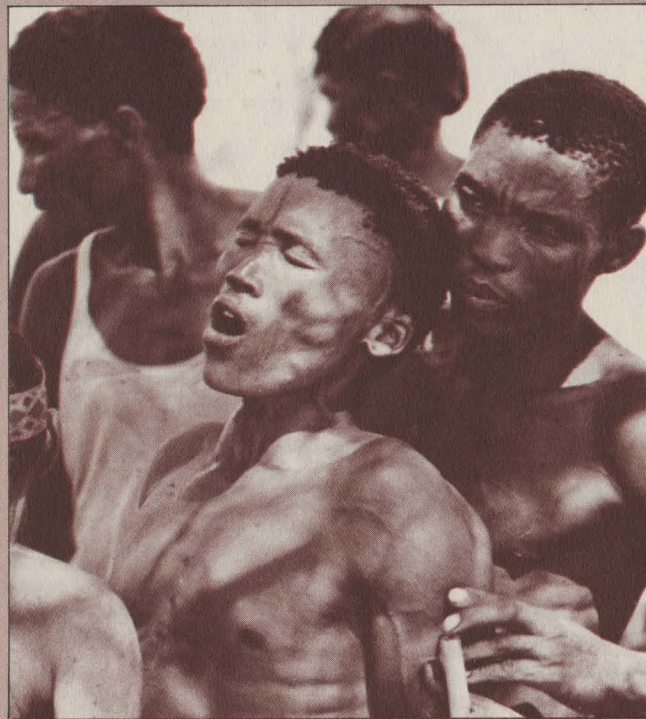


ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4316

Healing Dance Music of the KALAHARI SAN



!Kung San women dancing Photo by Richard Katz / Anthro-Photo



A !Kung San man in the healing trance Photo by Marjorie Shostak / Anthro-Photo



A !Kung San healing dance Photo by Richard Katz / Anthro-Photo

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

SIDE 1

Traditional dances—Giraffe dances

- Band 1 A San women singing one theme from
a healing dance song.
Band 2 continues
Band 3 A large traditional healing dance.
Band 4 A smaller traditional healing dance.

SIDE 2

Innovative dances

- Trees dance**
Band 1 A !kia dance recently created by a young
San man.
Drum dance
Band 2 A female-oriented !kia dance.

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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HEALING DANCE MUSIC OF THE KALAHARI SAN

Recorded by Richard Katz*, Megan Biesele, Marjorie Shostak



End of a healing dance. Photo by Richard Katz/Anthro-Photo.

This record contains healing dance music recorded among the !Kung San, a hunting and gathering people living on the northwestern fringe of the Kalahari Desert, in Botswana, Africa. It was recorded in 1968-1972 by Richard Katz (School of Education, Harvard University), Megan Biesele (Department of Anthropology, Harvard University), and Marjorie Shostak (Peabody Museum, Harvard University). The music evokes a religious altered-state-of-consciousness, called !kia, which leads to the experience of transcendence and facilitates the well-being of the group.

The central event in this healing tradition is the all-night healing dance. The dance, which involves the entire community, is also a major social event. It is an opportunity for self-expression and re-establishing the individual's sense of belonging to the group. Although dances are as much for enjoyment as anything else, the healing of sickness, both manifest and latent, remains a central feature.

On the average of four times a month, night signals the start of this dance. Women sit around the fire, singing and rhythmically clapping; men, sometimes joined by the women, dance around the singing women. As the singing and dancing intensified, n/um or spiritual energy is activated in the healers, most of whom are among the dancing men. As their n/um "heats up" the healers experience !kia--an enhancement of their consciousness. While experiencing !kia, the healer makes contact between the human and spiritual worlds. Healing now becomes possible. All who are at the dance are healed. Before the sun fully rises the next morning, the dance usually ends.

Those at the dance find it exciting, joyful and powerful. "Being at a dance makes our hearts happy," the !Kung say.

