



## The appreciation of exotic music throughout the centuries

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Immediately the word culture is uttered, a boundary is drawn. It is a concept informed by group intuition, tantamount to saying: restrain yourself from [embarking on] a host of possibilities. Possession of a particular culture is organically associated, as it were, with a certain bridling of sensitivity towards foreign cultural values; in some extreme cases, even to an absolute inability to appreciate the cultures of other civilizations. Hence, Athenians of the time of Pericles disparagingly referred to the Persians as *barbaroi*, even though in many ways the latter matched them – or calling state formation to mind – even surpassed them in civilization. Chinese travellers who visited the Indonesian Archipelago in the Tang and Sung dynasties could record with intelligence and benevolence, but none-the-less with condescension, their appreciation of what they found there. This same purblindness is also the reason our seventeenth-century forebears initially found it difficult to comprehend that the cultures they came across in Java, and later in China, were more than curiosities, somewhat peculiar expressions of less elevated civilizations.

Before this sort of appreciation is possible a day has to dawn in which culture must yield before a civilization whose intellectual elite has a purely eclectic orientation, with the capacity to empathize with the refinements of these foreign cultural values; gifted with the ability to value their beauty with minds unclouded by prejudice. Hence Tacitus was able to present German society to his fellow-countrymen as a fine one, worthy of emulation. It is the reason that it was only in the nineteenth century that for the first time the West – no matter how ambivalently at the beginning – began to immerse itself in the cultures of eastern civilizations. The realization gradually dawned that these were least on the same level as but just different to its own.

This appreciative attitude towards foreign expressions of culture can be most readily and convincingly observed when the essence of a people is revealed most clearly and directly. And in which field of human mental activity is this condition met to such a high degree as in music?

In the course of this lecture, I hope to inform you about and help you understand how a people express their sentiments of belonging together. In which field is of human intellectual endeavour are their essence and origins expressed with greater clarity than in melody and rhythm. I shall give just a few concrete examples. How one can hear that the pygmoid Papuans of the Central Highlands of New Guinea and some of the tribes in Flores are dark-skinned and have tightly curled hair as a consequence of their strong Negrito character? Or that the Naga tribes of the border area between Burma and Assam, the people of South Nias (Sumatra) and the Lionese of central Flores are bearers of the same Megalithic culture? That in the course of time the people of South and Central Sumatra have been influenced by China, Indochina, Java, the Persian-Arabian cultures and by Portuguese mariners? That the people of South Nias are a different people to those who inhabit North Nias and so forth and so on.

Under these circumstances, musicology enhances general ethnology in the same way that comparative religious studies, the study of ornamentation, the measurement of skulls, blood tests and the like enrich it.

This deeply engrained character of the music of a race and its culture explains why, even after other cultural values have long been acknowledged by the outside world, it often still lags behind in gaining appreciation. We hold Chinese porcelain and Japanese woodblock prints in high esteem, but the music of the Far East still jars on most Western ears. In the same vein, until very recently, Europe displayed the same attitude towards the sorts of music in Indonesia. What the musicologist Henri Gil-Marchex had to say about the attitude of the West to Japanese music is equally appropriate to that of Indonesia:

It is never easy for an occidental to apprehend clearly the musics of Asia. He resents unjustly the fact that they do not obey the laws to which he is accustomed. Their most obvious qualities, their most ordinary manifestations, are perceived by the foreigner only in the most rough and ready way. He certainly does not divine that quantity of intimate characteristics or that quality of latent and profound emotion by which is accomplished the unity of millions of human beings communing in a music dear to them for the reasons of which the essence mostly escapes the inattentive.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, in this lecture my intention is to make you understand, principally by giving examples relevant to the field, the reason I have been able to devote myself to the study of the forms of music of one region of the world, the Netherlands East Indies, for more than twenty years. Quite apart from the fact that some forms of Indonesian music can be counted among the most sophisticated, most refined and fascinating in the world, I hope that my choice is also justified by the fact that no other exotic music has attracted so much attention, not only in the twentieth

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<sup>1</sup> Henri Gil-Marchex, "Music in Japan" (*Contemporary Japan*, Vol. VI, no. 2, p. 264 et. seq.), Sept. 1937.

century, but for almost 1,500 years. I am able to do so because of the fortunate, nay absolutely essential, circumstance that so many and such a motley collection of observers have committed their findings about and their impressions of this subject to paper.

The oldest information about Indonesian music of which I am aware was noted by a Chinese hand. It occurs in the twenty-second Book of the Chronicles of the Tang Dynasty, which ruled China from AD 618-906. It possibly refers to Java and, given the time from which it dates, it must be a description of a Hindu-Javanese kingdom, namely: the realm of *P'oli*, founded by Gunārṇava at the beginning of the seventh century. Moens has identified this as *Pati* (in the eastern part of Central Java).<sup>2</sup> The report runs as follows: "He (the ruler) is seated on a golden throne and on either side stand servants with white fans made of peacock feathers. Whenever he ventures forth, he sits in a carriage, drawn by elephants, with a baldaquin of feathers and with embroidered curtains, while music is played on gongs, drums and shell trumpets."<sup>3</sup>

The temple reliefs, those on Borobudur and Prambanan<sup>4</sup> in the southern part of Central Java in particular, bear witness to the fact that at that time Java did possess such a rich assortment of instruments. However, as far as I know, no other literature dating from period, apart from of a couple of sources and stone inscriptions commemorating foundations, has survived. That is unless we care to follow Dr Poerbatjaraka and date the Hindu-Javanese redaction of the Ramayana to this early period. In view of the instruments which are mentioned in it, I personally tend to agree with Poerbatjaraka.

The first literary source to have been preserved which can be dated with any certainty comes from the end of the tenth century, 996 to be exact. It is a prose version of three cantos of the *Mahābhārata* written at the command of King Dharmawangṇa. In a few places it mentions musical performances and musical instruments. Taking other data into account, the question of whether this version reflects music played in India or gives a picture of the music then in fashion in Java can be affirmed in favour of the latter assumption.<sup>5</sup>

At this point, one example from the *Wirataparwa* [original: *Wirataparwaw*] will suffice:

.... others accompanied on bangsi (transverse flute), tāla (cymbals), paṇawa (a kind of drum) and mūdama (possibly small bells which were struck). Some had a wīṇādrāwaṇahasta (strummed lute) and their handmaidens were female dancers, skilled in their art (?). The performances offered a varied selection, pleasing to the taste of everybody: bhèri (here still meaning kettledrum; in later centuries it was a small gong) and murawa (another sort of drum) were beaten

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ir. J.L. Moens, *Çrīvṇaya, Yāva en Katāha* (in TBG LXXVII, p. 317 *et seq.*), 1937. See for other locations Prof. Dr. N.J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansch Geschiedenis*, 2nd impression (1931), see under Poli.

<sup>3</sup> After the English translation by W.P. Groenevelt in *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca compiled from Chinese Sources* (1876).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kunst-Goris, *Hindoe-Javaansch muziekinstrumenten* (Weltevreden 1927).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid. passim.*

incessantly, mingling with the sound of *ḡangka* (shell trumpet) and *kālaha* (curved trumpet).<sup>6</sup>

Contemporaneous, and indeed even older, inscriptions also reveal a lively musical scene: leaders of the drum corps, of lute- and cymbal-players are repeatedly recorded on them; in a few instances – first in an inscription dated 861<sup>7</sup> – a *paṇḡai gangsa*, a smith who makes bronze musical instruments and possibly also a gong smith – is mentioned and, on another occasion, in an inscription of 904 or 906<sup>8</sup>, of a *paṇḡai arāwāṇasta*, a lute-maker.

It would seem that temple reliefs, bronze and stone inscriptions, excavated instruments and the literature vie with each other to demonstrate the very important part music played in religious services, court ceremonies, the government and the lives of ordinary people throughout the entire Hindu-Javanese period. At times even the royal family were active engaged in playing gamelan and participating in theatrical performances. We know this because of a few passages in Prapanca's 1365 hymn of praise to his sovereign, Hayam Wuruk, the most famous king of Majapahit. With reference to music, in the ninety-first canto we read a description of a court feast: "As a lover of music, Kṛṭawardhana (the king's father) began to play the gamelan (probably: the *gambang kayu*)."

