

RECORDED AND ANNOTATED BY ELIZABETH NELBACH WOOD



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4371

# TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF BOTSWANA, AFRICA

A journey with Tape Recorder along Southern Botswana from Mochudi to Kang



MRS. KATHY KGAFELA, WIFE OF CHIEF LINCHWE II, WITH HISTORIC TRIBAL MOROPA—IN MOCHUDI

PHOTO BY SANDY GRANT

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



# TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF BOTSWANA, AFRICA

## SIDE 1 TRIBAL SONGS OF THE BATSWANA

- Band 1. "Oh, A Shoe, Oh, A Shoe" :45  
Band 2. "I Am Happy" :30  
Band 3. "I Am The Hare That Stays In The Road" :55  
Band 4. "When They Are Playing Their Whistles,  
Praise (Ululate) Them" 1:40  
Band 5. "Drive Away The Birds!" 1:10  
Band 6. "I Have A Pain!" :45  
Band 7. "Yes! Yes! Oh! Oh!" 2:00  
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## SIDE 2 BATSWANA TRIBAL SONGS

Through Band 5—Remainder are:  
**BASARWA (BUSHMEN) SELECTIONS**

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Band 7. Basarwa song 1:30  
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(mouth bow) :43  
Band 10. Basarwa instrumental selection—*setinkane*  
(mbira) 1:00  
Band 11. Basarwa instrumental selection—*setinkane*  
(mbira) :38  
Band 12. Basarwa instrumental selection—*setinkane*  
(mbira) 1:34

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**A Journey with Tape Recorder along  
Southern Botswana from Mochudi to Kang**

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

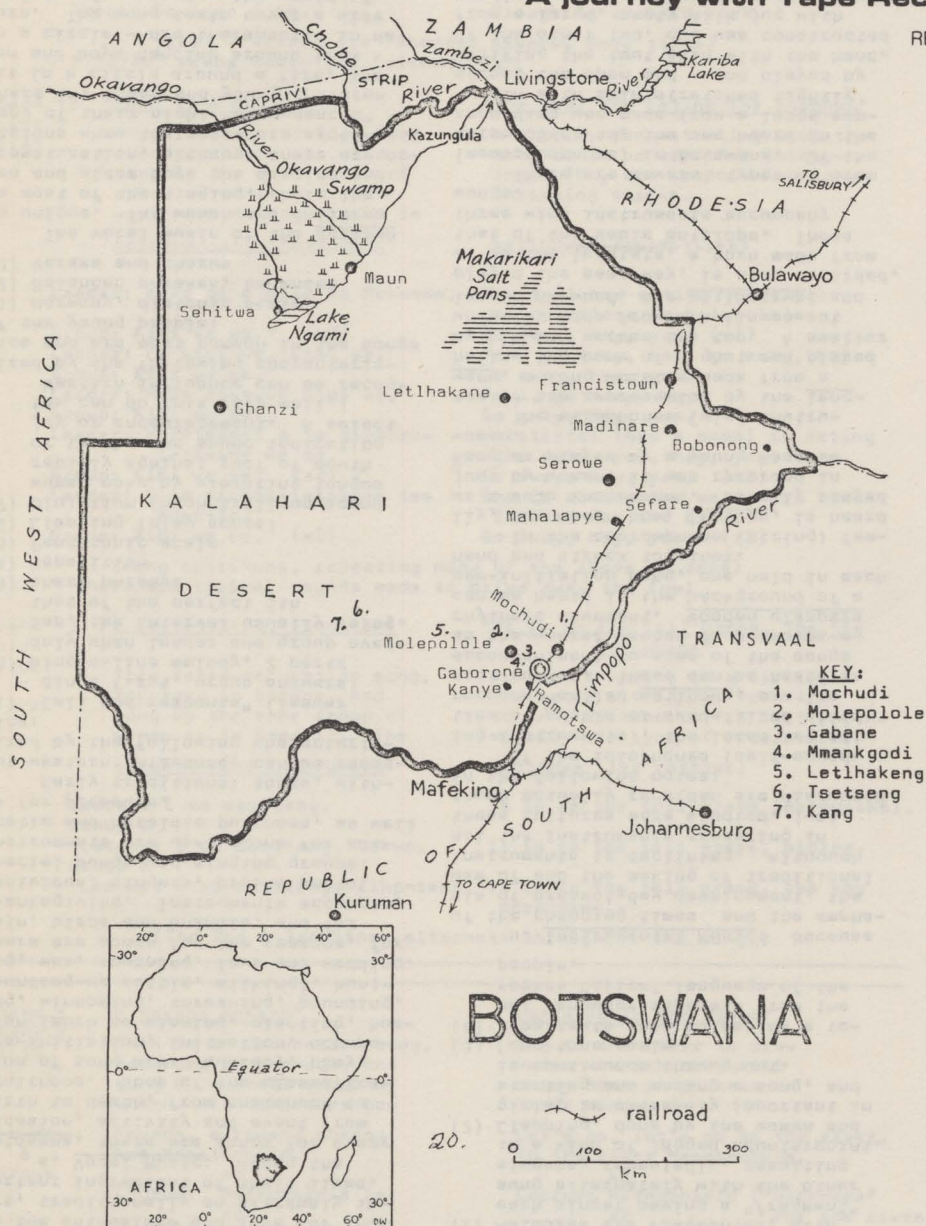
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# TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF BOTSWANA, AFRICA

