

Liner Notes for the recording *Simba La La: World Music for Children*

I have collected almost 100 songs from refugees and immigrants in Erie, Pennsylvania as part of a program called Old Songs New Opportunities (OSNO). Run by the Erie Art Museum, OSNO trains New Americans to work in local childcares and to use their native children's songs on the job. This album includes some of the most popular songs in the collection. They are all traditional songs, but the English versions were created in collaboration with the participating immigrants. Every song has its own story. In addition to all the lyrics, you'll find a bit of information about the singers and their culture. In the words of one of our singers, Nibal Ab el Karim, "These songs are little passports. They open up doors and let you meet new people." I hope you'll learn some of the songs and use them with the children around you, so they may be passports for you, too.

Kelly Armor
Folk Art & Education Director
Erie Art Museum

1. *Simba La La (2004)*, Swahili & English from South Sudan

From and led by Marlin Arop

Marlin learned this song as a child in the town of Juba in what is now South Sudan. "Simba" is the Swahili word for "lion", and "la" means "no" in both Swahili and Arabic. Literally, the song translates: "Lion? No, no, no, no, no!" Marlin explains that children find lions fascinating, but parents want to remind them that they are dangerous. This song and its simple hand-clapping game has become a favorite and has been sung by hundreds, if not thousands of children, teachers, and parents in our region. St. Martin's Center is a childcare in Erie that hosted some of the first OSNO interns and was the first to hire them when the training ended. Three OSNO graduates hired in 2004 are still working there. Marlin has gone on to open her own licensed home-based childcare in Erie.

*Simba la la lala la, simba la la lala la,
Simba lala simba lala, simba simba simbo!*

*Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow
We'll be the guides of Africa*

*Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow
We're going to kindergarten.*

*Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow
We'll go (to) St. Martin's Center*

2. *Kaleba*, Acholi from South Sudan

*From and led by Victoria Angelo, Drum by
Tasana Camara*

Victoria comes from the Acholi people whose ancestral lands straddle South Sudan and northern Uganda. This song is used when a baby starts to toddle. One person calls the child to toddle towards him and then to turn around, and then another person calls the child to toddle to her. Victoria simply inserted her own toddler's name, Henry, into the song. The words in Acholi literally translate to: "Henry is walking, little Henry, jump and turn around." Victoria realized that Americans like to call their toddlers "big boys," so our English version follows suit. Victoria works at St. Martin Early Learning Center and is studying to become a nurse. She is a master of Acholi traditional song, dance, and language and has actively taught it to her five youngest children. The drummer, Tasana Camara, is a djeli, or griot, from Guinea who now lives in Oil City, PA.

Henery agenda (Kaleba!)

Henery mutiti (Kaleba!) 2x

Cho cho chee! (Kaleba!)

Chuka nenda bah (Kaleba!) 2x

Choo choo choo (Kaleba!)

Chuka nenda bah (Kaleba!) 2x

Henery is walking! (Kaleba!)

Great big Henry (Kaleba!) 2x

Cho cho chee (Kaleba!)

Jump and turn around (Kaleba!) 2x

Choo choo choo (Kaleba!)

Jump and turn around (Kaleba!)

3. En Fit Hat (Open Up the Flower),

Arabic from Iraq

Led by Nibal Ab El Karim, from Hind Nawruz

This song is well known across Iraq. Typically, singers stand in a circle holding hands. When they open the flower, they widen the circle and hold their arms behind them, and when they close the flower, they race towards the center. Many teachers have used this song to help children not only identify body parts, but also colors, the parts of plants, and even Arctic animal names! Nibal grew up in Nazareth, Israel, as part of a singing family.

