

Recording of the week: Ethiopian Michael Jackson?

This week's selection comes from Dr Janet Topp Fargion, Lead Curator of World and Traditional Music.

This song was recorded in 1991 by ethnomusicologist Lesley Larkum at the Green Hotel, Mek'ele (Mekelle) in the northern Tigray region of Ethiopia. It represents one of those wonderful moments of ethnographic fieldwork when you come across something, not necessarily related to the focus of your work, but nevertheless captivating. It's times like those you are thankful for a sound recording device! Lesley was conducting research on Tigrinyan music during revolution. She had heard these two children singing in a bar a couple of nights beforehand and had asked them to return so she could record them. Sadly there's no photograph of them but as I listen, in my mind's eye I see a couple of youngsters with the voices, rhythm and exuberance of a young Michael Jackson.

[Children singing at the Green Hotel \(C600/15\)](#)



The [Lesley Larkum collection](#) of Ethiopian field recordings can be consulted at the British Library.

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