From an even earlier period, that of the kingdom of Kadiri (1042-1222), a Chinese report in the 489th Books of the Chronicles of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279), in a discussion of the population of East Java, says: "Their musical instruments consist of flutes, drums and xylophones; they can also dance."<sup>9</sup> A Hindu-Javanese work from this same period, the 1157 poem by Mpu Sēdah, *The Bhārata Yuddha*, in the 50th canto provides feasible evidence to conclude that both gamelan and *wayang* were extremely popular. This particular reference is also useful for comparative purposes:

Furthermore, from a stream came the sound of swaying bamboo<sup>10</sup>, like the gender in the wayang. Hollow pieces of bamboo made a sound when the wind blew through them: these were the flutes which accompanied the play; taking the place of the mandraka, the singing of the women, were the voices of the mountain frogs which sounded from the crevices. The tree beetles and grasshoppers, who chirped busily, took the place of the monotonous *kēmanak*<sup>11</sup> and the *kangsi*.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ed. Juynboll, p. 85

<sup>7</sup> OJO VII verso 11.

<sup>8</sup> OJO XXXVI verso 22.

<sup>9</sup> W.P. Groeneveldt, *loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> [Editor's note] presumably by 'swaying bamboo' (*kantelbamboe*) is meant: a bamboo piece that is placed under running water. After the upper part of the bamboo, as far as the node, is filled with water, this part moves down and the water runs out. Then the heavier other end moves down again and hits a stone with a clacking sound.

<sup>11</sup> Banana-shaped cymbals.

<sup>12</sup> Small *bonang*-shaped gongs.

We also have two other Chinese accounts of Javanese music in the Majapahit period.<sup>13</sup> 1) In Ma Huan's travel account of the voyages of Cheng Ho (in the Ming period, circa 1405)<sup>14</sup> occurs the remark: "The gamelan instruments consisted of copper drums (bonangs?), one large copper gong; the wind instruments were made of coconut shells" and 2) a report (identical to the first?) in the Ying-yai-Shing-lan<sup>15</sup> recording the existence in Java of copper drums and gongs, the blowing on coconut shells (ocarinas? cf. the present-day Papuan ocarinas),<sup>16</sup> drums and bamboo drums (bamboo idiophones; these are often mentioned, among other places on Nias *göndra hao* - bamboo drum).

This is the moment, the end of the fourteenth century, at which for the time being the curtain falls on the Hindu-Javanese kingdoms: the plethora of wars spawned in that time of turmoil displeased the Muses; no literary sources from this period have come down to us, if they had ever existed. However, there is a possibility that we have this political strife to thank for the many bronze finds – often including musical instruments – in Javanese soil. These are now the jewels in the crowns of the collections of the Bataviaasch Genootschap (The Batavian Society for the Arts and Sciences), the Colonial Institute and the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden.

When Java re-emerges from the crucible, Islam has triumphed and there are two indigenous powers in the island: the sultanate of Banten in the west and the new Mataram kingdom in the centre, very probably also extending into the east.

Not very long afterwards, a western wedge in the form of the [Dutch] East India Company (VOC) quickly insinuated itself between these two powers and, since that time, the majority of the principal authors who have entrusted their thoughts about Indonesian, initially especially Javanese, music, to paper have been Europeans.<sup>17</sup>

To the extent the majority of the servants of the VOC ever did feel inspired to seize their pens, they are proof of our postulation at the beginning, namely: coming from a country with its own flourishing culture and established way of life, they had to grope in the darkness in their search for the right attitude to adopt towards the cultural expressions of a foreign civilization.

However, they were not the only players in the game; others most certainly must not be overlooked: the Chinese and Arab travellers who had visited the Archipelago over the centuries and recorded their discoveries in books were members of the intelligentsia (the Chinese: theologians, monks and imperial envoys; the Arabs: geographers). In contrast, the majority of the early Dutch visitors were old seadogs and merchants, not intellectuals. Nor did artist, journalists with an artistic inclinations and aesthetes hasten to swell the increasing numbers of their compatriots in the Archipelago.

<sup>13</sup> [Editor's note] This section of a few lines (up to the Nias bamboo drum) was not included in the original print, but included on a separate page, 10a, typed on a typewriter.

<sup>14</sup> In *mededelingen van het china instituut*, Volume 1, p. 164 *et seq.* 1937

<sup>15</sup> Groeneveldt, *loc. cit.* p. 21

<sup>16</sup> J. Kunst, *A study of Papuan music*, p. 68 and Plate X, illus. 37.

<sup>17</sup> I have never come across any Old Portuguese opinions of Indonesian music.

Our record begins right from the time of our first contact with Java: in Willem Lodewijcksz' description of the "First Fleet"- that is Houtman's 1595-1597 voyage - in which he participated as a helmsman. Remarks about music are scattered at various places throughout his work, in two instances, even with illustrations. This author proves to have been completely impervious to what he was offered in the fields of music and dance at the sultan's court in Banten. From one instance you may infer the whole: under a drawing of a *bědaya* dance - famed as one of the most sophisticated expressions of the art of dance - accompanied by *gěndèr*, undoubtedly executed by an Amsterdam artist according to his instructions, he put the caption:

Illustration of one of their dances, both male and female, to the accompaniment of some reeds on which small steel plates are placed, in the manner of an organ, or resembling a clavichord, to the accompaniment of some songs or rhymes, stretching arms and legs, and turning the whole body, as a dog which comes creeping out of its lair.<sup>18</sup>

Willem Lodewijcksz's shipmate, Midshipman Aernoudt Lintgensz, also kept a journal during this voyage, particularly about the time he spent in Bali. In this *Verhael van 't gheene mij op 't Eylandt van Baelle wedervaeren is, terwijl ick aen landt ben gheweest, als hier nae volligen sall* [Story of what befell me on the island of Bali while I was on land as will follow hereafter] one comes across the information: "...when they hold great feasts, [it is] with drums, cymbals and all sorts of other instruments, the like of which have never been heard of or seen in our country; and then they eat from a piece of dog." This is the oldest known reference to the music of Bali written by a non-Balinese.

The second oldest record of the music of Bali followed not long after: in the *Daghregister* ([Daily Journal] of Batavia Castle) of 1633. It describes a cremation:

When these (that is to say the principal wives of the deceased ruler) had been stabbed with kerises, and were bathed in bright flames, the principal corpse was escorted in, on the most gorgeous and beautiful badé (cremation tower), on either side a woman bore a parasol and a horse-hair whisk: directly in front of the deceased two of their priests rode on a chariot holding long ropes in their hands, the which were attached to the badé, by the which according to their belief the dead man will transported to Heaven, and [they] rang two bells thereby making a great noise, along with gongs, drums and flutes and other instruments. The tower in which the body was placed resembled a pyramid eleven or more tiers high, and he was burned in this with his chair and bench (on which it was his custom to sit in life). In the meanwhile the spectators and closest friends enjoyed themselves eating, drinking, drumming and playing ...<sup>19</sup>

There are a few more short reports which date back to the first years of contact of the northern sea-farers with the East Indian Archipelago. These describe the music and dancing at the court of the sultan of Aceh. The oldest, from 1599, can be found

<sup>18</sup> Caption Plate 23, after p. 238 of the 1915 Linschoten Society edition.

<sup>19</sup> Colenbrander edition, p. 179 *et seq.* (Den Haag 1898)



in the *Cort Verhael* (Short Report) of Frederick de Houtman;<sup>20</sup> of the other two, both from 1602, one is in the *Historiael Journael* (Historical Journal) of the Dutch admiral Joris van Spilbergen<sup>21</sup> and the other is in the travel account of the English admiral James Lancaster.<sup>22</sup>

The French admiral [Augustin] De Beaulieu, who was also the guest of the Acehnese sultan in 1619, is more detailed and more enthusiastic in his description of this music and dance. In the Dutch translation of his book,<sup>23</sup> which appeared in 1669, the bulk of page 72 is taken up with a description of these dances and of the costumes of the female dancers. This is followed by his judgement on what he had seen:

They danced (...) with great grace and liveliness; because I had witnessed many dances in France, I could suppose that, had they seen this dance, those whose say they are knowledgeable about this would not have said that it was awkward and unrestrained.

