

Dan Na Maye

Ethnic group: Hausa

Language (dialect): Hausa (Katsinanci)

Country: Niger

Recording date: August 8, 2015

Recording location: Route Filingué neighborhood, Niamey, Niger

Total Recording time: 23:09

Technician: Brian Nowak

Group members:

Dan Na Maye Maman Buda – vocals

Mahamadu Ibrahim – Kalangu (talking drum)

Track names -- duration

1) Freestyle example – 11:18

2) Dan Na Maye Maman Buda interview – 6:52

3) Mahamadu Ibrahim interview – 4:59

Group introduction:

Dan Na Maye, a nickname, best translated as “the witch hunter,” is a wandering griot with a large repertoire of praises and socio-cultural advice. Throughout his life he has performed both as a member of a larger group supporting famous musicians and as a lead singer. He has extensively travelled in Hausa country in Niger and Nigeria. Often performing at weddings, he uses a megaphone to project his voice with a single talking drum to accompany him. This duo is a smaller version of the more traditional ensembles of male vocals and talking drums.

Stocked with a variety of proverbs, verses and songs, one cannot ignore the high degree of improvisation that singers like Dan Na Maye use to weave the lyrical strands of their repertoire to create a composition whose unpredictable nature adds to the excitement of the performance. This is an example of a free-style composition recorded privately in Niamey following a wedding performance.

Recording context:

Dan Na Maye is exhausted after hours of performance at a wedding, wandering in and out of the concession, greeting, praising, and singing to the entire crowd. When pulled aside, Dan Na Maye sang a freestyle example with a well-oiled singing style, using the raspy voice through the distorted megaphone to alter the tone, adding an excitingly loud element to the performance.

The volume also allows the *kalangu* (talking drum) to play louder making it easier to hear the intricacies and steadiness of the only accompaniment, a tonal drum. This is inside a large cement room which naturally enhances the echo. The echo feature is also common during a wedding, although the megaphone is obviously more useful for projecting over a distance when outside with a large crowd. This recording however allows us to hear the combined effort of the individual musicians.

Notes on Language Use:

Hausa is a major regional language, which in terms of landmass and population, is greater in Nigeria than in Niger. Both countries host the same ethnic group despite having different former colonizers, the British [Nigeria] and the French [Niger]. The Hausa language's dialects date back to the Hausa Bakwai, the Seven Hausa States that generally defined the limits of Hausa dialects, despite the newer political national and regional border system that does not usually follow or reflect social or cultural divisions.

The Hausa language is also used as a second language to many other ethnic groups neighboring the Hausa. Even in Northern Ghana, where some of the infamous Hausa migrants have settled, it serves as a second language used in areas with a high level of language diversity and no obvious dominant language.

Mahamadu, the *kalangu* player, has Fulani roots, yet has absorbed into the greater Hausa musician market. Fulanis also play for weddings, but the market for the more numerous, and relatively more densely settled Hausa population does not compare. He only plays the drums; he does not sing. But his ethnic identity represents the drive of the Hausa culture and economy.

Playing for Hausa parties would mean speaking Hausa, and also defines a majority-minority aspect to this Hausa-Fulani relationship that goes unnoticed in a performance or casual setting, but is clear to most present. The drive into a Hausa language or culture area follows the rapid urbanization in Hausa dominant areas that also include other ethnic groups that use Hausa as a lingua franca to communicate.

Hausar Katsina is a major dialect spoken by the Katsinawa, or the people of Katsina. It is a widely spoken dialect centered around Katsina and northward into the Maradi region of Niger. Dan Na Maye's history as a traveling musician has led him along the path of singing backup for a major professional, earning a lot of cash, and also learning from a master playing larger gatherings in larger towns and urban centers of Northern Nigeria. Now, later in life, he is singing lead in a slower gear

with mastery earned from endless weddings, parties, holidays and other celebrations, now in Niamey, the capital of the Republic of Niger. Praise and poetic mastery still reflect and uphold high standards from a language thirsty crowd.

Although Hausa is a tonal language, the kalangu example here does not mimic the lyrics' tones.