## A journey with Tape Recorder along Southern Botswana from Mochudi to Kang

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### Traditional Music Of Botswana

(A Journey With Tape Recorder Along Southern Botswana From Mochudi To Kang)

#### 1. The Country

Botswana is a land-locked country in the southern part of Africa, about the size of Texas. In climate and appearance, it closely resembles southern Arizona. Its population is small - about 800,000 - and a large part of the country to the west consists of the Kalahari Desert, an area of rolling grassland and scrub with little or no surface water. Most of the population lives in the east and north portions, where there is more water and rainfall, an essential element in their survival, for this is principally an agrarian society. The raising of cattle and grains are an important part of the economy.

The songs and instrumental selections in this study were recorded in several villages of southern Botswana, from Mochudi in the east, central village of the Bakgatla tribe, to Kang, a village in the Kalahari Desert to the west. For the most part, four tribes and a closely related group are represented. Since they derive from the same parent stem, the Tswana-Sotho people, their customs and language are very similar, and, therefore, could be considered to be of one culture. In addition, several songs and instrumental pieces were recorded of the Basarwa (local name for the Bushmen). Their language, customs and origin are entirely different from the Tswana (name for the tribal people of the country), and thus may be considered as a separate culture.

The Basarwa have for centuries lived in the Kalahari Desert as hunters and gatherers. In recent years, however, many have joined the village life of the tribal populace as helpers in agriculture. They have maintained their language and many of their customs, including their traditional songs, dances and instruments.

- by Elizabeth Nelbach Wood

In the villages visited, there is a striking blend of old and new, with tribal customs and local government responsibilities sharing in the life of the people. Some men and women work in the civil service and in the private sector. Many of the young men work in the mines of Botswana and South Africa. However, the large proportion of the population is involved in the day-to-day tasks of village life. For the women, this includes domestic duties of home and family, and when the rainy season begins, there are traditional crop-raising responsibilities at the "lands", the farming areas out beyond the village. The men assist in some of the agricultural activity, home and tool repair and building, but, chiefly, their responsibility is in the care of the cattle - out beyond the lands at the "cattle post". Children help with all these tasks, and even when of school age, participate on week-ends and during vacation.

The country, formerly a British Protectorate, became independent in 1966, and is now a Parliamentary Democracy, noted for its stability and wise planning in development.

#### 2. The Music

One of the reasons for this study was to help record and preserve the musical heritage. In addition to the taping of the music, several older people, tribal leaders and village historians were interviewed. It is true that some of the old songs are not being passed on, and many of the old instruments are disappearing, but the love of singing is still very evident. Improvisation and composing continue. Those who still own and play an instrument demonstrate great pride in this occupation. One is keenly aware of the vitality of the music and the singing, and feels completely caught up



in the enthusiasm and love for this art, traditionally an extremely important ingredient of their lives.

a. Vocal Music: Among the Batswana, there are songs for every occasion, activity and event from birth to death, from childhood to adulthood. Some of the classification of song are: lullaby, play, pre-initiation, initiation, occupation (such as plowing, planting, hoeing, winnowing, threshing, pounding, rounding-up cattle, milking), hunting, war, mourning, love and wedding. There are songs for the seasons, for rain, birds and animals, and for thanksgiving. Instruments accompany individual singers, praise poets, special songs and singing groups. Instruments are used alone for aesthetic and heraldic purposes, as well as for pleasure.

Early traditional songs, without western influence, can be recognized by the following characteristics:

- (1) "Call and response" (leader sings first, group answers)
- (2) Single-line melody, 2 parts only when leader and group overlap, the interval usually being that of the perfect 5th
- (3) Short phrases
- (4) Repetition
- (5) Pentatonic scale
- (6) Clapping (play songs)
- (7) Ululation (high trilling sound women make by vibrating tongue rapidly against roof of mouth or teeth, the sound indicating joy or encouragement. A select few can do this very well.)