En fit hat il warda

In sadat il warda

Hihna warda (Hihna warda)

Hihna idi (Hihna idi)

Hihna sharee (Hihna sharee)

Hihna riglee (Hihna riglee)

Open up the flower

Close up the flower

Here's my flower (Here's my flower)

Here's my hand (Here's my hand)

Here's my hair (Here's my hair)

Here's my toes (Here's my toes)

4. Aap Pakyo Bomboy (Trees Full of Mangos),

Nepali from Bhutan

From and sung by Tila Poudel

Mangos, like apples and pears, come in many varieties. The "Bomboy" (or Bombay) mango is particularly large. Tila is one of over 4,000 Bhutanese now living in Erie. They migrated from Nepal at the invitation of the Bhutanese monarchy over 100 years ago. They lived in relative isolation in the lowlands and kept their Nepali languages and traditions. In the 1990s the Bhutanese government forced most of them into exile. As of 2016, about 60,000 of them have been resettled in the U.S.

Aap pakyo bomboy

Faw low latar ramoy

Eak dana khana pai

Bhuru unter gambai

Trees full of mangos

So ripe they hang low

Just one is enough

Eat it and you're stuffed!

5. In Conyeh Dun, Dinka from South Sudan

Sung and brought by Simsim Machut

Although most Americans consider lullabies gentle and slow, many African lullabies are quite rhythmic. Some teachers have turned this into a work song substituting "Let's get it done" for "In conyeh dun!" ("In conyeh dun" are just fun to sing nonsense syllables.) Simsim taught us this song by using her firstborn son's name, Gakmar.

Gakmar anak joq in conyeh dun

Mon deet chee dyop akee qwet in conyeh dun

Gakmar about karo in conyeh dun

Mon deet chee dyop about achok in conyeh dun

Bahba ago beneen in conyeh dun

Mondeet chee dyop ahee nin in conyeh dun

Gakmar is hungry in conyeh dun

His little belly's empty in conyeh dun

Gakmar gets really thirsty in conyeh dun

His little belly is still empty in conyeh dun

My little man is sleepy too in conyeh dun

He will sleep the whole night through in conyeh dun

Alternate version:

Let's get our coats on, let's get it done

Button up your jackets, let's get it done

Put on your mittens too, let's get it done

Put on your boots also, let's get it done

Don't forget to wear your hats, let's get it done

We'll go outside when you're ready, let's get it done

6. Ana Zujaja (I am a Jar of Honey),

Arabic from South Sudan

From Namiki Lowaljock, led by Marlin Arop

This song, much like "I'm a Little Teapot," inspires imitative movement. Namiki was a teacher in what is now South Sudan until civil war forced her to flee. Once she completed the OSNO training she was quickly hired. She has since moved out of town, but this song remains her legacy to the children of Erie.

Ana zujaja asel, Ana zujaja asel

Amayil kida a kubel asel

Amayil kida a kubel asel

A dangar kida a gawan kasel!

I am a jar of honey, I am a jar of honey

When I bend this way I pour honey,

When I bend this way I pour honey

When I bend this way, I break!

7. Chamtembele (Catch Him Now), Swahili
from Burundi

From Niyizigama Dariya, led by Niyizigama Dariya and Kelly Armor

Dariya learned this when she lived in a refugee camp in Tanzania. This song is sung during a game similar to "Duck, Duck, Goose." A child (let's call her Dariya) walks around the circle with a scarf or rag and drops it behind someone (let's call her Samia). Samia must get up and chase Dariya. If Dariya gets around the circle into Samia's spot, Samia gets the cloth and begins the game (and song) again. If Samia tags Dariya before she gets to her place, then Dariya is out and sits in the middle. This song, like much East African music, is felt in two meters simultaneously. The piece is sung in three but clapped in two.

Kitambala cha mwana
Kinanguka (Cham tembele)
Kitambala cha mwana
Kinanguka (Cham tembele)
Kile kile cha mwana
Kinanguka (Cham tembele)

When the scarf falls on the ground
Jump up, run 'round (Catch him now)
When the scarf falls on the ground
Jump up run 'round (Catch him now)
Jump up, jump up, run around
When the scarf falls (Catch him now)
Jump up, jump up, run around
When the scarf falls (Catch him now)

8. Sandooi (Shoeshine Man), Arabic from Palestine
From and led by Nibal Ab El Karim

This song is about a man who is constantly busy and cheerful. In the Arabic version he states that he can be found on the streets and in the coffee shops and concludes by declaring, "Life is a pomegranate!" This is synonymous with the English idiom, "Life is peachy." Although it is hard nowadays to find shoeshine men in Nazareth (or Erie, for that matter) Nibal likes to use this song to teach industriousness and to remember days gone by.

