

KAKILAMBE – lyrics only (arrangement to come)

Traditional, Guinea/Mali/Senegal

Adapted from vocal arrangement by Brian Tate and percussion arrangement by Mamady Keita

These lyrics are phonetic, not actual spelling

CALL & RESPONSE:

BASS throughout: Kaki-lam-beh, Kaki-lam-beh, Kaki-lam-beh, Kaki-lam-beh
we might need some Altos on this part, too

ALTOS throughout: Kaki-lam-beh, Ke-Kom-Beh, Kaki-lam-beh, Ke-Kom-Beh

SOPRANOS & TENORS will join call & response for part of the song

VERSE: Sopranos & Tenors

Maim-Boh,

Maim-Boh Ma Ma

Maim-Boh,

Kaki-lam-beh, Ke Kom Beh

About Kakilambe:

Kakilambe is an African dance. There is contradictory information as to whether it is originated among the Baga people of Guinea or in Mali. It is also known in some other West African countries.

Kakilambe is a dance celebrating the growth of crops, life, and mostly the birth of children. The Kakilambe brings all these blessings and they celebrate his coming with the dance called "Kakilambe".

Kakilambe is a masked dance that appears once a year or once every seven years. It is a special celebration where the elders of the village hold on to ropes that come from the mask. The dance begins slowly and questions are asked about the year ahead. Will the crops grow, will the health be well, will children be born. Then, Kakilambe continues to dance but as he does, he grows to over twice the size and twirls and twirls around. The rhythm gets a little chaotic and then goes into a fast version of the rhythm/dance. It is three times faster than the original tempo. It gets very exciting as the answers to the questions are given to the elders and people celebrate.

The variant taught by Mamady Keita is based on the music of Baga people of Guinea:

Once a year, a mask is brought out to the villagers to announce what will happen in the coming year. Maimbo is a man's name. It was the name of an actual priest, but it is used as the generic name for the priest who officiates at the ceremony. The lyrics mean: "Maimbo, Maimbo we greet you/ Maimbo, greet Kaki Lambe for us." The people gather around and start praising Kaki Lambe: "Kaki Lambe, we believe in you! Kaki Lambe, we need you!" As they flatter the mask, it mysteriously rises up in the air, eventually to a height of some 15' (no one knows how this happens; Kaki Lambe is kept by a secret society of elder men). There are ropes hanging from the mask, and members of each of the lead families of the village hold onto the ropes. Each family takes a rope: as Mamady said, "one for the Keitas, one for the Camaras, one for the Bangouras," etc. During this time the village priest, who has already a relationship with the prophet, is asking the questions and translating the answers from Kakilambe to the heads of the families holding the rope

Listening & Reading:

Official Brian Tate arrangement:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HYqNoxfNRI>

Choral version, all parts, more rustic, Bangor choir (Scotland, I think):

<https://omniglot.com/songs/bcc/kakilambe.php>

Good description of meaning, translations, etc:

<http://www.reynders-bonhagen.nl/ritme/kakilambe.html>

Another very good explanation:

<https://www.paulnas.nl/en/kakilambe/>

Drum ensemble from Berlin, scenes from (Guinea?):

https://sonichits.com/video/Africa_Djole/Kakilambe?track=1