Western influence can be recognized by the following characteristics and are most common in the songs of the young people:

- (1) Harmony, diatonic scale
- (2) Balanced phrases, cadences
- (3) Verses and chorus

The vocal music of the Basarwa is unique. The women and children do most of the singing, while the men and older boys the dancing and dramatization, although there are occasions when the roles are exchanged. Many of their night "sing-dances" - where the women and young children sit in a circle around a fire, the men and boys dancing around them in a circle - are therapeutic in nature. The song texts cover a wide variety of subject: the world of nature, animals they admire, personal and spiritual experiences and feelings, and the ritual of healing. Some of the unusual musical characteristics:

- (1) Melodies are fragmented, with each singer having a "fragment" sung alternately with the other singers, repeatedly, resulting in a kind of jagged counterpoint.
- (2) Clapping, done by the women and girls, is extremely important in starting and ending a song, and is continuous throughout.
- (3) Four-tone scale.
- (4) Song texts seem to employ a tonal language separate from the spoken "click" language of the people.

b. Instrumental Music: Because of the changing times and the emphasis of present-day development, the use of and the making of traditional instruments is declining. Although all the instruments appearing in these cultures were studied, just those actually recorded are discussed in the following notes:

Of the idiophones (self-sounding instruments), the laced leg rattles of pebble or seed-filled dried cocoons, called matlhowa, are the most common. These can be heard as accompaniment to some of the songs as the wearer dances or performs a rhythmic movement. Wooden clappers can be heard in the background of a pre-initiation song, one held in each hand and struck together.

In the chordophone (string) family, the mouth bow, lengope, is heard as a solo instrument. Usually played just by women, it was recorded in Kang as played by a young Masarwa woman.

The aerophones (wind instruments) are represented by the lengwane, a long whistle made from a hollow leg bone of a goat and played by blowing across the top. A smaller whistle, made from a hollowed-out length of wood, the motlhatswa, and played the same way, is also recorded, as is the lepatata, a horn made from that of the sable antelope. These three wind instruments accompany songs.

There are several types of drum (membranophone) in Botswana. Of the three observed, the one heard in the recording was made from a large empty tin with skin stretched tightly across the open end - and played by striking the taut skin with the hand. Of the other two, one was constructed from a large, empty milk jug with handle, and the other from an empty stamping block (called kika) - used for pounding grain or corn into a fine meal. The drum throughout Botswana is called moropa.

Considered either as an idiophone or keyboard instrument is the mbira. In this part of southern Africa, it is often called sansa, but where it was observed and recorded, it was called setinkane. This particular instrument consisted of 15 finely tempered and tuned metal strips, bars or keys mounted on a metal frame fastened to a wood soundboard. Under the soundboard was a small empty tin container - for resonance. The keys were tuned to a 4-tone scale and the instrument played by holding it between both hands and plucking the keys with the thumbs (occasionally the forefingers). Strung along a metal horizontal bar on the front edge of the soundboard were several small metal rings. These added a light, staccato sound while the instrument was played. The setinkane is quite prevalent among the Basarwa in the area where the recordings were made. Each craftsman who constructs this instrument decides which 4-tone scale he prefers. Each builder may use a different combination, as well as decide how many keys he wishes to employ.

Throughout the southern portion of Botswana, where the recordings were made, there are variations in the names and spelling of some of these instruments.

### 3. Dance, Movement and Costume

Among the Batswana, young children, from about age 4 to 12, always have action or dancing in their songs. This would be in the form of rhythmic foot and leg

movement or actually a dance pattern performed by a small group in front of the singers. Adolescents, from about age 13 to 20, have their songs and dances, more mature in subject matter. The action and dancing is not so vigorous as those of the younger children, but more so than those performed by adults. These young people also enjoy acting out songs. Men and women usually move rhythmically to their songs, sometimes in a circle, or act them out - if dramatization is indicated. Men take pride in jumping up high and twisting about during the singing of particular songs.

Some take a great deal of interest in making costumes - reminiscent of earlier days. Women often wear small skirts or panels in front and back made of skins, sometimes beaded and with fringes. Tops or halters to match are often worn. Occasionally, women will wear matching skirts and bandanas. Men often wear skins, too, beads around the chest, and black ostrich feathers or hair from a wildebeest on their heads.

In addition to the notes describing Basarwa dance and movement - dramatization and games with rhythmic action are a much-enjoyed pastime. Their traditional costume is of antelope skin, and they often wear necklaces and bracelets of ostrich egg shell.