Sandooi ala zhenbi ahnal boyazhi
Ba'hmel agharra dewbamshi
Baroohoo bazhi
Bisharrah belahoowi
Fikoli makan

Sandooi ala zhenbi
Yehazhar leroman

My box is always by my side
I'm the shoeshine guy!
Cleaning boots and shoes with pride
See my brushes fly!
Come find me, on the street,
Shining shoes for you!
Being busy makes life sweet
There's lots of shoes to do!

9. Balayo, Acholi from South Sudan
From and led by Alba Shurea

This song is done as a circle dance. Singers hold hands and march in a circle and jump down on the first "Cheh!" and jump up on the next "Cheh!" Participants dance in place during "Ja jinge linge ling jalin" and freeze on "ga!" Alba works at St. Martin Early Learning Center, where she has a reputation of being able to calm crying babies with her many songs.

Balayo, balayo ahsa singa singa
Wala mama sey da ninka...Cheh!
Balayo, balayo ahsa singa singa
Wala mama nee nyenkee...Cheh!
Ja jinge linge ling, jalin ga (3x)

Balayo, balayo, sing high, sing low
Now walk fast, now walk slow
Down we go...Cheh!
Balayo, balayo, sing high, sing low
Now walk fast, now walk slow
Up we go...Cheh!
Ja jinge linge ling, jalin ga (3x)

10. Shapuche (Whispering), Bosnian from Bosnia
From and sung by Mensura Berberovic

This gentle song in Bosnian is about a child's crush on a sweetheart. Our English version focuses on simple friendship and love of school. Mensura has won numerous grants and awards for her knowledge of Bosnian Sevdalinka, love ballads that date back to as early as the Middle Ages. Her mother, aunts, and grandmother taught her hundreds of songs when she was young.

Od kuche do shkole, od shkole do kuche
Uveeyek se poneshto (Shapuche, shapuche)
Uveeyek se poneshto (Shapuche, shapuche)
Tiho tishey, tiho tishey, ko padanye kishey (x2)

Shapuchu se pisma, shapuchuse taine
Shapuchu se zakletve zelite ee traine
Shapuchu se zakletve velike ee traine
Tiho tishey, tiho tishey, ko padanye kishey (x2)

From home to school and from
school back to home
Always there is whispering (Shapuche,
shapuche) (x2)
Whispering softly, quietly calling, like raindrops
falling (x2)

Whispering 'bout schoolwork
Whispering 'bout teachers
Whispering will you be my friend, forever, never
ending (x2)
Whispering softly, quietly calling, like raindrops
falling (x2)

11. Sombar Mongalbar (Sunday Monday),
Nepali from Bhutan
*From Amrita Magar and Devi Khatiwoda and
sung by Amrita Magar*

Bhutanese Nepali children sing this song in both English and in Nepali. The traditional version reminds Hindus that Saturday is the holy day of worship. Our English version is secular. In the Nepali version the song starts with Monday, while the English version starts with Sunday. Amrita works at a YMCA program in Fairview, one of Erie's suburbs, where she teaches children to sing not just in Nepali but also in Arabic and Swahili.

Sombar, Mongalbar
Budhabar, Bihibar
Sukrabar. Sanibar, Aitabar
Hapdama sah deen huncha
Hapdama sah deen huncha hai nanny ho
Hapdama sah deen huncha

Sunday, Monday
Tuesday, Wednesday
Thursday, Friday, Saturday
In a week there are seven days
There are seven days we should remember.
There are seven days.

