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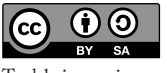

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Contents

Foreword

This is the fifth issue entirely dedicated to ethnomusicology in the remarkable six decades long history of *Musicological Annual*. The previous issues, edited by various scholars, included themes such as Applied Ethnomusicology (Pettan 2008), Music, Sound, and Ecology (Pettan 2016), Music, Migration, and Minorities (Kovačič and Hofman 2019), and Music, Religion, and Spirituality (Markoff and Bjelica 2022). Just like the previous four, this issue, edited by Christian Poske, Mark van Tongeren, Manoj Alawathukotuwa, and Dasith Asela Tilakaratna, is related to the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance, ICTMD (former International Council for Traditional Music, ICTM), the leading global scholarly association of ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists. The articles were developed, with one exception, from selected papers presented at the 12th symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Music and Minorities, which was enriched by a joint day featuring the ICTMD Study Group on Indigenous Music and Dance. The event took place on 4–9 December 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The six articles presented in this issue of *Musicological Annual*, which went through the double-blind peer-reviewed process, nicely reflect the symposium themes: Theoretical, methodological, and governmental implications for the study of music and dance of minorities; Music, dance, and minorities across the Indian ocean; Diaspora/translocality in music and dance of minorities; and Differences and commonalities between Indigenous people and minorities.

The authors of diverse origins and research foci, based in London (UK), Astrakhan (Russia), Vancouver (Canada), Vienna (Austria), and Riverside (USA), provide the results of their scholarly investigations into a wide variety of music and dance practices on different continents. Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya theorizes on the genesis of the Sri Lankan popular music genre Chorus baila. Elena M. Shishkina considers the aspects of preservation and reduction of traditional wedding rituals of the Volga German sub-ethnic group in Russia. Eshantha Peiris points to shared histories of Sinhalese and Tamil practitioners behind the cultural production of the music and dance genre Vannam in Sri Lanka. Christian Poske provides an analysis on how the Naga Indigenous people of northeastern India (and northern Myanmar) have responded with their songs to colonial and postcolonial armed conflicts in their territories. In her search for an answer to the research question »Whose sounds fit in the nation-state?«, Liz Przybylski explores expressions of Black Canadians, linguistic minorities, and Indigenous people in Canada through hip hop music. Finally, Chun Chia Tai focusses on Mando-pop

cover singer Ponay to demonstrate claims of Indigenous sovereignty on online social media in Taiwan.

As president of ICTMD and chairperson of its Study Group on Music and Minorities, together with Yuh-Fen Tseng, chairperson of the ICTMD Study Group on Indigenous Music and Dance, we express deep gratitude to the authors, editors, reviewers, and all other colleagues involved in the editorial process, and wish the readers to enjoy this rich and diverse issue of *Musicological Annual*.

Svanibor Pettan

Predgovor

To je peta številka, ki je v celoti posvečena etnomuzikologiji v izjemni šest desetletij dolgi zgodovini *Muzikološkega zbornika*. Prejšnje številke, ki so jih urejali različni znanstveniki, so vključevale teme, kot so Aplikativna etnomuzikologija (Pettan 2008), Glasba, zvok in ekologija (Pettan 2016), Glasba, migracije in manjšine (Kovačič in Hofman 2019) ter Glasba, religija in duhovnost (Markoff in Bjelica 2022). Tako kot prejšnje štiri, je tudi ta številka, ki so jo uredili Christian Poske, Mark van Tongeren, Manoj Alawathukotuwa in Dasith Asela Tilakaratna, povezana z Mednarodnim svetom za tradiciji glasbe in plesa, ICTMD (nekdanji Mednarodni svet za tradicijsko glasbo, ICTM), vodilno svetovno znanstveno združenje etnomuzikologov in etnokoreologov. Članki so z eno izjemo nastali iz izbranih prispevkov, predstavljenih na 12. simpoziju Študijske skupine za glasbo in manjšine ICTMD, ki ga je obogatil skupni dan s Študijsko skupino za staroselsko glasbo in ples ICTMD. Dogodek je potekal od 4. do 9. decembra 2023 v Colombu na Šrilanki. Šest člankov, predstavljenih v tej številki *Muzikološkega zbornika*, ki so šli skozi postopek dvojno slepe recenzije, lepo odraža teme simpozija: Teoretični, metodološki in politični vplivi na študij glasbe in plesa manjšin; Glasba, ples in manjšine ob Indijskem oceanu; Diaspora/translokalnost v glasbi in plesu manjšin; Razlike in skupne značilnosti med staroselci in manjšinami.

Avtorji različnega izvora in raziskovalnih usmeritev, živeči v Londonu (Združeno kraljestvo), Astrahanu (Rusija), Vancouvru (Kanada), na Dunaju (Avstrija) in Riversideu (ZDA), predstavljajo rezultate svojih znanstvenih raziskav o glasbenih in plesnih praksah na različnih celinah. Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya teoretizira o nastanku šrilanške popularne glasbene zvrsti *chorus baila*. Elena M. Šiškina obravnava vidike ohranjanja in redukcije tradicionalnih poročnih obredov povolške nemške podetnične skupine v Rusiji. Eshantha Peiris opozarja na skupno zgodovino singalskih in tamilskih praktikov, ki stojijo za kulturno produkcijo glasbenega in plesnega žanra *vannam* na Šrilanki. Christian Poske podaja analizo o tem, kako so se staroselci Naga v severovzhodni Indiji (in severnem Mjanmaru) s svojimi pesmimi odzvali na kolonialne in postkolonialne oborožene spopade na svojih ozemljih. V iskanju odgovora na raziskovalno vprašanje »Čigavi zvoki sodijo v nacionalno državo?« Liz Przybylski skozi hip hop glasbo raziskuje izražanje temnopoltih Kanadčanov, jezikovnih manjšin in staroselcev v Kanadi. Nazadnje se Chun Chia Tai osredotoča na pevca priredb Mando-popa Ponaya, da pokaže trditve o avtohtoni suverenosti na spletnih družbenih medijih v Tajvanu.

Kot predsednik ICTMD in predsedujoči Študijske skupine za glasbo in manjšine, skupaj z Yuh-Fen Tseng, predsedujočo Študijske skupine za staroselsko glasbo in ples, izražam globoko hvaležnost avtorjem, urednikom, recenzentom in vsem drugim kolegicam in kolegom, ki sodelujejo pri uredniškem procesu, bralcem pa želim, da uživajo v tej bogati in raznoliki številki *Muzikološkega zbornika*.

Svanibor Pettan

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UDK: 784.66(548.7):929Bastiansz W.

Theorising on the Genesis of *Chorus Baila*

Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya

Universities of London and Cambridge

ABSTRACT

Chorus Baila is associated with the Portuguese colonisers of Sri Lanka. The originator of the genre, Mervin Ollington Bastiansz, was a member of a minority community, a *Burgher* with Dutch, Portuguese, and Sinhalese ancestry. I consider the life and musical experiences of Bastiansz in theorising on the genesis of *chorus baila*.

Keywords: *chorus baila*, hybridity, postcolonial identity, Wally Bastiansz

IZVLEČEK

Chorus baila je povezan s portugalskimi kolonizatorji Šrilanke. Utemeljitelj žanra, Mervin Ollington Bastiansz, je bil pripadnik manjšinske skupnosti, *burgher* z nizozemskimi, portugalskimi in singalskimi predniki. Pri opazovanju nastanka *chorus baila* razmišljam o vplivu Bastianszevih življenjskih in glasbenih izkušenj.

Ključne besede: *chorus baila*, hibridnost, postkolonialne identitete, Wally Bastiansz

Figure 1: Wally Bastiansz CD cover.[1]

Samāgame Waslyan
Āgame Kristian
Mame Wally Bastian
All Ceylon baila champion[2]

(author's transliteration from Sinhala)

Only a single CD with fourteen *bailas* survives as a tribute to the *Baila* King Wally Bastiansz,[3] the originator of *chorus baila* (Figure 1). Sumathipala Perera, a leading *vāda baila* singer (2004, 193) remembers a competition near Ananda College, Colombo, when Bastiansz sang the above in Sinhala. This paper takes into account the history of *chorus baila* which is entwined with two other genres *kaffrinha*[4] and *vāda baila*.

Sri Lanka's strategic position in the Indian Ocean enabled trading during both the northeast and southwest monsoons enhancing its economic value and attraction to traders. In the early modern era, a small country on the Atlantic was driven to set sail in the high seas, taking high risks in expectation of high

1 Torana Records, Colombo, 2004.

2 "I Wally Bastiansz, the All-Ceylon *Baila* champion, am a Wesleyan Christian" (author's translation).

3 The variant spellings of the surname Bastiansz, pronounced with a final "s" in Dutch and Bastian in lyrics could be due to rhyme.

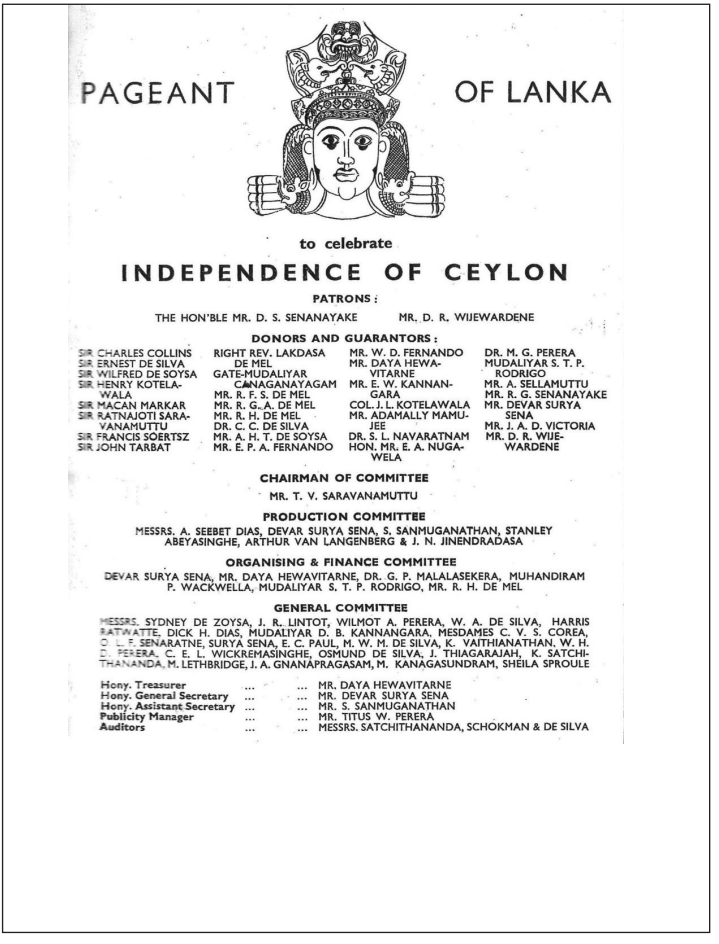
4 Spelt variously as *kaffrein* (Hugh Nevill manuscript) and *káfriinha*, *kaffringha* (see White-Radhakrishnan 2023), *kaffringna* (Kalinga Dona 2019, 217).

returns. By reaching the source of spices and carving out a maritime trade route, the Portuguese undercut the middlemen and previously established markets in Venice and Antwerp (de Silva Jayasuriya 2008). Whilst trade was the main driving force, proselytising and political entanglements with the local royalty led to colonisation from 1597 onwards. Sri Lankan culture moulded by its Buddhist-Hindu base was disrupted by the encounter, which began four hundred and fifty years of European contact. Although the Portuguese period is considered to be from 1506 to 1658, actual domination lasted no more than sixty-one years. Nevertheless, the Portuguese paved the way for other Europeans to engage in Indian Ocean maritime trade. In Sri Lanka, the Portuguese were ousted by the Dutch in 1658, after a prolonged struggle over twenty years. The Dutch, in turn, were superseded by the British in 1796, who unlike the two previous colonisers were able to take over the central Kandyan kingdom and unify the administration. By the time of independence in 1948, almost half a millennium of European contact had made indelible imprints in the island's socioculture. The Portuguese legacy is strongly embedded in the island's intangible cultural heritage. A multiethnic pluricultural country with a range of ethnolinguistic groups is further stratified by socioeconomic class, bound to a western education through the English medium. Caste is less problematic as the majority are Buddhists, not bound by ideas of purity and pollution as in the Hindu caste system but by a person's actions or deeds. A person should not be marked by his birth according to Buddhist philosophy. Remnants of caste that existed as trades and endogamous groups were ruptured by colonial presence; Sri Lankans abandoned their caste obligations to perform military and other tasks for the colonial regime.