Turning his attention to the accompanying music, he says:

Thereafter came around twenty women who lined up against the wall; and they sang, joining [their] voices to the sound of a few small drums, of whom each held one in her hand (...) [singing] of the deeds done and victories won by this king during his reign.

As I now, to putting the finishing touches to the picture, call your attention to yet another report (from 1637) about Acehnese court music, that included by the Englishman Peter Mundy in his travel account, I shall have told you about all the historical data I have ever seen about North Sumatran music. He is not particularly complimentary in everything he has to say and records the music played in the open air at the moment at which the Sultan, surrounded by his retinue and seated on an elephant, proceeded to the mosque on great occasions:

Att his (the Sultan's) Issuing Forth the Musick played some of them by turns and others altogether, as Hautbois, straight trumpetts and others in forme of great hunting hornes, Drummes (the 3 latter of Silver); another Copper Instrument called a gung, where they strike with a little wooden Clubbe, and although it bee butt a small Instrumentt, not much More than 1 Foote over and ½ Foot Deepe, yett it maketh a Deepe hollow humming sound Resembling thatt of a great bell: all the afforesaid musick Discordantt, Clamorous and full of Noise.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Cort verhael vant' gene wedervaeren in Frederick de Houtman tot Atchein, enz.* (Gouda edition 1880), p. 8-9.

<sup>21</sup> *De Reis ven Joris van Spilbergen naar Ceylon, Atjèh en Bantam* (1601-1604). (Publication XXXVIII Linschoten-Vereeniging), p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 10ol. 2, p. 409 (Glasgow 1905).

<sup>23</sup> *De ramspoedige Scheepvaart der Franschen naar Oostindien onder 't beleit van de Heer Generaal Augustyn van Beaulieu met drie schepen, uit Normandyen*. Taken from the French language and translated by J. Glazenmaker (1669), p. 71-2.

<sup>24</sup> *The travels of Peter Mundy 1608-1667*, Vol. III. *Travels in England, Western India, Achin, Macao, and the Canton River 1634-1637*, Part I, p. 123 (Series II, Vol. XLV of the Hakluyt Society), 1919.

But let us stop a moment, there is yet another opinion about the music played at the Aceh court, and one which most certainly deserves to be rescued from obscurity. It is to be found in the Journal of Senior Merchant Johan Truijtmán. On 10 October 1649, among other matters this VOC envoy noted that, on the occasion of a ceremonial reception by one of the most prominent courtiers, the latter “received me most graciously, while forthwith Acehnese and Siamese music was played.”<sup>25</sup>

It would be very worthwhile undertaking to investigate whether other Siamese elements also still occur in the language and music of the Acehnese at the present time.<sup>26</sup>

A few years later (1656), it seems that Rijcklof van Goens, later governor-general, was somewhat more amenable than the gross of his contemporary countrymen to what he saw and heard of indigenous music and dance. At the time he was visiting the court of Mataram, the residence of Susuhunan Mangku Rat I [Amangkurat I], as VOC envoy. His description of a *sěněman*, a chivalrous tournament at which numerous gamelans were played, and of a contest between two armed men held to the sounding of “great gongs” is lively and by and large betrays a certain appreciation which he was also pleased to bestow on the *sěrimpi* and *bědaya* and the music which accompanied them: “Meanwhile in the middle of the square, between the King’s and the lesser pavilions, an open pavilion was erected on which first the King’s young female dancers came to dance, playing for this purpose on many small gongs which, combined with a few flutes and violins, produced a melodious sound.” This passage is followed by a detailed and enthusiastic description of their costumes and ornaments.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, at the end of the seventeenth century – the actual date is not known but another work by this author carries the imprint of the year 1694 – we have a short description of *wayanx* and of a Chinese wedding from the hand of Aegidius Daalmans, a physician in the service of the VOC. In this piece he gives a fairly extensive enumeration of the orchestras which accompanied them, namely: a Javanese gamelan (a *tintamaar* or *bayaart* [carillon] and small Chinese ensembles. In the latter he was particularly struck by “a sort of violin, made in the Chinese fashion”.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Johan Truijtmán, *Dagh Register* (1649) (in Magister J.E. Heeres, *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië*, second series (*Buitenbezittingen*), part 3, p. 481 *et seq.* (492)), 1895.

<sup>26</sup> In another part of Sumatra, namely: muara Lakitan (district Musi Ulu, Central Palembang), at the time I did detect Siamese, or at least Achnese, musical influences still present. The – best-preserved local – small gamelan of the district head, Pasir Rus, had an identical tuning to that of a Siamese or Burmese orchestra.

<sup>27</sup> *Reijsbeschrijving van den weg uijt Samarang nae de konincklijke hoofd-plaets Mataram mitsgaders de zeden en gewoonten ende regeringe van den sousouhounan, groot machtichste koninck van ’t eijlant Java* (Bijdragen tot de Taal- land- en Volkenkunde van Ned.-Indië, Vol. 1856, p. 307 *et seq.*).

<sup>28</sup> *Kort Relaas van een ongedrukt schrift van “Indiaansche aantekeningen”, geschreven door Aegidius Daalmans, M.D.* (“Kronijk van Het Historisch Genootschap,” gevestigd te Utrecht, Vol. 24, 1868, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, 4<sup>th</sup> part, p. 620 *et seq.* (pp. 648, 651)), Utrecht 1869.



Their eighteenth-century successors are certainly no improvement on these oldest European reports. Quite the contrary in fact.

In his enormous five folio work *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* [Old and New East Indies], which dates from 1724-1726, François Valentijn has few good things to say about the different sorts of music of the various peoples he describes. Usually he was bored stiff when he was forced to listen to any musical offerings, be they songs or instrumental music, whether on Ambon or Ternate, on Madura or in Java and Bali.

To give a few examples:

As they (the Ambonese) dance, the men and women sing loudly and clearly. Their songs recount the oldest affairs of their country and people and, as they lack a written culture, they are alike their chronicles. The bulk of their content is taken up with lauding their valiant heroes and the deeds of their ancestors, which are preserved in them and so immortalized. They also deal with ancient matters such as their country, villages, coasts, kings and so forth and the lines always end in *e-e e e e e*; and this [performance] lasts not just one day but two to three days and nights without cease (which I found tedious beyond words). They hold the first *e* for a whole beat of the music and the four which follow for one-eighth of a beat, dropping from the first *e*, which they make a high *la* gradually to the *re*, while in the meantime they bawl out a few words in praise of one or the other between the two. They end with their *e-e e e e e*, never rising from low to high: however, when they want to bring the whole to a close, they end with: *ô-o o o-ô*.

On another occasion in Java he heard:

...a few damsels, who sang to the accompaniment of the beating of the gong and the tifa (drum) as well as one of the indigenous zithers. However, their music consisted merely of shrieking *re, mi, re* (just like the music of the Chinese) and in cadences of fourths, thirds and fifths in a most unpleasant fashion and with a drawl I found tiresome in the extreme.

Nevertheless, it seems that the *pangéran* of Surabaya did succeed in gauging the tastes of our clergyman and provided him with fare which he found more palatable, a musical elephant: "...For a change he (the elephant) also danced rhythmically to the beat of the gong, the which he did deftly each time, lifting his right front leg and his left back leg and then alternating to his left front leg to his right back leg."

Taking into account the subjective nature of his information, it cannot be assumed that this time Valentijn, as was so often the case, had poached on the intellectual property of his father-in-law, the great [Georg Eberhard] Rumphius.

