

# DELICIOUS PEACE



## COFFEE, MUSIC & INTERFAITH HARMONY IN UGANDA

Produced and  
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Folkways Recordings

The songs in this collection are written and performed by the coffee farmers of the Peace Kawomera (Delicious Peace) Fair Trade cooperative in Mbale, Uganda. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim farmers work together to overcome generations of conflict and poverty. Village guitar groups and women's choirs sing to stress the transformative impact of Fair Trade prices and to encourage their neighbors to join the coffee cooperative. Accompanied with xylophone, drums, and other traditional instruments, these farmers sing of the benefits of interfaith cooperation and, through music, teach new cooperative members how to produce great coffee. J. J. Keki, the founder of the cooperative, says: "Use whatever you have to create peace! If you have music, use your music to create peace. For us, we have coffee. We are using coffee to bring peace to the world."



## TRACK LIST

1. **“The benefits of coffee”**  
*Akuseka Takuwa Kongo Group. 2008. Sung in Lugwere. 4:23*
2. **“The people of Uganda”**  
*Balitwegomba Choir. 2006. Sung in Lugisu. 4:07*
3. **“Get up and grow coffee!”**  
*J. J. Keki and the Peace Kawomera Jazz Band. 2006. Sung in Lugisu. 3:34*
4. **“Hit the jerrycan!”**  
*Integrated Rural Development Support Programs Choir. 2006. Sung in Swahili and Luganda. 5:26*
5. **“In Uganda, everyone grows coffee”**  
*Mbiko Aisa Farmers Group. 2006. Sung in Lugwere. 4:18*
6. **“Let us continue farming”**  
*Kasimu Namanyala and Paul Mugoya. 2006. Sung in Lugisu. 5:26*
7. **“Construct a processing factory”**  
*Gumutindo Quality Choir. 2006. Sung in Luganda. 1:49*
8. **“My beautiful wife, come back and we’ll grow coffee”**  
*Peace Kawomera Jazz Band. 2006. Sung in Lunyole. 5:13*
9. **“Poverty is an obstacle to a good marriage”**  
*Masanda Group. 2008. Sung in Luganda. 2:22*
10. **“Let all religions come together”**  
*Akuseka Takuwa Kongo Group. 2008. Sung in Lugwere. 5:12*
11. **“Salaam alaikum”**  
*Balitwegomba Choir. 2006. Sung in Arabic and Lunyole. 3:26*
12. **“In Nangolo, we are all fired up”**  
*J. J. Keki and the Peace Kawomera Jazz Band. 2008. Sung in Swahili and Lugisu. 3:55*
13. **“If you are stuck in tradition, change will not wait for you”**  
*Gumutindo Women’s Group. 2008. Sung in Luganda. 2:00*
14. **“The Bagisu people have brought vanilla and coffee”**  
*Matale Mirembe Vanilla Group. 2008. Sung in Lugisu. 2:27*
15. **“Educate our children”**  
*Balitwegomba Choir. 2006. Sung in Lugisu. 4:10*
16. **“We have improved our economic status”**  
*Mbiko Aisa Farmers Group. 2006. Sung in Lugwere. 4:29*

above left: **Solomon Namugowa and his wife Margaret Nakayenze pour raw coffee beans into a sack.**

previous page:  
**On the road from Nongolo to Namanyoni.**



# DELICIOUS PEACE

## COFFEE, MUSIC & INTERFAITH HARMONY IN UGANDA

By Jeffrey A. Summit

**On September 11, 2001, J. J. Keki, a Jewish Ugandan coffee farmer and musician, was visiting New York City. He was walking up to the World Trade Center as the planes hit the towers.** When he returned to Uganda, he felt compelled to bring different religions together in peace. He walked from village to village, asking his Jewish, Christian, and Muslim neighbors if they would be willing to form a Fair Trade coffee cooperative. To date, more than 1,000 farmers have joined Peace Kawomera (Delicious Peace). These coffee farmers write songs and sing about interfaith cooperation and the economic benefits of Fair Trade. J. J. says, “Use whatever you have to create peace. If you have a body, use your body to bring peace, not to cause chaos. If you have music, use your music to create peace. For us, we have coffee. We are using coffee to bring peace to the world.”

**R**ecording the music of coffee farmers in Africa has given new meaning to “fieldwork.” I spent a lot of time tromping through muddy coffee fields as the harvest was peaking. I sat outside the small cooperative office as farmers carried in

50-kilo bags of raw beans. While coffee is a major part of so many of our lives, very few coffee drinkers understand how labor-intensive it is to produce good quality coffee.

Coffee cherries ripen at different times on a tree, making it impossible to mechanize the harvest. There is only one way for an excellent cup of Mirembe Kawomera (in Luganda: Delicious Peace) coffee to get to your kitchen or local café, and it starts with a farmer in eastern Uganda walking into a field, looking carefully at a coffee tree, then hand-picking the ripened coffee cherries. Timing is critical: cherries, the fruit that contains the beans, must be picked within a three-to-four-day window of ripeness. After picking, they are sorted, washed, pulped, dried, picked over, and bagged to be taken to the cooperative office. The fieldwork for this project has made me acutely aware of this web of connection between our morning coffee and farmers in Uganda, Guatemala, Ethiopia, and other parts of the world.

After completing the Smithsonian Folkways CD *Abayudaya: Music from the Jewish People of Uganda* in 2003, coffee led me back to the village of Namanyonyi, outside of Mbale. Since my work with

above:  
Balitwegomba  
Choir of Nkoma  
Centre Zone.



Map of Mbale, Uganda.

the Abayudaya Jews began in 2000, J. J. Keki, one of the community's leaders as well as a key performer and composer in the Abayudaya

community, had founded this Fair Trade coffee cooperative with his Muslim and Christian neighbors. On three field trips to Namanyonyi, together with photojournalist Richard Sobol, I have recorded and filmed the music of more than 400 coffee farmers along the hills by Mount Elgon. There is no music associated with the coffee harvest in Uganda comparable to the field hollers sung while harvesting cotton in the American South or the post-harvest music competitions in Tanzania (Gunderson 2002). The farmers' songs are rather performed at community gatherings, meetings of the cooperative, and wedding receptions of its members. The lyrics convey everything from the economic benefits of selling coffee (*Coffee has supported people. And it has even supported us. In order to educate a child, my friends, we sell coffee! In order to build a house, we sell coffee! Everything I want, I can get by selling coffee! Buying a bicycle!* Track 1) to the importance of peace among different religions (*I am telling all religious leaders that God is the*

*one who created us all. Our grandparents are Adam and Eve. We have the same ancestors. Let us not segregate each other: it destroys the world.* Track 10). Farmers also sing to welcome government officials to their villages, to honor the leadership of the cooperative, and to welcome the field supervisors from the Thanksgiving Coffee Company in Fort Bragg, California, that buys their entire crop, roasts, and markets their coffee. But most of their songs are directed toward their neighbors who stopped growing after the worldwide coffee market crashed in the 1990s. Farmers encourage neighbors to join the cooperative and, through songs, teach methods for producing higher quality coffee.

## Delicious Peace

J. J. Keki's vision for the cooperative grew out of seeing up close what can happen when religious conflict leads to violence. On his first trip to the United States for a lecture tour in 2001, he stayed at our home in Boston early in September before traveling to New York City. He was on his way to meet a friend who was going to show him the city from atop the World Trade Center and was actually walking up to the entrance when American Airlines Flight 11 hit the North Tower. When J. J. learned that the terrorists had been motivated by religious beliefs, he said, "I think we should begin something. We have coffee. Maybe we make a co-op of Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and then we can teach the world how to work together." With the involvement of Laura Wetzler, of the non-profit organization Kulanu, they established a relationship with the Thanksgiving Coffee Company to buy and market their coffee. The cooperative has grown by stressing the economic benefits of Fair Trade and the communal benefits of interfaith harmony.

