THE FREEDOM SONGS of the SOMALI REPUBLIC

with ABDULLAH KERSHI and AHMED SHERIF

collected by CHET WILLIAMS with HASSAN HUSSEIN (WIRELESS) and by MUSSA GALLAL with voices and lute, drums and tambourine

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FD 5443
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SOMALI SONGS


SIDE ONE

Abdullah Kershi, contemporary outstanding poet and composer, sings and plays, accompanying himself on the Eastern lute, aided by Fatima Kenya, Fatima Dales, and Duniya, amateur young lady singers who alternate with drums and tambourine.

Side I, Band 1: DULKAYAGA

(Words by Ahmed
music by Abdullah Kershi)

Note:
The entire first verse is repeated. In the other verses each couplet is repeated.

English (meaning only)

For our own Land; for our own Land,
We will die
For our own Land.

For pure blood and
Against defenders
We will die
For our own Land.

Youth and babies,
We are all ready.
We will die
For our own Land.

For it we have been born,
And now we have the courage.
Badness and difficulties
We will not accept
For our own Land.

Not all agree with the many,
For some are like the dumb,
And some are like the deaf.
We will die
For our own Land.

Somali

Dulkayaga, dulkayaga,
Waw dimanaynaa,
Dulkayaga, dulkayaga, dulkayaga.
Side I, Band 2: MADAFAN

The Most Important, refers to the most important day, Independence, 1 July, 1961. This is another tune sung by Abdullah in classical Somali and not understood by all, particularly those speaking Southern Somali dialects.

Side I, Band 3: LUMUUMBA

(Words and music by Abdullah Kershi)

Note:
Each line of each verse is sung twice.

English (meaning only)

Chorus:
Lumumba is not alive and he is not dead;
Do not believe either.
His figure is not visible,
But think not he is absent.

He was our worthy head;
Has he left an unoccupied place?

(CHORUS)

All colored peoples are with you,
Congolese, and today you are only
One Unity.

(CHORUS)

We do not want to be slaves or
protected;
Is it possible that they can
impose on us anything?

Side I, Band 4: WA MAHAD ALEH --

means Thank God. Abdullah Kershi sings his patriotic song, thanking God for the independence of his country.

Side I, Band 5: OGAADA (Take Care!)

(Words and music by Abdullah Kershi)

This song stresses the need for education and cultural growth.

Note:
The chorus is sung twice through each time. Each line of each verse is sung twice.

English

Without knowledge there is no brightness.
It is like a house without a light.

Chorus:
Take care! Take care!
And go to school, take care!

It is like thirst and drought:
It is like dryness and without water.

(CHORUS)

Let us open our eyes with knowledge
So that we may become advanced people.

(CHORUS)
Somali

Oqoon la, aani waa qof siin la, aaney.
Waa aqaliyo ilaya la, aaney.

Ogaadada ogaadada dugsiyada ogaadada!
OO aada oo aada walaalayayaalow aada!

Waa ooommanaaniyaha abbaaray.
Omnaabiyii la, aaney.

Indhaa aan kaa qaadnay.
Ska ugu ilbaaksanaan.

Side II, Band 1: WALALAHA

Brothers, advises Somalis to unite because they are all brothers and urges them to live in peace and for­sake strife, as they move forward to develop the nation.

Side II, Band 2: RAQAAT

is another unique Kershi song. The word raqaat denotes the lengthy pause taken by camels after they have quenched their initial thirst at water holes. 'The term is here employed symbolically, alluding to pauses in human enterprises after Independence has been won.

Side II, Band 3: ALOW

Oh, My God! was written by Abdullah Kershi for the Military in 1961. Sung by Ahmed Sherif, the patriotic essay calls for the necessity of the uni­formed forces' setting an exemplary example for everyone to follow.

Side II, Band 4: AWEE

Where?, ("Where is our harmony? Where is our friendship? Where is our relationship?") is another new top hit in the Somali Republic. Ahmed Sherif sings his own 1961 song concerning l'amore perdito.

Side II, Band 5: ALANKAA (Blue, Blue Flag)

(Words by Ismail Ahmed
music by Abdullah Kershi)

English (meaning only)

Chorus: (sung first and after each of the verses)
Every nation's flag has a color (2x)
And ours is like the sky.
Without clouds; please love it.

You, like the white star, have helped us.
You are alone to our country like the first baby.
Be famous, like the bright sun.

Side II, Band 5: ALANKAA (Blue, Blue Flag)

(Words by Ismail Ahmed
music by Abdullah Kershi)

English (meaning only)

Chorus: (sung first and after each of the verses)
Every nation's flag has a color (2x)
And ours is like the sky.
Without clouds; please love it.

You, like the white star, have helped us.
You are alone to our country like the first baby.
Be famous, like the bright sun.

Our body on the day you were born
Was cleansed and purified.
May God not turn you back (Amen)

What our five parts have missed before
You have returned to us and assisted us.
It is a wonderful change to see you flying.
Abdullah Kershi

Abdullah Kershi is poet, composer, and Somali Folk-singer -- all in one. One hears his songs hummed by children in the streets, sung by waiters, presumably to themselves, chanted by work crews building houses, and played proudly and loudly by the official (Police) band of the land, the one-year-old Somali Republic. The songs he writes are mostly patriotic ones -- fifty-three have been composed in this category -- although he has written more than one-dozen love songs.

Indeed, his first song, composed in 1949, called Gartanaqua, dealt with love; the title meaning, Solve me, Please. This was written in Hargeisa, the scene of a recent small unsuccessful revolt, then capital of British Somaliland, many years after he had finished his first 'guitar', from a large tin can and pieces of gut string salvaged from discarded fishing equipment found along the edge of the Red Sea, but only four years after on his own he had started to learn the rudiments of the Eastern lute; the song was created while he was a clerk, in which capacity he has since worked in medical, public works, and police departments.

Abdullah maintains that his music is somewhat eclectic because, coming from a family of gum and mirrh traders, he spent his boyhood away from his native country, in Tanganyika and Aden. Indian, African, and Western, Occidental, music are now all familiar to him, a fact readily discernible when one hears his music. Thanks to a kindly Egyptian music teacher on his own time acquainting the Mogadiscio Artists' Company with rudimentary music notation, he will soon be able to score his own compositions, particularly as he studies under the direction of musicians in London, where he is now undergoing medical treatment through the courtesy of the British Council.

He has known hardship and poverty and even harassment, as the result of standing on civil rights prior to Somaliland's independence. Although (a) his song Dulkayaga, Our Land, was selected as the national anthem when Somaliland gained its independence, (b) his Alankaa, Blue, Blue Flag, is the only national song of the Somali Republic written by a Somali, and (c) he received a standing, cheering ovation by thousands during outdoor African Day ceremonies in Mogadiscio in April, 1961, at which time he sang his new stirring Lumumba -- according to the press and eyewitnesses greeted with unrestrained enthusiasm -- tangible official recognition has come slowly, and only recently has he been a performer on Radio Mogadiscio.

AHMED SHERIF

Ahmed Sherif, born in Baidoa, then part of Italian Somaliland, in 1939, comes from a religious environment, his father being a teacher of Moslem theology. His family later moved to Afgoi, near Mogadiscio, where, with the help of his five sisters and two brothers, they run a butcher shop while also dealing in stock-trading. Self-taught on the lute and flute, Ahmed always wanted to compose and sing. At 16, after completing the formal schooling then available to him, he formed a small singing group in Afgoi. Four years later he was signed on as a professional musician with Radio Mogadiscio. He has six "hellos" to his credit and eight new tunes, in addition.