4. The Recordings - (Side 1 - Songs of the Batswana)

Band 1 "Setlhako We, Setlhako We"

Side 1  
:45 This is a play song recorded in Letlhakeng and sung by a choir of young school children of the

Maburu we, Maburu we - ijoo.

refrain: Dichankanana, chankanana  
chanchang. (x2)

Setlhako we, setlhako we - ijoo.  
(refrain) (x2)

Ko morago we, ko morago we - ijoo.  
(refrain) (x2)

"Oh, A Shoe, Oh, A Shoe"

Bakgeladi group. It makes light of a somber situation, and was probably brought back from the mines by an older brother.

The Boers, the Boers (final word  
"ijoo" is a sound indicating pain)  
Prisons, prisons.  
(x2)

A shoe, a shoe (pain).  
(refrain)(x2)

From the back, from the back (pain).  
(refrain)(x2)

Band 2 "Ke Mo Boitumelong"

Side 1  
:30 This is a hymn, set to a traditional tune, and

Ke mo boitumelong. (x2)

Ka Jesu Keresete.

Ke mo boitumelong.

O di tseere tsothle -

Tso-tlhe dibe tsa ka.

Jaanong ke mo boitumelong.

(Repeat entire song)

"I Am Happy"

sung by the same school choir as in Band 1.

I am happy. (x2)

Because of Jesus Christ.

I am happy.

He has taken them all -

Taken all my sins.

Now I am happy.

Band 3 "Ke Mmutla Wa Matshwara Tsele"

Side 1  
:55 This is a play song recorded in Mochudi (Bakgatla tribe) and sung by a group of young children. It describes the hare and the mountain reedbuck as such

Ke mmutla wa matshwara tsele.  
x3

Ke mhele wa matshwara tsele.  
x3

(Repeat song twice more)

"I Am The Hare That Stays In The Road"

fast runners that they can outrun all foes, even on the straightaway! While singing, the children performed a longways dance similar to the Virginia Reel.

I am the hare that stays in the road.  
x3

I am the mountain reedbuck that stays in the road.  
x3

(Repeat song twice more)

Band 4 "Ha Ba Tshameka Ka Diphala Tsa Bone, Ba Duduetse!"

Side 1  
1:40 This is a school song recorded in Mmankgodi (the Bahurutse tribe). The children are older than

Accompanying instruments:

- Girls: Ha ba tshameka -  
Boys: Ka diphala tsa bone.  
Girls: 'Ha ba tshameka -  
Boys: Ka diphala tsa bone.  
All: Ha ba tshameka, ha ba tshameka, ha ba tshameka ka phala tsa bone.

"When They Are Playing Their Whistles, Praise (Ululate) Them!"

the preceding groups. The entire village is present, and one can hear exclamations and the sound of a thunderstorm in the background.

lengwane, and small metal whistle

When they are playing -  
With their whistles.  
When they are playing -  
With their whistles.  
When they are playing,  
When they are playing,  
When they are playing,  
When they are playing  
with their whistles.

- Girls: Ba duduetse -  
Boys: Wena mme Mmakgosi.

- Girls: Ba duduetse -  
Boys: Wena mme Mmakgosi.

All: Ba duduetse, ba duduetse,  
fa ba tshameka ka phala  
tsa bone.

3. Same as verse 2.

4. Same as verse 2.

5. Girls: Kgosi Thobega -

Boys: Ema a bone bana.

Girls: Kgosi Thobega -

Boys: Ema a bone bana.

All: Ema o bone, ema o bone,  
ema o bone, bana ba gago.

6. Repeat verse 1.

Ululate them -

You, mother, Mrs. Chief.

Ululate them -

You, mother, Mrs. Chief.

Ululate them, ululate them,  
when they are playing their  
whistles.

Chief Thobega -

Stand up and see the children.

Chief Thobega -

Stand up and see the children.

Stand up and see, stand up and  
see, stand up and see your  
children.

Band 5 "Boragane, Bo Kgalamela!"

Side 1  
1:10 This is an occupation song, sometimes used in play, and sung by a group of high

"Drive Away The Birds!"

school girls, members of the Girl Guides. It is recorded in Molepolole, central village of the Bakwena tribe.

Leader: Boragane, boragane we!

Group: Boragane wa boragane, bo  
re jela mabele. (x2)

Leader: Boragane, bo kgalamela!

Group: Boragane wa, boragane, bo  
re jela mabele. (x2)

(song continues as above)

The birds, the birds, oh!

The birds, oh, the birds,  
they are eating our corn. (x2)

The birds, drive them away!

The birds, oh, the birds,  
they are eating our corn. (x2)

Band 6 "Ke Na Le Setlhabi!"

