

Crying Drums

A Zambian Song

Baba Noma, Alla Muta

Baba ici ano luka,

Ke mazumba itchawalele

Ke mazumba zumba o-i-eh.

Chorus:

Chimame chumbulumba, Chimame chumbulumba

Chimame chumbulumba o-i-eh-eh

Chimame chumbulumba, Chimame chumbulumba

Chimame chumbulumba o-i-eh

Translation:

Crying Drums, everywhere,

Their moaning sets a rhythm on the air,

If the good life ever really is to matter,

Time to pause a while and start to care.

Chorus

Crying Drums, everywhere,

Echo sadnesses that everyone must share,

But the drums of hope will sound again tomorrow,

When we start to build new bridges and to dare.

He explained we were going to the HHI headquarters, Health Help International where they had crutches and wheel chairs and where they cared for disabled children like me.

In the night we slept under the many stars. Close and covered in only a blanket which my father carried around his shoulders by day to help protect him from the strain of carrying me.

He walked for hours and hours, and I held on and wished I had brought my djembe to keep me entertained.

Who were these people who cared for disabled children?

After 3 days we came to the town of Monze and we soon found the HHI building with its grass roof and large green doors.

Inside the gates, we sat and waited and my father was very tired and desperate to rest. There were many people walking with the aid of crutches and wheelchairs and people were coming and going, smiling and greeting.

I sat and waited, I wanted to play my happy dancing rhythms but I didn't have my djembe.

I was given strong, silver crutches and a soft seated wheelchair and my father cried to see me moving by myself for the first time.

I wanted to say thank you but I didn't know how so I asked for a djembe and played for all the caring people in HHI my very best celebration rhythms.

Everyone clapped and sang and I was able to move!

I was able to go to the play park on my wheelchair with my djembe. I saw many children with wheelchairs, crutches, hearing aids, and sticks. They were playing, moving, laughing and learning and I played my djembe with joy.

The children gathered and listened;

"He's a good djembe player", they said, and now I know that I am!



The Djembe Boy



My name is Simushi and I am 9 years old. I live in Hennga Village on the Zambezi islands on the border of Zimbabwe. I have never been able to walk because when I was very young I had polio. But, I can play the drum.

In my village many children play the African drum, called a djembe, but they can also play football and climb trees. I can only play the djembe.

Ever since my family knew I couldn't walk, I would be put in the shade under a tree with a djembe to keep me entertained.

So now, I am a very good djembe player and I play when my family sing and my friends dance.

My rhythms can be strong and vibrant but many times my rhythms are slow and melancholy as I feel lonely and sad because I would love to move and join in with some games instead of just being the djembe player.

One day my father, whose name is Patson, became excited and told me we were going on a long journey to a town called Monze.

300Km away in the Southern Province. Me, going on a journey! I had never been outside my village, nor had I even been much further than my spot under the tree.

How are we going to go to Monze?

Why are we going to Monze?

I didn't know, but that evening I played my djembe with an excited rhythm.

The next day my father carried me on his back as he walked steadily but purposefully through the yellow, dusty grass under the clear, blue Zambian sky. I could feel the rhythm of his body walking and I could feel the rhythm of his breathing. I could imagine them being played on my djembe.

THE DJEMBE BOY



Health Help International