The music of the dance comes basically from the part-singing and complex clapping of women. In general, there are a number of healing songs. The songs are names for "strong" things--honey, elephant, mamba--and are considered

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A !Kung San healing dance. Photo by Richard Katz/Anthro-Photo.

to possess n/um or healing energy. The structure of the healing dance music is most intricate. It is endlessly varied by disciplined improvisation within the bounds of repeated musical phrases. When the awesome sound of the dancers' leg rattle is added to the songs and sharply clapped cadences, a music of truly profound beauty is produced. The music is a vehicle of transcendence for the healers and others participating in the dance.

During the dance there are numerous fluctuations of mood. The dancing may range from lack-lustre to ardent, and there may be several periods of intense healing interspersed with periods during which no one is in !kia. The healers' passage into !kia is terrifying and dangerous, requiring that the healer enter the "death of !kia." Healing is accomplished through a laying on of hands, as the sickness is taken into the healers and then expelled from them. Healing is difficult, painful work, expressed in the healers' kowhedeli their intense shrieks as they expell the sickness. These moans and shrieks themselves become part of the healing dance sound.

The healing dance is open and public. Becoming a healer is not an unusual event. By the time they reach adulthood, approximately one-half the men and more than 10 percent of the women are healers.

In the traditional healing dance, men and women make different but equally valued contributions reflecting the egalitarian nature of !Kung life. The healers, mostly men, readily acknowledge their dependence on the singers. The women sing and clap to provide not only impetus for !kia, but also protection for the healers as their spirits travel outside their bodies. The healing dance is thus not only an art, but a concerted effort of the entire community to resolve social conflict, banish misfortune and reaffirm their spiritual life. The dance becomes a unifying force in !Kung life.

Side One of this record contains selections from the traditional healing dance. Side Two contains selections from two other dance forms, neither of which regularly includes the entire community. Yet each offers an important perspective on the traditional dance, dramatically questioning the relationship between the sexes and reflecting the impact of sedentism on the !Kung.

Whenever possible, long sections of music are included, so as to capture some of the atmosphere and development of a dance. Also, the music is unedited, so that musical and psychological accuracy is maintained.



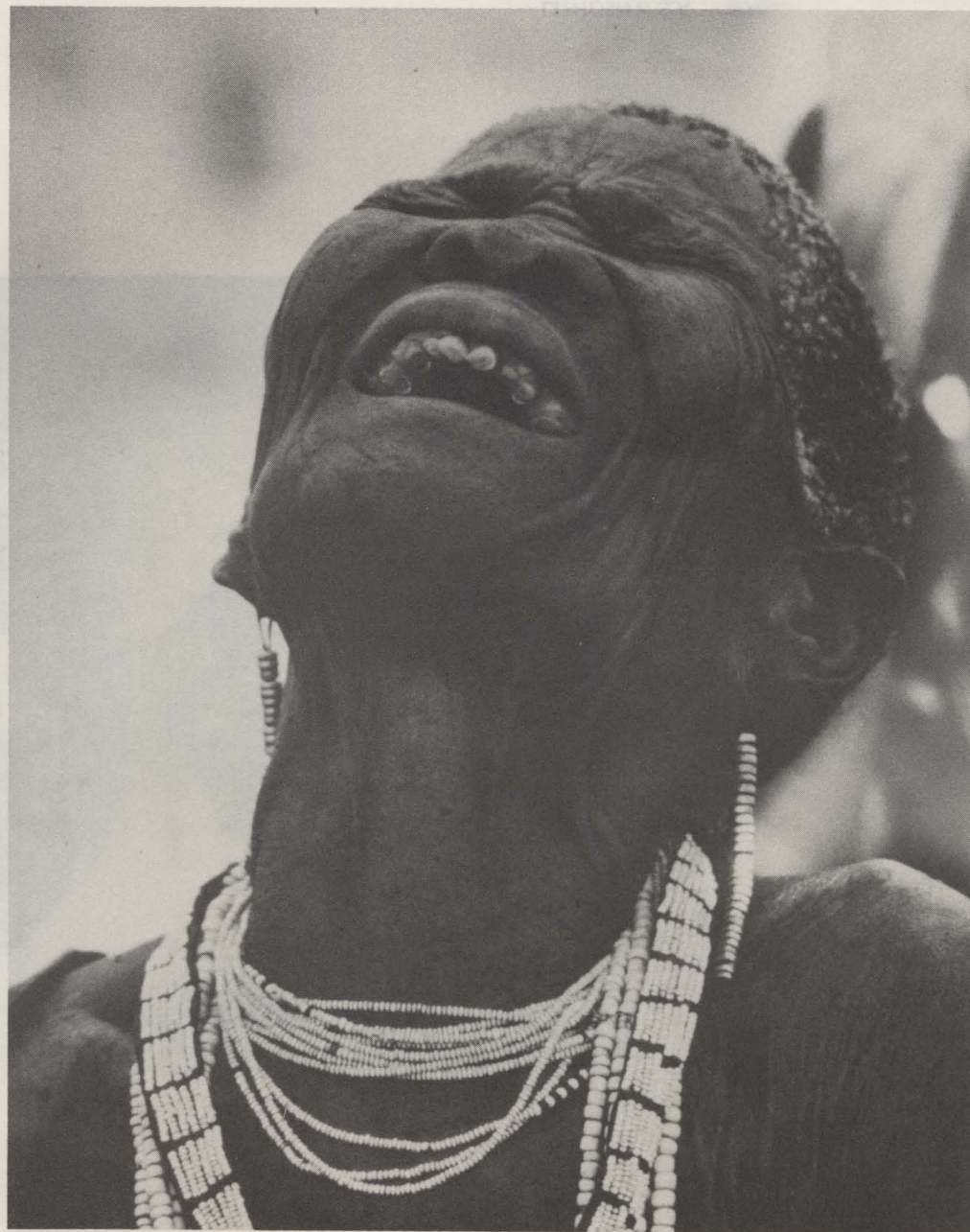
A !Kung San man healing another. Photo by Richard Katz/Anthro-Photo.