I hoped the peace that the Peace Kawomera coffee cooperative was creating was real. I know how challenging interfaith cooperation can be. In my university rabbinic work, I had been co-directing a multi-campus project to promote understanding among Jews, Christians, and

**I hoped the peace that the Peace Kawomera coffee cooperative was creating was real.... Was their cooperation creating peace or just a clever way to market Fair Trade coffee?**

Muslims through dialogue and education. I was eager to explore the impact that Keki's cooperative had on neighboring communities. Was their cooperation creating peace or just a clever way to market Fair Trade coffee?

J. J. Keki's work was cut out for him. Uganda has a history of ethnic and religious divisions that intensified during the brutal dictatorship of Idi Amin in the 1970s and the subsequent political turmoil, violence,

**J. J. Keki and Imam Siraji Kamulegeyeya outside the Nankusi mosque.**



and famine during Milton Obote's second administration in the 1980s. The modern history of religious conflict in Uganda can be traced back to colonial strategies to gain political control of the country. In the late 1800s, the British colonial and missionary authorities converted large numbers of Ugandans to the Anglican faith. The French also wanted to establish political power in Uganda, and they supported Catholic missionaries. Both groups saw religious proselytizing as a way to build armies for the colonial powers as they fought for control of East Africa. Now, the majority of Uganda's population is Christian (84%), split between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Muslims make up a significant minority of approximately 12%. The Jewish community in Uganda is small but plays a major role in the story of Peace Kawomera. This cooperative is the most ambitious in a series of joint economic projects that

Abayudaya leaders initiated in the 1990s to build positive relations between their community and their Christian and Muslim neighbors.

Members of the Jewish community experienced significant anti-Semitism as they grew up in the nearby villages outside of Mbale. Aaron Kintu Moses, the headmaster of the Abayudayas' primary school, recalled that in the 1970s he was taunted as a "Christ killer" and often heard people say, "How could such a good boy, a handsome boy like you, be a Jew!" As a teenager, he and his brothers were imprisoned and tortured by local leaders, who doubled as religious leaders in the Anglican church, when the Jewish youth tried to keep these leaders from taking over Abayudaya ancestral land on Nabugoye Hill. Aaron's brother, Rabbi Gershom Sizomu, stressed that today, in many parts of Uganda, being called Jewish is regarded as an abuse. "When Muslims are mad at one another, they will use the epithet *yehudi* (Jew)." The small Jewish community in Uganda is concentrated around Mbale; most Christians in Uganda only know the word "Jew" from the later New Testament Gospels, and those references are, for the most part, negative.

Relationships between Christians and Muslims have also been strained. I spoke to two members of the cooperative from a village some eighteen kilometers from Namanyonyi, a Muslim and a Christian, who were sharing lunch as their coffee beans were drying outside of the



**Phenehas Musenze, Simon Muyamba and Moses Sebagabo in the Namanyonyi Synagogue.**

cooperative's office. Patrick and Mohamud spoke about the days of Idi Amin when they were children, and said that relations among their religions had been contentious. People back then never socialized or visited their neighbors' places of worship. Even now, outside of the cooperative, they said that people say derogatory things about Jews, and many Muslims will not work with Christians for fear that the Christians will try to convert them. When I asked if it was usual for a Christian and Muslim to eat together, they both laughed and said that even four years ago, before they joined the cooperative, it would have been inconceivable to them. By one strict interpretation of Islamic law, Muslims are prohibited from sharing food or drink with those who are *kafir*, non-Muslims or "unbelievers." But their practice has been influenced by the relationships that have developed within the cooperative. Patrick and Mohamud repeated a refrain I heard often from co-op farmers: "Now, we are one."

The close working relationship among farmers in the cooperative appears to be changing the social fabric of Namanyonyi society. Betty Nambagla, one of the local farmers, said that she grew up fearing Jews, knowing them only as "the people who killed Jesus." That colored her perceptions of Keki and his large family until he came to her home to speak about Peace Kawomera. Betty praised his generosity and recounted that he gave farmers coffee plants so they could begin growing coffee

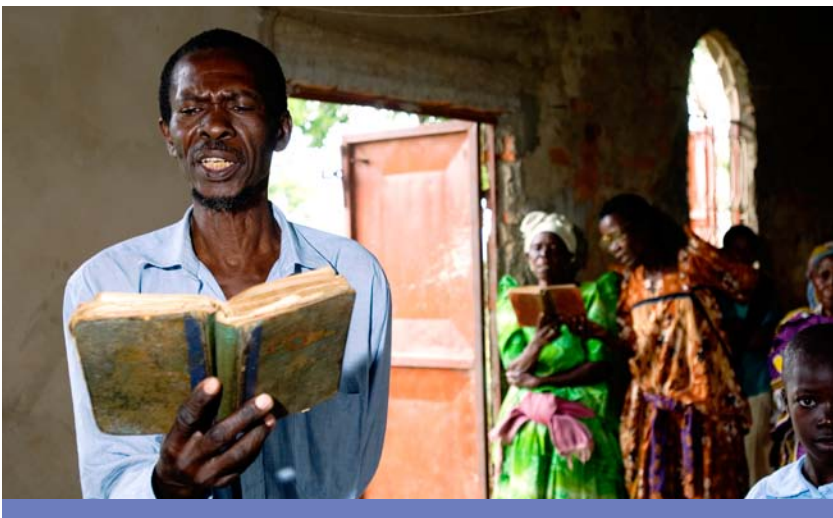
**Women described how they help one another farm as needed. Men and women who in the past would never sit down to eat or celebrate with one another now socialize freely.**

and join the cooperative. She realized that Keki "was showing a good heart." Her feelings for him strengthened after one of Keki's children drowned in a river, and her family observed the local custom of sleeping at the Keki family home to comfort him and his bereaved family. Before their connection in the cooperative, Catholics would not have comforted a Jewish family in this way. Betty said, "We were there! We slept there and they served us well. J. J. went around to the visitors, saying 'Here is a blanket.' 'Have you eaten?'" Betty explained that this, and similar examples of social exchange, had a significant impact on relationships in the cooperative.

Organizationally, the leadership of the co-op was set up to be religiously diverse: the chairman, J. J. Keki, is Jewish; the secretary manager, Elisa Hasulube, is Muslim; and the treasurer, Samuel Ngugo, is Christian. Women farmers' groups are primarily organized by location, and because the neighborhoods are not segregated by religion, many of these groups, who work and sing together, have members from all three religious traditions. Women described how they help one another farm as needed. Men and women who in the past would never sit down to eat or celebrate with one another now socialize freely.

This is not to say that no tension remains among these groups. In my conversations with Christians living on Nabugoye Hill, the location of the Abayudaya Semei Kakungulu Primary and Secondary School, I found a certain amount of jealousy directed at the Jewish community. The Abayudaya have raised money from Jewish visitors to provide scholarships for Jewish children in the school. But as yet, there were no scholarships in place for Muslim and

**Ngugo Yelusaniya prays in the Namanyonyi Anglican Church.**



*l to r:* Anthony Nyaluka, Jacob Asubert and Ramadhan Magombe playing soccer.



Christian students. Furthermore, in this area, where there is a low bar for religious conversion, some farmers complain that it is very hard to convert to Judaism; the Jews require circumcision for all men and intensive study and community participation before they will consider anyone for conversion.

**“You know, we are all children of the same God. We see little sense in fighting. We have found it is more to our benefit to cooperate together.”**

There is also disagreement among the leadership of the cooperative over whether Peace Kawomera has really created interfaith harmony or whether the area of Namanyonyi was always a place where people of different religions have gotten along. The latter group sees the formation of the cooperative as a way to model these well-established good relations as an example to the world. They advanced a theory that many people, from different language and ethnic groups, had emigrated to Namanyonyi from other areas of Uganda, so there was no long, contested history between local groups. As one member put it, “They don’t have their grandfathers buried in this land.” When I asked J. J. why these groups were able to build strong relationships in Uganda when Israel and Palestinians were in conflict, he answered, “Even though Jews support Israel and Muslims support the Palestinians, here we are not fighting over land.” Many of the cooperative’s members are Bagisu, the largest ethnic group in the Mbale District,

and it also appeared that in certain ways their common cultural and language bond trumped religious divisions.