**12. Yo Lay La, Swahili from Democratic Republic
of Congo**
*From Clarise Amani, led by Neema Mlongeca
and Marie Malango*

The first four lines of the Swahili version translate to: "I am a small child. Please help me, my friend. I'd like some bananas and peanuts. If you want to give me some, you'll watch me eat it all." Our version allows individual children to announce what they want to eat. Clarisse taught us a little dance to do during the "Yo lay la" refrain: Put your arms out bent at the elbows, and move your hands up and down triumphantly while swiveling your wrists.

Mimi mtoto mdogo
Sah ee dee ye ndugu
Napenda vitika
Na kalanga pia
Ukitaka unipay
Uta ona nakula
Oh yo lay la yo lay la
Yo lay la yo lay la!

We are hungry children
What is in the kitchen?
Mathilda likes pasta
Ronan likes green beans

If you want to give us some,
You can see us eat it all oh
Yo lay la yo lay la
Yo lay la yo lay la!

Quinn likes spaghetti
Coen likes milk!
If you want to give us some,
You can see us eat it all oh
Yo lay la yo lay la
Yo lay la yo lay la!

13. Gootoh Chetoh (Head Shoulders),
Dzongkha from Bhutan
From and sung by Gyan Ghising

The official language of Bhutan is Dzongkha. Before their exile, the people of Nepali descent living in Bhutan's lowlands learned some Dzongkha in school. This stirring song is a relic of that. Gyan is a multi-talented singer, songwriter, dancer, multi-instrumentalist, actor, and screenwriter. He has been an artist-in-residence at several local schools, teaching children songs, dancing, and drumming.

Gootoh chhetoh pumo,
chumo meetoh namcho
Haapa kha dang laap dang kang
Gootoh chhetoh pumo
Gootoh chhetoh pumo

Head, shoulder, knee,
Chin, eyes, ear
Nose, mouth, and hand and toes
Head, shoulder, knee
Head, shoulder, knee

14. Tula Tula (Go to the Center), Musoga
from Uganda

From and sung by Victoria Angelo

This spirited song and dance epitomizes so much of African culture. It is simple, athletic, and encourages participation! Victoria spent some of her childhood in Uganda. She learned this song in school. She said she remembers singing it when the village would gather under the full moon to dance together.

Tula tula wakati
No tuluniya bonna
Golokoka mangu nyoo
Olonze wo musogawe (3x)
Ruka ruka wakati
Zanya zanya wakati
Ruka ruka wakatii
Zanya zanya wakati

Go [Victoria] to the center
Look, look, look all around
Go, go, go quickly
Pick a partner choose a friend (3x)
Jump, jump in the center
Dance, dance in the center
Jump, jump in the center
Dance, dance in the center

15. Heera Heera Satti Oh (Come on Friends),
Nepali from Bhutan

From and sung by Tila Poudel

Mature mango trees are glorious. They grow tall and offer abundant shade. When trees get that big, it is best to climb the tree and pick the ripe fruit before it falls and bruises. It takes two verses in English, but our translation captures the original meaning. Recess ends too quickly for children all over the world.

Heera heera satti ho-oh
Aap pakecha
Aap teepee khana jada
Ghanti lagaycha
Ting eh ning eh ning eh ning!

Come on friends its recess now
I know we can find
A tree that full of mangos
Watch me as I climb

Juicy sweet lets eat so many
Mangos are so fine
Oh no, the bell is ringing
We've run out of time
Ting eh ning eh ning eh ning!

16. Vipepeo (Butterflies), Swahili from
Democratic Republic of Congo
From and led by Clarisse Amani, harmony by
Neema Mlongeca

The Swahili word for butterflies is "vipepeo". When Congolese children sing this, they flap their hands rhythmically on either side of their head. Versions of this song also came from Burundi women who lived in Tanzania.