The birth of *baila* stems back to an important moment in Sri Lanka's history – regaining independence after four and a half centuries of colonial rule. The Portuguese have left strong impressions on the cultural landscape of Sri Lanka of which music is the most vibrant. *Baila* evolved when Sri Lanka was struggling to define a national cultural identity. Newly independent nations search for an identity, untarnished by the colonial presence and imagining the precolonial past. But the precolonial cannot be reinvented by the independent nation. During moments of economic and socio-political chaos, music can be a weapon to articulate the sentiments of the masses. Multiethnic nations struggle with the tension between diversity and homogeneity that nationalism imposes. "Nationalism is a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond" (Gellner 1997, 3). As Kumar (2010, 393) points out, "[n]ationalism has a dialectical quality about it: it is both inclusionary and exclusionary at the same time. The very process of including people who share the same objective and subjective characteristics in the political community of nation inevitably excludes those who do not share these. […] [N]ationalism as a sentiment could be used by powerful groups to marginalise

and subjugate the weaker ones." Anne Sheeran says that "[a]lthough the *baila* is nowadays sung in the language of Sri Lanka's dominant ethnic group, the Sinhalese, it is originally an African-Portuguese musical genre" (Sheeran 1997, 2). Despite the African and Portuguese inspirations in the melodic-rhythmic structure of *baila*, I argue that *baila* is a new musical identity which emerged in the "third space". As cultural theorist Homi Bhabha asserts, hybridity is the "third space" where other positions emerge, setting up new structures of authority (Rutherford 1990, 209).

The Trajectory



PAGEANT OF LANKA

to celebrate

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Figure 2: Pageant of Lanka to Celebrate Independence of Ceylon (1948).

The term *baila* is used without qualification in the literature. In a souvenir published to recognise the culture of the Island in 1948 called "Pageant of Lanka to Celebrate Independence of Ceylon" (Figure 2), musician Devar Surya Sena describes *vāde baila/hitivana baila/tharanga baila*, a form of impromptu sung poetry:

> *The lilting rhythm and tunes of the "Kaffrinha", danced by Portuguese mercenaries, some of whom were Kaffirs* [sic], *fell on willing ears in the maritime provinces. Sinhalese words were immediately put to them and the Kaffrinha tunes are still sung and danced with gusto. Baila is another foreign importation which remains immensely popular at parties where Sinhalese words are composed extempore and sung to the Baila tune. That the Sinhalese have the gift of extempore composition is evident from the Viridu – a metrical pattern song sung to a rhythm on the Rabana.* (Surya Sena 1948, 65)

Ananda Jayasekera (n.d., 23), nephew of Bastiansz writes of a *vāde baila* competition where the theme was the Buddha. Bastiansz was the only non-Buddhist competitor. Nevertheless, his knowledge of Buddhism, learnt through priests, helped in his poetic compositions as he sang:

Sandun rukak sē suvanda pathurai bō sē (author's transliteration)
Budun kātade vandē budu vunāta passē?

Emitting a lot of sweet smells like a sandalwood tree (author's translation)
Who did the Buddha worship after he reached Buddhahood?

His opponents were baffled and looked at each other for help but none could retort. Therefore, Bastiansz himself replied:

Edandak udin dinak danakate vadine Budun (author's transliteration)
Thame, diyehi diswū chāyavete vendā dohoth mudun

One day when going out for alms, the Buddha walked on a plank to cross a pool of water Placing his hands on his forehead, the Buddha worshipped his own reflection

(author's translation)

Bastiansz won the competition, and he sang:

Āgamath Christian (Jayasekera, n.d.)
Palliye San Sebastiyan
Mame Wally Bastians
Ceylon Baila champion

Religion is Christian
Church is San Sebastian
I am Wally Bastiansz
Ceylon Baila Champion

Clearly, several genres of music inspired Wally Bastiansz in his compositions. The cross rhythms that he had been accustomed to through *kaffrinha* and the eighteen melodies, Portuguese legacies, which *vāda baila* singers draw upon, resurface in *chorus baila.* Bastiansz was known by various epithets such as "the person who brought *kaffrinha* to the fore" and "*baila* chakravarthy" [Baila Emperor], for example.

Wally Bastiansz was the leading *vāda baila* singer. His opponent Sumathipala Perera emphasised that the "real baila" was *vāda baila*, a form of impromptu sung poetry (de Silva Jayasuriya interview, 2008). More recently, Professor Nishara Fernando remembered *vāda baila* performed during his childhood in Dehiwela at *Poson* or *Esala* [June or July] full moon days in New Market, Station Road, opposite Perlin Hotel. The performance was on a stage constructed to act Buddhist dramas. After the *jāthaka kathā*[5] dramas followed a musical session with *vāda baila*. Four or five singers sat on the stage and four or five musicians sat behind the competitors and played violins and bongo drums. The judge set the topic on which the singers had to compose lyrics and sing according to the given melody. Eighteen Portuguese melodies are drawn from, and the Sinhalese have widened the spectrum of melodies. Themes are marriage, dowry, drunkenness and gambling, for example. The poetry is comical and entertaining (de Silva Jayasuriya interview, 9 March 2023).

I also interviewed Percy Rajapakshe (19 May 2023, Colombo), *vada baila* champion and Founder Chairman of the *Samasthalanka Shilpinge Sangamaya* (All-Ceylon Artists Association), founded in 2001, with the help of a former Minister of Culture, T. B. Ekanayake. The number of artists is now under one hundred. Sumathipala Perera was the Secretary and Esiri Fernando its Treasurer, both leading artists. During election campaigns, *vāde baila* singers are in much demand by politicians. Instruments played are violin, banjo, mandolin, triangle, congo drums, bongo drums, and tambourine. *Vāda baila* gave way to *chorus baila*. Both genres had space for creativity of the artist but *vāda baila* is demanding poetically as the singer must compose lyrics spontaneously and outwit the opponent. *Vāda Baila* is akin to Challenge Singing which in Brazil is called *Canto ao Desafio* [challenge songs] or *Repente* [improvised or impromptu songs] and in Portugal is called *desgarradas* [improvised or impromptu songs] or *Cantigas ao Desafio* [challenge songs].

5 Stories from the Buddha's previous births.

In his book *Baila Kapirinna Vimarshanayak* [*An Enquiry into Baila Kapirinna*], Sunil Ariyaratne (1999, 80–81) lists the melodies which can be transliterated as *kapirinna*, *filon da bol*, *rosa*, *minho mai*, *java*, *alankara*, *banda*, *bathe bathe*, *manila*, *jamare*, *coranjaneetha*, *thirani*, *cha cha*, *kaviyan*, *ramtha neluma*, *josalin*, and *kafar*, named after the first word/s of the Portuguese or Sinhalese tunes and songs. According to Lal Jayasekera (de Silva Jayasuriya interview, 9 September 2018), Bastiansz was uncomfortable with the aggression that ensues in *vāda baila* competitions. Therefore, he composed *chorus baila* which involves a solo singer narrating through sung poetry. Bastiansz was familiar with the poetic form of chorus and verse through Wesleyan church hymns. The form of *chorus baila* is chorus-verse-chorus-verse-chorus-verse. The chorus is the most memorable part of the song, and the singer uses the lyrics, composed with simple and direct poetry, and repetition to ensure that the listeners can memorise and join in.

Kaffrinha songs in a manuscript recorded in 1888 by Hugh Nevill who worked for the British Civil Service in Ceylon, housed in the British Library (London), illustrate that *kaffrinha* did not include a chorus. Six *kaffrinhas* – "*Singellenona*" ["Sinhalese Lady"], "*Korra Jannethaie*" ["Blush Joanita"], "*Bastiahna*" ["Bastiana"], "*Chekoetie*" ["Whip"], "*Ama die none Frencena*" ["Love of Lady Francina"] and an untitled song are grouped under *Cantiga De Purtiegese – Kaffrein – Neger Song Portigiese* [Songs of the Portuguese – *Kaffrinha* – Portuguese Negro Songs] (de Silva Jayasuriya 1995, 1996, 1997, 2001a, 2001b).

In order to contextualise *chorus baila*, I turned to the life of its composer, Gajanayake Mudiyanselāge Ollington Martalanus/Mervin Bastiansz (10 June 1914–16 January 1985), who became known as Wally Bastiansz. Bastiansz was a Burgher, a Sri Lankan of Portuguese/Dutch/Sinhalese descent. His father, Hinton Wilmot Bastiansz, was a Burgher and his mother Nalo Fernando was Sinhalese; the father's ethnicity determines the child's ethnic identity for official purposes. Bastiansz was born in Galle, a cosmopolitan port city, in the southern coast of Sri Lanka. I visited his home in the suburb of Piyadigama and his nephew Ananda Jayasekera, a son of his favourite sister – Felicia Florence, who inspired one of his best known *bailas* called *Nōna Mage Nurse Nōna* [*Lady, my Lady Nurse*] – showed me the site where Bastiansz's house stood, behind a Buddhist temple. I recalled another of Bastiansz's *bailas* called *Yaman Bando Vesak Balanna* [*Let's go Banda to See the Vesak Decorations*]. Though a Christian, Wally learnt Sinhala from Buddhist monks such as Venerable Sumangala, head priest of the temple adjoining his home – *Piyadigama Purāna Vihāraya* – and also from the *Dadella Vālukārāmaya* priests (Jayasekera [n. d.]). Although ethnolinguistic and ethnoreligious divides are apparent within the diversity of Sri Lanka, the porosity of culture amongst the ethnic groups is illustrated through the performing arts.

From his childhood, Bastiansz had an affinity for music and played the mouth organ, button accordion and flute as a self-taught musician. Later on, he also played the piano, banjo, ukulele, Spanish guitar, violin and accordion. Bastiansz became known as the "God Father of *Baila*", "*Baila Vishāradha*" ["Erudite in *Baila*"], and *Baila Chakravarthy* ["*Baila* Emperor"]; "The Exotic Ceylonese Performer" when he featured in Colombo's night clubs (Sheeran 2002, 154), and "Ceylon's Number One Baila Star" (anonymous 1962). Bastiansz joined the Police Department in 1932 and served for 27 years as Police Constable 2407. He was involved in the Road Traffic Demonstration programme which travelled throughout the island, educating children about road safety, when he became known as "*Polisiye Māmā*" ["Uncle in the Police"]. The simplicity of the narratives and the realities that he addressed through ballads, and the catchy rhythms are in these popularised *bailas*.