In 2009, I found that the boundaries of sacred space in Namanyonyi had become more permeable since my research with the Abayudaya began in 2000. While it was clearly not the everyday norm, members of all the religious traditions were welcome in the local church, mosque, and synagogue—not just with an eye toward conversion, but with respect for each individual’s religion. In the Anglican church in Namanyonyi, a leader publicly observed, “It’s that unity which brought us peace.” After Friday prayer, as I stood outside the Nankusi mosque, the chairman of the local Muslim community put his hand on my shoulder and said, “You know, we are all children of the same God. We see little sense in fighting. We have found it is more to our benefit to cooperate together.” Many of the coffee farmers have taken the mission, and message, of the cooperative to heart. When he found out that I was from America, the lead singer of the Mbiko Aisa Farmers Embaire Group, Katerega Alamanzani, gently lectured me: “I am sorry to mention it about the United States and Afghanistan, but why do you fight there? What is the problem? Come up with a resolution. Regardless of tribe, color, or religion, be one person!”

## Coffee and Fair Trade

**W**hile this story of interfaith co-existence is compelling, the cooperative’s success depends on delivering a good price to its subsistence farmers. In Mbale, on the slopes of Mount Elgon where Arabica coffee is cultivated, coffee has been the mainstay of the local economy. One out of eight Ugandans earns a living from coffee.

A series of factors—increased production in Brazil and Vietnam, drought, management problems, the liberalization of the Ugandan coffee market—exposed farmers to plummeting prices in 2000–2001. The Ugandan government was pushed by international leaders to privatize government-supported cooperatives and

end substantial subsidies to coffee cooperatives. Farmers in Mbale were suddenly left with no option but to sell to private buyers in a time of historic market lows. In 2001, when Western consumers were accustomed to paying more than \$3.00 for a large mocha latte, farmers were receiving as little as \$.60 a pound for their coffee.

Consumers pay more for Fair Trade coffee, and this increase is passed on to the farmers. In July 2011, the commercial market price for Arabica coffee was \$2.69 a pound, while a pound of Peace Kawomera's coffee sold for \$3.69. The pricing structure is complex. Whether the market is high or low, Fair Trade guarantees farmers a floor (minimum) price of \$1.71 per pound, in addition to a series of additional premiums based on quality, origin, and whether the coffee is organic. If the market rises, the Fair Trade floor rises as well. Some of these premiums are mandated; others, such as



the premium for quality, are negotiated individually between cooperative and buyer. For the farmers of Peace Kawomera, these Fair Trade premiums add up to about one dollar per pound over market price. Between 10 and 20% of that premium goes to the larger export cooperative—in Peace Kawomera's case, the Gumutindo Fair Trade Cooperative in Mbale, who certify the coffee as Fair Trade and organic. They also grade, hull, and sort the beans, provide quality control, bag the coffee, secure an export license, truck it to the port of Mombasa, and ship it for export. When the Gumutindo Cooperative makes a profit, a portion is redistributed back to the farmers in a "second payment." "Fair Trade" is a regulated trademark that indicates that a farmer has voluntarily chosen to meet certain standards; has joined a profit-sharing cooperative that reinvests a portion of profits in community development; uses environmentally sustainable agriculture; and abides by labor standards that include equal rights for women and access to credit, which is a required part of the trading relationship between Fair Trade buyers and cooperatives.

Ensuring that farmers receive a fair price for their coffee is only part of the story of Peace Kawomera and similar cooperatives around the world. Ben Corey-Moran, the president of Thanksgiving Coffee Company, has spent years with coffee farmers and has been instrumental in the success of Peace Kawomera. He explains that farmers who sell their own coffee are some of the most marginalized

### Fair Trade Certification: An On-going Discussion

There are many players in the Fair Trade movement, and a controversy has developed in regard to certification. In an effort to expand the market, engage more producers, and increase corporate involvement, some certifying organizations have broadened their parameters when certifying coffee as Fair Trade. Farmers and distributors committed to a more traditional model of Fair Trade charge that these changes enable large companies and multinational corporations to obtain certification for coffee produced under circumstances that stray from the original standards and intent of Fair Trade. They also stress that more loosely applied certification moves away from the commitment to work closely with small-scale family farmers and develop sustainable models of production that empower the most marginalized producers—historic values of the Fair Trade movement.



**For many farmers, the Fair Trade price is literally the difference between abject poverty and being able to afford malaria medication, basic health care, and school fees for their children.**

businesspeople in the world. International coffee traders rely on a volatile market, where prices rise and fall, to maximize their profits. While volatility can be good for a multinational corporation, it is often devastating for the farmers who build their lives on the sale of their coffee. When the coffee market is high, farmers might benefit by selling their product to commercial buyers; the following year, when prices might drop, farmers suffer. Fair Trade insures a living wage for coffee farmers regardless of the fluctuations of the market. For many farmers, the Fair Trade price is literally the difference between abject poverty and being able to afford malaria medication, basic health care, and school fees for their children. Critics of Fair Trade charge that the funds that go into the infrastructure of the cooperatives reduce the actual profits that the farmers receive. They also say that the formation of cooperatives puts individual farmers at a disadvantage. Membership in a cooperative also limits the farmers' ability to take advantage of the market when coffee prices are high. Within limits, the Fair Trade price rises as the coffee market rises, but the immediate benefits of Fair Trade are more apparent to the farmers when coffee prices are low than when the coffee market is high and large commercial

buyers compete vigorously to buy coffee from individual farmers. Critics also point out that Fair Trade does not necessarily equal quality, because there are no explicit quality control standards for Fair Trade certification.

Supporters of Fair Trade stress that this movement does not only impact coffee farmers; it is also an opportunity for consumers to bring their values to the marketplace. Ben Corey-Moran says, "Fair Trade is about engaging in the economy with our purchasing power, habits, and daily practice in a way that gives life to the values we hold dear to our hearts: relationships, connection, quality, justice. We *want* our lives to be surrounded by these things! The innovation of Fair Trade is not that it creates a connection to people on the other side of the world. We've *been* connected to these people for a long time, but in blind, damaging, and hurtful ways. The innovation of Fair Trade is that it's healing and empowering that connection."

Corey-Moran also loves to speak about what makes great coffee taste so good: "A focus on the quality of the coffee changes the conversation from what I do as a consumer to help someone 'over there' to what a privilege it is to choose this finely crafted product from the other side of the world. You come to understand how much work goes into producing a great coffee." Fair Trade is about investing in infrastructure, resources, training, and all the logistics that come together to produce quality. Corey-Moran believes that Fair Trade contributes to building a world where people are connected in positive and mutually beneficial

*right:* **Idi Higenyi and Moses Sebagabo picking coffee.**



*far right:* **Sorting coffee cherries.**





**Alisati Kange tosses dried raw coffee beans in the air to remove the husks.**

ways: a connection to place and people, and a sense of knowledge about the impact of our choices. He continues, “And for coffee farmers, it is ultimately about a sense of stability, progress, optimism, and real economic benefit.”

### Coffee Songs

It is challenging to record in small villages in Uganda. A case in point: In October 2009, I spent a couple of days with four teenagers in Namanyonyi—one Jew, one Muslim, and two Christians—whose families are all members of the cooperative. The boys play *embaire* (xylophone) together, and, machetes flying, they made an eleven-key *embaire* from a small eucalyptus tree. Right after the instrument was finished, they jumped in to play, accompanied by another teenager on a *ngoma* (drum). But I no sooner started to record them than we were surrounded by every child in the village, with mothers in tow. Crying babies, kids herding goats, the odd motorbike—all were drawn to the music. This added “authentic,” albeit extraneous, ambient sound. Sometimes, however, when I wanted to record, I’d ask the farmers if we could move to areas with more privacy and better acoustics; then, we would walk over to the local synagogue, church, or mosque, where it was a bit easier to monitor and control the crowds.