In the printed works of Rumphius, I have come across only one snippet of information about music, a mention of the famous, pre-Hindu kettledrum in Bali, known as the "Moon of Pèjèng"<sup>29</sup>. As you will hear, the blind seer of Ambon did not mince his words:

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<sup>29</sup> *Amboinsche Rariteitenkamer* (Amsterdam 1705). P. 207.

... that large piece ... is in the shape of a massive wheel with a piece of the axle still attached, with a bluish or blackish sheen, which the Natives say fell from the sky. Some tell another tale. Near the town of Pèjèng is shown the place where the extraordinarily long piece of metal lies in its very own spot, the place where it fell, a large martavan (pottery storage jar) on either side of it. The wheel is some 4 feet in diameter, and the axle is a little bit longer, all of one piece, and nowadays has a bluish tinge. The Balinese sincerely believe that it is one of the wheels of the chariot of the Moon, which once shone so brightly it illuminated the night sky. However, after a certain thief had urinated on it because it disturbed his nocturnal depredations, it corroded and darkened. Despite this, the King of Bali never had the heart to remove this piece of metal from its place nor to detach any piece from it; but left it lying there in remembrance. If this is indeed true, it was not made by human hand nor can anybody explain what purpose such a shapeless lump might have had; it is therefore likely that it was a sort thunderbolt and fell [to earth] at that very spot.

Next in chronological order is a curious report written by the German E.C. Barchewitz, who came to the Archipelago as a soldier in the service of the VOC. He also talks about a kettledrum but that of Luwang, one of the Barat Daya islands in the province of Maluku. His report dates from 1730 and can be found in his *Allerneueste und wahrhafte Ost-Indianische Reise-Beschreibung*.<sup>30</sup> In it he recounts that the people stated that it was deadly dangerous to touch this instrument, again said to have fallen from heaven at some time or other. Moreover, a soldier of the VOC who had had the temerity to hit this drum with a stone to hear what sort of sound this would elicit, promptly found himself at death's door and, only after the village head had gone to the trouble of sacrificing a pig, a goat and a fat sheep in that order at that place was he restored from this nonsense and devilry.

Music barely rates a mention in Cornelis de Bruin's *Reizen* [Voyages], dated 1744. The orientation of this author, who was a talented artist, seems to have been entirely visual. All I have been able to find are a couple of statements, confined to what he had heard and seen on the estate of De Heer Kasteleyn at Meester Cornelis:

In the centre above the gate one sees musicians sitting, of whom from time to time ten, twelve or fourteen make themselves heard. They beat several kinds of cymbals and small drums and play on flutes made from pieces of reed and constructed in the way the old herdsmen did it [pan flute. W.v.Z.]. They also have a sort of zither and a large drum on which the lowest pitch is beaten, an occasional happening and, as far as my memory serves me right, with one stick: the which is not unpleasant to listen to.

A little earlier on the same page [he writes]: "This is the place where the gong-players, who are Balinese slaves, make themselves heard."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Pp. 311-313.

<sup>31</sup> Cornelis de Bruin, *Reizen* (1744). P. 368.

Only one more item has come down to us from the Company era, a remark which an anonymous writer committed to paper in the year 1782 in his book, *Batavia, de hoofdstad van Neêlands Oost Indien, in derzelver gelegenheid, opkomst, kerkzaaken, koophandel, zeden, luchtgesteldheid, ziekten, dieren en gewassen, beschreven* [Batavia, the Capital of the Netherlands East Indies. In which are described [its] location, origin, clerical matter, trade, customs, climate, diseases, animals and crops].<sup>32</sup> Here I shall give just a small sample of the man's style and outlook.

The nocturnal entertainments differ somewhat from those held during the day, and consist principally of music and dancing: the majority of the musicians are their slaves, some of whom play upon an instrument most closely resembling an old-fashioned three-stringed violin, usually known as a country fiddle. To this fine instrument they add their large copper cymbals, which elicit an annoying, shrill noise, and do nothing but mark the beat without any alteration in tone. In general, it provides evidence for the claim that the music of the East is still in its infancy, and is played only on extremely simple, monotonous instruments, rendering it an abomination to European music-lovers. Moreover, the Orientals are not yet advanced enough to imitate the quick rhythms and successive cadences in European compositions, and from which they derive not the slightest pleasure. Above all, it is most remarkable that the Orientals learn music only by ear and play it without using any written notation: which would seem a nigh-on impossible feat to most of our music-lovers, and also renders them incapable of learning to play our exceedingly complex pieces. This discordant string music is accompanied by dances

Obviously, anonymous was a man of his times, the dying days of the moribund VOC: a little insipid and a tinge bourgeois. The first long-needed breath of fresh air was felt during the time of the English Interregnum. Its legacy was a more propitious atmosphere which would place the newly founded kingdom of the Netherlands in a better position to be reconciled with its colonial inheritance. The invigorating way in which the British treated the subject and the intuitive feelings displayed by Raffles and his team leap from the page in the few sentences devoted to the indigenous music by the lieutenant-governor in his 1817, but always much more modern seeming, *History of Java*. Among other things he says:

The gongs are perhaps the noblest instruments of the kind that have been brought to Europe. (...) They are probably the most powerful and most musical of all monotonous instruments. (...) They have the advantage of being mellifluous, and capable of accompanying, pathetic strains. (...) But it is the harmony and pleasing sound of all the instruments united which gives the music of Java its peculiar character among Asiatics. The sounds produced on several of the instruments are peculiarly rich, and when heard at a distance have been frequently compared to those produced on the harmonic glasses. The airs, however simple and monotonous they may appear of themselves, when

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<sup>32</sup> Te Amsterdam bij Petrus Conradi. Te Harlingen bij Volkert van der Plaats.

played on the *gambang kayu*,<sup>33</sup> or accompanied by other instruments, never tire on the ear.<sup>34</sup>

In his *History of the Indian Archipelago* published in 1820, Raffles' subordinate John Crawfurd also reveals that he was before his time in his objectivity and his capacity to appreciate foreign cultures. Among other comments about Javanese music, he says:<sup>35</sup>

They (that is, the gongs) are usually suspended from a rich frame, and the tone which they produce is the deepest and richest that can be imagined. Dr Crotch (a musicologist whom he consulted) says of those inspected: 'A pair of gongs was suspended from the centre of a most superb wooden standard, richly carved, painted and gilt. The tone of these instruments exceeded in depth and quality anything I have ever heard. (...) The tone of this singular instrument is at once powerful and sweet, and its intonations clear and perfect. (...). On the fabrication of those instruments, Dr Crotch observes, ... that he "was astonished and delighted by their ingenious fabrication, splendour, beauty, and accurate intonation."

In 1811, another subordinate, William Marsden, gives a pretty extensive description of the music of the Sumatran Malays in his: *History of Sumatra*. Speaking of the singing he says:<sup>36</sup>

A *gadis* (young girl) sometimes rises, and leaning her face on her arm, supporting herself against a pillar, or on the shoulder of one of her companions, with her back to the audience, begins a tender song. She is soon taken up and answered by one of the *bujangs* (young men) in company, whose greatest pretensions to gallantry and fashion are founded on a adroitness at this polite accomplishment. The uniform subject, on such occasions, is love, and as the words are *extempore*, there are numberless degrees of merit in the composition, which is sometimes surprisingly well turned, quaint, and even witty.

In this same period, perhaps even slightly earlier, that wonderful Javanese poem which encompasses the whole of indigenous life in all its nuances, the *Sĕrat Tjĕntĕni* [*Sĕrat Cĕnthini*], was composed. This work contains delightful passages about the gamelan. Entrenched in its smug fortress of western superiority, for the time being Europe remained completely oblivious to it.<sup>37</sup> For the next five decades, even after the restitution of the colony, the attitude towards indigenous music showed no signs of changing. For the time being, this art continued to represent the absolute height of tedium and discordance to the majority of Westerners.

<sup>33</sup> That is, a xylophone.

<sup>34</sup> Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, Vol. I, p. 469 (470-471).