Twende tukawinde ley oh
Twende tukawinde ley oh
Tuka winde vipepeo

Aiyo mama pepeo, vipepeo (clap)
Aiyo mama pepeo, vipepeo (clap)
Aiyo mama pepeo, vipepeo (clap)

Let's go hunting in the skies today
Let's go hunting in the skies today
We want to catch a butterfly

Aiyo mama butterfly, butterfly (clap)
Aiyo mama butterfly, butterfly (clap)
Aiyo mama butterfly, butterflies

17. Ahnal Bandura Hamra (I'm a Tomato),
Arabic from Iraq
From Zahraa Al Duliemi and Eman Rasheed,
sung by Zahraa Al Duliemi

This short and sweet song celebrates the tomato and a healthy complexion. Both Zahraa and Eman work at the childcare of the Multicultural Community Resource Center that serves New Americans in Erie.

Ahna! bandural hamra
Mezru ah ben alkhedra
Takul menea matishba
Wut seerakh doodak hamra
Wut seerakh doodak hamra!

I'm a tomato nice and red
I grow in the garden bed
You can't eat just one of me
Your cheeks will be red like me
Your cheeks will be red like me!

18. Près de la Fontaine (Near the City Fountain),
French from the Democratic Republic of Congo

From and sung by Michou Ntambwe

There are versions of this song all across the Francophone diaspora. In French it simply states that there is a bird near the fountain. We added "city" because it allows us to keep the original rhythm. "Un oiseau à la volette" is probably better translated to "a bird flutters", but the New Americans felt it was easier to sing flapping.

Près de la fontaine
Un oiseau chantait / criait / volait
Un oiseau à la volette, un oiseau à la volette
Un oiseau chantait / criait / volait

Near the city fountain
Hear a bird singing / squawking / flying
A bird is flapping, a bird is flapping
Hear a bird singing / squawking / flying

19. Ya Teyru (Come Down Birdie Birdie),
Arabic from South Sudan

From Victoria Angelo and Gwedet Lado, led by Victoria Angelo

This sweet song captures human's universal love of birds' gracefulness and song.

Ya teyru ghani ghani ana ughani maka (2x)
Lo kanalee jinahu kuntu atsiru maka (2x)
Anzihuna ya teyru aridu an asmaka (2x)

Oh sing birdie birdie so I can sing with you (2x)
If I had wings I'd fly, up in the sky with you (2x)
Come down birdie birdie so I can sing with you (2x)

20. Kilalo (The Bridge), Swahili from Burundi
Niyizigama Dariya

This literally translates to: "Today we will play the bridge game, and river water will pass below the bridge." It has an accompanying dance. Two lines face each other and reach out and touch hands to form a bridge. The couple at the top of the line ducks underneath and travels underneath everyone's arms and reforms their part of the bridge at the end of the line.

Leo tutacheza
Mchezo wa kilalo
Na maji ya mto ya pita
Chini ya kilalo

Okay let's play a game
We can build a bridge today
The river can make its way
Underneath the bridge we made

21. It Is My School, English from South Sudan
From and led by Kolina Okot

Children in rural Africa do not usually take a bus to school and many of them walk for miles. Kolina says this song not only taught her English as a child, but it gave her and her friends encouragement to keep their energy up on the long commute.

It is my school and see, it is not far
I want to go to the school,
I want to go to the school
It is my school and see, it is not far
I want to go every day.
I want to go every day

22. Ana Firoutha (I'm in Kindergarten),
Arabic from Iraq

From Suad Kumor, sung by Rahaf and Sama Husein

This song originally came to us from an OSNO participant from Iraq, but it is widely known across the Middle East. There are many songs like this that help young children prepare for school. Rahaf and Sama are the daughters of Samia Almarshni, an immigrant from Jordan. Samia and her children enjoy being able to sing the same song in two languages.

Ana fihrowtha wai es habi
Sah ah lohahbi sah ah kitabi
Ah ruf asawur

Ar sim surah al seb burah
Fiha shajarah fiha asfurah
Yalah ya mama yalah ya baba
Saf ooli ar aba saf ad
Wahed, ethnyen, thelathe, arbah

I'm in Kindergarten with my friends
Lots of fun everyday
Time for books, time for play
Snapshots by the teacher
Smile for the picture
On the chalkboard you can see
We've drawn some birds and some trees
Let's go Mommy, let's go Daddy
Clap to four for me
One, two, three, four

23. Anzekida, Acholi from South Sudan

From and led by Marta Sam

This simple invitation to play was easy to translate into English. Acholi children use this as a hand-clapping game with a partner. Marta is also a master Acholi singer and dancer and drummer. She actively passes down her Acholi music and language to her children and grandchildren. She also works at St. Martin Early Learning Center. She says that singing and dancing not only help relieve stress, it has helped her cure her back pain.

