

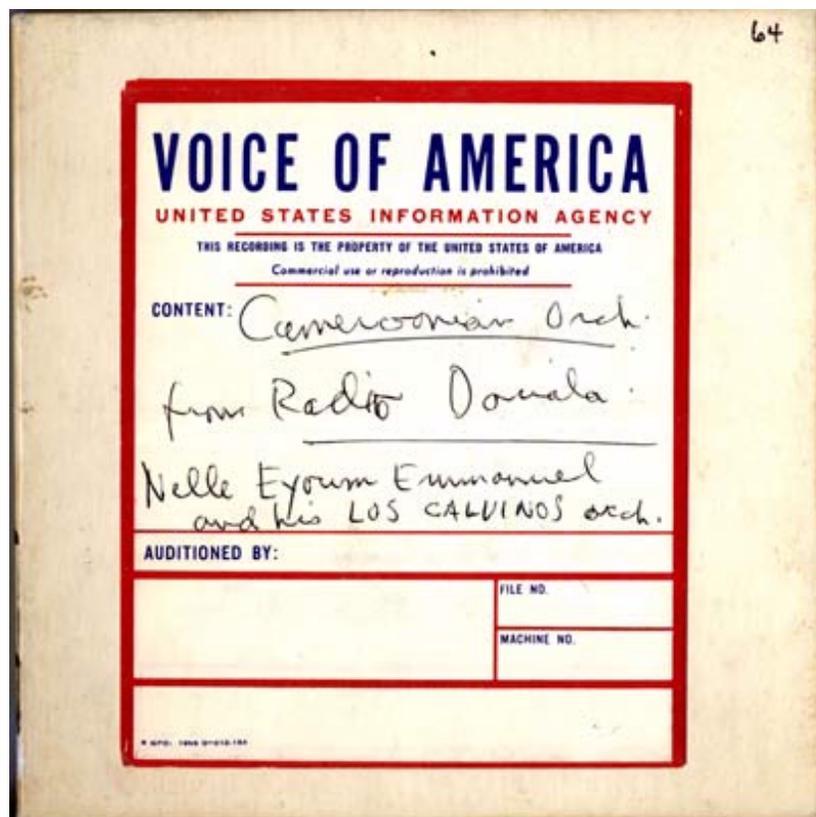
## Musical memories from Cameroon

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Yesterday, the Egyptian national soccer team, the Pharaohs, only needed one goal to beat Cameroon's Indomitable Lions, and win the Africa Cup of Nations for the sixth time. This morning, the Pharaohs—who were the defending champions—returned to Cairo International airport, where they were met by thousands of overjoyed fans. The Cameroonians, meanwhile, returned to Yaoundé, where their glum fans were still absorbing the team's defeat. While soccer-mad Egyptians are enjoying the trophy, I imagine many Cameroonians must be nostalgic for their great soccer teams of the 1980s and 1990s.

And while I can't bring back the 1984 Indomitable Lions of Théophile Abega who—under his leadership—won the 1984 African Cup of Nations, or Roger Milla's 1990 squad, who brought Cameroon to the World Cup quarterfinals, I can hopefully relieve the nostalgic aches of some fans with a few selections from our archives.



Nelle Eyoum Emmanuel, from Douala, was one of the pioneers of Cameroonian modern music. Every weekend, throughout the mid-1960s, fans would flock to the bar 'Le Flambeau' where, with the help of his band Los Calvinos, Nelle Eyoum would keep Douala's music lovers dancing through the night. Nelle Eyoum Emmanuel and Los Calvinos, along with Ebanda Manfred and Epée Mbende, laid the foundations for what became Makossa music. The story goes, although I have not been able to confirm this, that as Los Calvinos would work themselves into a solid groove, and the dancers would fall into the rhythm, the band would call out 'Kossa, Kossa'—which is also the name of a children's hand-clapping game. Eventually this dance call gave its name to a new style of music from Douala, the Makossa.

This reel was given to us by Radio Douala back in the 1960s; we don't have an exact date, but judging by the music, and the tape stock, I am guessing probably around 1965-6. This is a two-track recording, featuring a lean line-up of two guitars, an upright bass, congas, and maracas. Unfortunately, there is no documentation accompanying this reel. The lineup is a mystery to me. I know that François Misse Ngoh was the guitar player for Los Calvinos for many years, before breaking away and launching his own successful career. I, however, I am not sure that he is the lead guitar player on these recordings (whoever the guitar player is, he is a wonderfully fluid soloist). I imagine that this reel is pretty representative of the pre-Makossa repertoire of Los Calvinos; the Cuban and Congolese rumba influences are obvious, and there are also some hints of highlife.

↪ [Nelle Eyoum Emmanuel & Los Calvinos 'Kembe Federale'](#)

↪ [Nelle Eyoum Emmanuel & Los Calvinos 'track 2'](#)

This next track is my favorite of the bunch. The band goes into a great percussion breakdown that gives a glimpse of the rhythmic changes that were to come with Makossa.

↪ [Nelle Eyoum & Los Calvinos 'track 4'](#)

I don't know if all of the tracks on this reel were recorded during the same session; and if they were, in what order they were recorded. The guitar soloist, however, does seem to get looser and more expressive in the final two songs.

◀▶ [Nelle Eyoum & Los Calvinos 'track 6'](#)

◀▶ [Nelle Eyoum & Los Calvinos 'track 8'](#)

Enjoy the music, and here's to hoping the Indomitable Lions come back stronger in two years for the next African Cup of Nations!