<sup>35</sup> John Crawfurd, F.R.S. *History of the Indian Archipelago*, Vol. 1, p. 332 *et seq.* (1817)

<sup>36</sup> William Marsden, F.R.S., *The History of Sumatra*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London 1811), p. 267.

<sup>37</sup> The bulk of it, taken from a manuscript kept in Leiden, was finally published under auspices of the *Bataviaasch Genootschap* in the years 1912-1915. For a Dutch translation of these particular strophes may I point you in the direction of my *Toonkunst van Java*, (Den Haag, 1934), Vol. I *passim*.

"Their singing is monotonous, tedious and intolerable to the European ear," was the opinion of the ethnologist Von Zimmermann in 1825.<sup>38</sup>

In 1866, the engineer S.E.W. Roorda van Eysinga commented: "From the very depths of their throats, maladroit female dancers elicit shrill tones and rouse the audience to transports of delight with their snake-like movements and hysterical shrieking."<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, a sort of nascent academic interest was beginning to emerge. This growing interest is demonstrated in a memorandum written in 1822, but first published in 1852, entitled *Bijdrage tot de kennis van de zeden en gewoonten der Javanen* [Contribution to knowledge of the usages and customs of the Javanese] by the colonial official A.D. Cornets de Groot.<sup>40</sup> When it is all said and done it is not really any great improvement on what we find in Valentijn. An overpoweringly excruciating paternal condescension still ruled. Take, for example, that shown by Dr Strehler in 1833: "Apart from this, they have some forms of music which most closely resemble the sounds of the anvil and the triangle, supplemented by a few stringed instruments. From the latter they can barely coax a third. However, they are content with this and [they] hop and skip merrily to it."<sup>41</sup> Listen to what the theologian Dr E.R. van Hoëvel, otherwise a most praiseworthy man, has to say about the Badui who live in South Banten:

It is truly remarkable that so many of the numerous people who inhabit this Archipelago, however rough-hewn and primitive they might be, have their own idiosyncratic music; therefore, in some places, even cheek-by-jowl with the most benighted cannibalism, some hints of enlightenment and a dawning of civilization are undeniable. The Badui are no exception. (Here follows a description of their instruments. B. B.). Whether these musical instruments, which are their only possessions apart from what is strictly necessary for them to live, are enough to indicate some degree of culture, this discovery does not belie their innate feeling for melody and music. Moreover, they are likewise characterized by that childish simplicity which we remarked on in their customs. The *tjaloeng* [*calung*]<sup>42</sup> can be said to be the sort of instrument which typifies these people, who still live very closely indeed to their original natural state. However, the tones which their fantasy can conjure out of these bamboos, so replete with feeling and harmony, do offer us proof that the seeds of enlightenment are present in these simple mountaineers, and await only some

<sup>38</sup> *De aarde en hare Bewoners volgens de nieuwste ontdekkingen. Naar het Hoogduitsch van E.A.W. Zimmerman*, Vol. 18, pp. 260-261.

<sup>39</sup> S.E.W. Roorda van Eysinga, *Mijne verbanning en mijn vloekzang* (1866), p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Included in *Tijdschrift van Ned.- Indië*, Vol. 14 (1852), Part II, p. 260, 261, 276 and 415 *et seq.* and Appendices III and IV.

<sup>41</sup> *Bijzonderheden wegens Batavia en deszelfs omstreken; uit he dagboek gedurende twee reizen derwaarts in 1828-1830*, by Dr Strehler. Uit he Hoogduitsch. Te Haarlem bij de Wed. A. Loosjes Pz., 1833 (pp. 169/170).

<sup>42</sup> An instrument with bamboo keys, suspended on cords. Cf. *Kunst De Toonkunst van Java*, Vol. I, p. 290 *et seq.*

external circumstance, akin to rain and sunshine, to allow that seed to germinate.<sup>43</sup>

In 1878, the missionary [R.] van Eck also cast a friendly, considerate eye over another indigenous population – in his case the Balinese – still wallowing somewhere near his feet in the night of barbarism: “It is true that, viewed from our superior position, the Balinese still stands on a low rung of development”... And a little later he writes: “Heard from afar, the gamelan can even have some charm for European ears.”<sup>44</sup>

In the eyes of W.L. Ritter, who wrote the texts to accompany the plates drawn by E. Hardouin,<sup>45</sup> the gamelan was principally a soporific: “It is difficult to give a detailed description of the playing of this gamelan. The sound is undeniably very harmonious and melodious; although it is more pleasant to hear at a distance than from close by; we recall with pleasure, how when heard from afar, it often helped benignly to lull us to sleep.”

In the reports of the missionary [H.] Smeding, for the first time since the restitution of the colony we can divine both an academic interest in and a cerebral and heartfelt understanding of the native music he heard in East Java.

I would be carried away were I to cite him at length, but I can say this about him: what Smeding wrote about Javanese music in 1860 is still so worthwhile people should take note of it. The same can be said of the more detailed, but rather more businesslike contemplations of his younger fellow official and later professor, C. Poensen, 1872.<sup>46</sup> Smeding devotes a couple of pages to the instruments found in the gamelan, and the scales which were the most in vogue. In his report he makes some very pertinent remarks about the relationship between the vocal and instrumental music, especially in punctuating the rhythm.<sup>47</sup>

However at that juncture in time, and indeed even later, the official academic world still remained uninterested. In 1869 in the following sentence, Dr J.J. de Hollander, lecturer at the Military Academy in Breda, puts down his thoughts about Javanese music. “Not to put too fine a point on it, one would seek in vain for the art of music among the Javanese.”<sup>48</sup> In his masterly work, *Java*, Professor J.P. Veth writes: “Although we cannot deny the Javanese some of their own peculiar

<sup>43</sup> Dr. W.R. van Hoëvell, *Bijdrage tot de kennis der Badoeïnen, in het zuiden der Residentie Bantam*. (Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië VII, 4<sup>th</sup> part, p. 335 et seq. (428 et seq.)), 1845.

<sup>44</sup> R. van Eck, *Schetsen, van het eiland Bali* (Tijdschrift voor Ned.-Indië, new series, part IX), 1878.

<sup>45</sup> *Java, tooneelen uit het leven; karakterschetsen en kleederdragten van Java's bewoners in afbeeldingen naar de natuur geteekend door E. Hardouin met tekst van W.L. Ritter*. Leiden 1855, p. 174-175.

<sup>46</sup> C. Poensen, *De wajang* (Mededeelingen vanwege het Nederl. Zendelinggenootschap, Vol. 16, p. 59 et seq., 204 et seq., 233 et seq. and 353 et seq.), 1872.

<sup>47</sup> H. Smeding, *Bezoekreis naar de gemeenten in Kediri, Madioen en Modjokerto, gedaan van 9 tot 29 Julij 1859*. (Mededeelingen vanwege het Nederl. Zendeling-genootschap, Vol. 5, p. 120 et seq. (127 et seq.)), 1861.

<sup>48</sup> Dr. J.J. de Hollander, *Handleiding bij de beoefening der Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, Vol. 1, p. 416 et seq. (1869).



arts, there is little to be said about Javanese scholarship"<sup>49</sup>. Furthermore, he claims that, as a consequence of its "anti-rhythmic jumps" Javanese music cannot be classified within a set, regular range.<sup>50</sup> Even in the second volume of the *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* [Encyclopaedia of the Netherlands Indies], dated 1918, in an article, entitled the "Javanese" taken over in its entirety from the first edition, it is still possible to come across the words: "The music is on a fairly low rung of evolution and can only partly be accorded the designation of music."<sup>51</sup>

"Well", one might say, "perhaps the authors cited were not very musically inclined, they had other interests: philology, theology, ethnology. Surely musicology will have gradually grown more appreciative?"

I shall say this only once: the faces of all musicologists should blush red with shame, when we read what our nineteenth-century predecessors have written in that field, if indeed they had the far-sightedness to have spurred them on to assign a place in their works, albeit a modest one, to these non-European forms of music they dismissed as insignificant.

