BAIJUN BALLADS
Somali songs in Swahili

With Haussein Shiekh and Radio Mogadisco Swahili Singers

COLLECTED BY CHET WILLIAMS, WITH HASSAN HUSSEIN
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Band 2. Furaha, Happiness
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Here are eight classical pieces of the Baijun folk, or Island Peoples, yet living for the most part on islands near, and along the coasts of, Northern Kenya and Southern Somalia, from Mombassa to Chisimaio. Of Bantu, Arabic, Persian, and Somali people, the singers of this striking material, living in Mogadiscio, Somali Republic, have as ancestors an ethnic sea-faring group who pre-date the Somalis, themselves on hand to greet ancient Chinese explorers of the East African coast. Two modern songs by Hussein Sheikh, tunes also composed in this coastal Swahili dialect, provide contrast.

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**SIDE ONE**

Band 1. Pumbao, Fun, or Enjoyment, is a modern ironical song by Hussein Sheikh, the form fitting the style of older Baijun material. "First I caressed you like a little baby, as if I were healing your wound," says Hussein in a Swahili dialect strongly flavored with Arabic. "When you became cured you turned on me like a snake and betrayed me."

Band 2. Furaha, Happiness, another new song by Hussein but in a completely different vein, is a prayer to God to care for a bride, her children, and her country.

Band 3. Kikombe Cha Zari, The Decorated Cup, a beautiful old song written in catchy classical Swahili, bears a tune reminiscent of the Middle East. At least the words were composed on the island of Ciula by a member of the Chungwaya, a Baijuni tribe now living in the village of Chungwaya, in Tanga District, on the Tangan-yika seacoast. The Decorated Cup is a sweet young thing who warns her lover to stay close by:

1. The decorated cup is good for tea.
   It needs milk and much sugar.
   If you go away, others will take your place.

2. For a long time I have been telling you
   to stop pretending you don't care;
   Otherwise you will spoil our love.
   Don't be like the captain of the down who by mistake
   went down with his ship.

Nali kikuangacha na kukwangachua,
Nali kikuangacha na kukwangachua.
Jarah ki-osha ki-kwandika dawa,
Umenipa sumu wataka niuwa.

**Chorus:**

Leo ni Leo Leo, Leo no Leo Leo,
M'ta uwona m'pam'banuko si urongo.

(2)

Saidana, you are the light of my two eyes.
When I see you I become upset.
Whenever you are away I am distraught.

Saidana, buru za macho mawili,
Saidana, nuru za macho mawili.
Ki-kuona hungiwa na mashughuli,
Hudangana muhibu ukiweko mbali.

**Chorus:**

Band 4. Leo Ni Leo, Today is Today, a very old tune once a n'vudi, a form somewhat reminiscent of the foxtrot, has lately been somewhat modernized in Mombassa. Saidana is the counterpart of the young lady in Pumbao (No. 1).

(1)

Today is today -- we will see the light of truth;
I was caressing you like a baby and cleaning your sores with medicine.
Now you are poisoning me and want to kill me.

Nali kikuangacha na kukwangachua,
Nali kikuangacha na kukwangachua.
Jarah ki-osha ki-kwandika dawa,
Umenipa sumu wataka niuwa.

**Chorus:**

Band 5. Gungo, Wedding Invitation, is a ruwasha, a type of tune hundreds of years old. As a part of a series of events preceding a wedding, the Gungo may be sung during the initial, invitation writes, or maaliko, precisely at the time when during a week of ceremonies the women, having cut the hair of the intended bride and bathed her, gather in song before each doorway of the village.

A father is praising his daughter who will soon be married:
(1) I did not send this girl, Saada, to be a slave.
I did not give her a hoe to cultivate the field;
I gave her a book to read, to learn knowledge,
the Koran.

E hee Kijakazi, Saada, si-kumuchuma,
Howaa Sikumpa jembe kwenda kulima;
Nimpee chawo kwenda kusoma,
Kupacha elimu na Qaruwani.

Chorus:

Howaa kupacha elimu na Qaruwani,
E hee kupacha elimu na Qaruwani.
Sikumba jembe kwenda kulima,
Ni impe chawo kwenda kusoma,
Kupacha elimu na Qaruwani.

(2) My daughter is very delicate. May God protect her
from the eyes of all evil people.
She is like the mvunde tree and gives brightness
to the branches of all other tall things growing.

Howaa Kijana changu ke-enge enge,
Jito la hasidi lisimukume.
Pwani kuna m’chi huichwa mvunde,
Hunawirisha tanzu na mashinaye.

Chorus.