Side 1  
:45 This is a play song, recorded in Molepolole, and  
Accompanying instrument:

"I Have A Pain!"

sung by the same group of high school girls as in Band 5

Matlhwa (leg rattles)

Leader: Ke na le setlhabi.

Group: Se ntlhaba mo maleng.

Leader: Setlhabi!

Group: Se ntlhaba mo maleng.

(song continues as above)

I have a pain.

It pierces me in the stomach.

Pain!

It pierces me in the stomach.

Band 7 "Ee! Ee! Owe! Owe!"

Side 1  
2:00 This is an occupation song, often used in play, sung at the cattle post while acting out the

Accompanying instrument:

Leader: Ee!

Group: Ee! Owe! Wee!

Leader: Mmama we!

Group: Ee! Owe! Wee!

Leader: Ee! Owe! Nnana we!

Group: Ee! Owe! Owe!

Leader: O ija wee!

Group: Ee! Owe! Wee!

(Song continues as above)

"Yes! Yes! Oh! Oh!"

rounding-up of cattle. It was recorded in the village of Gabane (Bamalete tribe) and sung by a group of older women.

lengwane

Yes!

Yes! Oh! Oh!

Mother, oh!

Yes! Oh! Oh!

Yes! Oh! Little one, oh!

Yes! Oh! Oh!

Oh my oh!

Yes! Oh! Oh!



Band 8 "Ko Gae, E A Na Tsopotso" Side 1  
1:45 This is a rain song, recorded in Gabane, and sung

Leader: Ko gae, gae.  
Group: Ko gae, gae.  
Leader: E a na tsopotso.  
& E a na thibe,  
Group a e thibe.  
E a na tsopotso.  
E a na thibe.  
a e thibe.  
Leader: Leru ke lele.  
Group: Ko gae, gae.  
Leader: Leru ke lele.  
Group: Ko gae, gae.  
Leader: E a na tsopotso.  
& E a na thibe,  
Group a e thibe.  
E a na tsopotso.  
E a na thibe,  
a e thibe.

(song continues as above)

Band 9 "Re Tswa Kwa Lesunyaneng" Side 1  
2:04 This is a pre-initiation song, recorded in Gabane and sung by the same group of women as in Band 8.

When the young people reach puberty, they go on separate retreats to the initiation school, where they

Accompanying instruments:

Leader: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, tshwara Mmakadira.  
Group: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, tshwara Mmakadira, tshwara Mmakadira, o ye, o ye, o ye, o ye wee, re tswa kwa lesunyaneng.  
Leader: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, re tsogile phakela.  
Group: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, re tsogile phakela, re tsogile phakela, kgesing, o ye, o ye, o ye, o ye wee; re tswa kwa lesunyaneng.

Leader: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, e re o fitlha o re:  
Group: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, e re o fitlha o re, o ye, o fitlha o re: "Kgosi, neele re", o ye, o ye, o ye, o ye wee; re tswa kwa lesunyaneng.

Leader: Kgosi Ntshabele, o re nee, o re neela o re.  
Group: Kgosi Ntshabele, o re nee, o re neela o re. O fitlha o re neela, o re nee mosadi, ye, o ye,

"At Home, It Rains Heavily" by the same group of women as in Band 7.

At home, home.  
At home, home.  
It rains heavily.  
It rains from clouds, from the clouds.  
It rains heavily.  
It rains from clouds, from the clouds.  
There is the cloud.  
At home, home.  
There is the cloud.  
At home, home.  
It rains heavily.  
It rains from clouds, from the clouds.  
It rains heavily.  
It rains from clouds, from the clouds.

"We Come From The Forest"

learn about adult life and proper adult behavior. In this song, a girl has been "to the forest" 3 times (has had 3 menstrual periods) and, therefore, is ready to join the others for the initiation school period. The use of metaphor points up the sense of impatience.

lenqwane, wood clappers

Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, notify Mrs. Kadira (mentor, sponsor).  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, notify Mrs. Kadira, notify Mrs. Kadira, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes indeed; we come from the forest.  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, we got up early in the morning.  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, we got up early in the morning, we got up early in the morning, coming to the chief's place, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes indeed; we come from the forest.  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, when we arrive, we'll say:  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, when we arrive, we'll say: "Chief, give us", oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes indeed; we come from the forest.

Chief Ntshabele, oh give us, oh give us.  
Chief Ntshabele, oh give us, oh give us. Oh, when we arrive, oh give us, oh give us

o ye, o ye, o ye wee; re tswa kwa lesunyaneng.

Leader: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, re nama re tsofala.

Group: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, re nama re tsofala, re nama re tsofala, o ye, o ye, o ye, o ye wee; re tswa kwa lesunyaneng.

