FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC7852

SIDE 1
1. Neive ni Asa
   (I was told by my father...)  
2. Mwee Nuuya
   (The moon is over there...)  
3. Lulu Kiliya
   (Lulu... quiet...)  
4. Mwene Atete
   (The chameleon walks cautiously...)  
5. Ninjie Mbitti
   (I am hyena...)  
6. Masau Ngungungi
   (Flamingos... as many as you are...)  

SIDE 2
1. Katumbu
   (Me... dove...)  
2. Atangwa
   (Atangwa are the people that ate a dog...)  
3. Mmamba na Mkwasi
   (Maize and potatoes...)  
4. Kavuli Tutu
   (Dove... hold my baby for me...)  
5. Nguli Ithi
   (Hey, you working over there...)  
6. Ndaa
   (Mr. Ndaa, gird yourself tightly...)  
7. Kyungu Vuthu
   (A hollow well...)  

CHILDREN'S SONGS FROM KENYA

D. Nzungu and children sing songs of folklore, which embody moral messages and traditional wisdom. The songs have been slightly re-fashioned and rearranged, but they capture and preserve the original melodies, rhythms and themes.
Children's Songs from Kenya

D. Nzomo

Chorus:
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Dedication
To the Children of the World
Who play happily in innocence
Till the world outside
Confronts them with deceit
Conceit and corruption

Foreword
In oral cultures, music plays a prominent educational role. Consequently, songs embody moral messages and/or traditional wisdom. The songs in this album are basically children's songs and the functions of each are indicated under individual songs. While they are folk in origin, they have been either slightly recomposed or rearranged. The objective has been to capture and preserve the original melody, rhythms, and themes.

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Titles

A

Neeiwe ni Asa
Lulu Kilya
Mweny nuuya
Ninyile Mbiti
Masau Ngunu

B

Katumbu
Atangwa
Mbasa na Makwasi
Kawuli Tutu
Nguli Ithi
Ndau
Kyunu Vuthu

A1. Neeiwe ni Asa

Music in traditional Africa has many functions. As a medium of education, it conveys accumulated wisdom from generation to generation. This song narrates the gems of wisdom passed on from father to son in connection with the responsibilities one must assume for family and community.

Neeiwe ni Asa ndikaa;
Uswini ngatusye

Thi Usini weelwe
Kili kitiyana;

Sawa manzi ni mutwa;
Kila kwo kukuwana;

Ngui oki na mwa;
Tine ya nthengothesha;

Mukwa makwa ngalwa
Kiveta ro kiveta
Kintata ta kina
Nga mbasa ngaeta

I was told by my father
Many do's and many don'ts
You are responsible for the welfare of your family
And that of the community.

A2. Mwei Nuyua

The chant and story-telling under the silvery moon are part and parcel of communal life in traditional Africa. On seeing the moon, happy to play under its light, the children sing; the leader starts and chorus joins in. The song can be repeated any convenient number of times.

Mwei nuyua
Mauta ni ma mwa

Ukwete kating'ali
Maleta niza mvulu
Ngima - kasa wa mwe
Tama nhikolwa;

The moon is over there
Holding a cooking implement
With which to pound stiff porridge
Till it tastes so good
As if it has been spiced with oil.

What kind of oil?
It is deer's oil
If I feasted a deer for you
You wouldn't finish a portion
Of arm, leg, or even an eye.

A3. Lulu Kilya

The older children take care of the younger ones as the parents go about gardening, fetching wood, or doing whatever has to be done to take care of the family. This is a baby sitting lullaby.

Lulu, lulu lulu

Lu lu lu
Lu lulu
Lu lulu
Lu lu lu

Lu lu lu

Lu lu lulu
Lu lu lu

Lu lu lu
Lu lu lu

Lulu, lulu, lulu

Mweny nuuya
Aendie
Kisami
Kwinza manga
Lu lu lu
Lu lu lu
Lu lu lu

Lu lu lu

Lu lu lu

Lu lu lu
Lu lu lu

Lulu, lulu

Thera is your mother
She went to the garden
That is in the plateau
To fetch cassava.

Lu lu lu

... She is soon coming back.

... ...

A4. Mwene Ateete

Folk songs encompass imitations of animal and/or bird sounds. Some songs may describe animal or bird mannerisms. This song describes how the chameleon walks.

Nikinya nthi'vondolel 
X3

Mwene Ateete

If I step on the ground hardly
It shall submerge and
The owner will grumble
(So, the chameleon walks cautiously, very slowly)

A5. Ninyile Mbiti

This song tells how the hyena goes about hunting.

Nathukwe kwa Kimanthi
Kivalo 'e ki Mbuli yake malunga

Nshile kwa Kimanthi
Kivalo 'e ki Mbuli yake malunga

Nesila kwa Kimanthi
Kivalo 'e ki Mbuli yake malunga

I shall take a detour at Kimanthi's
It is a farm full of goats and sheep
It is me hye... ... I am hyena.
A6. Masau Ngunguli

As seasons change, birds emigrate to warmer regions either south or north of the equator. Here is an example of the songs children sing as they see birds flying by.