SIDE TWO

Band 1. Bembea M moto, another rewashsa-type song, is,
in this instance, a lullaby:

(1) Mazoweya, mazoweya, na mahaha hunikera;
Naumiya, naumiya kuzikosa lako sura,
Kwakuliya, kwakuliya, hatu macho yanifura.

Chorus:

Bembea hee leo, Bembea hee,
Bembea hee leo, Bembea mtoto,
Ukiliya waniliza, Bembea mtoto.
Sina mwana mimgaliya, Bembea mtoto,
Bembea hee leo, Bembea hee,
Bembea hee leo, Bembea mtoto.

(2) Husikiti mpenzi labude huna imani?
Killa siku ni hasira hiyo ni tabiya gani?
Kusema nawe nataka hebu mwapuse shetani.

Chorus.

(3) Wa halba, wa halba, nyuka chwandame upepo,
Matilapa, matilapa, ni hoko tuonanapo;
Ukishiba, ukishiba, ndipo akili ziyoapo.

Chorus.

Band 2. Safaridi, Martin Bird, an enchanting and poignant
fragmented love-poem, is an invocation to both bird
and flower:

(1) Will you help me and my Love when we meet?
You are not like the m’kadi flower but are the
flower itself.
Knogomile is not more beautiful than you, the
Safaridi bird;
Indeed, you devastate me, your wings flapping
in the night
worshipping God.

Safaridi, ni ndege, mjuzi m’no,
Safaridi, ni ndege, mjuzi m’no.
Ni saidi katika madirikano,
Ni m’kadi, ni m’kadi, harufuye si m’fano.
Kongomile hamshindi, safaridi,
Kongomile hamshindi, safaridi.
Ndege yule menitiya itikadi,
Hata mbale, hata mbale, usiku huta-abadi.

Band 3. Sina Mwana, I Have No Son, is another lullaby:

(1) La waridi, la waridi, (haa, haa, haa) Shada lema,
la halba, (haa, haa, haa)
Maridadi, maridadi, Dawa ya nafusi tiba,
Jitahidi, jitahidi, tuonane kwa kuiba.

Chorus:

La waridi, la waridi, (haa, haa, haa) Shada la mti
rafu, (haa, haa, haa)
Yamezidi, yamezidi, (haa, haa, haa) Mahaba
kunikalifu.
Yabaidsi, yabaidsi, (haa, haa, haa) Baruwa nakuarifu.
(Haa, haa, haa)

Band 4. Kasikazi Vuma, Oh, Wind of the Southwest
Monsoon! is a powerful sailors’ chant once voiced to
the stroke of oars as seamen, having cast off, struck
out for the strong steady breeze that would carry them
when, once gaining momentum, they outreached the lee
of the harbor.

Blow, Oh Wind of the Southwest Monsoon! (Ch: 2x)
Let us pull the oars of our master’s down
and keep it from drifting aft.
I was gone, but now I am here; the painters have
painted my boat well.
Everything in it is poised and the ship well-balanced,
not listing to port of starboard.
When it was finished I could master the sea
and make it like a road on the land;
Even if I were to sail in the jungle the desert
would spread out before me.

Blow, Oh Wind of the Southwest Monsoon! (Ch: 2x)
Kasikazi Vuma, Na umande mwema,
Chukuvuche kidau, che bwana kisireje nyma! (Ch: 2x)
Saliko ni mezhe kuya, Sambo mavedha, Sambuko,
Kituzwata kikatikwa.
Kisende, Huko, na Huko, Nitakacho kamuana nilazapo,
Kusurufu, Bahari ka towa ndiya mwichu kafanya
ututku.

Kasikazi Vuma, Na umande mwema,
Chukuvuche kidau, che bwana kisireje nyma! (Ch: 2x)
Band 5. Randa, Farmers' Chant, another Baijuni old-timer, tells us of the toll just passed and of the repose to come before the next planting. The first farmer to finish burning the scrub trees and bush on his land throws down his simple tools and runs through the village, singing this song. Of course, everyone stops what he is doing and follows him, joining in and thus starting off the season's festivities. As with the sailors' song, Kasikazi Vuma, no instrumentation is called for in this farmers' work piece. Smart hand-clapping and a bit of footwork is all that is required. In reality the chorus is the song:

Chorus: (Several times)

M'chwana wa Salim boco, Ulyie kivamba vamba,
Haikubakiya kich, illa ivu na mtanga.

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(1)
Kulima kuchema, Kuva ni maeme,
Na ibada lema ni Maikitiini.

Chorus: (Several times)

(2)
Mchama ni imeb, mnazi n'gome,
Harusi ni pembe ndipo ifanapo.

Chorus: (Several times)

M'chwana wa Salim boco, Ulyie kivamba vamba,
Haikubakiya kich, illa ivu na mtanga.

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