On hearing of Bastiansz's problems, Sir John Kotelawela, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (1953–1956), requested the police department to relieve Bastiansz from night duty and to retain him in Colombo. Bastiansz thereby was able to perform in Colombo's night clubs. Lal Jayasekera informed me that Bastiansz had sung his composition *Dadikala Mage Mavuni* [*Mother Who Brought Me Up*], and tears had rolled down the cheeks of Sir John who remembered his own mother. This is just one example of the sentiments that Bastiansz evoked through his poetry. Moreover, *baila* dissolved class barriers and the Sri Lankan elite who were accustomed to western classical music also identified with *baila*, a space where they could express a new identity and embrace modernity. Sir John danced the *baila* in public such as at the annual police picnic when his sarong, singlet and *baila* merged as signifiers of the local, counterpoints to the supposedly unpatriotic embrace of colonisers' tastes among the upper classes (Sheeran 2002, 157). However, *baila* is Sri Lankan, if the lyrics and poetry are taken into account. Bastiansz's patriotism and unrecognised role as educator and social reformer is evident in his poetry. An example is the song *Nidahas Lankāve* [*In Freed Lanka*] where he brings to the fore values suppressed by colonialism.

Nidahas Lankāve

Nidahas Lankāve… Api du puthu obagē…
Veera vikum pa dasa maha yōdayo kō ape lak mavagē?

Asanu lamayinē… mage dū puthunē
Ma dena bas medinē…
Numbala mal men suvanda hamannē
Sirilaka mal uyanē…

Saradam marekam nokaran sorakam
Hasirenu kusum vagē...
Numbela mal men suvanda hamannē
Sirilake mal uyanē…

Honda lamayin vāge… sitiyoth ratata agē…
Ametheke nokeran… me dena ovadan
Polisiye mamagē….

Ganja thailan… abing de mathpan
Lamayine ivatha lanū…
Horakam merakam vancha athahera
Sāmen rata rakimū…

Asanu lamayinē… mage du puthunē…

Sithe thaban dotha naga vandinuva mavpiyatē
Bulath aran haniketa yan thama guruverayanetē

Nidahas Lankāve… api du puthu obage
Veera vikum pa dasa maha yōdayo ko ape lak mavge

(author's transliteration)

In Freed Lanka

In freed Lanka… We are your daughters and sons…
Where are the ten giants who performed heroic acts for Mother Lanka?

Listen children… my daughters and sons
To the advice that I give
You all are like sweet smelling flowers
In the flower garden of Sri Lanka

Do not be fierce or treacherous and do not steal
Be like flowers
Your fragrance floats like flowers,
In the flower garden of Sri Lanka

If you are good children, the standing of the country will be enhanced
Do not forget… this advice I give
Your uncle from the police

Opium, drugs and alcohol
Children throw away
Give up stealing fierceness dishonesty
Let us peacefully protect our country

Listen children… my daughters and sons…

Keep your hands on your forehead and worship your parents
Take betel leaves and quickly go to your teachers

If you behave well, children, you will be an asset to the country
Don't forget the advice of your uncle in the police
Don't forget the advice of your uncle in the police

(author's translation)

Figure 3: Marshall Wambeck with Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya holding his tambourine.[6]

First point of contact for my research on *baila* was Gerald Wickremasooriya, the founder of Sooriya Records. At his suggestion, I contacted Marshall Wambeck (Figure 3) who was a member of the Bastiansz troupe. Wambeck lived in Mutwal, where Bastiansz was also stationed in 1962.

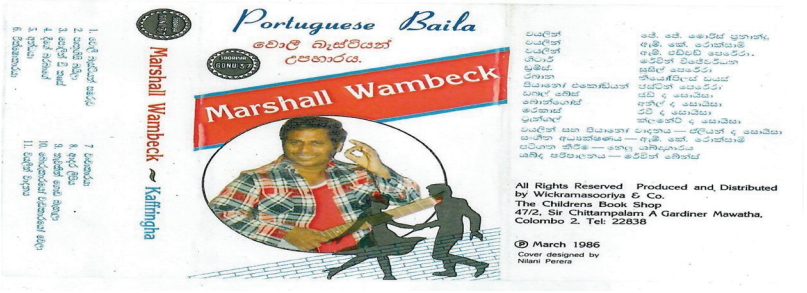
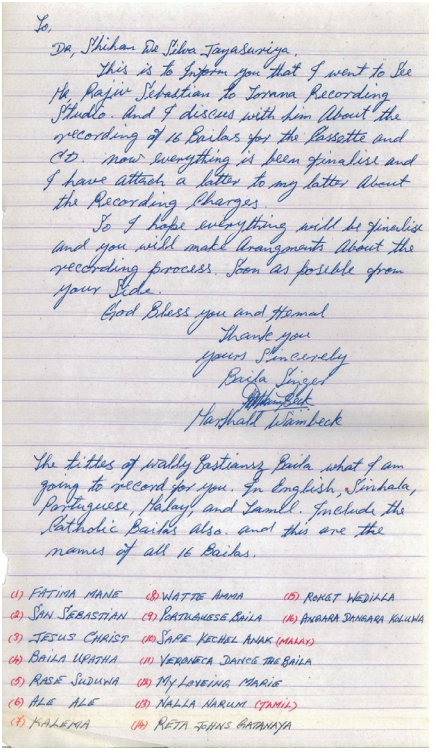


Figure 4: Cassette inlay of Marshall Wambeck's recordings of Portuguese *bailas*.

Surprisingly, at our first meeting, Wambeck presented me with the last copy of his Portuguese *baila* cassette (Figure 4). Wambeck substituted for Bastiansz on stage.

6 Photograph by Dr Hemal Jayasuriya.



To,
Dr. Ithihas De Silva Jayasuriya.
This is to inform you that I went to the Mr. Rajiv Sebastian to Tonma Recording Studio. And I discuss with him about the recording of 16 Bailas for the Cassette and CD. now everything is been finalise and I have attach a letter to my letter about the Recording Charges.
So I hope everything will be finalise and you will make Arrangements about the recording process. Soon as possible from your Side.
God Bless you and Hemal
Thank you
yours Sincerely
Baila Singer
Marshall Wambeck

The titles of Wally Bastiansz Baila what I am going to record for you. In English, Sinhala, Portuguese, Malay, and Tamil. Include the Catholic Bailas also. and this are the names of all 16 Bailas.

(1) FATIMA MANE (8) WATTE AMMA (15) RONET WEDILLA
(2) SAN SEBASTIAN (9) PATUGHESE BAILA (16) ANGARA DANARA KALUWA
(3) JESUS CHRIST (10) SAPE KECHEL ANAK (MALAY)
(4) BAILA UPATHA (11) VERONICA DANCE THE BAILA
(5) RASE SUDUWA (12) My LOVEING MARIE
(6) ALE ALE (13) NALLA NARUM (TAMIL)
(7) MALENIA (14) KETA THINS GATHANAYA

Figure 5: Marshall Wambeck's handwritten list of Wally Bastiansz *bailas*.

Wambeck compiled a list of *bailas* that Bastiansz sang in Sinhala, Tamil, Malay, Portuguese and English (Figure 5). Whilst the masses were receptive to a new genre given the political climate surrounding independence, the inclusivity of Bastiansz in reaching out to everyone through his multilingual lyrics is noteworthy. Unfortunately, Wambeck passed away before we could complete the project. The dialectics of language can be inclusive or exclusive. Bastiansz also sang bilingual (Sinhala/English) *bailas* such as *Kussi Amma Sēra* [*Kitchen Maid Sera*]. Listeners must understand the narration to appreciate *chorus baila*, which I argue is a ballad, a narrative poem set to music. Its value is primarily in the poetry. Ronald Walcott, an American musicologist, in his doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Sri Jayewardenapura (Sri Lanka) in 1978, highlights the poetic value of *baila* which surpasses all else in importance (Donaldson 2006). The etymology of *baila* is *ballare*, the Latin/Italian word which means "to dance". A ballad is a short poem suitable for singing and was originally intended to accompany a dance. In Portuguese, the word *bailar* means "to dance" in the context of a ball in a dance hall; the standard European Portuguese word *dançar* means "to dance". The intertwining of music,

song, and dance is reflected in its contemporary usage when *baila* is used to refer to the three art forms. *Baila* is a noun qualified by adjectives: *Paraguayan baila*, *kapirinna baila*, and *vāda baila*, for example. *Kapirinna baila* is described by Anne Sheeran (1997, 11) as "the rich continuum of Afro-Portuguese expressive traditions that eventually formed the basis of twentieth century *baila* music as a Sinhala popular cultural form".

Traditionalists may be sceptical, but they cannot disagree that *baila* stirs Sri Lankans and as Aelian Soysa sings: "*Lankāvata Baila genā Wally Bastiansz, Baila valin rata hollapu Baila champion*" ["Wally Bastiansz, who gave *Baila* to Sri Lanka, was the *Baila* champion who moved the country with *Baila*"]. *Baila* reflects Bastiansz's creativity as a poet and as a musician, composing both the lyrics and music for his songs and accompanying himself on the guitar. His favourite instrument was the *viyōle*, meaning "guitar" in Portuguese,[7] a language that Bastiansz spoke. His Sinhala *baila* composition *Ayirin Josepin Rosalin Anjelin* exemplifies this. Bastiansz sings of Irene, Josephine, Rosaline, Angeline, and Catherine, and his grandson Lahiru (Angeline's son),[8] remarks that the names are of Bastiansz's daughters. However, Bastiansz's second wife was also named Josephine (née Stratts); his first wife was called Florie de Silva (Ananda Jayasekera interview by de Silva Jayasuriya, September 2017). Bastiansz had thirteen children (six from Florie and seven from Josephine). The lyrics reveal Bastiansz's immense love for his *viyolē* with which he hopes to be re-united in heaven.

Ayirin Josepin Rosalin Anjelin
[Irene Josephine Rosaline Angeline]

Chorus
Ayirin Josepin Rosalin Anjelin
Atharin patharin natayida Katharin
Piyano banjo tamarin mandolin
Vayalin vayalin lōke nonasena vayalin

Irene Josephine Rosaline Angeline
Katherine also dances amidst
Piano, banjo, tambourine, mandoline
Violin, violin, violin that is indestructible in the world

7 Ruwin Rangeeth Dias (2015) writes of Malaysian Joget, a genre of Portuguese-inspired music in Melaka (Malacca) and refers to a *violão* as a guitar-like instrument which strummed fundamental chords.