Side One

- Band #1 Giraffe Dance song. A San woman singing one theme from a song which occurs in the traditional healing dance. Recorded at Dobe, Botswana by Marjorie Shostak, 1971.
- Band #2 Giraffe Dance song. The first woman is joined by a second woman who sings a variation on that first theme. Listening to Bands #1 and #2 can help to understand the singing which occurs in the traditional healing dance (Bands #3 and #4), where up to thirty women sing together, improvising on the basic themes of the healing dance songs. Recorded at Dobe, Botswana by Marjorie Shostak, 1971.
- Band #3 Giraffe Dance. A large traditional healing dance, with approximately 12 men dancing and 25 women singing. In between the songs, there are periods of conversation and joking. Included are sections where healers are in !kia. The characteristic moaning and deep breathing of !kia can be heard. Recorded at /Xai/xai, Botswana by Richard Katz, 1968.
- Band #4 Giraffe Dance. A smaller traditional healing dance, with about five men dancing and a dozen women singing. The section of the dance on this tape focuses on male healers in !kia, healing those at the dance. The characteristic kowhedeli shrieks can be heard, shrieks which accompany the healing activity. Recorded at /Xai/xai, Botswana by Richard Katz, 1968.

Side Two

- Band #5 Trees Dance. A !kia dance recently created by a young San man, which incorporates elements from pastoral neighbors. With a solo emphasis differing from the traditional dance, the creator sings his songs rapidly, barely forming his words, and the dance troop of women responds with singing and clapping. Others in the camp are not active participants in the dance. Though the dance creator does !kia, healing is not emphasized. Recorded at /Xai/xai, Botswana by Richard Katz, 1968.

