

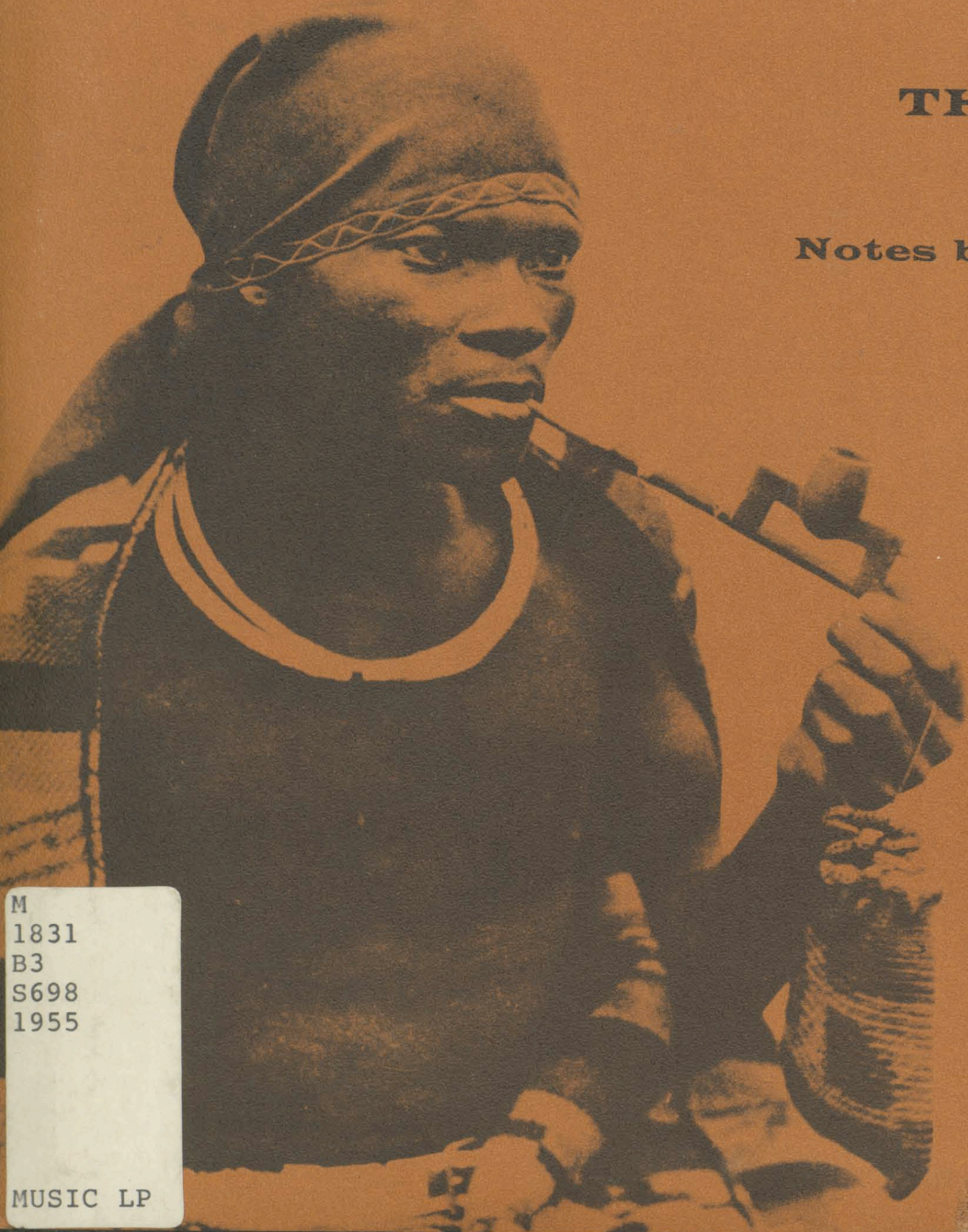
FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6912