8 Lahiru commented on the girls' names in the song via YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWYL6SO2JAo.

Stanza 1
Viyole mā sanasane viyōle
Viyōle oba mage athē mevelē
Obē mihiri nādeta nidallē
Nalawē ladaruvō ran thotillē
Viyole obave ne man hare giyē
Sangīta sastarē kumāriyē
Vinōde obe ne suraliyangē
Viyōlē viyōle māgē, viyōle viyōle māgē

Guitar, the guitar that comforts me
Guitar you are in my hand now
For your sweet sound in tranquillity
Babies are rocking in their golden cradles
Guitar, I did not abandon you
Princess of the art of music
You are the joy of the angels
Guitar, my guitar, guitar, my guitar

Chorus

Stanza 2
Devna nādeta dev suraliyan
Natuvāne guththile panditha vatekaran
Nirindūn bisōvarunde pandidanan
Āvānē obe tharangeta dura sitan
Mihirī geetha nāda liyangē
Asilā sith randuna kumaradanangē
Nādē mahalu vunath anargē
Viyōlē viyōle māgē viyōlē viyōle māgē

For your divine music the angels
Danced surrounding sage Guttila
Kings, queens, and sages
Came to your competition from afar
Writing sweet sounding songs
Etched in the memories of princes
Even though old, the music is great
Guitar, my guitar, guitar, my guitar

Chorus

Stanza 3
Bāledi obata bande ādarē
Ēkālē sita sithen māge nomaharē
Hitē athivena duk karadarē
Obagē eka talayakata mage hare
Māgē avasāne mohothe velāvē
Nādē kumatade batanalāvē?
Hamuvemu api denna suvargē
Viyōlē viyōle māgē, viyōlē viyōle māgē

The love I took to you in my youth
Has not left my mind since
Sorrowful problems in my heart
Disappear when I hear one of your melodies
During my last moments
What is the point of the flute's sound?
Let's meet up in heaven
Guitar, my guitar, guitar, my guitar
(all transliterations and translations by the author)

Through playing chords on the guitar, Bastiansz included harmony in *baila*, a dimension introduced by the Portuguese. The typical chord progression in *baila is* I IV V and most, not all, *baila* are built on major scales. For example, a *baila* built on C major involves C major, F major and G major chords. The asymmetric rhythm and syncopations drive *baila*. *Baila* is not entirely a carryover of colonial music as I have illustrated. As Sri Lanka discovered and explored her new post-independent identity, *baila* music became more indigenised and identified with Sinhala popular music.

Wally Bastianz's Musical Journeys

His musical compositions, I argue, were shaped by his journeys through several genres of music. *Kaffrinha* was in vogue during the 1950s, and Alex Van Arkadie (personal communication, 2001) recalls Colombo's *kaffrinha* dancers, travelling entertainers, who performed annually with blackened faces in affluent Dutch Burgher houses. Van Arkadie's father was a close acquaintance of Bastiansz (de Silva Jayasuriya 2013, 2020, 2023). The etymon of *kaffrinha* is *Kaffir* meaning "African" from the Arabic word *qafr* which means non-believer and *nha* (or ɲa) which is the Portuguese diminutive implying that the music consisted of a bit of African. Portuguese Burghers in the Eastern Province towns of Batticaloa and Trincomalee call their traditional performance *kaffrinha* and sing in Sri Lanka Portuguese, a creolised form of Portuguese, which

was the lingua franca of Sri Lanka for most of the colonial era. The language was called "Ceylon Portuguese" by its speakers at the end of the nineteenth century, "*Indo-Portuguese de Ceilão*" by the Goan Vicar General of Ceylon, Sebastião Rodolfo Dalgado (1900), and "*Indo-Portugiesisch von Ceylon*" by the "father of Creole languages" Hugo Schuchardt (de Silva Jayasuriya 1999). Mother-tongue speakers of Creole, simply call their language "Portuguese" though they are aware that it differs from the European dialect.

The pioneer researcher of Portuguese music in Sri Lanka – C. M. Fernando, an elite Sinhalese who graduated in Law from the University of Cambridge – presented his seminal paper on "The Music of Ceylon" to the Royal Asiatic Society (Colombo) in 1894, and accompanied Portuguese Burgher musicians on the piano. The "Ceylon Portuguese" orchestra consisted of a *banderinha* [mandolin], *viaule* [tenor violin], and *rabāna* [tambourine] (Fernando 1894). Whilst scores were published by Fernando (1894 and 1904),[9] Nevill's manuscript (1888) included songs with similar titles: *Singallenona* [*Sinhalese Lady*], *Bastiana* [*Bastiana*], *Chikothi* [*Whip*], and *Coran Janita* [*Blush Joanita*]. The African connection is also evident in the titles of songs: *Velinda*[10] *Mazambicu* (Fernando 1894, 184), *Viltao*[11] *de Mazambicu* (Fernando 1904, 16), *Caffri* (African), and *Cafferina* (*Kaffrinha*). Culture contact and cultural exchange is brought out through *kaffrinha* (see de Silva Jayasuriya 2020 and White-Radhakrishnan 2023). Describing music of the Portuguese, Fernando contrasts the "peculiar jerky movements" of the fast *kaffrinha* in 6/8 time (six quavers to a bar) with the "slow and stately" *chikoti* in 3/8 time (three quavers to a bar) (Fernando 1894, 186). Scores of three twentieth century orchestral arrangements of *kaffrinha* for the piano such as "Ceylonese Dances" (Norbert Rodrigo), "Ceylonese Lancers on Kaffrinha Airs" (Vincent Rodrigo) (Ariyaratne 1999) and "Caffarina Quadrilles" (Professor Lord) consist of five movements: *siinku padáás* [five dance figures] (Radhakrishnan 2021, 3). *Kaffrinha* is sparked off by cross rhythms, that is, the interplay between 6/8 (six quavers to a bar) in the treble and 3/4 (three crotchets to a bar) in the bass, and syncopation, shifting accents to where they are not supposed to be in western music and accenting the parts in-between beats. Playing "off the beat" adds excitement to the performance. The scores of the first collector of *kaffrinha* Herr Somers, the Band Master of the Ceylon Rifle Regiments, have not been traced (Ariyaratne 2001, 32). Many of these "Kaffir airs" had been published by the Band Master of the Ceylon Rifle Regiments under the title *After Supper Kaffir Quadrila* (Brohier 1973, 27).

9 Fernando provides different titles for the same song in his publications of 1894 and 1904.

10 Fernando (1894) provides a title that is different in a later publication (1904). Both refer to Mozambique.

11 *Viltao* could be a misreading or typing error of *Villão*/*Vilão* meaning "villain".

Figure 6: Portuguese Burgher Musicians Edward Outschoorn, Niroshan Ragel, Freddy Sellar, Stephen "Iva" Andrado, and Gladwin Speck playing *Kaffrinha* at the Batticaloa Burgher Union.[12]

During my visit to Batticaloa in 2009, I experienced the hospitality and warmth of the Portuguese Burgher community in their community centre, the Catholic Burgher Union. Edward Outschoorn played the *rabāna* (a hand-held circular drum played with the fingers and palm of the hands), *ravukinnas* (violins) were played by Freddy Sellar and Stephen "Iva" Andrado, Gladwin Speck played the guitar, and Niroshan Ragel played the tambourine. Four couples – Ludmila Outschoorn, Selorin, Sriyana, Omega, Edvin Outschoorn, Stephen, Repitus, and Lenor – danced the five figures of the *kaffrinha*. The girls wore pale blue knee length dresses of organsa lined with silk, or made of pure silk, adorned with sequins and trimmed with lace. The boys wore black suits, white shirts and ties. For a description of *kaffrinha* performed at a Portuguese Burgher wedding see Mahesh Radhakrishnan (2021, 9–12).

Although *baila* is associated with the Portuguese colonisers and the performers were originally Christians in urban coastal areas of the southwestern parts of Sri Lanka, its popularity spread throughout the island through cinema and radio. The diaspora carries their musical identity overseas but *baila* has not become globalised. Globalisation remains in the hands of the *baila* singers who might introduce international languages in the lyrics such as Sunil Perera's *baila* with an Italian chorus:

12 Photograph by Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya, 2009.

Buongiono Senhore,	Good morning, gentleman
Buona sera Senhora,	Good evening, lady
Como stai Senhorita?	How are you, young lady?
Va bene?	Alright?
(author's transliteration)	(author's translation)

Baila was moved into the age of rock 'n' roll by including electric guitars, drum kits, and synthesisers by Gerald Wickremasooriya of Sooriya Records (Fernandez 2002, 10). The dynamism of *baila* through M. S. Fernando, C. T. Fernando, groups such as La Ceylanicas, Los Caballeros, Nihal Nelson, Bhatiya and Santosh inspired by several genres of world music has broadened its range. Although *baila* is popular with both men and women, boys and girls, performers are mostly male which reflects the established patriarchy. Vasana de Mel (2004) argues that "negotiating freedom and commanding respect within a rigidly debilitating framework burdens many Sri Lankan women in *chorus* baila and Sinhala *pop* music" (de Mel 2004, 121). Recently, however, the number of female *baila* singers has increased. During an event organised by Feizal Samath, Business Editor of the Sunday Times, on 15 July 2014 aboard a floating restaurant cruising along Colombo's Beira Lake, I stressed the importance of *baila*, which needed support through economic and marketing strategies.[13] Ronnie Leitch confirmed the prejudices towards *baila* singers: parents were reluctant to give their daughters in marriage to *baila* singers. "A *baila* festival with an academic flavour" called for by Damith Kurunduhewa, Corporate Risk and BCP Specialist/Pragmatic Trainer (Sirimanna 2014) has not come to fruition yet. However, a new *baila* called *Prūtugīsi Apita Kiyala Dunna Thāle* [*The Melody That the Portuguese Taught Us*], which Ronnie sang with Corinne Almeida, a leading singer, was released. Mariyaselle Goonetilleke, who sang her signature *baila* – *Kandy Lamissi* [*Girl from Kandy*] – with Ronnie on our cruise, identified *baila* with a 6/8 beat.

13 I am grateful to musicians Marshall Wambeck, Anton Jones, Walter Fernando, Stanley Oumar, Mariyaselle Goonetilleke, Harsha Makalanda, Sumathipala Perera, Percy Rajapakshe, Ranjith Fernando, and Dulcie Outschoon. I thank Dr Hemal Jayasuriya, Johan de Silva, Ajith Nanayakkara, João Paulo Cota, Margarida Oldland, Dr Samadi Galpayage, Dr Marilyn Herman, Shanta Gunasekera, Dr Mahendra Gonsalkorale, Dhammi and David Holbourne, and Srimani Ranasinghe for participating with me in my *baila* performances.

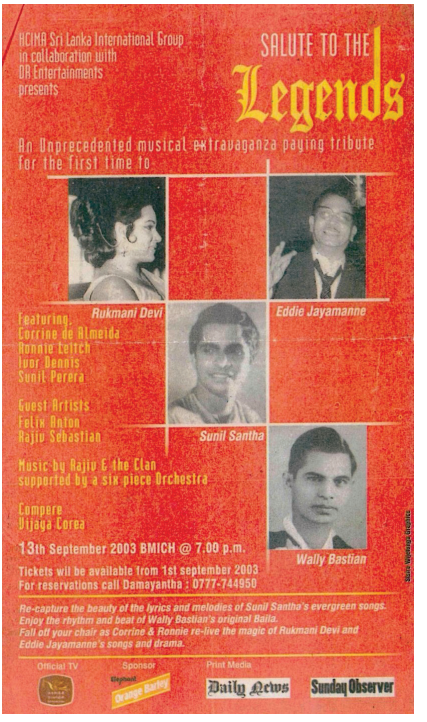


Figure 7: Advertisement for the concert "Salute to the Legends" (Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, 13 September 2003).

As a member of the police band, Bastiansz was inspired by western music, and his composition *Hai hui Babi Achchige baisikel eka* [*The Bicycle Belonging to an Old Lady Called Babi*] can be mapped on to Charles Sweeley's composition titled "Repasz Band" (1901) (Abeywickrama 2006). On my visit to the police station at Park Road, Colombo 5, I was shown Bastiansz's photograph which hung in a room where the police band was rehearsing. He was honoured posthumously at the concert "Salute to the Legends" in Colombo on 13 September 2003, together with three other megastars in the field of entertainment (Figure 7).