Nevertheless, on this occasion I must seize the opportunity to place this attitude in a wider context. It is well known that the essays in any General History of Art written by a European are devoted exclusively to architecture, sculpture and painting and not a word is said about literature and music. In a similar vein, any general history of music consulted by a western musical scholar will contain nothing about the music of people beyond those in Europe. There are some rare exceptions, albeit usually dismissive, to this rule. Occasionally such writers devote a few pages to commonplaces about Chinese, Indian, Ancient Jewish and Arabian music; almost always the same, because they copy from each other and, with an unerring instinct, thereby pass on the inaccuracies above all else. For instance, in his *Katechismus der Musikgeschichte* [Catechism of Musical History](1906),<sup>52</sup> Hugo Rieman writes that the great Chinese musical scholar Prince Tschay Yu (Zhu Zaiyu) lived in the sixteenth century before (not after) Christ, and in the *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* [Manual of Musical History], by Adler(1929),<sup>53</sup> Robert Lach copies him, adding the clarification : "from the Ming, dynasty", thereby implicitly revealing that not only was he unacquainted with the work of Prince Tschay Yu (Zhu Zaiyu),<sup>54</sup> but also the concept of the Ming dynasty did not ring any bell with him. Consequently Tschay Yu's life has been predated by 3,200 years in our official musical historiography.

<sup>49</sup> J.P. Veth, *Java*, Vol. I, p. 482.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. G. Brom, *Java in onze kunst* (1931), p. 156.

<sup>51</sup> Vol. II, second edition, p. 219a

<sup>52</sup> Vol. I, pp.68-69.

<sup>53</sup> Vol. I p.13. A mistake also committed by H.W de Ronde in his, *Overzicht der muziekgeschiedenis*, (1939) p. 27

<sup>54</sup> Repeatedly quoted by the Jesuit father Amiot in his famous *Mémoires sur la musique des Chinois, tant ancienne que moderne*, (1776) and amply referred to in the great monograph by Maurice Courant: *Chine et Corée, Essai historique sur la musique classique des Chinois, avec un appendice relatif à la musique coréenne*, (1912) (in Lavignac *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, Part 1, *Histoire de la musique* (Vol. I, p. 77 et seq.)

Be that as it may, as a rule general histories of music written by Europeans contain nothing about exotic or about Indonesian music at least. However, there are a few exceptions.<sup>55</sup> I shall give you the names of Karl Storck, (first edition 1910), Van Milligen (first edition 1918), *Bücker's Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft* [Manual of Musicology], in which there is an outstanding contribution about the music of primitive and eastern people dated 1929 by Robert Lachmann; *the Atlantisbuch der Musik* [The Atlantis Book of Music] (1934) with a very good article by Fritz Bose and the recently published fourth edition of Caspar Höweler's *Geschiedenis der Muziek* [History of Music]. Last but not least, there is the great *Geschichte der Musik* [History of Music], dated 1862, by A.W. Ambros, the oldest and also the worst as far as Javanese music is concerned, culminating in the opinion which has almost become proverbial: "Auf Java geht die Tonkunst in barbarische Trübung über, so dass sich hier ihre letzte Spur verliert."<sup>56</sup> [In Java the music is transformed into barbarian dirt and everything gets lost. W.v.Z.]

Alas our compatriots Daniel de Lange and Joh. F. Snelleman do not lag far behind Ambros in their astonishing smugness. Their contribution, probably dating from 1918, in Lavignac's large musical encyclopaedia<sup>57</sup> begins with the words:

In commencing our study of the music and instruments of the East Indies, it is essential to recall Rousseau's definition of music, namely: 'Music is the art of combining sounds in a fashion agreeable to the ear.' One has to say that the music of the East Indies does not venture beyond this. The people who are satisfied with this music do not possess what we, the inhabitants of Europe, call an ear for artistic music.

And a little further on they declare: "In this art, everything which is grand and sublime is absent."

I lack time to quote more of those statements. Fortunately it is unnecessary. However, in the meantime the tide had begun to turn. In 1889, the physician Dr J. Groneman, who was of course not musically trained but as a scientist was a good observer and accustomed making to correct and succinct formulations, placed his extensive notes about the gamelan in Yogyakarta at the disposal of the Leiden orientalist-musicologist Prof. Dr J.P.N. Land. Their joint work, which appeared

<sup>55</sup> Nothing, or at most nothing more than a few lines as an appendage to an article, section of paragraph about Indian or Chinese music. About Indonesian music: Fétis (1869/1875), Neumann (first edition 1880-1885, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, 1927), Riemann (*Lexikon*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1882, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. 1929; *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* (1904-1913); *the Oxford History of Music* (1901-1905), Combarieu (1913-1920), the first three editions of Höweler's *Muziekgeschiedenis*, Hutschenruyter (1919), Nef (1919), Adler (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1924; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1929), Bekker (1926), Keller (5<sup>th</sup> edition 1926), Keller and Kruseman's *Muzieklexikon* (1932), Bernet Kempers (1<sup>st</sup> edition 1932, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1941), Prunières (1934), Moser (1935), De Ronde (1937), Smijers (1938), the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians* (1938), Percy A. Scholes' *Oxford Companion to Music* (1938) and O. Thompson's *International Cyclopaedia of Music and Musicians* (1939).

<sup>56</sup> A.W. Ambros, *Geschichte der Musik*, Vol. 1, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (1862). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> editions this remark has wisely been dropped.

<sup>57</sup> Daniel de Lange and Joh. F. Snelleman, *La musique et les instruments de musique dans les Indes orientales néerlandaises* (in Lavignac *Encyclopédie de la musique*. Part I, *Histoire de la musique*, vol. V, p. 3147 et seq.

under the aegis of the Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen [The Netherlands Academy of Sciences], is the first solid monograph about Javanese music.<sup>58</sup>

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a different way of thinking was gradually gaining ground. It no longer considered that the only ideas and formulations which really counted were their own and pertinently they were both more methodical and more scientifically and psychologically oriented in their approach. Moreover – restricting ourselves to musicology – the sorts of apparatus which made it possible to record and define the singing and instrumental music of foreign peoples objectively were also rapidly making their first appearance on the scene. With their entrée, for the first time ethnology could use a phonographic machine in “fieldwork”. This step opened the door for comparative musicology to make its debut as an independent discipline. Hereafter it was no longer necessary to rely on their own, benign perhaps even musical, but none-the-less very fallible ears, which were all too inclined to “correct” unusual intervals to their European counterparts when writing down notation.

This was also the time the comprehension began to dawn that the European musical scale was but one among numerous others; in principle, there were other just as useful and valuable possibilities. Consequently, from that moment the study of the exceedingly important and characteristic differences in the musical performances and voice productions of all sorts different people could also be absorbed into musicological research.

The founder of modern ethno-musicological [muziekethnologische] research was the Englishman Alexander J. Ellis, who laid the foundations in his 1884/5 publication *Tonometrical Observations on Existing Non-Harmonic Scales*.<sup>59</sup> He found worthy like-minded men and followers in such personalities as Carl Stumpf, J.P.N. Land, Victor Mahillon, Erich von Hornbostel, Curt Sachs, Robert Lachmann, [Abraham] Idelsohn, André Schaeffner, Kathleen Schlesinger and Béla Bartók. These are but a few examples, representatives of the mere handful of researchers on whose shoulders this infant science has been borne and still rests. Across the whole world those whose names were or are highly regarded number not much more than a good thirty.

From this point, not without some inevitable relapses, we begin to see interest in and the estimation of foreign expressions of music growing. Since then the number of published descriptions and impressions of Indonesian music, especially of Javanese and Balinese, have been legion. However, it has to be said that reliable musico-technical monographs tend to lag behind in number, but this should not come as a surprise. This eastern music is intensely complicated and has wandered a completely different path to that taken by its western counterpart. At Christmas 1919, when I heard it for the first time – by chance played with the highest degree of perfection, namely: at the court of the Paku Alam in Yogyakarta –

<sup>58</sup> Prof. Dr. J.P.N. Land, *Over onze kennis der Javaansche musiek, Introduction to “De gamelan te Jogjakarta”* by Dr. J. Groneman (1890).