BANTU

CHORAL FOLK SONGS

THE SONG SWAPPERS,
Pete Seeger, Director

Notes by Dr. Richard A. Waterman
and Pete Seeger



M
1831
B3
S698
1955

MUSIC LP

Ronald Clyne

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6912

BANTU CHORAL FOLK SONGS

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

BABEVUYA
ISILEYI SAM
MANAMOIELLA
(Ha Ho Hlaotoa)
ABIYOYO

BAYEZA
(Oonomo^thot^tholo)
HEY, TSWANA
(Lengae)
SOMAGWAZA

BAYANDOYIKA
HEY, MOTSOALA
HERE'S TO THE COUPLE
(Lo Mfan' Uhesangota)

FOLKWAYS RECORDS
FW 6912

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FW 6912
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BANTU

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BANTU CHORAL FOLK SONGS

sung by THE SONG SWAPPERS
with Peter Seeger, director
and arranger

"What does the average American think of when he hears the word 'Africa'? Jungles? Cannibals? Most of us, raised on a diet of Tarzan movies and comic books actually know little about the traditions of that great continent. Tremendous civilizations there were destroyed by centuries of the slave trade, and wars of conquest. Two thousand years ago they were

forging iron and casting brass, at a time when men in Northern Europe still used stone hatchets. 800 years ago a University flourished in Timbuctoo, drawing scholars from many lands to its halls. Today one can find African cultural expressions which challenge the world to produce their equal for beauty, vigor, subtlety and rich variety. Music is one of these."

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FOREWORD

by Richard A. Waterman

The songs on this disc are the results of a most interesting experiment in the blending of musical styles. The musical themes, melodies and harmonies of which they are made have come from Africa to the United States in the form of written music. Re-worked and interpreted by Mr. Seeger and by the performers they provide examples of a novel form in Western choral singing, since they maintain many of the characteristics of the adoption of themes of Western music and by others familiar with, and conditioned to, African musical tradition. Much of the dance music and popular music of Latin America falls into this category and so do early forms of jazz and some of the Spirituals. In recent years examples have been recorded of Western themes--usually of popular music--played and sung by African natives. In the context of the study of the dynamics of musical style these instances amount to loosely-controlled experiments in

musical change with particular reference to the re-interpretation of foreign themes in terms of the stylistic elements of a well-understood indigenous musical art.

On this record we encounter--perhaps for the first time--the reverse of this process. American high-school youngsters familiar with the musical traditions of the Western world, or at least the American part of it, have been presented the problem of interpreting materials involving tonality, melody and harmony derived from a very different musical environment. They have succeeded in producing a kind of music that, while recognizably Western in many characteristics, has distinctly a flavor of the South African in it.

Some of the songs have been translated into English, others have been kept in the original language as transmitted by phonetic transcription. In both cases the primacy of the rhythmic and harmonic materials over the words has been demonstrated.

It seems probable that the reaction of a South African native musician to these records would be mixed. He would certainly hear enough that was familiar to him to classify it as music he could understand. On the other hand, Western intonation and rhythm patterns seem to predominate, and in spite of the fact that many of the native singers of South Africa have been themselves somewhat influenced by Western music, he might be expected to find the songs in this record most exotic in quality.

Important as authenticity is for many aspects of musicological investigation, the present kind of experiment can provide far more exciting materials for the study of musical change than can "authentic" records of ethnic music. Perhaps at a later date parallel recordings of South Africans singing these songs will furnish controls for the experiment; comparison of the two could be expected to point out specific mechanisms of re-interpretation stemming from the Western-music conditioning of the performers on the present record. This record, however, has been made more for entertainment than for laboratory research; by providing a fresh and interesting sound and by supplementing the bit of techniques common in Western choral music, it has succeeded very well in its purpose.