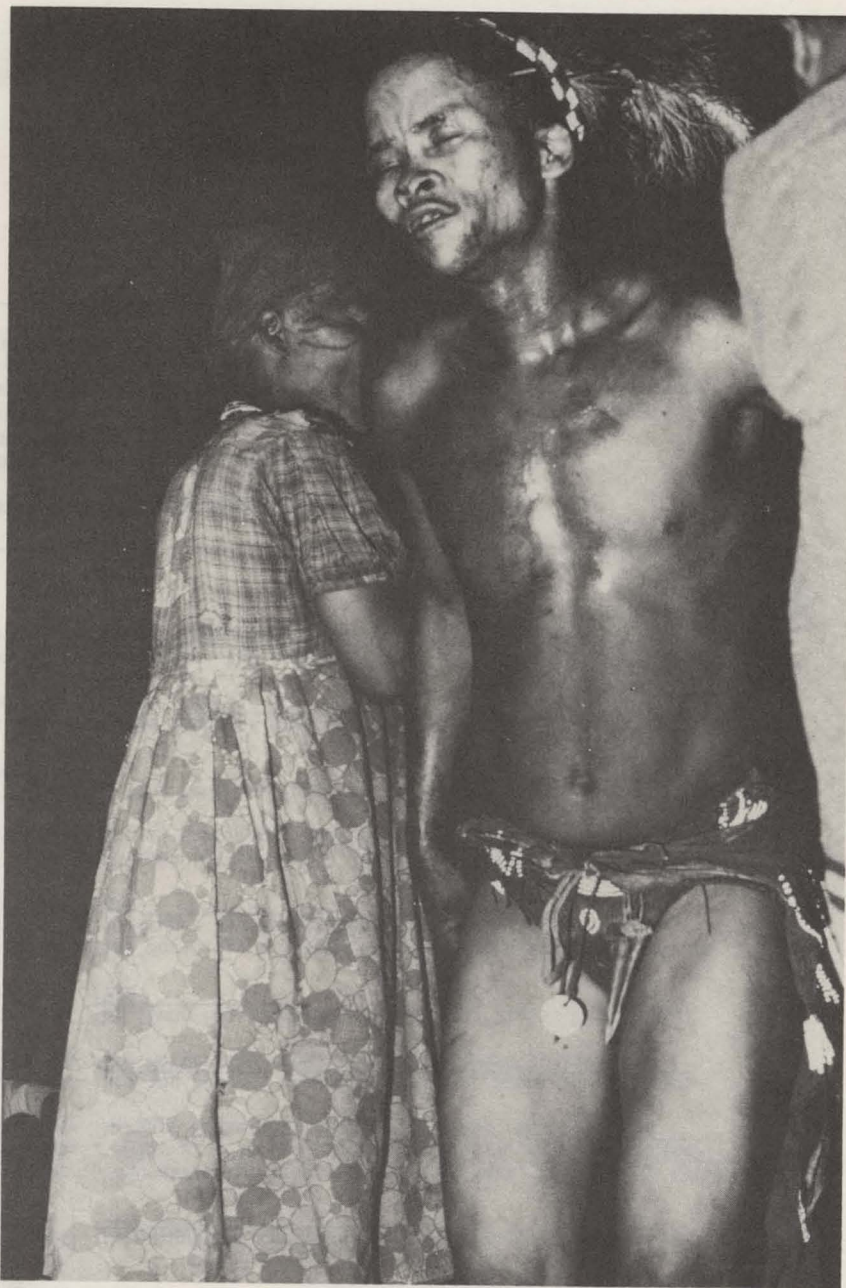


!Kung San woman in the healing trance. Photo by Richard Katz/Anthro-Photo.