**Leader:**

Masau  
Nkunguli
Ndongo  
Sithi
Kwalwe  
Kukwanyana
Mabu  
Mukuyana
Mabu
Mbalwa
Mbalwa

**Chorus:**

Masau  
Nkunguli
Ndongo  
Sithi
Kwalwe  
Kukwanyana
Mabu  
Mukuyana
Mabu
Mbalwa
Mbalwa

**Arrangement:**

Leader sings through 1
Group joins in the chorus 4
Everybody sings the chorus (no call) 5
Group joins in the chorus 4
Leader sings through 1

This arrangement conforms to an informal situation, where the leader eventually realizes that the chorus is thinning out as an indication that the song should come to an end.

Flamingos .................... as many as you are
The leader ............... shall die
There shall remain .......... the last one only
And pieces................. of cooking pots.

B1. Katumbu

The story going along, alternating with singing varies in detail according to times, circumstances, the purpose for telling the story and the message to be conveyed. In this instance, the story-teller is narrating the sad story of a young couple's separation.

Katumbu ningatho na kwitu
Kula ngwehatwa ni syana ngaiahwa,
Aka ni maki  
Neuka makyasa  
Mathekya wendo
(tu)  
(tu)  
(tu tu tu tu)

Me dove ... I shall go homewards
Where I am greeted by children in tears

What are women for?
They come laughing
Always smiling at love.

B2. Atangwa

The people of this clan, Atangwa, have the reputation of liking meat so much so that they once ate a dog and concocted an alibi that it was not a dog but a calf. That alibi is the text of this song.

**Leader:**

Atangwa nimo maie ngiti nguma musyi

**Chorus:**

Na makyalya mutwe  
Na makyalya mutwe
Na makyasa ni wa Kasau
Ngone 'Thiawo Kikili' x 4
Ngone 'Thiawo Kikili' x 8

**Leader:**

Atangwa nimo maie ngiti nguma musyi

**Chorus:**

Na makyalya mutwe  
Na makyalya mutwe
Na makyasa ni wa Kasau
Ngone 'Thiawo Kikili' x 4

Atangwa are the people that ate a dog
And as they feasted on the head
They maintained that "it is a calf".

Things must be kept quiet.
Quiet, quiet, quiet ... 

B3. Mhehe na Makwasi

As modernity penetrated African traditional culture, economic activity became commercialized to a degree, and folk songs acquired appropriate meanings. The text of this song is to the effect that growing cash crops is just as beneficial as growing subsistence crops.

Mabwisa ka mmuunda waMakwasi
Mukwanchoona mbenza na makwasi

The fruits (cash crops) of my garden
You shall buy with maize and potatoes.

B4. Kavuli Tutu

Maize, beans, pigeon peas, cow peas and various greens, mixed differently to change flavour constitute the staple food for the Akamba. This is a child's song to welcome the ripening of maize. One child leads and the rest respond with "tutu."

**Leader:**

Kavuli  
Ngakwato Mwana
Kuku'lela Mathe
Mumbe Ikiwa
Meho Tulaya
(tutu)  
(tutu)  
(tutu)  
(tutu)

Dove,
Hold my baby for me
So that I may dance with
its father
While the maize is ripening
That is what we shall eat.

B5. Nguli Ithi

In search of the medicine man; has anyone of you seen him? Or knows his whereabouts?

**Leader:**

Nguli ithi muhikentamba  
Kaa ngali' e' tumbo
Kwaambonea kwa
Kithi-mbalu Mwende
Mwe?

I nguli syaaliya

**Chorus:**

Nguli ikakuna
Nguli ikakuna
Nguli ikakuna
Nguli ikakuna
Nguli ikakuna

Ukwa ndyaawoona

Hey, you working over there
Walking in the terrain
Did you see Kithi-Mbalu
The Medicine Man?

They all responded, in unison
So, we never saw him.

B6. Ndwa

In traditional Africa, ethnic groups raided one another for cows, goats, sheep, or even women. Here is a song warning Mr. Ndwa, one of the rich men, to arm himself because the raid is on, and all his cows have been captured and are on their way to the neighboring society's locality.

Ndwa ni Ndwa, Ndwa ni Ndwa
Ndwa iyo kavyu 'ukuli Taka
Ndwa ng'ombe nsiyaana kuthi 'ukavi Taka

Mr. Ndwa, Mr. Ndwa
Gird yourself tightly
With your sword
Your cows a heading away
To masai land.

B7. Kyungu Vuthu

The children welcome the rain. One singing "kyungu vuthu" - the rain is making a hallow well, and the rest join in at different points, at various melodic levels.

Kyungu vuthu Kyungu vuthu
Kya sbe Kyungu vuthu
A hallow well, a hallow
Of rain, a hallow well.

The song is repeated any convenient number of times.