BANTU CHORAL FOLK SONGS

Introductory notes by Peter Seeger

While the music of Africa has become justly famous for its complex and exciting drumming, the great variety of other music indigenous to that continent is not so generally known. For example, in East Africa one can find large xylophone orchestras. In West Africa the predecessor of the American banjo is still played. Flutes, bowed instruments, thumb pianos, trumpets, harps, all can be found, not only playing ancient traditional music but contemporary combinations which result from the influence of European music.

In South Africa, the home of the Bantu people, choral music has long been a favorite. The first European explorers heard village choruses singing rich harmonies, with counterpoint and antiphony entirely African in character.

The songs on this record are undoubtedly not sung exactly as they would be by the peoples who created them. I learned them in 1953 from Mrs. Z. K. Mathews, whose husband was at that time teaching at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City. They have now gone back to South Africa, where Dr. Mathews teaches, and is, incidentally, one of the courageous leaders of the African National Congress.

Mrs. Mathews had heard the recordings made by the Weavers of the popular South African song "Wimoweh", and told me, "Yes, your record of it was quite popular down in Johannesburg. But, you know, you should learn some of our older folk songs, which have been in danger of dying out because of changed conditions in Africa." She then presented me with a rare and remarkable volume, "African Folk Songs", edited by Rev. H. C. N. Williams, and Mr. J. N. Maselwa. It contained forty songs: worksongs, wedding songs, lullabies, songs of the witchdoctor, songs of the initiation ceremony, and miscellaneous songs such as drinking songs, childrens songs, and warrior songs. All were written out with full harmony, with from two to six parts, but no accompaniment was indicated.

The ten songs on this record have all been learned from this book. Perhaps it would be well to quote at length from the editor's preface to it:

"This book is the result of five students of St. Mathews College, members of a choir of eight which broadcast a series of programs of African Folk Songs for the South African

Broadcasting Corporation. The five students are Khulukazi Mpati, Norauti Klaas, Joseph Maselwa, Alfred Mangcu, and Sabelo Mjali."

"Many have heard Africans singing, and have been impressed with the resonance of the harmonies and the attractiveness of the rhythm, but few have ever regarded these harmonies and rhythmic effects as songs with a clear melody, and still fewer have felt them to be beautiful music representative of a unique and valuable tradition. Prejudice based on ignorance of the music which these songs, and an undue exaggeration of the lack of "respectability" in their associations in non-Christian customs have been responsible for their rapid disappearance. . . ."

"Most of the songs included in this series are of the ancient and original tradition. This tradition has been characterized by what has been called the Pentatonic scale. No satisfactory theory has been produced to question the validity of that scale as the basis of African traditional music. Non-essential additional notes beyond the scale do not affect the validity of this theory. But a further analysis of these original songs will show that within the Pentatonic scale there is a characteristic melodic phrase peculiar to each tribal group which maintains its traditional song. This phrase we have called the Autophonic Phrase. . . . The phrase always starts on the 'dominant' of the Pentatonic scale, and works down the scale, and is then repeated, beginning with the next note down the scale. This similarity of phrasing in African songs is noticeable in the more modern folk songs where the octave scale is used. This makes for similarity of harmonization, which is normally in parallel thirds or fifths, and accounts to a large extent for the ease with which Africans are able to harmonize their songs."

"The present arrangement of these songs does not pretend to be final, and indeed it is to be very much hoped that those using this book will use their imagination and make their own arrangements of these songs. Where possible the characteristic and beautiful polyphony of some of the songs has been brought out in the form of "rounds". Others, such as the lullabies, lend themselves to acted games for the very young. Others, such as 'Nomathotholo'. . . . suggest song games for young children. . . ."

"No formal notation can convey the intricacies of rhythm and suspended syncopation. Perhaps it would have been better to have printed them without bars, but this would assume that readers and singers would know the time of each song, whereas many will have never heard

the songs at all. It must, however, be strongly emphasized that these bars and note values are only intended as a preliminary guide, and every encouragement should be given to freedom of expression to keep the natural rhythmic flow essential to the attractiveness of the songs."