Cooperative members also use music to recruit new farmers to join Peace

Kawomera: the more coffee the cooperative has to sell, the more power it has in the marketplace. In Uganda, when villagers have important information to share or lessons to teach, they turn to music. Not only is music an effective means for community education, it is often one of the only ways to transmit information in a village where radios are scarce and televisions are non-existent. This educational use of music starts early in childhood, as Rabbi Gershom Sizomu said: “When I was a boy, my grandmother would tell us bedtime stories. These stories all had morals, and whenever she came to the moral, the lesson, she would break out in song.” In the villages, important societal issues are commonly addressed through music. In his book on the role of music in HIV/AIDS education in Uganda, Gregory Barz discusses the “purposeful” nature of music and entertainment, and details the role of music in education, communication, and community outreach (2006; 2007). The coffee songs on this album serve similar functions.

**In Uganda, when villagers have important information to share or lessons to teach, they turn to music.**

The coffee farmers of Peace Kawomera sing in a wide range of musical styles, from village guitar music to women’s choirs to songs accompanied by a variety of traditional instruments: *embaire*, *ngoma*, *akadongo* (lamellaphone), *endingidi* (one-string tube fiddle), and *nsasi* (shaker). Performers range from professional musicians who also farm coffee to accomplished amateurs who are members of the cooperative. Women farmers organize local collectives, and most of these groups sponsor choirs who sing about coffee (cf. Cooke 2001). In their places of worship, Ugandan Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims have distinctive styles of religious music. However, the coffee songs are sung in the musical styles of the five language/



left: **Mbiko Aisa Farmers Group.**

right: **The Ndega Women's Group.**

ethnic groups who form the cooperative—Bagisu, Bagwere, Banyole, Basoga, and Baganda. They sing in all five languages, occasionally including Swahili, Arabic, Hebrew, and English.

Sinina Namandosi, a Muslim woman on the board of the cooperative, explained the importance of music to both attract new members and educate the farmers in more effective methods of planting, harvesting, and processing coffee: “When you say, ‘Come, and we are going to teach you about coffee,’ they say, ‘Ah, me, I will not go.’ But

a bride’s and groom’s families, weddings, and funerals. When they play at a wedding or introduction of the bride’s family to the groom’s family, and both families are members of the cooperative, it is common for the group to sing coffee songs, primarily to advertise the cooperative and encourage unaffiliated farmers present to join. This music is fluid, and new songs are composed constantly. After a number of performances I recorded, the cooperative’s chairman J. J. Keki commented, “Mmm. I never heard those songs before!”

**In their places of worship, Ugandan Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and Muslims have distinctive styles of religious music. However, the coffee songs are sung in the musical styles of the five language/ethnic groups who form the cooperative.**

While individual performers such as J. J. Keki compose their own songs, Sinina Namondosi explained how her women’s collective composes together: “For example, we start by asking questions: How has Peace Kawomera changed Namanyonyi? How is Peace Kawomera helping us? They have given us a washing station. It has made the work easy: it pulps so much coffee in just a few minutes!” Collectively, they discuss the impact of such initiatives and share ideas for lyrics. Once the content of the song has been determined, it is common for the leader to improvise in the course of performance, building on the themes laid out by the group in earlier discussions (cf. Barz 2006, 62–75).

when they hear that there is music, they come in big numbers!” At the cooperative’s general meeting, farmers sing to encourage members of the cooperative to produce high quality coffee. When visitors arrive from Thanksgiving Coffee, or other organizations that support the cooperative’s efforts, farmers sing to express their appreciation for the benefits of Fair Trade and to welcome foreign guests to their villages. Other groups, like the Mbiko Aisa Farmers Group, who play the *embaire*, perform at life cycle events such as introductions of

The farmers set these lyrics to familiar tunes learned at school or in church, political campaign songs, or popular songs heard in town or on the radio. They also compose tunes in the style of the traditional music of their particular language/ethnic group. In Namanyonyi, where the co-op’s office is located, the predominant group

**This music is fluid, and new songs are composed constantly. After a number of performances I recorded, the cooperative's chairman J. J. Keki commented, "Mmm. I never heard those songs before!"**

is the Bagisu, also called the Bamasaba. Traditionally, young Bagisu men and women compose songs for the celebration of Imbalu, the large community ritual of adult male circumcision practiced by Christians and Muslims held every two years. Leading up to Imbalu, teenagers who are candidates for circumcision compose songs and travel in groups with friends throughout Mbale, performing and raising money to support the celebration. Bagisu farmers write songs in this style as they sing about coffee, its cultivation, and the benefits of the cooperative.

Once composed, these songs are often sung at other community events where the lyrics are changed to match the specific occasion. Typically, the NGOs that work in Mbale hold large public celebrations to publicize and promote their aid projects.

Women's collectives are asked to compose songs for the festivities to acknowledge the impact of these initiatives—ranging from improved nutrition to HIV/AIDS prevention to child welfare—on their families and communities. A women's group might have a repertoire of five or six rehearsed songs, and it is common to use the same song for an event that acknowledges the support of Peace Kawomera, World Vision, or "The Day of the African Child," changing the lyrics and then altering the melody slightly to fit the new words. In this way, many of these coffee songs fall into the larger category of music composed to advance community economic and welfare projects.

*Author's notes:*

*For video, full transcriptions and song translations, click here: [www.folkways.si.edu](http://www.folkways.si.edu) or go online to [folkways.si.edu](http://folkways.si.edu) and search for Delicious Peace. Lyrics in these notes have been edited to give a sense of their meaning and message, while taking out much repetition.*

*In Uganda, it is common to list surnames before given names. However there are members of the cooperative, especially those in leadership, who list their given names first. In order to be consistent, I follow the Western convention of listing given name followed by surname.*

**Transporting a bass *adungu* (nine string harp) to a performance in Mbale.**



1 “The Benefits of coffee”  
*Akuseka Takuwa Kongo Group, 2008*  
*Sung in Lugwere*

The success of the cooperative also depends on the quality of its coffee. Ben Corey-Moran told me, “Their coffee is extremely good, but it has the potential to be truly great.” Great coffee depends on the details of production: how the product is fertilized and cultivated; exactly when it is picked; how it is pulped, dried, and hulled; and, among other things, how carefully the beans are sorted. Music plays a part in educating farmers about coffee cultivation.

One might think that farmers who have grown coffee for generations don’t have to be taught how to grow it, especially when the soil in the foothills of Mount Elgon is so rich that plants seem to grow overnight. But in the 1990s, when coffee prices crashed, farmers ripped up their coffee trees and returned to the staples of subsistence farming: mangos, avocado, millet, beans, and bananas. People forgot how to grow coffee. “The benefits of coffee” is one of several songs that provide tips about planting, cultivating, and processing—and gives a larger picture of the international demand for coffee.

The Akuseka Takuwa (The one who is cynical doesn’t contribute) Kongo Group is a favorite of J. J. Keki’s. They live in the village of Katio about a half-hour drive from Mbale. For years, farmers in this area grew Robusta coffee, which had been supplied to them by the British. When I recorded them in 2008, they were switching over to the higher quality Arabica coffee and were in the process of joining the cooperative. Their lead singer, Saban Nabutta, is a master at improvising lyrics for special occasions, such as weddings, graduations, political gatherings, and celebrations to introduce a bride and groom to one another’s families. At such events, he weaves details about the couple into his songs. He sings in the traditional lyric-heavy style of the Bagwere people, built around the lead

singer’s vocal improvisation for the occasion at hand. While the tune and rhythm of this song are traditional, the lyrics are modern, focusing on coffee production and its benefits. The *akadongo*, also called *kongo*, is played throughout Uganda. In this ensemble, we also hear the *endingidi* and *nsasi*.

