SONGS FROM KENYA

DAVID NZOMO TRIO
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I find this little most convenient for my songs because they are not only Rhythmic - as nearly all African Music is undisputably Rhythmic, AFRICA IS THE LAND OF RHYTHM, but are also very much influenced by Jazz melodies; this is mainly why I find it so necessary to say the following, endeavouring to give as full an explanation as I know of their Origin.

In the years 1957 and 1958, I happened to preside over a High School Students' Organization that staged concert displays around my country - Kenya in East Africa. So as to hold the attention of our audience when the stage was being set for the succeeding scene or play, it occurred to me that a song may conveniently be entertaining. I knew how to hold a few key scales on the guitar and had already struck some simple tunes that I was using for entertainment at wedding parties, get-together parties and local dances. I thought of trying some on the stage and they proved very entertaining to the audiences. As time went and I became a little better acquainted with the guitar, I tried them on different keys, giving them a twist here and there until they came to their present form.

(Original words and manuscripts)

NZEMBELUK’I

This is one of my very earliest compositions, solely for entertainment at wedding parties, get-together parties and local dances, mooted at a time when the guitar was becoming very popular and when any kind of dancing was being strongly suppressed, the context gives vent to a moregless rebellious attitude. The Words - fitting so well to a rhythmic beat that is moregless traditional - express a then prevailing thought of the youth, to the effect that the rhythmic melodies of the guitar are so sweet that Baby-sitters can no longer contain themselves but must run (to listen to the guitarists).

P.T.O.

SIDE A, BAND 1
STIMBITHE: (Secrets)

This is a comparatively large composition whose context is a basic philosophy to the effect that the Secrets of the mind can not be read let alone being predicted. Therefore simply be frank and that will be just that.

SIDE A, BAND 2
KANA NGWENDA

N1

1. NTA KA NA KA MWE KA KWA KWE NDA

2. NTA KA NA KA MWE KA KWA KWE NDA

This is an early composition for entertainment purposes. It is a Love Song by which as a young man (myself) is proposing by calling the girl that he loves so that they may spend their lives together singing. Paradoxically enough, he goes as far as telling her how his love has been taken up by singing, dancing, etc., etc.

SIDE A, BAND 3
6. NIKI (WHY).

A top highlight for the 1968 concert displays, the is open for
both social and political interpretations. The nearest & trans-
lation of the sense is a series of questions as to: Why this
world is vexing me: Why some people are rich and others poor
mentally as well as materially - while we have a common Providence:
Why could I never understand when Grandfather was telling me of
the hardships I might encounter: and Why when I look around and see &
good houses, large farms and healthy herds of cattle - symbolic
of material possessions - they always belong to someone else (never
to me)

SIDE B, BAND 2
This is a late composition whose context can be interpreted either politically or socially. From a political point of view, the original thought, the commoners are telling the politician - any one of them - that they are looking upon him (he should subsequently look at them and see their problems) to lead the way; so that their political and social problems may be eliminated.
LING'A (PLEASURE)

Hitherto tittled WE MWAITU. This was a smashing hit for the 1957 concert displays. The word Ling's came into use in my country in the late fifties, mainly among the elite to mean all that includes pleasure, enjoyment, luxury, etc., etc. The composition is woven into a rhythmic beat that is traditional and the melody is for group singing. In my country, we consider Child-bearing as the excellence of womanhood. The context is to the effect that My Mother has a Child: My Darling has a Child: A Child that I would really like to see.