Anzekida, anzekida, zekida, zekida
Mathilda, Mathilda, Mathilda
Come play with me
C'mon Mathilda play with me,
C'mon Mathilda play with me!

Anzekida, anzekida, zekida, zekida
Yelena, Yelena, Yelena, Yelena
Alim bo so, alim bo so
Na manan dilini na kursi
Na manan dilini na kursi

24. Herr Zinga (The Fly), Nepali from Bhutan

From Maya Rai, sung by Bishnu Khadka, bansuri by Gyan Ghising

This song is about the green fly, a large insect found in south Asia. Our English translation keeps close to the original Nepali version, except that the green fly, much like a Junebug, sometimes does fall off the wall. It wonderfully communicates the peaceful Nepali

Bhutanese culture. It extols the iridescent wings and yellow-tipped legs of a humble insect, yet it politely asks it to stay out of the house. Gyan plays the bansuri, a bamboo flute common to India and Nepal.

Her zinga bhitta ma ladi badi chardai cha
Paketa kay jasto indrani rangko cha
Tesko cha ota khuta ma
Sunako juta lagako cha
Udiza bhagiza feri ta farkera na aiza

Fly you crawl up the wall, but you never ever fall
Your wings are shiny things, they hold a
rainbow amazing
Your six legs, is it true, are wearing pretty
golden shoes
Friendly fly, say bye bye, we like you more when
you stay outside.

25. Laman Kunta (When I Was a Little Child),

Arabic from Sudan

From and led by Nemat Abdelrahman

Nemat is from Eritrea but spent much of her life in Sudan. This is another example of one of the many songs children learn about the joys of school. Nemat teaches at Erie's Multicultural Community Resource Center.

Laman kunta seghera be la fiturap
Mama labasetni jesma wa shurap
Mashet lel afendi adani kitab
Geley aktib arabi katebta lel hesab
El muzikha ta drab wal keshelfa takshif
Aquilal ey? Aquilal kek!
Al sherab ey? Al sherab halib!
Ad hakef? Ha ha ha! Apikef? Ee!
Asafike? (clap, clap, clap)

When I was a little child I played in the sandbox

Then mama dressed me up
New shoes and new socks

When I went to preschool I got crayons
Blue and green and red

She said let's write Arabic I write math instead.

Then we sing a lot of songs and
Make the camera flash.

What I eat? I eat cake. What I drink? I drink milk.

How I laugh? Ha ha ha! How I cry? Ee!

How I clap? (clap clap clap)

26. Johnny Johnny/Baby Baby, English from

Bhutan, Arabic from South Sudan

From Devi Khatiwoda and Victoria Kanu, led by Gyan Ghising and Devi Khatiwoda

Victoria Kanu brought us this song in a dialect of Arabic. Our English version substitutes cookies for sugar. Years later, to our surprise, Devi brought us an English version from Bhutan. It is also a common nursery rhyme in Hindi and confirms that the guilty pleasure of sweets is universal and instilled at a very young age!

Johnny Johnny? Yes Papa!

Eating sugar? No Papa!

Telling lies? No Papa!

Open your mouth! Ha ha ha!

Baby, baby, nahm mama.

Ah kaltah sukar? La mama!

Meen al akaloo? Ahnha mahreef!

Ufdah khashmah, ha ha ha!

Baby, baby? Yes mama!

Did you eat the cookie? No mama!

Who ate the cookie? I don't know!

Open your mouth! Ha ha ha!