"Great difficulty has been experienced as a result of the impossibility of conveying the times of the songs as heard, to the formal settings of this book. . . . This is accounted for largely by the recitative effect of disregarding the normal time for two or three bars to crowd in additional words, while the time is 'assumed', and then of returning to strict time values for the completion of the phrase. This is a very characteristic form. A further complication is presented by the fact that in many of the songs as heard the Cantor or 'Umhlabeli' adds a flowing descant which often bears no direct relation to the time of the remaining parts."

"Great care has been taken to ascertain that all the songs are traditional. It is impossible to guarantee in every case that traditional music has remained unmixed with modern compositions, mainly hymn tunes. This is particularly true of such wedding songs as . . . 'Lo Mfan' Unesangota", where the ecclesiastical environment in which these songs are sung has influenced them. The authors of this book are unaware of having included any composed songs"

St. Mathews College
January, 1947

H. C. N. Williams
J. N. Maselwa

To this we only need to add a few words to American listeners to this recording. First, while we have tried to be as faithful as we know how to be to the original spirit of the songs, certain changes have purposely been made to bring them more into line with American folk traditions. Why have we done this? Because we are interested in these songs as wonderful to sing, not as museum pieces. There is no reason that African folk songs should not be added to the world's heritage of song. In time we may come to sing them, as we do 'Auld Lang Syne' or 'Silent Night' without bothering to make a big point about the country of their origin. Perhaps it would be worthwhile pointing out, too, that there is much of Africa already in American folk traditions, and these songs can be learned extraordinarily quickly, especially by those familiar with spirituals, blues, and square dance tunes.

For the record, however, let us note exactly what changes have been made. Banjo and guitar accompaniment (popular in South African cities nowadays!) has been added. Undoubtedly the African words are not pronounced exactly correctly. And vocal intonation naturally tends to be American rather than African. Let us not forget, too, that our tastes (prejudices?) determine which ten of the book's forty songs to use on the record. For example, almost a third of the book's songs use a harmony strange to our ears - but only one of the ten, "Bayandoyika", has this harmony. For three of the songs English words were composed which are not a literal translation of the original.

Actually, even in translation, many of the African lyrics would still be meaningless. Mr. Henry Ramaila, student at the Union Theological Seminary, who was able to translate some of the songs, gave up on many. "This song is untranslatable; it is felt by Africans," he noted under 'Somagwaza'. Of 'Manamolela', he said, "Don't try to render this song in English. It will make no sense. The idiom has no equivalent to give the exact emotion in English."

So if through the years new words get composed for many of these melodies, let us not be surprised. It will do no injustice to the magnificent folk traditions of a great continent, but can only serve to strengthen the bonds of friendship between peoples.

We wish to express our thanks to Mr. Ramaila for the translations, to Mrs. Mathews for introducing us to the songs. Special thanks to Rev. Williams and Mr. Maselwa, editors of the collection, and to Lovedale Missionary College, owners of the book's copyright. Most especially, thanks to the peoples of South Africa, who created these works of art through the centuries, and who have passed them on to us.

Peter Seeger and the Song Swappers.

SIDE I, BAND 1

BABEVUYA

Babeyuya be tshayelela
Kodwanamhlanje yincind'ye khala

'Nto z'ka bawo, 'Nto z'ka bawo
'Nto z'ka bawo, yincind'ye khala

Translation:

They were jolly, they were singing
But today the fist is sounding*

Sons of my father, sons of my father
Sons of my father, the fist is sounding*

* (as in fighting)

"It is not considered customary for the bride to show any emotion but sadness during the wedding ceremony. When her party is ready to depart for the wedding, this song is sung to express this ceremonial sadness. It asserts that "they were glad and rejoiced when the bridegroom brought the dowry; but today they are full of sadness, sadness like the bitterness of the juice of aloes." "

Changes: The key has been changed from the original A flat, to E flat, necessitating some slight changes in the bass part, and switching the alto and tenor parts. In view of the explanatory note above, it is possible, even likely, that this recorded version is too fast. The singers, however, felt the music too joyous to feel downhearted, no matter how hard they tried. Accompaniment in 12/8 time has been an addition, but one felt in keeping with African counter-rhythmic traditions.