Bastiansz's ethnicity shaped *baila* as he ruptured cultural borders and negotiated a new identity. Finding a new musical identity which is not simply a colonial continuum is a celebration of freedom. Moreover, *baila* draws together diverse communities, dissolving hierarchies and has a role to play in the reconciliation process, in re-building social cleavages. I will conclude with a poem composed by Dr Hemal Jayasuriya:

Sounding* Baila*, Plucking Strings
by Hemal Jayasuriya

Fireflies light the night
Hanging on a forest
Of tropical green leaves nestling
In the dark besides the beach
Of the Galle[14] bay. Sounds
Emanating from plucked strings:
Guitar, Violin and Tambourine
Roped in, togethered, by the drumbeat
On the taut skin of a *Rabāna*
Lets loose *bailas*
Into the salty winds soothing the Indian Ocean
As the feet of the Dancers
Rotating at the edge of the Water
Kicking, sending plumes of sand skywards.

A silvery full moon alights
On the face of the Lagoon
And silently ruptures into a million pieces
As the gentle oceanic ripples take apart
The cosmic intruder making it into a non-entity.
Bastiansz sings: *Nōna mage Nurse Nōna*.
My arm becomes a sail
My body becomes a boat
To carry you, you my everlasting Love
That is untouched by Time and Space
On an ocean wave to the resplendent isle of Lanka
For us to climb the Holy Mountain
To see butterflies frolicking in the cool air
In the surrounds of Adam's Peak

Acknowledgements

I thank Gerald Wickremasooriya and his son, Udena, for their advice and for introducing me to the *baila* singer Marshall Wambeck. I also thank Professor Sunil Ariyaratne who gifted me his book on *baila kaffrinha* and Dr Maya Abeyiwckrema for sharing personal experiences on the subject. I thank Dr

14 Galle is a heritage city which highlights Sri Lanka's colonial past.

Lalanath de Silva for his generosity in sending me copies of his *baila* compositions. I am obliged to the feedback from participants of my *baila* and *kaffrinha* seminars and lectures at the Universities of Aberdeen, Aveiro, Colombo, Hawaii, Lisbon, Llubljana, London, and Roehampton, and at the Sooriya Village (Colombo). I thank Dr Roland Silva for encouraging me to research *baila* due to its significance for Sri Lankan identity and heritage. Moreover, I am grateful to the British Library Sound Archives for supporting my research on *baila*. Lastly, I am grateful for the critical remarks by the anonymous reviewers and sincerely thank Dr Christian Poske for his editorial suggestions.

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POVZETEK

Razprava o nastanku *chorus baila*

Portugalska zapuščina na Šrilanki izhaja iz srečanja obeh kultur v šestnajstem in sedemnajstem stoletju. Od 150 let (1506–1658), ki veljajo za portugalsko dobo, je portugalska oblast trajala le enainšestdeset let. Kljub temu so Portugalci na Šrilanki pustili močno zapuščino. Najbolj živa je popularna glasba, kot je *chorus baila* (splošno znan kot *baila*). O njej bomo razpravljali skozi teoretsko opazovanje raznolikosti tega postkolonialnega žanra, ki presega etnične, verske, jezikovne, razredne, kastne, spolne in starostne delitve. Pri orisu evolucijske poti *baile* so upoštevani zgodovinski in etnografski pristopi. Ob upoštevanju življenjske poti začetnika *baile* – Wallyja Bastiansza – in žanrov, ki so ga navdihnili, razpravljam o njenem nastanku. Pomembni viri informacij so intervjuji z Bastianszovimi sorodniki in glasbeniki, arhivski viri in postkolonialne pripovedi. Kot trdi postkolonialni teoretik Homi Bhabha, je hibridnost »tretji prostor«, kjer se pojavljajo nove pozicije, ki vzpostavljajo nove strukture oblasti (Rutherford 1990, 209). *Baila* daje Šrilančanom možnost, da najdejo novo postkolonialno identiteto. Pri razumevanju *chorus baila* se ne omejujem le na melodično-ritmične strukture, ampak upoštevam tudi poezijo in besedila. S tem trdim, da ima *chorus baila* posebno vlogo pri obnavljanju šrilanške identitete na osnovi predkolonialnih vrednot. Poleg tega trdim, da *chorus baila* zaobjema a novo postkolonialno glasbeno identiteto Šrilančanov. Kot sta ugotovila Jim Sykes in Julia Byl (2023, 3), je »glavni cilj preučevanja glasbenih tradicij Indijskega oceana razumevanje, kako lahko glasba tvori in prečka meje skupnosti«.

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O AVTORICI

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Theoretical Aspects of Preservation and Reduction of Traditional Wedding Rituals of the Volga German Ethnic Minority in the Russian Federation

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ABSTRACT

For the first time in world ethnomusicology, the work examines the theoretical aspects of the cultural transformations of the wedding ceremony of the Volga Germans, a subethnic group that arose in Russia in the eighteenth century. Identification of the structure of the ritual and its musical content is based on archival research and the author's field expeditions of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

Keywords: Volga Germans, cultural transformations, wedding ritual

IZVLEČEK

Delo prvič v svetovni etnomuzikologiji preučuje teoretične vidike kulturnih preobrazb poročnega obreda povolških Nemcev, subetnične skupine, ki je nastala v Rusiji v osemnajstem stoletju. Identifikacija strukture obreda in njegove glasbene vsebine temelji na arhivskih raziskavah in avtoričinih terenskih ekspedicijah v poznem dvajsetem in na začetku enaindvajsetega stoletja.

Ključne besede: povolški Nemci, kulturne transformacije, poročni obred

Introduction

For the first time in world ethnomusicology, the work considers theoretical aspects of cultural transformations of the wedding ritual of the Volga Germans, a sub-ethnic group that emerged in Russia in the eighteenth century.[1] The Volga Germans belong to the migrant ethnic groups and are a sub-ethnic group that separated from the mother (main) ethnic group as a result of successive migrations that lasted almost a century (from the 1760s to the 1850s) and were subject to further mixing in the course of later resettlements in the areas of new settlement in Russia.[2]

The article also describes the structure of the wedding ritual of the Volga Germans as a musical and ethnographic complex for the first time. The ritual actions are structured in correlation with their musical content. The study identifies the main components of the ritual structure with a reflection of their functional purpose and a discussion of the multifaceted nature of foreign ethnic influences.

Despite the large number of ethnographic studies on the problems of wedding rituals, there is still no unified approach to the study of the typology of rituals as such. Although the task of studying the structural and functional typology of rituals was set as early as 1909 by Arnold Van Gennep in his work *Les Rites de Passage* (Gennep 1909), it has not yet been achieved.[3] Studies that have attempted to map wedding rituals have also raised problems of systematising rituals and identifying ritual actions that "sanction marriage". (Komorovský 1976; Zelenchuk 1982). This is due to the fact that, as the ritual developed or died out, many elements changed their functional significance. "The late history of the wedding ritual was a process of reduction of ritual elements" (Chistov 1974, 82), while "the remaining descriptions of weddings usually reflect the collector's transmission of information received from informants rather than

1 In 1762 and 1763, Russian Empress Catherine I issued manifestos inviting people from European countries to come to Russia and settle on the banks of the Volga River in order to populate the sparsely populated Russian lands with foreigners. Thousands of people from German states (Hesse, Baden, Saxony, Holstein, Mainz, and others), Switzerland, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Sweden, and other European countries moved to the Volga region.

2 From 1764 to 1768 in the Volga region, in the territory of the modern Saratov and Volgograd Oblasts, 106 resettlement colonies with a population of 25,600 people were established. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were 190 colonies in the Volga region with a population of approximately 407,500 people, mostly Germans, who from the end of the nineteenth century were officially called Volga Germans (*Wolgadeutsche*) (Figure 1). Despite the frequent modern use of the term "Russian Germans", there has been no ethnic consolidation of this diaspora. The Russian Germans still consist of various sub-ethnic groups in the Volga, Ukraine, the Crimea, Volhynia, the Caucasus, Siberia and Orenburg Oblast, some of which were subjected to total deportation in the twentieth century.

3 Gennep states that "[t]he rites of passage represent changes that have been too much discussed and interpreted. It must be understood that it is necessary to study the main ways in which the ritual has evolved and to separate the elements that have been used from those that are rare and not essential for a valid systematization" (Gennep 1909, 12).

the observer's objective portrayal" (ibid., 83). In understanding the problems of the interrelation of the musical content and the structure of the German wedding rituals, the author relied on the definitions in the works of Borislava B. Efimenkova on East Slavic wedding rituals (Efimenkova 1987).

Figure 1: Map of the Volga German Republic, 1925.[4]

On the Historiography of German Wedding Rituals

The study of German wedding rituals in ethnography and folklore studies has mainly been at the level of accumulating empirical descriptions. Well-known ethnographic works from the end of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century give the most general picture of German wedding rituals.[5] The scarcity of publications and the difficulty of finding wedding music material in archives are due to the ambiguity and uncertainty of the genre itself, which does not exist today as a unified and organic whole among German and Austrian musicologists. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars have doubted the specificity of this genre

4 Source: The German Archive, Engels Branch of the State Archive of the Saratov Oblast, Engels, Russia.

5 Düringsfeld and Reinsberg-Düringsfeld 1871; Sartori 1914; Spamer [n. d.]; Fehrle 1937.

and have hesitated in defining its terminology and identifying its specific characteristics. In addition, the number of collected and, above all, published musical examples is still minimal.

The most extensive ethnolinguistic study of the twentieth century was the work of Lothar Martin, based on 18,000 questionnaires received from respondents in 1932–1933 from all German states. The study took Martin half a century. He used questionnaire and mapping methods to answer questions about changes in the terminological names of both the individual stages of the rite and some (not all) wedding ranks (such as matchmaker, mediator, friend, or inviter) across the German states. Martin's work is characterized by a narrowly focused practical character for the production of ethnographic maps based on the ethnographic terminology of the wedding procession (Martin 1959–1964, 1983). A more general theoretical work was Dieter Dünninger's monograph, in which the actions during the so-called "delays" (German: *Wegsperre* and *Lösung*) of the wedding procession were examined diachronically using the methods of comparative historical analysis (Dünninger 1967). However, its purely ethnographic character and its dedication to only one ritual action in the ritual greatly limit the field of scientific influence and the overall significance of the conclusions. In the field of domestic science, German-speaking wedding rituals have been considered only by Tamara Filimonova, who enumerated and described a certain sum of ethnographic actions (Filimonova 1989). Filimonova's work very briefly introduced the works of German ethnographers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such as Düringsfeld and Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, Sartori, Spamer, and Fehrle.

The published song material is scattered and scarce, presenting us with isolated regional musical examples; the most complete publications of German family and domestic wedding, marriage and death songs to date are sixteen wedding texts, of which only three were published with melodies (Röhrich and Brednich 1967), as well as twenty-three wedding song texts and fifteen melodies in another publication (Brosch 1986, 5–90). Unpublished song material on the German wedding ritual has been collected in a number of archives, notably the German Folk Song Archive (Ger.: *Deutsches Volksliedarchiv*) in Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany)[6] and in the archives of the Institute of Music Ethnography at the University of Cologne (written wedding invitations, parodies, humorous descriptions of the bride and groom, riddles, and wedding poems). The absence of wedding songs as a significant song and ritual complex is replaced by the constant inclusion of dance fragments in the German ritual, which can be considered its constant feature. Modern researchers, in particular

6 Their number is insignificant compared to the collections of songs of other genres in this famous archive: wedding songs number no more than a few hundred, and when they were recorded, they were not correlated with their function in the rite or with the stage of the ritual, which makes their analysis and interpretation difficult.

