

CultureTalk Ethiopia Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
On Traditional Music

English translation:

N: Nafkote M: Woman on the left

M: Music. Ethiopia's music.

N: You're a musician, so I don't think that I can measure up to you. What's your favorite type of music? Bati, Ambasel, Tizita?

M: Tizita.

N: They're all nice.

M: True. While I was growing up, I didn't appreciate a lot of our traditional music. I think this was the style of the young people who were growing up at that time. All that we'd listen to was foreign music: rap or even slow music, but everything came from outside. It even got to the point where listening to traditional music made you look un-cool. And, it's only now as I'm growing up, after I came here and returned to Ethiopia that I saw how rich our culture is.

N: True. That's sad, you see. That's how culture drains away. When there's no one left to maintain it, or, as you said, if no one can appreciate it, then who's left to care? We'll be influenced by the West. Personally, I can't believe these things. We can maintain both at the same time: popular music and traditional music. But many- when I talk to my friends from western Africa, they tell me that people in their countries are mixing the music. That's fine, at least the culture- even if it isn't fully preserved, it still exists. But now, if you've noticed- what disappoints me about a lot of music is that there's no *Ambasel* – no one uses it anymore. There's no more *Tizita*. They're forgetting the scale and using another style of music's scale. Our scale is pentatonic – it's very unique and isn't found elsewhere. Maybe each country uses their own. Instead of that one, now we use the diatonic scale, instead – this is what they use in Western music; when you're on the piano, this is from do-re-mi, etc. But on ours, you'd go from three to two to one. But, as you said, our culture is extremely rich. And we only realize this once we've gone abroad. And the best thing is- if it was just one thing, you'd get bored, but Ethiopian music isn't boring because the people are so diverse. There are over eighty languages, so think of the ethnicities – there are very many! So when you want to listen to Gojam music you can, including the dancing, their movement, it's unique; their singing technique, and like I said, the scale that they use is different. Then Tigrigna, it's great. I don't know anyone who doesn't want to get up and dance when Tigrigna music is playing. Music from Wollo...

M: Oromigna, Guragegna. Welaytegna.

N: All of them. Aderegna. I don't know, I'm sorry if there are some that I haven't mentioned, but it's something that pleases you in your heart. You never get tired of it, even if you listen to it over, and over, and over again. And, I won't lie, my favorite traditional music is from Wollo- not just because I'm from Wollo; I just really enjoy Wollo music.

M: Wollo music's good, that's true. Um, there's something about it that you feel inside. But now I think that the young people are changing.

N: To traditional?

M: To traditional. Even if they don't turn more to traditional music, the music that they listen to is mostly Amharic now. When I went to Ethiopia recently, I really noticed this – the people are changing. And if continue this way, then I hope that we might even return to traditional music

N: Indeed.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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