Musical score for Babeyuya, featuring four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics in Xhosa and English. The lyrics are: "Ba-be-vu-ya be-tsha-ye-le-la ko-dwa-na" and "Ba-be-vu-ya, be-tsha-ye-le-la".

Musical score for mhlanje yincind'ye khala, featuring four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics in Xhosa and English. The lyrics are: "mhlanje yincind'ye khala. 'Nto z'ka ba-wo, 'nto z'ka" and "mhlanje yincind'ye khala. Ha, Ho, Ha".

Musical score for Sons of my father, featuring four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics in Xhosa and English. The lyrics are: "ba-wo, 'nto z'ka ba-wo yincind'ye khala. 'Nto z'ka Khala." and "Ha, Ho, Ha, Ha, Ho, Ha, Ha, Ho, Ha, Ha, Ho.".

SIDE I, BAND 2

ISILEYI SAM

Satyibilik Isileyi sam
Satyibilik Isileyi sam

Translation:

My heart melted with joy, my heart melted
with joy

"This wedding song is normally sung during the daytime competitions, usually at home, though it has been heard during the night after the wedding ceremony."

Changes: Original key A flat, instead of G. A second verse, 'Yiza ne zembe ndingawule' meaning 'Bring that chopper, let me chop this' has not been included on the recording. Accompaniment added.

Musical score for Isileyi Sam, featuring four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics in Xhosa and English. The lyrics are: "Sa-tyi-bi-lik - Isileyi sam, Satyibi-lik Isileyi Sam." and "Isi-ley' sam, Isi-ley' sam -".

MANAMOLELA
(Ha Ho Hlaoloa)

Manamolela! Manamolela!
Won't you let us take it slow?
Won't you let us take it slow?
You know the day is long
You know the day is long

(English lyrics by P. Seeger)

African words:

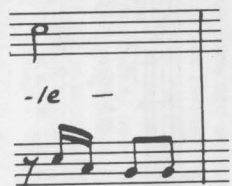
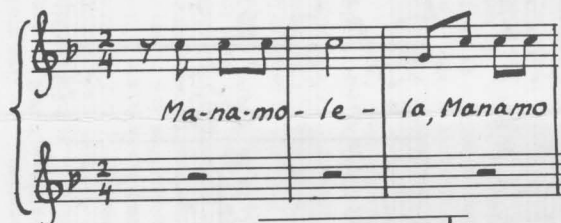
Manamolela! Manamolela!
Helele re khat'he tsi
Helele re khat'he tsi
Ahere khat'hetsi!

Translation:

Mediator (foreman), Mediator!
Behold, we are tired
Behold, we are tired
Alas, we are tired
Alas, we are tired

"This Sutho song is used during hoeing. It is a song of weariness, in which the singers beg of their employer to be relieved."

Changes: Original key G, instead of F.
English lyrics added. Otherwise unchanged.



He-le-le-re

SIDE I, BAND 4

ABIYOYO

Abiyoyo, Abiyoyo
Abiyoyo, Abiyoyo
Abiyoyoyoyoyoyoyo
Abiyoyoyoyoyoyoyo

"This is a lullaby. It comes at the conclusion of a bedtime story in which a monster figures as someone who threatens little children. The children are given a charm for their protection, which inspires them to sing this song, the rhythm of which affects the monster so powerfully that he is induced to dance. In this state of emotion he is quickly dispensed with by the fathers and mothers of the children. The song is sung till the babe is asleep."