Stefan Löscher and Karl Horak, described dancing at Austrian and German weddings as their most important component (Löscher 1965; Horak 1985, 1988); the most complete elaboration of this topic was made by Herbert Oetke (Oetke 1982).[7]

Siuts identified four genres related to the wedding theme: 1) songs about the May bride auction or *Mailehen*, 2) utterances of the wedding inviters or *Sprüche des Hochzeitsbitters*, 3) wedding songs or *Hochzeitslieder*, 4) marriage songs or *Ehestandslieder* (Siuts 1973, 361). Siuts does not categorize the wedding songs themselves. Michael Becker mentions "a special genre of spiritual chants — wedding songs, which were often sung and will be sung during weddings or donations" (Becker 1978, 275). In examining the musical material of the wedding, Becker focused on the dance fragments and their ritual functions. The most comprehensive overview of song genres related to the German wedding is given in the work of Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, who distinguishes more than fifteen genre variants of wedding ritual songs that fix important moments of the wedding ceremony, in particular the vertical and horizontal transitions of the bride:[8] parting of the bride from her parents or *Trennungslieder*, thanksgiving songs or *Dankeslieder*, handing over of the bride to the groom in the bride's house or *Brauchtümliche Dialoglieder*, removal of the bridal wreath in the groom's house or *Kranzlieder*, *Habungslieder*, and tying off the bride or *Brautabbinden* (Weber-Kellermann 1973, 552–557).[9]

This lack of penetration into the structural and functional interaction of the various codes of German-language wedding rituals, and especially into the relationship between music and ritual, has many implications. The apparently unambiguous definition of wedding songs or *Hochzeitslieder* by many German scholars, including the fundamental modern genre classification of the German Folk Song Archive, is combined with the genres *Ehestandsklage* and *Nonnenklage*, which take us far away from the specifics of ritualism as such.

The mixture of different approaches to genre classification led musicologist Georg Schünemann to combine bridal songs (*Brautlieder*) with play, mocking, counting and lie songs (*Spiel-, Spott- und Zähllieder, Lügenlieder*) in a single genre block. Finally, one of the constant songs of the German wedding ritual sung for the bride, titled *Der goldene Rosenkranz* ["The Golden

7 On the theoretical understanding of German-Austrian wedding music in the last third of the twentieth century, G. Siuts analysed the general approaches to ritual songs (Siuts 1973), M. Becker considered the functions of musical fragments in the regional variant of the Austrian wedding (Becker 1978), and I. Weber-Kellermann outlined her views on the classification of German wedding songs (Weber-Kellermann 1973).

8 The author relies here on the terminology used by Arnold van Gennep in his monograph *Les Rites de Passage* (Gennep 1909).

9 Unfortunately, there is no attempt in Weber-Kellermann's article to consider song structures according to their function in the rite, nor is there any publication of the musical examples themselves.

Wreath of Roses"], is generally attributed by German scholars to the genre of spiritual songs called *Marienlieder* ["Marian songs"] or to the overarching genre called *Geistliche Lieder* ["spiritual songs"], echoing the study of the Austrian scholar Becker.

These ambiguous results of research into the relationship between music and the ethnography of German-speaking wedding rituals are directly related to the fact that many important ethnographic components have been lost in modern wedding rituals in Germany and Austria, that ancient song ritual material has almost disappeared, and that the musical content of weddings today is no longer traditional, being replaced either by religious psalms or by authorial city songs. It is no coincidence that the musicologist and folklorist Helga Thiel, in her work "Zur Systematik des burgenländischen Hochzeitsbrauchtums" ["On the Systematisation of Burgenland Wedding Customs"], which deals with a contemporary cross-section of Croatian and Hungarian wedding songs in Austrian Burgenland, states that "German-language wedding songs connected with a specific purpose are – at least for the time being – unknown" (Thiel 1975, 92; translated from German by the author).

This is why studies of island cultures, which often preserve many relics of musical and ethnographic complexes, are becoming increasingly important (Näumann 2013). In our case, however, due to the cultural catastrophe of 1941 of the sub-ethnic group called Volga Germans,[10] the author has to analyse the reconstructed memories of the villagers, who very rarely remember musical and ethnographic details. The author is also forced to analyse the reconstructed memories of the village residents, and very rarely has the opportunity to personally observe the performance of traditional rituals in modern times.[11]

The materials that can be used today to model versions of the Volga German wedding ritual are few, and the information that can be gleaned from published (and unpublished) sources also varies greatly in its degree of completeness. Nevertheless, the available articles and materials collected by Alexander

10 The deportation of the Volga Germans to the settlements of Siberia and Kazakhstan in September 1941 resulted in the almost complete removal of objects of national material and domestic culture as a whole from the everyday life of the Volga Germans and transferred most of the traditional musical and ethnographic heritage into the underground latent state (Schischkina 2020).

11 The mass total deportation of Volga Germans, which took place after the beginning of the Second World War as a result of the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Nos. 2056–2933 of 26 August 1941 "On the Resettlement of Germans from the Volga German Republic, the Saratov and Stalingrad Regions", involved the forced eviction of about 480,000 Volga Germans. They were not allowed to return to their villages and towns of origin until 1972. Many German villages on the Volga were completely destroyed, and all surviving national settlements were given Russian names, which have not yet been abolished. The Law of the Russian Federation "On the Rehabilitation of Oppressed Peoples" of 26 April 1991 provided rehabilitation for both forced resettlement and the establishment of a regime of terror and violence in places of special settlement, including for the Volga Germans (German 1996, 228).

Minh, Eduard Seib, Georg Schünemann, and other scholars are of great factual value, although almost all works on Volga German wedding rituals are purely ethnographic.[12] Let us mention here the works of Iris Barbara Gräfe on the culture of the Volga Germans who migrated to Argentina, Johann P. Windholz on the Volga Germans in Kazakhstan, and Klaus Boll on the culture of the Volga Germans who emigrated from the Soviet Union to Germany, in which there is information on the wedding of Volga Germans (Gräfe 1971, 1982; Windholz 1989; Boll 1993).

The ethnographic descriptions obtained during the author's field ethnographic expeditions in 1992–2022 (interview recollections of weddings before 1941) are often fragmented, reflecting the passing from passive memory of many important realities of the authentic rite, and publications on the music of the Volga German wedding are few.[13]

The author considers it important to combine the methods of archival research with modern expeditionary material. In one of his publications on modern methods of ethnomusicology, Lars-Christian Koch, Director of the Berlin Ethnological Museum and Phonogram Archive, emphasizes the necessity of field research "as a basic condition for studying music as part of general culture and as the only way to understand the socio-cultural context and the relevance of music for people and society" (Koch 2020, 11).

12 The first versions of German wedding rites were recorded in the Saratov region by Alexander Minh and belong to the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century (Folk Customs 1890). The rites of the late nineteenth century are described in more detail in an article by pastor Eduard Seib (Seib 1968) and more fragmentarily in the monographs by Jacob Dietz (Dietz 1997) and Georg Schünemann (Schünemann 1923, 5–6). Wedding descriptions from the 1900s and to 1920s are presented in the works of Töpfer (Töpfer 1925), Eugen Kagarov (Kagarov 1929; Kagarow 1932), and Andreas Dulson (Dulson 1931). Since the 1950s, in various editions of the magazine *Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Russland* (Stuttgart, Germany) and the newspaper *Neues Leben* (Moscow, Russia, 1957–2010) one can find various notes on the marriages of Russian (including Volga) Germans, some of which are interesting enough to have a certain scientific significance (Kirschner 1956; Zeiler 1960, 1961; Stahf 1961). Gottfried Habenicht studied the peculiarities of the wedding ritual and wedding songs of the Volga German colony of Rothammel (now the village of Pamyatnoye, Volgograd Oblast), based on the archival records of Johannes Künzig of the outstanding folk singer Maria Wohn (Habenicht 1981, 1985).

13 There are fifteen published song lyrics of the genre *Hochzeits- und Ehestandslieder* (wedding and marriage songs) (Erbes and Sinner 1914, Nos. 115–129), and a few published musical transcriptions of the bridal songs *Ach Gott, es fällt mir schwer* ["Oh Lord, It's Hard for Me"], *Hochzeitsmahl, Freudensaal* ["Wedding Feast, Celebration Hall"] (Schünemann 1923, Nos. 242–243), *Singt mit fröhlichem Gemüte* ["Sing With Joyful Spirit"], *Der goldene Rosenkranz* ["The Golden Wreath of Roses"], and *Die Melon', die viel Blumen hat* ["The Melon That Has Many Flowers"] (Habenicht 1981). The author's edition presents the 1992–1997 field recordings of the song-romance *Schön ist die Jugend* ["Youth Is Beautiful"], which functionally replaced the ritual songs for the removal of the wreath (*Kranzlieder*) and six wedding dances on the Volga (Shishkina-Fisher 1998, Nos. 27–28, 41–43, 46–48).

Volga Germans Today in the Context of the Author's Fieldwork and Archival Research[14]

According to historian Arkady German, before World War I there were already more than 200 German villages called colonies in the Volga region, inhabited by 554,328 people. German colonists in the Volga region were the largest ethnic group of Germans, accounting for more than 30% of all Germans in the Russian Empire (German 1996, 228). At the end of the nineteenth century, Alexander Minh noted the phenomenon of the insular existence of the German diaspora in the Volga region:[15] "The Germans who still live in our region are a completely separate type; they do not intermarry with any other nationality… More than half of the local colonists do not speak Russian at all, as there are hardly two or three women in every village who can say a few words in Russian" (Folk Customs 1890, 11).

The manifestation of national culture in the Volga colonies was quite free: "Folk song lives in the memory of the old, is young in the mouths of the young, and is passed down from one generation to the next without books or writing. Songs are shared when farmers from different colonies make their way home from the fields, or when a break invites them to rest and recuperate. […] In groups and comradeships, the lads march along the lanes singing their folk songs" (Schünemann 1923, 3; translated from German by the author).

There are many historical sources and studies on the Volga region, which has attracted nomadic peoples since ancient times because of its geographical location and diversity of landscapes suitable for agriculture, animal husbandry, and fishing. Since antiquity, the region has been a kind of cauldron in which different ethnic groups such as Scythians, Sarmatians, and Huns have merged or replaced each other (Figures 2–3*)*.

14 The sources of the article are the materials of the author's field music and ethnographic expeditions in 1992–2010, collected in 130 settlements of the Volga region (Astrakhan, Volgograd, Saratov, Samara, and Ulyanovsk Oblasts, Republic of Tatarstan), Siberia (Omsk and Novosibirsk Oblasts, Krasnoyarsk and Altai territories), and the Urals (Sverdlovsk and Orenburg Oblasts). The author's materials from the following repositories and archives in Russia and Germany were used in the analysis of the ritual schemes: the archive of Professor Georg Dinges (State Archive of Saratov Oblast, Engels), the archive of Academician V. M. Zhirmunsky (St. Petersburg, Russia), the archive of Professor Georg Schünemann (Phonogram Archive of the Ethnological Museum, Berlin, Germany), the University of Cologne: Institute for Musical Folklore, Germany, the German Folk Song Archive and the Johannes Kuenzig Institute for East German Folklore, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: German field notebooks Nos. 1–6, 29–31.