*All Ugandans, hear this story:  
Friends, let me tell you about the benefits of coffee.  
How do we improve the quality of our coffee?  
Our coffee should be handled well.  
Don’t harvest the unripe, green cherries:  
That will kill our market.  
Friends, clean everything used to store coffee.  
So that the quality of our coffee can be improved.  
Mr. J. J. [Keki], I thank him so much for his contribution to Uganda.  
Coffee has supported people. And it has even supported us.  
In order to educate a child, my friends, we sell coffee!  
In order to build a house, we sell coffee!  
Everything I want, I can get by selling coffee!  
Buying a bicycle!  
Friends, let us improve the quality of our coffee  
So that we can get money and we can all be rich.*

*My fellow Ugandans, let me tell you about the benefits of coffee:  
Coffee is medicine. Even when you are sick with malaria, friends, you take caffeine.  
My friends, coffee is a valuable drink.*

**Akuseka Takuwa  
Kongo Group.**



*Western countries need it.  
 They import a lot of it, if it is of good quality  
 here.  
 But my fellow Ugandans, if you harvest coffee  
 when it's not ripe,  
 If you mix it with soil, it destroys our market.  
 I call upon agriculture officials to send us  
 pesticides  
 So that we can improve our coffee.  
 My friends, we suffer greatly, but with coffee,  
 We can make it better!  
 When you are sick, in the hospital  
 You can sell coffee and afford treatment.  
 My fellow Ugandans,  
 My friends, I am talking about coffee!  
 Our coffee is marketable.  
 I am Saban speaking these words.  
 Abdu, give me the music so that I can speak  
 again!  
 Ugandans, I want to say goodbye, but I am  
 stressing this:  
 Let us not allow the quality of our coffee to fall!  
 Let us improve its quality and prices can be  
 higher!*

## **“The people of Uganda”** *Balitwegomba Choir, 2006* *Sung in Lugisu*

In rural Uganda, the government pays special attention to the role of women in national development, and there are many women's clubs and organizations. It is common for these clubs to have choirs as one of their activities. In Namanyonyi, women's organizations are involved in a wide range of community projects, from HIV/AIDS education and educating villagers about the dangers of traditional healers to micro-finance and the promotion of energy-efficient wood-burning stoves.

The women's choirs associated with Peace Kawomera perform at local, district, and national gatherings organized by the ministries of agriculture, education, and culture, such as International Women's Day and Farmers' Day. They also sing at an annual music festival organized by Kulanu, the NGO that helped J. J. Keki establish the coffee cooperative. There, they welcome visitors and thank the organization for its support.

The vast majority of the songs that I recorded are directed toward the members of the cooperative or toward local farmers, encouraging them to cultivate coffee and join the cooperative. They praise the interfaith efforts of Peace Kawomera and the atmosphere of cooperation that it has created. This song, directed toward the younger generation, also gives a brief history lesson, explaining the factors that led to the high cost of living in Uganda—poor leadership, inter-religious conflict, and inter-ethnic warfare. Many farmers don't remember the political conflicts beginning with Idi Amin and continuing through the 1970s and '80s. They are also too young to remember the crash of the coffee market in the 1990s, when farmers stopped cultivating coffee.

This song is in the style of the Bagisu people. It utilizes call-and-response as it explains the importance of interfaith peace to social stability, stressing that it is once more economically viable to grow coffee.

*The people of Uganda suffered so much  
 because of bad leadership in our country.  
 In the recent past, many people died during  
 the war.  
 Famine broke out. It broke out in Uganda.  
 Diseases came. They came in Uganda.  
 HIV/AIDS came in Uganda.*

*But things today, things today are good.  
 Let us rebuild our country, Uganda.*

*So, we grew coffee. We grew coffee. Please help  
 us!  
 We appreciate Peace Kawomera. Thank you so  
 much.  
 We appreciate Fair Trade.  
 We thank our father J. J., thanks to everyone.  
 We thank our father Sam [cooperative  
 treasurer], thank you so much!  
 We thank our visitors [from the Thanksgiving  
 Coffee Company].*

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Friends, rejoice!  
 Chairman, rejoice! Fair Trade, rejoice!  
 Peace Kawomera, rejoice!*

**J. J. Keki (left) and the Peace Kawomera Jazz Band.**



**3** **“Get up and grow coffee!”**  
*J. J. Keki and the Peace Kawomera  
Jazz Band, 2006*  
*Sung in Lugisu*

J. J. Keki composed this piece drawing from the style and response of a traditional Bagisu circumcision song. In Lugisu, “*Ndikiyo!*” means “That’s right!” or “That is true!” This is one of the responses proclaimed by the crowd accompanying a teenage candidate for circumcision as he sings the verses he has composed. In this song, J. J. adapts that structure as he sings about the financial benefits of growing coffee. He will often improvise verses, and the lyrics of each performance will vary even as the theme remains the same.

J. J. is an important leader in Namanyonyi and is often referred to as “Papa” (One who gives you money) J. J. His leadership is very hands-on during the coffee harvest. J. J. sits with farmers, rolls up his sleeves, and helps them pulp and clean coffee. When he visits cooperative members in their villages, his message mirrors the words in this song. He encourages them: “This is the time to chase poverty from the land! Get up! Grow coffee!”

*Brothers and sisters, come together.*  
(Chorus repeated throughout):  
*That’s right! My dear, that’s right!*  
*Children of my mother, sit down.*

*Let us get up and grow coffee.*  
*Children of my mother, come.*  
*The time has come, my friends.*  
*Stand up! Let us all grow coffee!*  
*Coffee brings money.*  
*We shall buy vehicles.*  
*Children of my mother, stand up!*  
*Arise!*  
*In order to survive poverty,*  
*We want to grow coffee!*  
*The time has come, my friends.*  
*Why are you sitting down? Get up!*  
*Work hard! It’s true!*

**4** **“Hit the jerrycan!”**  
*Integrated Rural Development  
Support Programs Choir, 2006*  
*Sung in Swahili and Luganda*

In Uganda, it is common for villagers to sing to welcome visitors. When members of the Thanksgiving Coffee Company, the Kulanu NGO, local officials, or even the leadership of the cooperative arrive at a village, they are often greeted with music. In Swahili, “*Tunafulaha sana*” means “We are very happy.” Ten years before this recording, J. J. composed and recorded a song with the same Swahili phrase, and it is possible that the choir was familiar with his composition. The group adapts a number of standard welcome phrases, such as “We are happy to see you, visitors!” changing them to refer to their happiness with the coffee cooperative. A plastic jerrycan is often played as

percussion, and “Hit the jerrycan!” has the same sense as “Play the drum!”

*We are very happy!  
We welcome you, our visitors [from Fair Trade]!  
You are welcome, our visitors!  
Play, play, play the drum! Hit the jerrycan!  
You see me dancing endlessly: Don't tell me to stop!  
You see me shaking my bottom endlessly: That is because you have not stopped growing coffee.  
You see me singing endlessly: That is because Peace Kawomera did not abandon me.  
You see me shaking my waist: That is because he did not stop growing coffee.  
You see her dancing endlessly: That is because you have not abandoned Peace Kawomera.  
You see her shaking endlessly: That is because you have not abandoned Peace Kawomera.  
You see me break dancing: It is because you have not abandoned Peace Kawomera.  
Play the drum! Hit the jerrycan!*

## 5 “In Uganda, everyone grows coffee”

*Mbiko Aisa Farmers Group, 2006  
Sung in Lugwere*

The *embaire*, a xylophone with wooden keys, is a traditional instrument of the Bagwere people, also played by the Basoga. This group plays an 18-key *embaire*, but instruments with up to 25 keys have been documented among the Basoga people (Barz 2004, 25–33). Generally it is too loud for vocal accompaniment; the instrument commonly accompanies dancing. It is often grouped with drums and sometimes with the *endingidi* and the *nsasi*. The *embaire* is traditionally played at funerals, weddings, and other ceremonial events. But times are changing, and when I asked one group of men in Namanyonyi about the role of the *embaire* at weddings, they laughed and said that it was old-fashioned: these days people want to hire bands with electric guitars and keyboards or to blast recorded music. But in the villages, young people still play the

*embaire*. Electric instruments are expensive, but a boy with a machete can make an *embaire* in a couple of hours. *Embaire* playing can be addictive. Rabbi Gershom Sizomu recalls that when he was ten years old, he and his brothers were so entranced by the *embaire* that all they wanted to do was play it. In frustration, Gershom's mother burned the keys of his *embaire* for firewood, one by one, stressing that, if he was to make something of himself, he had to devote his efforts to education.