Changes: Original key was G, not D. There was three part-harmony given, and two notes of the melody, the 4th note in the second and in the 4th measures, was originally sung on the 5th of the scale, instead of the 4th. Accompaniment added.

S
A
T
B

Soma gwaza mna yo

Hey mna

Ha-weh, ha-weh soma gwaza

weh, yo weh. Soma

yo weh, hey mna yo weh, soma

Ha-weh, ha-weh soma

gwaza mna yo weh, yo weh.

gwa-za Hey mna yo weh, Hey mna yo

1, 2, 3, etc. *LAST TIME*

Soma gwaza mna soma gwaza

weh, soma gwaza weh, soma gwaza

weh soma gwaza. weh soma gwaza.

Song No. 31

SOMAGWAZA

Key G

: :	: :	: :	: :
: :	: :	: :	: :
: :	: :	: :	: :
<i>p.p.</i> : d l, : -	: d l, : s, s, s, : d, -		<i>cres.</i> : d l, : -
Haw - e	Haw - e So - ma gwa - za		Haw - e

: :	<i>p</i> : m . m m : d . d m . r . d	l, : - r . : - d	l, : -	<i>m.f.</i> : m . m
: :	So - ma - gwa - za mna - yo	we yo	we	So - ma
: :	: :	: :	: :	: :
: :	: s, m	r . : - d l, : s, m	r . : - d l	: d . d
: d l, : s, s, s, : d, -	He mna yo	we He mna yo	we	So - ma
Haw - e	So - ma - gwa - za	Haw - e	Haw - e	So - ma

m : d . d m . r . d	l, : - r . : - d	l, : -	m . m	m : d . d m . r . d
gwa - za mna yo	we yo	we	So - ma	- gwa - za mna yo
d : s,	: s, m	r . : - d l, : s, m	r . : - d l	: d . d
gwa - za	He mna yo	we He mna yo	we	So - ma gwa - za
s, : d,	: d l, : -	: d l, : s, s, s, : d, -		: d l, : s, s, s, : d, -
gwa - za	Haw - e	Haw - e	So - ma	gwa - za

l, : - r . : - d	l, : - r . : - d	d : s,	- : - - : -
we yo	we yo	'ma gwa - za	
: :	: :	: :	: :
r . : - d l, : -	s, : d, l, : d . d	d : s,	: :
yo we	yo we	So - ma gwa - za	
: d l, : -	: d l, : s, s, s, : d, -		: :

SIDE II, BAND 4

BAYANDYOYIKA

E we, bayandoyika bantwan
E we no ma ma, bayandoyika bantwan

Bayandoyika bantwanabama gqo boka
Bayandoyika bantwanabama gqo boka

Pronunciation: The letters *gg* are a clucking noise, made by pulling the tongue down from the back part of the roof of the mouth. It is a sound difficult but not impossible for Americans to make. In the Folkways Record FP60A, 'Millions Of Musicians', one can hear a South African woman pronouncing a tongue-twister full of such clicks. It is a feature of language believed to have been picked up by some of the Bantu peoples from neighboring Hottentot tribes.

"This song is frequently sung by girls whenever they do work of any sort in company. Thus it is often heard during hoeing, stamping of mealies, carrying of water from the river, or gathering wood."

Translation: They fear me, O the children of heathen.

Changes: The original key was B flat, not E, and the lead part was taken by the sopranos. Altos took the part here given to the sopranos, and tenors took the part here given to the altos. Accompaniment added.