15 The Germans settled on the Volga in strictly separate ethno-confessional groups; they established Mennonite colonies (Rosenthal, Reinsfeld, Bergthal, Liebenthal, Hoffenthal, and Strassburg), Lutheran colonies (Schaffhausen, Bettinger, Basel, Unterwalden, Reinwald, and Rosenheim), and Catholic colonies (Wittmann, Urbach, Rohleder, Marienthal, Brabander, Rothammel, and Leichtling), between which family ties could not arise. The religious isolation of the colonies did not arise by chance, as the socio-religious conventions of the different confessional groups influenced the organizational structure of their colonies.

Figure 2: German Lutheran residents, Gremuchy settlement, Astrakhan Oblast, 1960s. The settlement was founded by its residents – Volga Germans – in 1956 after their return from exile with the permission of the regional administration.[16]

Figure 3: Sisters Erna Elberg (b. 1937, left) and Emma Brown (b. 1928, right), deeply religious Lutherans, singing the psalms *Jesu, geh voran* ["Jesus, go ahead"], *Wo ist Jesu, mein Verlangen*? ["Where is Jesus, my yearning?"], *Hab' keine Eltern mehr* ["My parents are no more"], *Lebe wohl, du, böse Welt und Sünde* ["Farewell, you, evil world and sin"], *Liebeslieder* [love songs], and *Balladen* [ballads]
(Gremuchy settlement, Kharabalinsky district, Astrakhan Oblast, 29 November 1997).[17]

16 Photo given to the author by residents of the settlement in 1992.

17 Photo by the author.

In the territory of the Volga region, there was a mixture of various ethnic and cultural streams of Finno-Ugric, Turkic, Mongolian, Slavic, and Germanic peoples between the fourth and the nineteenth centuries, resulting in the formation of distinctive cultures of different ethnic groups living in Russia, outside their national state formations (Historical Review 1837; Nebolsin 1852). Thus, Russians, Tatars, Kazakhs, Kalmyks, Germans, and Finno-Ugric peoples have lived together in the Volga region for several centuries. As a result of the long inter-ethnic contacts of these peoples, peculiar cultural types were formed, characterized by great tolerance towards foreign ethnic components. The process of isolation of the German colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from contacts with the neighbouring inhabitants, who were foreign to them by nationality, eventually led to the unique preservation of ancient relic forms of German culture. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Volga colonies were prosperous.[18]

Figure 4: Sofia Andreyevna Korbmacher (b. 1941), a Volga German Lutheran (Gremuchy settlement, Kharabalinsky district, Astrakhan Oblast, 29 November 1997).[19]

18 The Volga German colonies of the late nineteenth century were characterized by a number of features, such as: the widespread use of capitalist methods of economic management, which led to the creation of large landed estates; the occupation by German landowners of a leading place in the economy of the southern regions of Russia; the emergence on the Volga of hundreds of industrial enterprises owned by citizens of German nationality; the free practice of religion by the Germans in Russia; the development of culture. There were German-language schools in all settlements, and dozens of German newspapers were published (see the publications of Russian historians, such as Jacob Dietz, Arkady German, Igor Plehve, Alexander Klaus, Lev Malinovsky, or Vladimir Kabuzan).

19 Photo by the author.

The Volga German colonies were a closed space with an administratively defined territory, whose isolation from each other was predetermined by the conditions of resettlement, which led to the long-term preservation of national and cultural identity and the creation of an integral organic culture of a conglomerate character (Figures 4–5).

Figure 5: Family named Gross, Volga German Lutherans, sitting: Sofia Ivanovna (b. 1923)[20] and her husband Viktor Karlovich (b. 1923), their children and grandchildren are standing (Kharabali, Astrakhan Oblast, 28 November 1997).[21]

Initially, the conditions for settlers in the Volga region were very difficult, not only because of the unfavourable climate and the need to cultivate previously uncultivated land, but also because of the constant attacks of nomads. In fact, one of the aims of Catherine II in the famous manifestos of 1762–1763 was to create a barrier against "wild nomadic hordes in the Volga region". The Volga German colonies became the first effective barrier of this type, after all previous attempts had failed, amongst others because of the societal system of serfdom that was common in Russia in the early modern period, leading to a lack

20 Sofya Ivanovna Gross says: "My husband and I are members of the local Lutheran community; we go to services with pastors from Germany. All my friends in the community have already left for Germany. Catholics also come to services with us. Our children do not go to services with us, they were all Komsomol members, all atheists. We are not going to leave for Germany" (Figure 5). Recorded on 28.11.1997 in Kharabali, Astrakhan region. AA1997, German field notebook No. 3, E. M. Shishkina.

21 Photo by the author.

of people having the right to free movement ("Russian Germans on the Don, in the Caucasus and on the Volga" 1995, 20).

There are known examples of the complete destruction of German colonies in the Volga region by Kazakhs, Bashkirs, Kalmyks, and Nogais in the late eighteenth century and subsequent episodes of difficult struggle of Volga German colonists for their lives and freedom (ibid., 15). In the character and mentality of those who tried to live in the Volga land, a settler mentality had to emerge: hard work on scarce land, surrounded by unknown landscapes, wild steppes, and often hostile neighbours. Those who survived and consolidated were already settlers with a changed mentality, who gained confidence, hardened themselves, and showed persistence, courage, imagination, and ingenuity. The close association and interdependence of the colonists became all the more important, stemming from the proximity of religious aspirations and leading to the organization of ethno-confessional groups, which ultimately generated a high economic impact of their activities.

This was already noted in the first third of the nineteenth century in the Journal of the Ministry of State Property: "All the settlements have a comfortable and flourishing view; they are kept clean and tidy, order is strictly observed in them, […] straight streets lined with houses of beautiful appearance […]" (Historical Review 1837, 69). In the middle of the nineteenth century, August von Haxthausen wrote about the Volga colony Schaffhausen that it was "a blooming land with a population of far more than 100,000 people and with a completely Germanic appearance" (Haxthausen 1852, 466–467; Figure 6).

Figure 6: The village of Nizhnyaya Dobrinka, the first German colony in the Volga region, founded in 1764.[22]

22 Photo by the author, July 1999.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, musicologist Georg Schünemann observed the following in the Volga region: "The weddings [...] remained the most important festivities in the lives of the colonists. They are strong pillars of Germanness [*Deutschtum*] at a time when the fight against and eradication of the German way of life begins at school" (Schünemann 1923, 7; translated from German by the author). Similarly, Ernst Stöckl pointed out in the 1990s: "For the emigrants, song and singing in Russia retained the importance they had in the old country. They loved to sing and sang at every opportunity: at work, at social gatherings, in the pubs and during the corn harvest, at folk and family celebrations and especially at weddings, which usually lasted several days" (Stöckl 1993, 153; translated from German by the author).

Until their deportation in 1941, "the colonists [...] retained many peculiar customs that they had brought with them from Germany" (Dietz 1997, 39). Although the Volga German culture of the Volga region was severely affected by the deportations of 1941, individual song artifacts and relic phenomena can still be observed in various regions of Russia (e.g., the Urals and Siberia), Kazakhstan, Germany, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and the USA, that is, everywhere where communities of Volga Germans still live together today (Shishkina-Fisher 1998; Shishkina 2019).

Figure 7: Ekaterina Karlovna Kaufman (b. 1928), Maria Khristianovna Kaufman (b. 1924), Olga Gaisner (b. 1938) sang Lutheran psalms (Verkhnyaya Dobrinka – former German colony Dreispitz founded in 1766 – Volgograd Oblast, 6 July 1999).[23]

23 Photo by the author.

The beginning of the author's folklore expeditions in the German settlements in 1992 coincided with the period of legal rehabilitation of the Russian Germans in Russia, but the degree of distrust of the Germans – Lutherans, Catholics, and Mennonites – towards the Russian state officials was so great that the re-emigration flow to Germany in this period since 1988 amounted to up to 200,000 Russian Germans annually. The emotional situation of my research participants during the field expeditions in the early 1990s was very difficult and ambiguous, particularly among the older generation who had survived deportation in childhood or adolescence. During a folklore expedition, the author noted down the names and surnames of those he spoke to, as well as their years of birth. People were afraid that if someone registered their names and surnames again and took down the personal details of everyone present in a notebook ("write everyone down"), then another eviction was ahead: "Well, you wrote us down today, which means that tomorrow we are being evicted again!" (Shishkina 2008, 117; Figure 7).

On the one hand, these residents felt great joy from meeting people who, after so many years of spiritual isolation, were interested in their national culture and who spoke to them in their native language. At the same time, the author also encountered the reticence of members of Lutheran congregations, their unwillingness to sing folk songs; they usually told the author: "there are German wedding songs, but we don't sing them — it's sinful" (Figures 7–9).

Some of the Russian Germans who had travelled to Germany since the late 1980s started returning to the Volga region between 1994–1996. Why? "We will always be only 'Russians' there and never brothers in faith", a 74-year-old Volga German Lutheran woman told the author with deep bitterness. This woman survived deportation from the Saratov region to a concentration camp in Siberia at the age of 18 in 1941 and subsequent work in Kazakhstan. She left for Germany in 1992, was disappointed in her expectations and returned again a year later to permanently reside in the Astrakhan region (Figure 3).

"Where is our fatherland? It is neither here nor there – we have no homeland."[24] During the author's expeditions, a new factor emerged in the context of interviews, when the author was repeatedly told why this particular family had not left Russia for permanent residence in Germany. The reasons can be found in letters from friends and relatives – those who left for Germany in the 1990s.

24 Words by Olga Alexandrovna Braun (née Mayer), Lutheran, born in 1931 (Figure 8). Blumenfeld village, Volgograd Oblast. Author's entry, May 13, 1999. AA 1999, German field notebook No. 6, E. M. Shishkina.

Figure 8: Lutheran psalms are sung by the Mayer sisters: Olga Alexandrovna Braun (b. 1931) and Maria Alexandrovna Markus (b. 1933) (Tsvetochnoe Village – former German colony Blumenfeld – Volgograd Oblast, 13 May 1999).[25]

Figure 9: Volga German members of the Lutheran community Emma Alexandrovna Ginter (b. 1915, sitting, born in this village before deportation) and Olga Karlovna Styrtz (b. 1938, standing) singing Lutheran psalms (Verkhny Yeruslan village – former German colony Gnadentau – Volgograd Oblast, 13 May 1999).[26]

25 Photo by the author.

26 Photo by the author.

In all explanations, the main issues mentioned were not economic problems, but socio-cultural factors of rejection and the fact that Germans in Germany did not accept the cultural heritage of Russian Germans, including their traditions, rituals, features of dialects, or favourite songs, which are often long forgotten or simply unknown in German spiritual chants.

In the process of the self-definition of the Volga German sub-ethos, the sense of ethnic belonging to Russia and the Volga – which had already emerged and manifested itself repeatedly in the course of their historical development – was revived and intensified at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the same period, certain fragments of wedding rituals based on national German traditions began to be restored and publicly performed in Russian settlements.