The Mbiko Aisa Farmers Group comes from the village of Mbiko located in Aisa parish, close to the village of Nangolo where J. J. Keki lives.

*Nowadays, we Ugandans grow coffee.  
Nowadays, we grow coffee (chorus repeated throughout).  
We people of Mbale, these days, we grow coffee.  
People of Namanyonyi, these days, we grow coffee.  
Members of Peace Kawomera, these days, they grow coffee.  
People of Aisa [parish], these days, grow coffee.  
That [J. J.] Keki, these days, he grows coffee.  
That Sam, these days, he grows coffee.  
That Erisa [cooperative secretary manager], these days, he grows coffee.  
Youth these days grow coffee.  
Policemen grow coffee.  
Chiefs, these days, grow coffee.  
The parishes grow coffee.  
We people of Mbiko, all farmers grow coffee.  
Advocates, these days, grow coffee.  
Students, these days, grow coffee.  
Everyone grows coffee!*

## 6 “Let us continue farming!”

*Kasimu Namanyala and Paul Mugoya, 2006  
Sung in Lugisu*

The *endingidi*, the one-string tube fiddle, was introduced to Uganda about 100 years ago, influenced by other simple string instruments such as the children's ground bow and the Arab *rebab* (cf. Makubuya 2000). The ethnomusicologist Peter Cooke writes that, like the *adungu*



(bowl lyre), it did not have associations with traditional rituals and was used to accompany contemporary topical poetry (2001). Together, the *endingidi* and the *nsasi* are important musical components in Bagisu weddings and during the Imbalu adult circumcision ceremony. When we were recording, I compensated all of the musicians for the recordings we did, in consultation with the leadership of the cooperative. But these two musicians were paid several times as much as the others because they are accomplished performers and in high demand.

This song gives detailed instructions on how to cultivate coffee. They sing, “Clean your coffee, process your coffee well, dry your coffee well, wash your coffee well, pick out the husks and use them as fertilizers. Make a raised stand, get a plastic bag to dry your coffee.” The cooperative wishes to stop the common practice of drying coffee on the ground between people’s homes and the road, under the feet of goats and chickens. As one farmer put it, “If you wish to produce high quality coffee, you don’t want your goats to piss on it.”

*Let us continue farming!*  
*Peace Kawomera wants coffee (repeated refrain).*  
*Mothers! Let’s grow coffee!*  
*Youth! Let’s grow coffee!*  
*Elders! Let’s grow coffee!*  
*My dear farmers, clean your coffee well.*  
*Dry your coffee well. Wash your coffee well.*  
*Dry your coffee on a mat [so it won’t absorb odors].*  
*Put your coffee on a raised stand.*  
*I appeal to all Ugandan farmers:*  
*Let us not use chemical fertilizers on the coffee.*  
*We will educate our children.*  
*We will solve our problems.*  
*Pick out all defective cherries.*  
*Let’s work together!*  
*Yes, dear ones, this is what J. J. wants (This becomes the repeated refrain.).*  
*Friendship is the best thing.*  
*Now we have white buyers with financial ability.*  
*Bring more friends into the cooperative,*  
*So the cooperative will grow.*

*It is good to see these visitors.*  
*This is what our father J. J. wants.*  
*These are good words to listen to.*  
*One day, this will pass away.*  
*But what Papa J. J. wants is for us to work together.*  
*Worldly things will end.*  
*What Papa J. J. wants is friendship,*  
*So let us continue.*  
*We are happy to see you, our visitors, with great joy.*  
*I tell this to all the youth, the women and men who are present,*  
*All who know the importance of farming.*

 **“Construct a processing factory”**  
*Gumutindo Quality Choir, 2006*  
*Sung in Luganda*

A key to improving the quality of the cooperative’s coffee—and in turn raising its price and expanding its market—is centralizing the sorting, pulping, and drying operation. In Peace Kawomera’s early days, they owned seven or eight hand-operated pulping machines that were carted from farm to farm by bicycle. Individual farmers would do their own pulping, but because coffee is sold by weight, there is an incentive to pulp as many coffee cherries as possible without removing the unripe and overripe cherries. Without a way to control the sorting of the coffee cherries, it is difficult to create an excellent product.

In this song, a group of farmers ask the large Gumutindo (quality) Coffee Cooperative in Mbale, which processes and exports their coffee, to construct a local facility to sort, pulp, and dry Peace Kawomera’s coffee. The leadership of Peace Kawomera, working with Laura Wetzler and the Thanksgiving Coffee Company, secured a grant from the United States Agency for International Development to construct this processing facility. Now, cherries are processed under careful supervision, and the quality of the cooperative’s coffee has improved significantly.

This song is sung in the style of Anglican Protestant church music, in

**Peace Kawomera Jazz Band on J. J. Keki's porch.**

Luganda, the language of the Ugandan Protestant liturgy.

*Gumutindo! Gumutindo!  
This is our Gumutindo.  
Let us work hard so that Gumutindo can build  
a factory.  
Our mama Laura [Wetzler],  
Please work with all our energy so that  
Gumutindo can build a factory.  
Our father Joseph, our father Wamayeye  
[managing director at Gumutindo], and our  
father Ben [Corey-Moran],  
Please work hard so that Gumutindo can build  
a factory.  
Our father Nagona and our father J. J., please  
work hard so that Gumutindo can build a  
factory.  
Our mother Nabude and our mother Tobin  
[Diane Tobin of the NGO, Be'chol Lashon],  
Please work hard so that Gumutindo can build  
a factory for our Fair Trade and organic  
coffee.*

## **8 “My beautiful wife, come back and we’ll grow coffee”**

*Peace Kawomera Jazz Band, 2006  
Sung in Lunyole*

This song is based upon a traditional love song sung by the Banyole people. Older members of the cooperative remember this, and similar songs, from the 1970s, when Radio Uganda would present music from the country's many language and ethnic groups to build a sense of national pride in Uganda's diverse cultural heritage. In the original song, the main lyrics were: “My beautiful wife, I don't know when she will return.” In this version, the musicians weave the theme of coffee cultivation into the lyrics. The Peace Kawomera Jazz Band, which consists of five to six older men who play guitar, live close to J. J. Keki's home and have incorporated many of his exhortations: “Wake up and grow coffee!” and “My beautiful wife, come back and we'll grow coffee!”