Bayando yika bantwanabama gqo boka. Bayando

Bayando yika bantwanabama gqo boka. Bayando

E-we, bayando yika bantwan E-we, bayando

Bayando yika bantwanabama gqo boka. Bayando

Variant phrase for leader: Ewe no-ma-ma bayandoyika bantwan, E

HEY, MOTSWALA

Hey, motswala, hey, motswala
Hey, motswala, hey, motswala

1. My mother travelled to Pretoria
To sign the license for the wedding
day. (twice)
2. Her father wants to give the bride away
I think he's waiting for the dowry (twice)
3. And now the time has come I have to go
I wish perhaps I hadn't hurried so

(English lyrics by P. Seeger)

Original words:

He motsoala, he motsoala
He motsoala, he motsoala

Mangoane oile Petoria
O tsabile tsepese panere

Se panere sa ba e sekele
Ka tempa kaba ka saena

Translation:

O my cousin, O my cousin
O my cousin, O my cousin

My aunt has gone to Pretoria
She has run away from the iron spanner
(wrench - pliers)

The spanner of a bicycle
I stamped and even signed

"This is a Sutho marriage song during the
general festivities after the ceremony is over."

Changes: English lyrics. Original key G,
instead of E. Four part arrangement in the
book has been adapted to three-part version
learned from Henry Ramaila, of Zulu back-
ground, and a student at Union Theological
Seminary, New York City. Accompaniment
added.

HERE'S TO THE COUPLE
(Lo Mfan' Unesangota)

1. Here's to the couple so valiantly wed
(basses: 'knotted untogether')
Here's to the years that for them lie ahead
We wish them good fortune and health of
the best
We wish them good fortune and health of
the best (Tenors: 'and also..have')
Strong children, good neighbors, and all
the rest
(Basses and altos: 'Also good neighbors
and all the rest')
2. Here's hoping that they never do part
(Basses: '...never have trouble with the
baby')
And all their quarrels be patched 'ere they
start
Let love be the teacher and make all the
rules
Let love be the teacher and make all the
rules (Tenors: 'Remember!')
Let love be the doctor and cure the fools
(Basses and altos: 'Love be the doctor and
cure the fools')
3. They venture now out on life's stormy seas
(Basses: '...on the waves and the waters
of the ocean')
May they hold to their course, be it north
south or east.
May they hold to their course though the
tempests may blow
And reach their goal, the goal of us all
(Tenors: 'Forever!')
For them and their children, a world at
peace
(Basses and altos: 'And for their children,
a world at peace')
4. Repeat first verse.

(English lyrics by P. Seeger)

Original words:

Lo mfan' unesangota
Lo mfan' unesangota
Ha dovale le ma gqibelaka Nkqo yi

Ndi khokele O Yehova
Ndingumhambi nkosi yami
Una mandla a ndi na wo
Ebu tha tha ke ni bami
O msindi si, O msindi si
Nguwe O li khakala me

Translation: (partial)

This boy has the guts
This boy has the guts

Save me O Jehovah
I am a pilgrim, my Lord
Thou are almighty
I have it in my misery.

"This is a wedding 'competition' song, normally
sung during the night following the wedding, or
during the signing of the register in church."

Changes: Introduction (Lo mfan' unesangota),
which was a bass solo, has been omitted.
English lyrics added. Accompaniment added.
Otherwise, parts and key unchanged.

HERE'S TO THE COUPLE

S
1. Here's to the couple so valiantly wed, and

A
1. Here's to the couple so valiantly wed, and

T
1. Here's to the couple so valiantly wed, and

B
1. Here's to the couple so valiantly knotted untogether

Here's to the years that for them lie a-head. We

Here's to the years that for them lie a-head.

Here's to the years that for them lie a-head.

Here's to the years that for them lie a-head.

wish them good fortune and health of the best. We

wish them good fortune and health of the best.

wish them good fortune and health of the best.

wish them good fortune and health of the best.

wish them good fortune and health of the best. Strong

wish them good fortune and health of the best.

wish them good fortune and health of the best, and also

wish them good fortune and health of the best.

children, good neighbors, and all the rest. Strong.

... also good neighbors, and all the rest.

— have good neighbors, and all the rest, and also

... Also good neighbors, and all the rest.

children, good neighbors, and all the rest!

.... also good neighbors, and all the rest!

— have good neighbors, and all the rest!

.... Also good neighbors, and all the rest!