<sup>59</sup> Journal of the Society of Arts of 27 March 1885 no. 1688 vol. XXXIII, p. 485; republished in the *Sammelbände f. vergl. Musikwissenschaft*, Volume I (1922), p. 1 *et seq.*

I did not understand much about it, but that night it offered an amazingly glorious sound and kept me enthralled in its grip for hours. It was the reason I did not return to the Netherlands, but sought work in Java which would enable me to learn more about it. Consequently, I could listen to and study the indigenous music for fifteen years.

For the first ten years this research was carried out purely on my own initiative, funded from my own slender purse. Nevertheless, I was also fortunate to enjoy the strong moral, and sometimes financial, support of some academic institutions including the Netherlands Academy of Sciences and the Colonial Institute, and in the Netherlands Indies the Bataviaasch Genootschap and the N.I. Comité voor Wetenschappelijke Onderzoekingen [The Netherlands-Indies Commission of Scientific Researches], as well as that of a few private individuals, the first and foremost among whom should be mentioned Professor Dr J. Huizinga and Mevrouw Delprat-Veth. Finally, on 6 January 1930, my work was brought under government auspices where it remained for nearly two years. In this same period, a few funds to promote musicological research in the Archipelago were also set up at home in the Netherlands. Since then it has been my great privilege to be able to continue my research with the authority and support of the Netherlands-Indies government behind me. As a result, this research could immediately be put on a much stronger footing and extended to the Outer Provinces. This has happened not a minute too soon. It transpired that much had already been irrevocably lost to musicology as the result of the encroachment of western civilization.

From the beginning, I had before me a four-fold goal which, thanks to the fact my work had been elevated to a government job, has been able to be achieved.

1. The founding of a musical archive containing as much data as possible. It encompasses instrumental music from the entire Archipelago, a phonogram collection, photos, lantern slides and films of musicians, instruments, orchestras and dances – in short, the creation of a centre in which as much data as possible in the field of indigenous music and dance can be found under one roof;<sup>60</sup>

2. In as far as this has been attainable, to produce a comprehensive work about the music of Java covering the field to its fullest extent;<sup>61</sup>

3. To set to work slowly but surely to produce short preparatory publications about the musical expressions of the inhabitants of the Outer Provinces so as to make these accessible to science;

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<sup>60</sup> This archive has seen a truly tropical growth: in the three years I was entrusted with directing it, we made a collection of more than 1,100 musical instruments of the Archipelago; besides this there were 450 wax-cylinders, containing records of indigenous vocal and instrumental music, around 800 photos and a good 500 slides of orchestras, players and instruments, one and the other made more accessible to interested parties by a card system. A great deal of information was collected in writing and by word of mouth and hundreds of visitors from all around the world were shown around. After my repatriation in March 1934, after having been handed over to the Bataviaasch Genootschap, the archive had to do without expert leadership for a few years. In 1937 the Austrian musical scholar Dr. Karl Halusa [died 19<sup>th</sup> June 1942?] was appointed curator.

<sup>61</sup> Published in 1934, see no. 77 in the Bibliography.

4. To arouse interest in indigenous music among a broader public, for instance, by giving public lectures and in this way working to preserve it or, at the very least, delay its extinction.<sup>62</sup>

This labour would have been too much for one person, even were he to devote himself to it with body and soul, even were he bolstered by the greatest possible support of others. And I must hasten to add that he did find this unswerving support – in this instance – his spouse. Despite this, the programme was just too enormous for one single individual to bear it. It amounted to the musicological exploration of an enormous area, measuring some 2,000 kilometres wide by 5,000 kilometres in length. Some of it by the way is extremely inaccessible but in which are to be found the most diverse musical forms, sometimes in astonishing wealth. Moreover, the programme was undertaken on the understanding that the research would have to be carried out simultaneously without delay in many different places as it was rightly feared that within a few years many forms, which were still preserved by the people, would have already been beyond rescue for science.

I do not need to tell you that the few years I spent as government musicologist were unforgettable. I would like to say more about it, but time presses, and I have already trespassed too long upon your patience. May it suffice for me to inform you that I have already set down some of the results of my research on paper in a series of monographs;<sup>63</sup> another part is awaiting working out and publication.

In the same period various people have been working in this field in Java and on Madura. Among them are the late J.S. Brandts Buys, the discerning music critic and musicologist, and in Bali the highly gifted but alas recent victim of the violence of war the painter-musician, Walter Spies, and the Canadian composer-musicologist Colin MacPhee. The latter two have unfortunately published few results of their research;<sup>64</sup> on the other hand Brandts-Buys, in collaboration with his wife, Mevrouw A. Brandts Buys-Van Zijp, did publish a great deal in a truly superlative manner.<sup>65</sup>

Of course, it would be impossible to cite the above-mentioned people at length; I would not know where to begin, let alone where to end. Nor, for the same reasons, shall I be able to quote from the work of a few other musicologists, first and foremost Erich von Hornbostel,<sup>66</sup> to whom our young science is so deeply indebted and Robert Lachmann.<sup>67</sup> Curt Sachs<sup>68</sup> and Erwin Felber<sup>69</sup> plus a few

<sup>62</sup> Since then more around 500 lectures have been given in Java, Sumatra, Celebes, in the Netherlands, England (London, Cambridge), Germany (Frankfurt, Berlin, Leipzig, France (Paris) and Belgium (Brussels and Ghent).

<sup>63</sup> Bibliography Nos. 9, 10, 10a, 41, 44, 45, 51, 52, 52a, 53 to 57, 76 to 81, 111, 118 to 121, 136 and 137.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* Nos. 112 to 116.

<sup>65</sup> Bibliography Nos. 30, 34, 38, 39, 43, 58 to 72, 94, 127 and 131.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*: no. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*: no. 11.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*: Nos 14, 15 and 16.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*: No. 4.

others also spring to mind. Of necessity I must also restrain myself from reading to you some of the work written by the choreographer Miss Beryl de Zoete, who has been inspired by Walter Spies. Her work contains some excellent ideas about Balinese dance music.<sup>70</sup> For the sake of simplicity, it is better that I point you in the direction of the works of these authors, whose titles you will be able to find in the bibliography which has been attached to my lecture as an appendix.

Just how far the assessment of Indonesian music has changed over the last twenty years can be revealed in a few short quotes with which I shall end this public lecture.

The first is a citation from Decsey's monograph about Claude Debussy:<sup>71</sup>

Like in his former study of the Gypsies in Moscow ten years earlier, Debussy now let himself be enchanted by Javanese and animistic melodies in the Javanese Village on the Esplanade des Invalides, that is, at the Paris World Exhibition of 1883. Many years later he will still be delighted with the originality of these melodies. He enters a new world of metrical systems, scales and forms. An unfamiliar orchestra accompanies the unfamiliar movements of the Bedaya dancers. (...) And, whereas the narrow-minded visitors to the exhibition laughed about this, Debussy was entranced. Devoid of European arrogance, he sensed the enriching presence of a new world of sounds, based on pentatonic scales, the birth of new rhythmic and harmonic challenges. Oh, this was so entirely different from the forge for constructing rigid chords that called itself 'Academy', this was breathing nature

It is well known how much Debussy's art was influenced by the impressions this exhibition made on him. For instance, it is possible to point out a few passages in *La Mer* in which angklung music is evoked in an extremely suggestive way. Likewise other places in his oeuvre which would probably have remained unwritten had Debussy never heard Javanese music can be indicated. Vice-versa, when listening to a Javanese or Balinese orchestra, I have often caught myself thinking of compositions by Debussy and other French impressionists. The prelude to the *Paku Alam* version of the orchestral composition *Puspawarna* resembles nothing so much as the beginning of the song *D'une prison* by Reynaldo Hahn.

