

Dumela Kaufela

As sung by: The Mascato Youth Choir of Namibia

Album: Namibian Folk Songs

Languages: Kavango, Herero and English (*mixed with Oshiwambo, Sesotho and Afrikaans*)

Key signature: G

Time signature: Common time 4/4

“Dumela kaufela” is a folk song from the Kavango region in the north of Namibia. The Kavango is one of thirteen provinces in Namibia and borders with Angola and Botswana. Music from the region is typically communal and relates to daily or seasonal functions. Wedding songs, greeting songs and working songs are common examples. Dumela Kaufela is a greeting song commonly sung in Namibia and in neighbouring countries. The term “dumela” or “dumelang” is a common greeting phrase in languages across South Africa, Namibia and Botswana. It translates as “good day” and can therefore be used at any time of day.

*The Kavango region is marked in red on the picture below
(Namibia is marked in white):*



Dumela Kaufela is a common song in many languages in Namibia and across the border, where other groups sing the same melody with different lyrics and in different languages. It has since been arranged for choir and is typically used as an opening piece.

LYRICS & PRONUNCIATION:

Both the Kavango and Herero languages use “tall” vowels:

a = ah (as in father)
e = eh (as in met)
i = ee (as in machine)
o = aw (as in bought)
u = oo (as in tutor)

* In addition:
au = ow (as in cow)
ue = we (as in wet)

The consonants are mainly pronounced the same as in English, except for “R” which is an alveolar trill (or rolling R).



KAVANGO lyrics:

Dumela kaufela dumela ho
Dumela kaufela

Dumela kaufela dumela ho
Dumela kaufela

HERERO lyrics:

Moro keni vakuetu moro keni
Moro keni vakuetu

Moro keni vakuetu moro keni
Moro keni vakuetu

Interesting Fact:

*Pearl millet (locally known as **mahangu**) is farmed in the Kavango region. In the picture above, a woman is seen pounding the mahangu until it is fine. This method of farming is used to make porridge. The pounding of mahangu is a daily task and therefore lays the foundation for the rhythm and meter of most songs from the region. People sing while they work. Their “one and two” stomping motion therefore typically produces songs that are in 2/4 or 4/4 time signatures!*

CURRICULUM CONCEPT SUGGESTIONS:

Rhythm:

- Accents may fall on beats that are usually unaccented (“Oosh!” on beat 4).
- Rhythm is created by combining beat, tempo, patterns, metre and duration.
- There are many kinds of rhythm; e.g. ethnic rhythms, dance forms etc.

Melodies:

- Melodies may be based on the “G” and “F” major scales.
- An interval is the space between two sounds.

Harmony:

- The IV and V chords are also used to accompany melodies.
- Voices with different pitch ranges can be combined to create harmony. (The choral version is in SATB but students only sing the soprano and sometimes the alto section).

Form:

- Sections may be identified by letters AB, binary: (Section A = soloist; Section B = group).
- Repetition and contrast give unity and variety to form in music.
- Improvisation is part of many forms of music. (African “calls”).

Movement:

- Move to the beat. (B section = singing and dancing)
- Participate in folk, square or traditional ethnic dances.
- Move to illustrate phrase, repetition, contrast. (A = no movement; B = movement).

Expression:

- Sing with various instrumental accompaniments: drum, bass and guitar.
- Participate in singing alone or in a group, a capella.
- Sing partner and nonsense words. (oosh! and African “calls”)

Reading and Writing:

- Recognize 4/4 time signature.
- Read repeat signs with 1st and 2nd time repeats.
- Interpret chord symbols and recognize I, IV, V chord progression.
- Develop ability to read parts while singing. (Students sing soprano part).

*** Social Studies:**

- *Value the diversity, respect the dignity and support the equality of all human beings.*

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For more information visit www.GarthPrince.com or www.MascatoYouthChoir.com