27. Nategemata (Gonna Get Me Some Milk),

Swahili from Burundi

From Niyizigama Dariya, led by Niyizigama Dariya and Kelly Armor

This is not classic Swahili but rather a dialect spoken by people of Burundi descent when they lived in exile in Congo and in Tanzania. It does encapsulate a child's eye view of life in a refugee camp—the wait for rations and the hope for a better life. This song goes with a hand-clapping game and ends with a staring contest. The first one to smile or laugh loses!

Nategamata, nategamata

Natega vitamini

Kuru bey bey bey bey

Nina lala nina lota

Kuru bey bey bey, eh kuru bey

Gonna get me fresh milk

Gonna get it for free

Gonna get me vitamins

And carry them with me

I'll sleep and my dreams will

Carry me away hey hey!

28. Il Était Une Fermière (Watch the Farmer March),

French from Democratic Republic of Congo

From and sung by Michou Tshiala

There are versions of this song in France, but this African version has the apples rolling a bit more rhythmically. We find it interesting that all versions include the English word “stop,” right in the middle of the song. It is about a female farmer, and Michou always includes an affirmative “bravo” at the end. Michou works at the childcare program of the Eastside YMCA in Erie.

Il était une fermière, qui allait au marché

Et portant sur sa tête

Des pommes dans un panier

Des pommes faisaient uli, ula

Des pommes faisaient uli, ula...stop

Trois pas en avant, trois pas en arriere

Trois pas de côté et de l'autre côté

Bravo!

Watch the farmer march

To market day today

A basket on her head

Holds apples all the way

The apples sway uli ula

The apples sway uli ula...stop

Three steps forward, three steps behind

Three steps to the left and three steps to the right

Bravo!

29. Ya Teyru (Come Little Birdie), Arabic from Iraq

From and led by Zainab Al-Kalkawi

Although the words of this song are almost identical to track 19, it has a very different feel. A girl begs a bird to sing and give her a ride. In return she'll wear a pretty dress and they'll feast on figs and water.

Ya taeru ghani ghani

Ala j'na hak taiyerni

Wadini lel basateen

Ashrab mai (clap clap clap)

Akul teen (clap clap clap)

Ashrab mai (clap clap clap)

Akul teen (clap clap clap)

Farehi farhat el aid
Labesni thubeel jahdeed

Come little birdie sing for me
On your wings please carry me
Fly me to the fields so green
We'll drink water (clap clap clap)
We'll eat figs (clap clap clap)
We'll drink water (clap clap clap)
We'll eat figs (clap clap clap)
I'll dress up so nice you'll see
It will be a big party

30. Haiyo Doh Amah (Let's Go to the Pond),
Nepali from Bhutan

From Leela Chuwan, sung by Tila Poudel

This little song has simple dance moves that are great for developing fine and gross motor skills. Where most Americans imitate a fish by putting their palms together, Nepali Bhutanese put one hand on top of the other, interlace their fingers, and flex their thumbs like fins. The song also allows children to leap up and wiggle their hands behind them like fish tails.

Haiyo doo amah
Macha kilayko
Heerday oopridaay
Poochar hallanday

Lets go to the pond
Where the fishes play
Watch them jump and dance
And shake their tails away

31. Saberio, Acholi from South Sudan
*From Chistina Ola, led by Victoria Angelo and
Marta Sam*

This song literally translates to: "Everyone (including Saberio) is from Sudan." Ironically, Sudan suffered a devastating civil war and the formation of South Sudan, the world's newest country. It seemed most appropriate to us to turn this song into an anthem for New Americans.

Wan kurusey das de, kurusey da Sudani
Wan kuruseu das de kurusey da Sudani
Saberio, Saberio, Saberio Sudani
Saberio, Saberio, Saberio Sudani
Wanjili Wanjili kokno kiley?
Wanjili kokno!

Wanjili Wanjili kokno kiley?
Wanjili kokno!

We're in the USA and we are Americans
We're in the USA, we are Americans
Saberio, Saberio, Saberio is American
Saberio, Saberio, Saberio is American
Wanjili Wanjili why do you cry?
Wanjili don't cry!
Wanjili Wanjili why do you cry?
Wanjili don't cry!