*My beautiful wife [my dear],  
I don't know if she will come back.*



*My love disappeared.  
I don't know if I will see her again.  
My dear one has disappeared.  
Come back and we'll grow coffee.  
My beautiful wife, come back and we'll grow  
coffee.  
The people from Fair Trade have come into  
our family.  
Let's wake up and grow coffee.  
White coffee buyers have come into our family.  
They've come to see coffee.  
My beautiful wife, I don't know if she will come  
back.  
Super Rose, I don't know if she will come back.  
Good father, continue growing coffee.  
Modern mother, continue growing coffee.  
My dear one has disappeared, but we should  
continue growing coffee.  
I have looked for her but failed, my dear.  
Let's wake up and grow coffee.  
Super Rose, come and we'll grow coffee.  
I have looked for a better price for coffee.  
Coffee buyers have come into our family.  
Coffee buyers from America are here.  
America is here in our house.  
They've come to see coffee.  
Peace Kawomera is moving up!*

## **9 “Poverty is an obstacle to a good marriage”**

*Masanda Group, 2008  
Sung in Luganda*

When singing about the material benefits of Fair Trade, farmers usually stress access to education, medical care, and material prosperity. But the impact of economic difficulty is far-reaching. In this song, sung

in traditional central Uganda Baganda style, a group of Christian and Muslim women from the village of Masanda relate their marital problems. The solution? Plant coffee. This secure source of income will enable the family to buy clothes and send children to school, and provide the basis for a lasting, quarrel-free marriage.

*Poverty is disturbing me, but when I get rid of it,  
I will call you so we can celebrate.  
Poverty has disturbed me, my friends.  
Poverty has struck me, my elders.  
When I get rid of it, I will call you so we can celebrate.  
Poverty has struck me here in Masanda [village].  
Poverty has struck me in Aisa.  
My children don't even go to school.  
My dear, if you don't grow coffee, they will not go to school.  
You see, I don't have anything to wear.  
My dear, if you don't grow coffee, you will not get clothes.  
Yes, my husband, you have done a good job.  
Yes, lady, you have said the right thing.  
Thank you for planning. Thank you, community members.  
Thank you all for singing.  
My sisters, yes, I am singing reservedly because my throat is paining me.  
Not quarreling is the foundation of a loving relationship.  
Sisters, yes, love, love! Not quarreling is the real love for each other.*

## 10 “Let all religions come together”

*Akuseka Takuwa Kongo Group,  
2008*

*Sung in Lugwere*

Saban Nabutta sings in the traditional style of the Bagwere, stressing how important it is for religions and ethnic groups to come together in peace. He sings, “Our grandparents are Adam and Eve. We have the same ancestors. Let us not segregate each other: It destroys the world.”

*Boys, play the music!  
All religions, let us come together,  
So that we can overcome the prejudices in this world.  
All religions, let us come together so that we can manage this world.  
Let us not segregate each other, that only brings problems.  
A Muslim prays in his or her own way.  
A Catholic prays in his or her own way.  
People from England pray in their own way.  
The source of the problem is,  
When a Muslim finds a Catholic, he ends up mistreating him.  
When a born again Christian finds a Muslim, he looks at him badly.  
When a Tabliq [Muslim] finds an Anglican, he looks at him badly.*

*I am telling all religious leaders that God is the One who created us all.  
Our grandparents are Adam and Eve.  
We have the same ancestors. Let us not segregate each other: It destroys the world.  
Boys, play the music so I can tell Ugandans and people of the whole world: Segregation brings problems.  
Stop saying, “I am rich. I am a Mugwere. I am a Mugisu. I am an Iteso, or I am a Muslim—friends, let us work together for the growth of our nation.  
Boys, pluck the strings!  
God created man and told us to worship Him.  
But there are some friends of ours who read the holy books but still treat people badly.  
You can find a Muslim who looks at you badly, claiming he is deeply knowledgeable.  
You are a circumcised Christian, but a Muslim calls you a pagan.  
Nations segregating each other caused problems.  
Religions segregating each other brought problems.  
People say, I am a Mugwere, I don't talk to a Muteso.  
I am a Muganda, I don't talk to a Mugwere.  
That is bad! God is the One who created us in this world.  
But why do we segregate each other?  
Let us stop killing each other because of religious differences.  
We pray to the One who is in heaven, who*

brings us rain  
 So that we can be sustained.  
 God is One.  
 If you believe in the Qur'an, when you pray to  
 God, He is the same One.  
 If you believe in the Gospel, when you pray to  
 God, He is the same One.  
 If you believe in the Torah, when you pray to  
 God, He is the same One.  
 If you are an Evangelical Christian, when you  
 pray to God, He is the same One.  
 What reason do you have to segregate  
 yourself?

Play a long piece on the drum so that I can tell  
 all Ugandans:  
 My friends, let us come together so we can  
 overcome the troubles in this world.  
 Even in politics, let us come together so we can  
 overcome these troubles and promote  
 development.  
 Let us stop religious and tribal segregation.  
 At a Bagisu meeting,  
 There was a Mugwere, a Muteso, a Muganda,  
 and a Langi.  
 All of them sat and said, "Friends, let us be  
 united so we can be as one!"

## 11 "Salaam alaikum" Balitwegomba Choir, 2006 Sung in Arabic and Lunyole

Six of the twenty members of the Balitwegomba (They will admire us) Choir are Muslim. They composed this song with their Christian and Jewish choir members. Here, they integrate the Muslim greeting, "salaam alaikum," into this welcome song as they request support for their cooperative so that "Peace can have its say" and they can help the world.

There is a significant Muslim population in Namanyonyi sub-county, and the Jewish community has developed a close relationship with their leadership. The Muslim community supported J. J. when he ran for local office, and the imam at the Nankusi mosque was an active supporter of Gershom Sizomu's campaign for Parliament in 2011. Supporters from America have expressed some concern that

Peace Kawomera might receive too much attention in the Muslim world and become a target for extremist groups operating in Kenya, but the local leadership of the cooperative does not see this as a problem. They recently hosted a reporter from Al Jazeera who produced a positive story on the interfaith work of the cooperative.

Salaam alaikum! Peace be upon you! This is wonderful!  
 This is wonderful!  
 God be praised for these honored visitors.  
 God in Heaven be praised!  
 He has given us these visitors.  
 They have given us coffee which can give us wealth.  
 They have given us coffee farming which can give us wealth.  
 We appreciate what they have done.  
 Youth with the drum, play the drum for us!  
 Our esteemed elder is called J. J.  
 He has given us coffee so that we can be rich.  
 The great God has given us wealth.  
 Lord be praised, the great God.  
 My name is Saniya Nakira.  
 This is wonderful!  
 Crow, cock, crow!  
 Crow, Peace Kawomera, like a powerful rooster!  
 Peace Kawomera, show power! You own the village!  
 Our Peace Kawomera has given us support.  
 Our Peace Kawomera has brought us coffee.  
 We request from you hoes, please help us!  
 We request that you help us cultivate!  
 We request assistance, please help us!  
 Now, Peace Kawomera have a say!  
 Help us also with ploughs.  
 We also request bulls, so we can plough for other people,  
 So we can manage to help the world.  
 We don't want hate.  
 Now, Peace have a say!  
 We don't want rumors.  
 Peace Kawomera has educated people.  
 Peace Kawomera has enlightened the world.  
 You can plant coffee and the farming is beneficial.  
 Chairman Sam has enlightened the world.  
 We want you to help us so that we can educate other people.

## 12 “In Nangolo, we are all fired up”

*J. J. Keki and the Peace  
Kawomera Jazz Band, 2008  
Sung in Swahili and Lugisu*

J. J. Keki lives in the village of Nangolo, about a half-hour walk from Namanyonyi. His compound is full of activity. Counting both their natural and adopted children, J. J. and his wife Miriam have more than twenty sons and daughters. His daughters danced around his compound as J. J. sang. It was a warm afternoon in Nangolo when we recorded this song, and at times the cicadas were so loud that we had to suspend our recording and throw rocks at the trees to quiet the insects down.

In this song, built on the rhythmic and melodic structure of traditional Bagisu dance music, he sings, “I went outside my village looking for money, but money was right here, in our coffee!” “*Moto, moto*” is Swahili for “fire.” J. J. has recorded a version of this song that is popular locally. People often play it at weddings and other celebrations.

