

Paul Kelemba: Singing Wells Project

Ketebul Music is continuing its documentation and archiving of East African music genres, both past and contemporary. We are now in a strong partnership with The Singing Wells Project (SWP) whose goals are similar to ours in the preservation of the region's music heritage.

In March this year, combining our resources and those of SWP along with their partners, Abubilla Music, we covered extensive parts of the Kenyan coast for field recordings in which we successfully captured traditional music and its performers from selected groups amongst the Giriama and Digo people. Our recordings and analysis shall now be available in various mediums to both local audiences and those abroad.

Along with this, the partnership also seeks to produce teams of young personnel that will gain the expertise in this unique mode of field recordings employing the use of the equipment at our disposal. Our goal is for each team we train to, in turn, train others and eventually generate interest within our targeted young audiences.

The coast tour was the first of our series of audio-visual capture and training. I worked on this phase with our SWP partners, James Allen and Andy Patterson from Abubilla Music, two extraordinary people with a passion to preserve African music roots threatened with extinction. The Ketebul team, led by Tabu Osusa, worked well with these experts.

Our second phase was amongst the communities of northern Kenya, this time largely handled by Ketebul Music based on the experience of the first. The next phase will take us to the Uganda/DR Congo border, to Kisoro to record music of the Batwa people – known by a few to the world as pygmies and little else. We have been seeking funding for this event, so far the furthest from our Nairobi base. We shall also follow up the Kisoro phase by also immediately recording selected groups in Western Kenya to wrap up the year.

I can be contacted at any time to provide information on these and other projects from our partnership with Singing Wells Project.

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