Leader: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, go tswa mabele ke gone -  
Group: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, go tswa mabele ke gone, go tswa mabele ke gone go tsofala, o ye, o ye, o ye, o ye wee; re tswa kwa lesunyaneng.

Leader: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, re nama re thunya re se digojana.

Group: Kgosi Ntshabele, o ye, re nama re thunya re se digojana, re nama re thunya re se digojana, o ye, o ye, o ye, o ye wee; re tswa kwa lesunyaneng.

the young woman, yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes indeed; we come from the forest.

Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, we are becoming old (tired of waiting).  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, we are becoming old, (oh yes) we are becoming old, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes indeed; we come from the forest.

Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, to grow the breasts -  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, to grow the breasts, to grow the breasts is to grow old, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, indeed; we come from the forest.

Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, we are now growing white hairs prematurely.  
Chief Ntshabele, oh yes, we are now growing white hairs prematurely, we are now growing white hairs prematurely, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, oh yes indeed; we come from the forest.

Band 10 "Pula Wee E A Na" Side 1

1:23 This is another rain song, recorded in Gabane, and

Leader: Pula wee e a na.  
Group: Ee a e ne.  
Leader: Pula wee e a na.  
Group: Ee a e ne.  
Leader: A e ne, a e ne.  
Group: Ee, a e ne.  
Leader: A e ne, a e ne.  
Group: Ee, a e ne.  
Leader: Pula wee, pula wee.  
Group: Ee, a e ne.  
Leader: Pula wee, pula wee.  
Group: Ee, a e ne.  
Leader: A e ne mogorogo.  
Group: Ee, a e ne mogorogo.

(song continues as above)

Band 11 "Go Tshajwa Ke Mma Modise Side 1  
1:40

This is an occupation song, recorded in Gabane, and sung by the same group of women as in Band 10. The

Accompanying instrument:

Group: Go lema ijoo.\*  
Leader: Go tshajwa ke Mma Modisa lema.  
Group: Go lema ijoo.  
Leader: Go tshajwa ke Mma Modisa lema.

"The Rain, Hey, It Is Raining"

sung by the same group of women as in Band 9.

The rain, hey, it is raining.  
Yes, let it rain.  
The rain, hey, it is raining.  
Yes, let it rain.  
Let it rain, let it rain.  
Yes, let it rain.  
Let it rain, let it rain.  
Yes, let it rain.  
Rain hey, rain hey.  
Yes, let it rain.  
Rain hey, rain hey.  
Yes, let it rain.  
Let it rain heavily.  
Yes, let it rain heavily.

"Mrs. Modise Doesn't Want To Plough"

women are moving around in a circle, demonstrating that the song could be used for threshing or hoe-ing, or other occupations.

moropa (drum)

Ploughing is hard work.  
Mrs. Modisa does not want to plough. (It is hard work.)  
Ploughing is hard work.  
Mrs. Modisa does not want to plough.



Group: Go lema ijoo.  
 Leader: Go tshajwe ke ijoo lema.  
 Group: Go lema ijoo.  
 Leader: Go tshajwe ke ijoo lema.  
 Group: Go lema ijoo.  
 Ploughing is hard work.  
 Does not want to plough.  
 Ploughing is hard work.  
 Does not want to plough.  
 Ploughing is hard work.  
 (last 2 verses are repeated several more times)  
 \* "ijoo" means "pain" or "discomfort"

Band 12 "Koko Di A Sela"  
 Side 1  
 1:45 This is an occupation song, recorded in Gabene, and sung by the same group of women as in Band 11. The women are moving around in

Accompanying instrument:

Leader: Koko di a sela ko Mokwena.

Group: Kibi we ee.\* (x2)  
 Leader: Ee kibi we, kibi we.  
 Group: Kibi we ee.  
 Leader: Hela koko we kibi we.  
 Group: Kibi we ee.  
 Leader: Waletsatsi o ja diphereletswane we ee.  
 Group: Kibi we ee. (x2)  
 Leader: O ja diphereletswane tsa mogetlo.  
 Group: Kibi we ee. (x2)

(song continues, repeating many of the above phrases)

\* these are typical sounds made to drive away the fowl

Band 13 "E Mo Seriteng, Tlhontshi"  
 Side 1  
 2:02 This is an occupation song, recorded in Gabene, and sung by the same group of women as in Band 12. The

Accompanying instrument:

Leader: E mo seriteng.  
 Group &  
 Leader: E mo seriteng, kokwe.  
 Group &  
 Leader: E mo seriteng, tlhontshi.