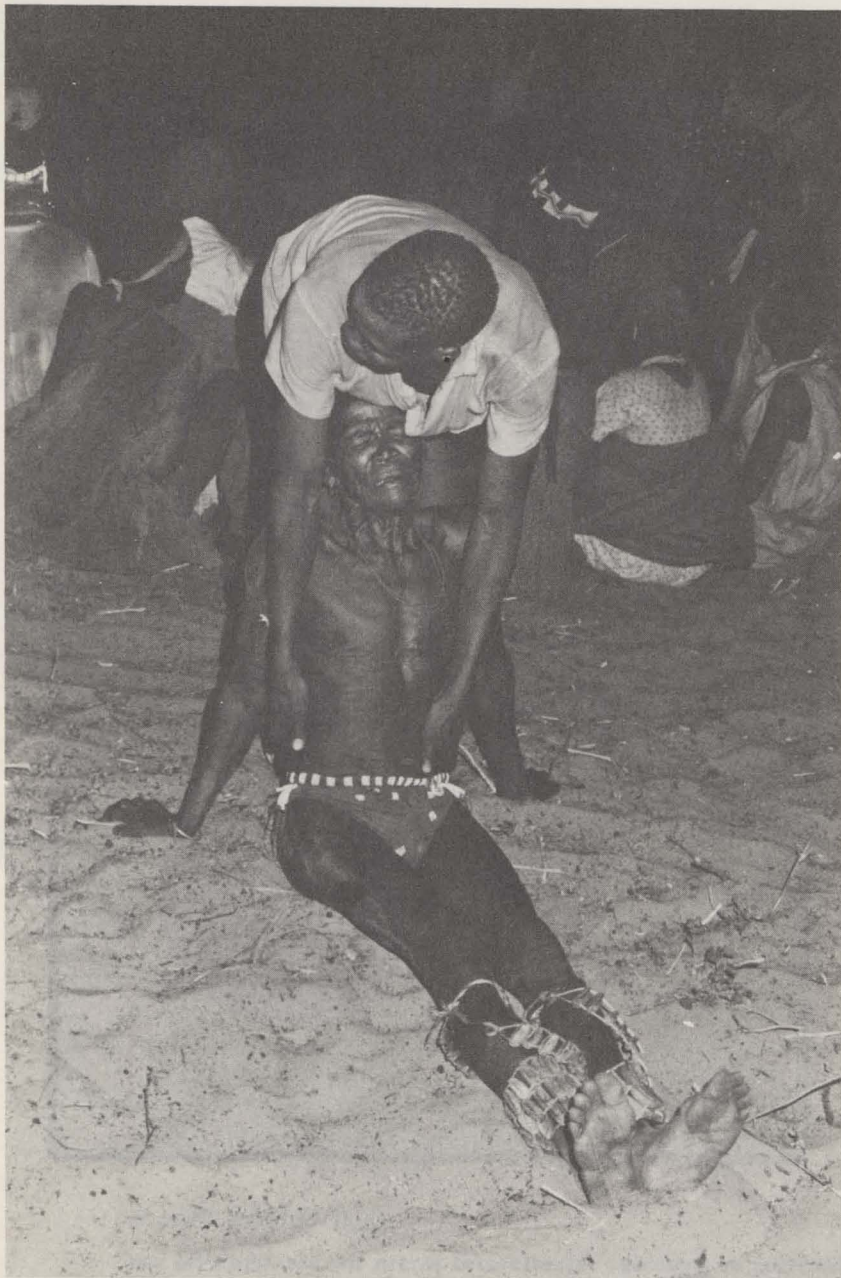
Band #6 Drum Dance. A female-oriented !kia dance. Healing occurs but it is not as central as in the traditional dance. The drum appears as a major instrument. It is the women who sing, clap, and !kia. A man plays the drum, and may on occasion !kia, though men generally are not active participants. Recorded in Botswana by Megan Biesele, 1972.



16. A !Kung San man in the healing trance. Photo by Marjorie Shostak/Anthro-Photo.



17. A !Kung San man in the healing trance. Photo by Richard Katz/Anthro-Photo.



Further Reading

Healing Dance Music of the Kalahari San

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4. Richard Katz, Boiling Energy: Community Healing Among the Kalahari !Kung (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.), 1982.
5. Richard Lee, The !Kung San (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England), 1979.
6. Richard Lee, "The Sociology of !Kung Bushmen Trance Performances" in Prince (ed.), Trance and Possession States, R.M. Bucke Society, Montreal, 1968.
7. Richard Lee and Irven DeVore (eds.), Kalahari Hunter-Gatherers (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.), 1976.
8. Lorna Marshall, "The Medicine Dance of the !Kung Bushmen," Africa, 39(4), 1969.
9. Lorna Marshall, The !Kung of Nyae Nyae (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.), 1976.
10. Marjorie Shostak, Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.), 1981.

FE 4315 INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC OF THE KALAHARI SAN.

Recorded and annotated by Majorie Shostak, Megan Bieseke, Nicholas England.

Much of this music was used in the award winning film "The Hunters." Instruments are: Tin can bow, Sitengena; plucked metal mounted on a board, metal pluriarc, gut hunting bow, and gut pluriarc. 1-12" LP with background illustrated notes.



Young !Kung San healer. Photo by Richard Katz/Anthro-Photo.