While we still linger in the sphere of the modern French composers, I shall give a few citations from French female artists who have travelled in the Archipelago. Of the gamelan music of the Principalities, Suzanne Laroche says: "A dream music, distant and dulcet ... One asks oneself somewhat anxiously why one sometimes speaks of 'bringing' civilization to these races who are so skilled in comprehending and exalting beauty so divinely."<sup>72</sup> The artist Gabrielle Ferrand, who spent many years in Java, [says]: "The musicians do not follow a rhythm, they 'are' the rhythm itself and one feels that one is in the presence of the absolute mastery of a collective realization of a splendid perfection of art. (...) The combined perfection of such an orchestra, the fusion of such diverse instruments is the

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*: no. 117.

<sup>71</sup> Ernst Decsey, *Claude Debussy* (Leykam-Verlag, Graz 1936), pp. 46-47. [translated from German by W.v.Z.]

<sup>72</sup> In *L'art vivant*, August 1931, p. 427. [translated from French by W.v.Z.]



greatest surprise; and, on one of those clear Oriental nights, when in the fantastic semi-obscurity of the courtyard of a palace the muted tones of a melody, the gending, begin to rise, it makes one dream of the rustling of wings, the chirping of insects or the gurgling of water. One remains transfixed as if spellbound by this eminently distinguished music which produces and unveils a quality of such superior emotions eliciting, even in the most intense expression of joy, a silent and distant melancholy – the eternal accompaniment whose essence is everywhere the same – which punctuates, sad and mournful, the most splendid joys of our lives (...)

An art with a universal character because of its power to evoke life, in a form of beauty comprehensible and moving for all.”<sup>73</sup>

The great piano virtuoso Leopold Godowsky also fell under the spell of Javanese gamelan music. “The sonority of the gamelan music is so weird, fantastic and bewitching, the native music so elusive, vague, shimmering and singular, that on listening to this new world of sound I lost my sense of reality, imagining myself in a realm of enchantment.”<sup>74</sup>

The German art historian Otto Fischer had this to say: “How I found my way home after the enchantment of this night – I do not remember. I assume I will never again hear such a perfection of heavenly sounds. Since then I have often heard the gamelan sounds in Java and Bali, and always with great pleasure. However, only in Yogyakarta’s Kraton, where the people live according to their old tradition, did I hear this perfection surpassing all human efforts.”<sup>75</sup>

Finally let us hear what a Dutchman has to say: the man of letters Leonard Huizinga who spent some years in Java characterized the gamelan in these words:

It can be compared to only two things: moonlight and flowing water. It is as pure and mysterious as the moonlight; it is always the same and always changing like flowing water. The music does not take the shape of any song in our ears, it is a natural phenomenon like the moonlight itself which spills over the entire countryside. It flows bubbling, tinkling and gurgling like the water which tumbles down from the mountains. But it is never monotonous. Sometimes its notes flow more quickly and loudly, just like water which sounds louder at night, then once again slipping by in silence.<sup>76</sup>

Honoured listeners, using many, perhaps far too many, examples I have transported you through the centuries and in doing so have tried to demonstrate that, and indeed why, the western appreciation of the phenomenon of eastern, especially Indonesian, music has gradually altered. Moreover, it is my hope that what I have told you will have impressed upon you that the forms of exotic music which have been discussed are very worthy of our interest, from a music-

<sup>73</sup> Gabrielle Ferrand, *Le théâtre et la danse à Java*, In “Revue des Arts Asiatiques”, December 1926, p. 194 *et seq.* [translated from French by W.v.Z.]

<sup>74</sup> Leopold Godowsky, *Introduction to ‘Phonoramas’, tonal journeys for the Pianoforte* (New York, 1925).

<sup>75</sup> Prof. Dr. Otto Fischer, *Kunstwanderungen auf Java und Bali*. D.V.A. Stuttgart-Berlin, 1941, pp. 30-31. [translated from German by W.v.Z.]

<sup>76</sup> Leonhard Huizinga, *Indische muziek en muziekinstrumenten* (Algemeen Handelsblad van Zondag 31 October 1937).

ethnological [*muziek-ethnologisch*], that is, purely academic, no less than from an aesthetic point of view.

As I come to the end of this public lecture may I first take the opportunity to express my gratitude to the Municipal Council of Amsterdam, to the curators of this University and to the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy for having desired to raise comparative musicology to the status of an academic subject. For more than three centuries our country has borne the care and responsibility for an area in which a wealth of musical forms can be observed; more numerous than anywhere else in the world. However, it is a treasure threatened with extinction because of its collision with western civilization – and we have an undeniable moral obligation to protect these cultural expressions and, where this is no longer possible, at least to study them and preserve them for science. Therefore it is right and proper that a special lectureship has been founded at this university in the capital. I consider a great honour that you have allowed me to teach in this field, in which I hope to prove myself worthy.

I feel very much indebted to you, Professor Révész. In the first place it is thanks to your interest in my work and your encouragement that I now stand here. You were also my host at the Psychology Laboratory and promised that I could use all of its facilities for my teaching. May I have the opportunity to show that your trust in me was not misplaced.

Professor Schrieke, I am delighted that I have finally found the opportunity to thank you in public for your work in encouraging musicological research in the East Indies Archipelago. You have stimulated this in a number of functions, both during your time in the Indies and later here at home.

It was under your directorship of the Department of Education and Religion, this research was elevated to a governmental task; as Vice-President of the Indies Comité voor Wetenschappelijke Onderzoekingen, as a member of the board of the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen and a member of the editorial board of the Internationales Archive für Ethnographie, you have ensured ample opportunities for the results to be published; as Director of the Afdeeling Volkenkunde of the Koloniaal Instituut, you gave me the chance to work on the wealth of material which I have brought with me from the Indies; not least as a consequence of your intervention comparative musicology has now become a university study. Last but not least, in an altruistic and friendly manner you have stood by me constantly all the long, now more than twenty years, in word and deed and given me the opportunity to profit from your enormous knowledge of the Indian Archipelago in the fields of history, archaeology, literature and sociology.

My learned friend Bernet Kempers, you and I are old acquaintances. For many years we have been wandering the great land of the musicology, albeit in our own provinces, but none-the-less taking an undeniable interest in the work of the other. In this new venture may I make an appeal to your profound experience in the field of musical education and express the hope that we shall both be able to enjoy the fruits of our exchanges of ideas about the subject which we both love so richly provides.

Members of the Board of the Koloniaal Instituut may I thank you heartily for the fact that you have permitted me to take up the *privaatdocentschap* alongside my task as General Curator of the Ethnographic Department and that in the near future I shall be able to rely on the rich musicological collection of the Institute in my teaching duties.

Dear Students, it is a privilege that I have now been given the opportunity to show others the way and to assist them in their journey through this inexhaustible field of foreign music cultures. Do not assume that I am a person with a hidebound attitude to music-ethnological knowledge, thinking of it as virtually hermetically sealed against any additions or improvements. Please, accept me as a slightly older, and therefore maybe more experienced, mentor and guide with whose help you can begin to tackle one or perhaps even more of the many problems still unresolved. In the future, I shall be delighted if just a few of you are able and willing to continue and expand this work which I have to confess is the object of my dedication and my passion, surpassing everything else.

I have spoken.

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[Note Jaap Kunst, 1942:]

This list of publications concerning the indigenous music in the Indonesian Archipelago and the related Malay groups contains an almost complete overview of what can be found about this in the existing literature in a European language. Not mentioned are the (numerous) articles that do not contain anything new or include too many inaccuracies. The publications marked with an asterisk contain elaborate bibliographical data.

[Note translator/ editor – Wim van Zanten, 2018:]

The bibliography given by Jaap Kunst in 1942 has been kept as it is. Only minor inaccuracies have been corrected and some information was added. This has been done by mostly using

- (1) the bibliography in Volume 2 of Jaap Kunst *Music in Java*, its history, its theory and its technique, third enlarged edition edited by Ernst L. Heins, 1973, The Hague: Nijhoff; and
- (2) the digitally available information at Leiden University Libraries (<https://www.library.universiteitleiden.nl>). Since 2014 Leiden University Libraries also include the collections formerly under the stewardship of the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV/ Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies).

We hope that this additional information will make it easier to find the publications mentioned in the 1942 bibliography of Jaap Kunst.

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