"The Fowl Are Eating The Sorghum"  
 a circle, demonstrating that the song could be used for threshing. They are brandishing long threshing sticks.

matlhowa (leg rattles)

The fowl are eating the sorghum at our place in Molepolole.  
 Go away, hey, yes. (x2)  
 Yes, go away, hey, go away, hey.  
 Go away, hey, yes.  
 Fowl, go away, hey.  
 Go away, hey, yes.  
 Waletsatsi (hen's name) is eating the malt meal, hey, yes.  
 Go away, hey, yes. (x2)  
 She is eating the malt meal that is used for the beer.  
 Go away, hey, yes. (x2)

"It Is In The Tall Grass, The Shy Porcupine"

women are moving in a circle. The meter alternates from 4/4 to 3/4, perhaps to fit best rhythmically the type of occupation.

matlhowa (leg rattles)

It is in the tall grass (porcupine).  
 It is in the tall grass, hiding.  
 It is in the tall grass, the shy porcupine.

(The 2nd & 3rd lines alternate throughout the song.)

Band 1 "A Reyeng Nokeng"  
 Side 2  
 1:10 This is an occupation song, recorded in Mochudi, and sung by a small group of women. It describes go-  
 Leader &  
 Group Reyeng, a reyeng nokeng Kwa Masethobola.  
 x2  
 Group Chorus: Mathobolele le.  
 x2  
 (Song is repeated)

"Let's Go To The River"  
 ing to the river to draw water - which they will carry home in buckets on their heads.  
 Let's go, let's go to the river, To the river Masethobola.  
 x2  
 Chorus: Mathobolele ("nickname" for the river)  
 x2  
 three more times)

Band 2 "Buwa Ke Re"  
 Side 2  
 1:38 This is a song about heartbreak and unrequited love. It was recorded  
 Leader &  
 Group Itse ge lo buwa -  
 Taba tsa lorato,  
 Go ne go le monate.  
 Jaanong go bothoko.  
 x2  
 Buwa ke re,  
 Buwa ke re,  
 Buwa ke re,  
 Buwa ke re.

(Entire song

Band 3 "A Ntsha Dinko Maje"  
 Side 2  
 3:05 This is a war song, recorded in Mochudi, and sung by a group of about 20 men. They are return-

Accompanying instruments:

1. Leader: Kgomo ya kua. Eh-he.  
 Re kile re bolaya  
 Makgalagadi, ee.  
 Group: Le kwa, le kwa re tswang  
 and wa. Eh-he. A-he-a-he-a-he.  
 Leader: Le kwa re tswang wa.  
 Kwebu kae.
2. Leader: Bare sentse mme le rona  
 ra ba senya we.  
 Group: Le kwa, le kwa dira wa,  
 and etc. Etc.  
 Leader
3. Leader: Maje ke ale a ntshitse  
 ditlhogo. Etc.
4. Leader: A ntsha dinko maje a  
 dillo, etc.
5. Leader: Mma ntsholele ke je ke  
 kgore. Etc.
6. Leader: O seno ore ngwanake ga  
 kgore. Etc.
7. Leader: Ke yo reng latolela  
 morena? Etc.
8. Leader: Motlhakana wa me o  
 ntshabetse. Etc.
9. Leader: O rile a tshaba a  
 ribega nkwe. Etc.
10. Leader: Nkwe ga a ribegwe  
 o legatlape. Etc.

"Speak To Us"  
 in Mochudi and sung by the same group of women as in Band 1(Side 2)  
 Know that when you spoke to us -  
 About your love affair,  
 It was nice.  
 Now it is painful.  
 x2  
 Speak to us, (about it)  
 Speak to us,  
 Speak to us,  
 Speak to us.  
 is repeated)

"The Hills Of Mourning"  
 ing from a battle (to recapture stolen cattle) and are recounting their experiences before reporting to the Chief.  
lepatata (horn of sable antelope)  
motlhatswa (whistle of wood)

The beast made a sound. Yes.  
 We once killed the lesser people, yes.  
 Even where we come from. Yes.  
 Yes. Yes. Yes. Even where we come from.

They destroyed us, and in turn, we destroyed them.  
 Even the enemies where we come from. Etc.

There are hills with their tops appearing (hills of Mochudi). Etc.  
 The hills of mourning are showing their tops. Etc.  
 Mother, give me food so I may be satisfied. Etc.  
 You shouldn't complain that your child does not have enough food. Etc.  
 What am I going to say when I report to the chief? Etc.  
 The worthless person had deserted me. Etc.  
 When he ran away, he turned over (reversed) the leopard skin (to avoid identity). Etc.  
 You are a coward to reverse the leopard skin. Etc.