32. Los Pollitos (Baby Chicks), Spanish from
Puerto Rico

From and sung by Moraima Rivera

Los pollitos dicen, pio, pio, pio
Cuando tienen hambre cuando tienen frío
La gallina busca, el maíz y el trigo
Les da la comida y les presta abrigo
Bajo de sus alas, acurrucaditos
Duermen los pollitos hasta el otro día

The little baby chicks say peep, peep, peep
When they are hungry or when they need to sleep.
The mama chicken gathers grains of wheat
and corn
She feeds them when they're hungry and she
keeps them warm.
Under mama's soft wings the chickies
snuggle tight
There she keeps them safely until the
morning light.

33. Tashun, Bosnian from Bosnia
From and sung by Mensura Berberovic

This song literally means, "Clap your hands, a kitten fell from the attic, and when she fell, who did she scratch?" Then the child who is scratched gets some consolation. Teachers in Erie have adapted this song to call preschoolers to wash their hands or choose activities. ("Don't cry Quinn, it's time to wash your hands...go!") We've seen Mensura use this song to immediately distract and soothe a sad child and prevent a tantrum.

Tashun tashun tanana
Pala matza stavana
Ogrebala who?
Don't cry [Ronan]

You have your teachers and friends around you
And they love you so much

34. Choo Choo, Arabic from Jordan

From Samia Almashni and sung by Samia Almashni, Rahaf Husein, Sama Husein, and Laith Husein

This song literally means, "The little train comes at night, it comes to us at the right time." Samia encourages children to form a human train and sing as they travel through the classroom.

(Choo choo) Atr zghantoot
(Choo choo) Bil layl yefoot
(Choo choo) We hil alayna
(Choo choo) Fe ma'ad mazboot
Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo

(Choo choo) Its chugging through
(Choo choo) It comes for you
(Choo choo) It comes on time
(Choo choo) In rain or shine
Choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo-choo

35. Eh Toch (The Bull), Dinka from South Sudan

From Suzan Majok, sung by Suzan Majok and Kelly Armor

This was the most challenging song on this album to translate as it employs intense word play in the Dinka language. The Dinka people are pastoralists, nomads who travel with huge herds of cattle. They prize their bulls and brush them and rub them with oil. This tells the story of two girls named Ayan, and they are anointing a beautiful bull. One is the daughter of the singer's father. The other is the sister of the man who owns the bull. "Ayan" is also the word used to describe the color of the bull. This song refers to the Dinka custom of bride price. When a woman marries, the groom's family gives an entire herd of cattle to her family, as respectful compensation for letting their daughter become a part of the groom's family. When the new couple has children, they often name their children after the colors of the herd's healthy offspring. Our translation doesn't employ puns like the Dinka version, but it does point to the Dinka's deep connection to cattle.

Eh toch inyirayan ton mawondye
Toch inyirayan ton mawondye
Oh toch inyirayan ayanalayk
Ayana manyan wa mayan toch ayanalayk

Ayana manyan wa mayan toch ayanalayk
Ayana manyan wa

I have a fine bull, he's brown and beige
I have a fine bull, he's brown and beige
I know a girl, her name is Ayan
Ayan uses oil to groom the bull all beige and brown
Ayan uses oil to groom the bull all beige and brown

36. Simba La La (2016), Swahili & English from South Sudan

From Marlin Arop, led by Victoria Angelo, balafon by Tasana Camara

Although we love the first recording of Simba La La made in 2004, we wanted to reprise the song and enable many more OSNO participants to sing along. We also enlisted the help of Tasana Camara, who plays a West African xylophone, called a balafon, that he made himself.

Simba la la lala la, simba la la lala la,
Simba lala simba lala, simba simba simbo!

Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow
We'll go to the zoo

Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow
We'll go to (the) art museum

Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow
We'll go to school

Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow
We'll go riding bikes

Simba la la lala la, simba la la lala la,
Simba lala simba lala, simba simba simbo!

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