*Nangolo is all fired up!  
There, at Nangolo!  
Peace Kawomera is all fired up!  
Peace Kawomera!  
Today, Peace Kawomera is all fired up!*

*My brothers, I move around with pain.  
I have traveled the whole of America looking  
for money.  
Looking for money unsuccessfully. Money is not  
there.  
My brothers, as I tell you,  
Now that I have come back home, I want to  
grow coffee.  
I have come back home so that I can grow  
coffee.  
I grow coffee: I get money. I educate children.  
I get money: I eat well.  
I get money: I build houses.  
I get money: I dress well.  
My children, dance! I welcome you, my*

*children.*

*I have worked hard.*

*My [wife] Miriam, thank you for growing  
coffee.*

*I appreciate you, Miriam. Thank you.*

*My Miriam, come closer so that I can see you.*

*Today, Nangolo is all fired up!*

## 13 “If you are stuck in tradition, change will not wait for you”

*Gumutindo Women’s Group, 2008  
Sung in Luganda*

Farmers draw from diverse sources when composing their coffee songs. When I played this recording for Gershom Sizomu, he smiled in amazement. He explained that he had heard this very song, a modern composition in the style of the Baganda, performed in a national competition in the Kampala Theater in 1992. The theme of the contest was innovation within tradition, and many singers based their compositions on traditional material but used guitars or other contemporary instruments. Gershom was there as a contestant representing the Mbale district. He recalled the composer’s message: Uganda is advancing very fast, and if you are stuck in the traditions of your ancestors, Uganda will not wait for you! While Gershom was not aware of any recordings of the song, he speculated that one of the women in the Gumutindo Women’s Group might have heard it on the radio and learned it in that way. He explained that the coffee farmers’ version is a clever adaptation because the word “*mutindo*” in Luganda means “up to date” and is related to “Gumutindo” (quality), the name of the coffee cooperative in Mbale that exports Peace Kawomera’s coffee. They adapt this song by substituting “Gumutindo” for “*mutindo*” and presenting the cultivation of coffee as the way to modernity and prosperity.

*My friends, the Gumutindo Cooperative is  
growing rapidly.*

*If you are still stuck in tradition, it will not wait  
for you.*



*It will leave you behind.  
And as for current challenges, if you discuss  
them, you go crazy, and can be called  
mentally abnormal.  
Who says what he or she does not know?  
And yet, what I am talking about, it's the  
reality,  
Experienced by both adults and infants.  
Now coffee—which created awareness among  
people—is number one!  
In all programs, coffee is very useful.  
To us, coffee is our mirror.  
It shows you where you have gone wrong.  
Whoever deals in coffee is the number one  
wise person.  
Growing coffee is like going to school. It teaches  
our parents and also our children.  
God, who created people of all categories.  
All the mistakes we make, so when you make  
them, in fact you do not realize.  
Maybe when someone helps you and warns  
you.  
But who warns you? None other than  
Wamayeye.  
My friends, let us thank him: He has done  
great work.  
Work well done!  
He is our J. J.! Creating awareness in coffee,  
and improving its quality.*

**14** **“The Bagisu people have  
brought vanilla and coffee”**  
*Matale Mirembe Vanilla Group,  
2008  
Sung in Lugisu*

An older version of this song was popular on Radio Uganda in the 1970s, accompanied by drum and flute in Bagisu traditional style. Here, the lead singer plays the *endingidi*. The words “*Bamasaba baleta*” mean “The Bamasaba (the Bagisu) present...” and would be used to introduce the song that the musicians were presenting. These farmers word-play on “*baleta*,” which also means “bring,” and recast it as “the Bagisu are bringing their coffee and Fair Trade vanilla to market.” This group comes from a village about eighteen kilometers from Namanyonyi, where they are developing the cultivation of Fair Trade vanilla as well as growing coffee for the cooperative.

*The Bagisu people present this music!  
The Bagisu people have brought [Fair Trade  
coffee and Fair Trade vanilla].  
The Bagisu who grow vanilla have brought.  
Thank you all for coming.  
We coffee farmers have brought.  
Everyone! Dance to the music!*

**Rachel Mutesi**  
**skipping rope outside**  
**of the Abayudaya's**  
**primary school.**

*I, Nangayo, a vanilla farmer, a Mugisu.  
 Those of you in the market, dance!  
 Because the Bagisu have brought!  
 The youth of the Bagisu have arrived.  
 Dance, coffee growers! The coffee farmers have  
 arrived.  
 Dance, grandparents! The Bagisu are happy.  
 Let's grow vanilla, friends, so we can eradicate  
 poverty.  
 Let's grow our coffee so we can eradicate  
 poverty.  
 Behold, opportunity has presented itself.*

## 15 “Educate our children”

*Balitwegomba Choir, 2006*  
*Sung in Lugisu*

This original composition is in the style of the Bagisu. The particular instrumental accompaniment is called *luwempele*, which refers to two sticks played on a wooden block.

*Who is that, suddenly appearing like an  
 animal we thought was extinct?  
 I was standing at home in Nkoma.  
 I noticed the arrival of visitors.  
 I was standing at home in Nkoma.  
 I noticed the arrival of Fair Trade officials.  
 I sat down with joy and listened to the visitors  
 from Fair Trade.  
 We are happy to see you!  
 Thank God, you avoided accidents on a long  
 journey.  
 We are the women of the Nkoma Centre Zone  
 group.  
 It is us you are seeing.  
 We are facing many problems.  
 We look to Fair Trade to educate our children.  
 We have cultivated coffee in order to educate  
 our children.  
 We look to Fair Trade and ask for a better  
 price when we cultivate coffee,  
 So that we can educate our children.  
 All members of Peace Kawomera, let us  
 rejoice!  
 God Almighty, thank you!  
 Our children are going to school now!  
 Thank you, Fair Trade!  
 Let all women rejoice!  
 God almighty, we thank you!*



## 16 “We have improved our economic status”

*Mbiko Aisa Farmers Group, 2006*  
*Sung in Lugwere*

As they sing, these musicians acknowledge visitors and prominent members of the audience by name. John Servies, the recording engineer, and I were written into this and other songs.

*We have improved our economic status!  
 Peace Kawomera has improved our economic  
 status!  
 That Stephen [member of cooperative board]  
 has improved his economic status!  
 Peace Kawomera's coffee has improved our  
 economic status!  
 Peace Kawomera, Fair Trade,  
 Thanksgiving Coffee, help us improve our  
 economic status!  
 You, John [Servies, recording engineer],  
 You, Jeffrey [Summit],  
 Fair Trade!  
 We have improved our economic status!*



left: **Zachariah Wakou with raw coffee beans.**

right: **Jeffrey A. Summit and Baliyati Namono with the Ndega Women's group.**

### Suggested Reading and Listening

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### About the author

Jeffrey A. Summit is Research Professor of Music at Tufts University, where he also serves as rabbi and Neubauer Executive Director of Tufts Hillel. He is the author of *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship* (Oxford University Press). His CD *Abayudaya: Music from the Jewish People of Uganda* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings) was nominated for a GRAMMY Award in 2005.

### About the photographer

Richard Sobol has worked extensively in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia focusing on wildlife conservation, cultural identity, and politics. His photographs have been published in *Time*, *National Geographic*, *Newsweek*, and the *New York Times* and exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum in New York and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. He is the author of eleven books for children and young adults.

### How to taste the coffee

Mirembe Kawomera "Delicious Peace" coffee is available through the Thanksgiving Coffee Company in Fort Bragg, California, [www.mirembekawomera.com](http://www.mirembekawomera.com).

*While this recording highlights the music and impact of a particular Fair Trade cooperative, I believe that supporting Fair Trade in general is an effective way for consumers to bring fairer compensation to the men and women who produce products that we value and use in our daily lives.—Jeffrey A. Summit*

### Proceeds from Delicious Peace

All royalties from the sale of this recording are being directed to support education for the children of the members of the Peace Kawomera cooperative.





## Credits

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## About Smithsonian Folkways

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