Band 4 "Bana Ha Tau Re Ts'o Bidiwa"  
Side 2  
2:37

This is a war song, recorded in Mochudi, and sung by the same Men's group as in

Accompanying instruments:

Leader: 'tawana.  
Group: Eh - bana ba tau re  
ts'o bidiwa.  
(x2)

Leader: Bana ba tau re.  
Group: Eh - bana ba tau re  
ts'o bidiwa.  
(x2)

Leader: Ditawana.  
Group: Eh - bana ba tau re  
ts'o bidiwa.  
(x2)

Leader: Re tswa go bidiwa.  
Group: Eh - bana ba tau re  
ts'o bidiwa.  
(x2)

(The song is repeated

Band 5 "Re Neele Re Je"  
Side 2  
1:33  
This is a war song, recorded in Mochudi, and sung by the same men's group as in Band 4. It was performed

Accompanying instruments:

Group: (Re) neele, re neele  
re je.  
Leader: Re neele, re neele.  
Group: Re neele, re neele re  
je.  
Leader: Re makau a go ja -  
Group: Re makau a go ja  
meratshwana.  
Leader: Re makau a go ja -  
Group: Re makau a go ja  
meratshwana.  
Leader: Re makau a go ja -

(This pattern is repeated  
twice more. The "Group"

(Side 2 - Band 6 through Band 12 - Music of the Basarwa)

Band 6 This is an untitled song of  
Side 2 the Basarwa. It was recorded  
:58 in the village of Tset-  
seng, in the Kalahari Desert,  
and sung by a group of

Band 7 This is an untitled song of  
Side 2 the Basarwa. It was recorded  
1:30 in the village of Tset-  
seng and sung by the same

Band 8 This is an untitled song of  
Side 2 the Basarwa. It was recorded  
1:16 in the village of Tset-

"The Children Of The Lion Have Been  
Called Up"

Band 3. The Chief is represented  
as the "lion" and the young men, ready  
to go into battle, as the "lion cubs".

Lepatata and motlhatswa

Lion cubs.  
Yes - we, the children of the  
lion, have been called up.  
(x2)

Children of the lion.  
Yes - we, the children of the  
lion, have been called up.  
(x2)

Lion cubs.  
Yes - we, the children of the  
lion, have been called up.  
(x2)

We have been called up.  
Yes - we, the children of the  
lion, have been called up.  
(x2)

several times with variations)

"Give Us The Signal To Fight"

traditionally before battle  
while gathered at the Chief's  
special meeting place, while  
awaiting the "signal" from him.

Lepatata and motlhatswa

Give us the signal, give us  
the signal to fight.  
Give us the signal, give us  
the signal.  
Give us the signal, give us  
the signal to fight.  
We are young and strong enough -  
We are young and strong enough  
to overcome the lesser people.  
We are young and strong enough -  
We are young and strong enough  
to overcome the lesser people.  
We are young and strong enough -

seems more dominant - the "Leader"  
more like a "response".)

about 20 women. The interpreter  
mentioned that the song was  
about a greatly admired animal.  
The singers were shy at first, then  
gradually gained confidence.

group of women as in Band 6. The  
subject matter is also about a  
greatly admired animal, probably  
an antelope.

sung and sung by the same group  
of women as in Band 7. The sub-  
ject is also about an antelope.

Band 9 This is an instrumental  
Side 2 selection played on the  
:43 lengope by a young Masar-  
wa woman. It was recorded  
in the village of Kang.  
The instrument is a form  
of mouth bow, and one can

Band 10 This is an instrumental  
Side 2 selection played on the  
1:00 setinkane, the name for  
mbira in this area. It  
was recorded in the vil-

Band 11 This is an instrumental  
Side 2 selection played on the  
:38 same setinkane as in Band  
10 and performed by another

Band 12 This is an instrumental  
Side 2 selection played on the  
1:34 same setinkane as in Band  
11, and performed by a  
young Masarwa woman of the  
same band. It was recorded-

hear the change in tone as the  
player alters the shape of the  
mouth and moves the tongue - the  
mouth cavity being the resonance  
chamber. The piece was about the  
hartebeest, a much admired ante-  
lope.

lage of Kang, and was performed by  
the young Masarwa gentleman, member  
of a "band" of three families, who  
had constructed the instrument. The  
subject was the hartebeest.

er young Masarwa gentleman of the  
same band. It was recorded in the  
village of Kang, and is also about  
the hartebeest.

ed in the village of Kang, and  
is also about the hartebeest.  
Toward the end of her selection,  
one of the young men of the band  
was inspired to stand up, sing  
and dance.



Photo by Peter Wood

Woman of Gabane group with moropa



Photo by Peter Wood

Women of Gabane group

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