The Structure of the Volga-German Wedding Ritual and Its Musical Content

The Volga German wedding ritual is a specific ritual complex, saturated with various folklore genres: songs of the bride's farewell, religious songs, dance music, *Ladesprüche* or invitation songs, *Schwanks* or funny tales, games of the dressed. Let us review the ten parts of the ritual structure:

1. *Freierei* ["matchmaking"] was an important initial ritual action of the ritual, which took place in three main stages: a) *Freierei* ["matchmaking"]; b) *Verlobung* ["engagement"] and *Handschlag* ["handshake"]; and c) *Versprechen* ["promise"]. The matchmaking process included the following actions: a) meeting of representatives of both families; b) consent of the bride's parents to the marriage; c) consent of the bride herself to the marriage; d) announcement of the matchmaking: gunshots, noise, church proclamation, and songs; and e) money for the bride from the groom called *Handgeld*.

Until recently, matchmaking was carried out by male matchmakers (called *Freier*, *Kuppler*, *Freiersmann*, or *Freierschmann*) "who were specialists in their trade. They were experienced, articulate, well versed in people and customs" (Windholz 1989, 9; Boll 1993, 254–255). The terms *Freier* and *Freierschmann* were used in the Volga colonies until the end of the twentieth century (AA 1994, Krasny Yar and Generalskoe village, Saratov Oblast). They retained the terminology of the state of Hesse (Martin 1983, 77, para. 63). Since the post-war period, this role of matchmaker has sometimes been taken up by a female bride-seller, called *Brautwerberin*, in keeping with Volga Russian customs (AA 1994; Boll 1993, 255–256).

According to the author's field notes, the engagement (*Verlobung*, *Verlöbnis*, *Freien*) took place in the bride's house with the participation of the parents on both sides, when the bride and groom exchanged gifts, and money (*Handgeld*) was given from the groom's side (AA 1994). The rite of handing over money from the groom to the bride, which has survived in Kazakhstan (Windholz 1989), comes from the German states of Saarland, Rhenish Hesse and Baden (Martin 1983, 78, para. 64).

The preparation period included the following important ritual activities: a) the bride and groom should wear wedding rings (*Das Tragen der Eheringe*); b) tour of the groom's household (*Brautschau*, *Beschauung*); c) the groom bade farewell to his fellows (*Der Abschied des Bräutigams*); d) visit to the pastor (*Die Anmeldung beim Pfarrer*, *Versprechen*); e) appointment of groomsmen and selection of musicians (*Die Bestellung der Brautführer und der Musikanten*); f) making the bride's wreath, veil, and dress (*Die Anfertigung des Brautkranzes, -schleiers und -kleides*); g) preparations for the wedding feast (*Die Vorbereitungen für das Hochzeitsmahl*); and h) wedding invitation (*Hochzeitseinladung*).

2. Inviting relatives, neighbours, and friends to weddings (*Rundreise*, *Hochzeitsbitter*, *Hochzeitsläder*, *Freiersmänner*). The inviter (*Hochzeitsbitter*, *Hochzeitsläder*, or *Freiersmänner*) invited the guests to the wedding ("*vor der Hochzeit geladen*", "*geschah durch die Hochzeitsläder*"), which took place on the Volga, and after 1941 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Urals, and Siberia in the form of a solemn ceremony during which one or two inviters (e.g., two bachelors or young men) invited guests to the wedding and used pre-learned speeches with jokes (*Ladesprüche*) and witticisms (*Sprüchleine*). In this "well-rehearsed theatrical performance" (Windholz 1989, 14), the main characters are the wedding inviters who are called *Hochzeitsbitter*, *Hochzeitsläder*, *Freier,* or *Freierschmann* (AA 1994). Their symbol of the right to speak on behalf of the parents and the newlyweds and to invite guests to the wedding is a man-sized pole that looks like a "carved stick with notches to which ribbons are tied" (Seib 1968, 163). The pole is called *Bandstock* (Boll 1993, 256) or *Pelnstock* (AA 1994). As a sign of accepting the invitation, all invited wedding guests tie "colourful and variegated ribbons, bright handkerchiefs and headscarves or even vibrant pieces of cloth" to the pole (Windholz 1989, 15). However, the significance of the pole is more than just being a symbol of the rite of invitation. For example, our 1994 expedition records show that the pole with ribbons was kept by the steward *Freierschmann* throughout the wedding; then at the end of the wedding the pole was stolen and the steward had to buy back his pole, with the money going to the young newlyweds (AA 1994).

This is what was said during one of the wedding invitations:

Ein Gruss von Braut und Bräutigam	Greetings from the bride and groom
Die lassen euch bitten insgemein	They are asking you all to come
Ihr sollt die Hochzeitsgäste sein.	You are to be the wedding guests.
Bis Donnerstag ist das Hochzeitsfest	Until Thursday is the wedding feast
So stellt euch ein als liebe Gäst!	So prepare yourselves as dear guests![27]
(verbal text in German)	(translation by the author)

27 After the inviter (*Hochzeitsläder*) invited guests, they were treated with vodka, and "a bow or a multicoloured handkerchief – *Schnuppduchs* – was tied by the invitee to the pole" (German archive. Engels, Saratov Oblast. Fond 1348, inventory 2, case 111, sheet 487, record of 1928 in the colony Stahl, Republic of Volga Germans).

As a popular custom, the invitation rite was preserved until the early 1980s in various regions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Siberia, where the Volga Germans were deported, but it is not practised in Germany (Boll 1993, 256). The custom of wedding invitations with a large number of verbal texts is a German tradition that shows a love of vivid theatricality, scenery, fantasy, and precision of form.

3. The groom's party (*Polterabend*, *Polrowet*, *Polerowet*, or *Polrout*) is the most important rite on the eve of the wedding. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was "a small preliminary celebration with invited guests" (Seib 1968, 165). By 1929 it had already "lost its ritual character and been reduced to treats, songs and dances" (Kagarov 1929, 264). In the author's notes, the term "eve" (*Vorabend*) is used (AA 1994, Generalskoe village, Saratov Oblast). This evening was a must, and all of the author's recordings from the late 1990s emphasise that it was the young people who came together for it: "They break glass and clay items, they don't mind shooting" (AA 1994; Boll 1993, 256–257). The ritual meaning of the custom was to drive away evil spirits from the bride and groom's home by knocking, making noise, and rumbling, so that the evil would not interfere with the well-being of the wedding ceremony and the future life of the newlyweds. Therefore, "each of the guests considered it their duty to bring something that could be broken" (Windholz 1989, 23–24). During this rite, the bride weeps in her house with her friends and sits at a table with a loaf of *korovai* [wedding bread] and a sprig of spruce, and her friends form a circle and hold hands while singing wedding songs (Windholz 1989, 23–24; Boll 1993, 256–257). The ritual itself is very reminiscent of Russian hen parties and most likely emerged as a result of Russian cultural influence. We have not found any mention of such rites with the bride in German-language literature. Rites involving a loaf of *korovai* and a sprig of spruce reflect Ukrainian influences, which are characteristic of the Volga region.

4. The bride's farewell (*Abschiedsdank*) to her parents takes place on the first day of the wedding, when the groom comes to collect the bride from her parents' home. During the farewell scene, the bride sings a farewell song to her parents' home and relatives; she hugs her father, mother, brothers, and sisters, and the groom thanks his parents for raising him.[28]

28 German archive. Engels, Saratov Oblast, Russia. Fond 1348, inventory 2, case 111, sheets 197–198, 329–330; (Schünemann 1923, 282–283, No. 242; Windholz 1989: samples Nos. 5–8, 12).

Figure 10: Volga German bride in national costume, 1880s.[29]

Minh wrote that on the bride's head "a customary headdress (a kind of wreath) made of flowers, beads, colourful and shining ornaments and colourful ribbons is worn, which falls in a wide fold to half of the back" (Folk Customs 1890, 130; Seib 1968, 166; Habenicht 1981, 162) (Figures 10–11). The role of the bride's headdress or wreath as the main symbol of virginity is maintained throughout the period, and its removal is marked by various codes, such as actional, verbal, and musical ones.

Figure 11: Bride's wedding wreath (*Kranz*) and groom's bouquet (*Schlup*) (Medveditskoye village, Zhirnovskiy district, Volgograd Oblast, Russia).[30]

29 Arndt 2000, 57.

30 Gorobtsova 1998, 111.

5. Music in the church during the wedding (*die Trauung*): According to information from the early twentieth century, when people come to church, musicians play "*Jesu, geh voran*" ["Jesus, Go Ahead"]. This song is still preserved among the Volga Germans (Shishkina-Fisher 1998, Nos. 6–7).

6. Delays of the wedding procession (called *Wegsperre* or *Lösung* in Germany, or *das Hemmen*, *der Weg gesperrt*, *Geldbüsse bekommen*, or *Straßensperren* in the Volga region) are a custom that survived among Volga Germans and in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Siberia during the post-deportation period until the end of the twentieth century. The author observed a similar delay of a wedding procession going along with demands for a "ransom for the bride" at a modern German wedding and, to all appearances, the revival of this custom is taking place today in towns and villages (Figures 12–13).

Figure 12: Bride and groom in an antique carriage. Modern German wedding (Orenburg, 1999).[31]

7. The music that is performed at weddings is striking in its variety and colourfulness, featuring different types of vocal and instrumental music, including dance music. Although there were, of course, regional differences, the reduction of rural folk culture in the twentieth century and the fact that not much has not been documented by scholars often make it impossible to determine what has been lost.

7.1. The instrumental music at the wedding was played by a specially invited orchestra, comprising "cimbalom, violin, viola, cello and wind instruments" (Seib 1968, 173) (Figure 14).

31 Photo by the author.

Figure 13: Delay of a wedding procession with ribbons and ransom demands for the bride at the entrance to the wedding dinner. Modern German wedding (Orenburg, 1999).[32]

Figure 14: Violinist Alexei Vasilyevich Dementyev (b. 1922, Weizenfeld; his mother was a German Lutheran) (Pallasovka settlement, Volgograd Oblast, 13 May 1999).[33]

32 Photo by the author.

33 Photo by the author.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, wind instruments have become widespread, such as the trumpet, clarinet, and flute. Later, string instruments were introduced: "balalaika, mandolin, guitar, as well as harmonicas: khromka, Saratovskaya garmonika (a one row push-pull button accordion), Wiener harmonica" (Windholz 1989, 21). After the deportations of 1941, the composition of ensembles changed again, as bagpipes, whistles, triangles, tambourines, big drums, zithers and pump organs disappeared. During the author's expeditions in the Volga region, all wedding tunes were only performed on different types of harmonicas: *saratovskaya garmonika*, *chromka*, accordion, and *bayan*, all of which are typical for the Volga folk cultures of the twentieth century as a whole, and which exerted their dominant influence already after the deportations of 1941 (Shishkina-Fisher 1998, Nos. 41–48).

7.2. During the first wedding night, licentious songs (*Liederliche Lieder*) are played at night and in the morning. Among them, the following songs can be highlighted: *Nonnenbeichte* ["Nun's Confession"], *Einstmal leg ich mich ins Bettchen* ["One Day I'll Lie Down in Bed"], *Meine Hosen sind gerissen* ["My Trousers are Torn"], *Wenn meine Frau nicht tanzen kann* ["When My Wife Can't Dance"], *Unsre Wesmirina* ["Our Wesmirina"] (Schünemann 1923, Nos. 342–343, 345), and *Ich weiss e Maedelein* ["I Know a Girl"] (AA 1995).

7.3. The dances during the wedding dinner on the first day of the wedding, including the circle dance of the bride (*Brautreigen*) and the dance of the bride (*Brauttanz*), fulfill a number of different functions: a) development of the action; b) transfer of the bride to another clan; c) combination with gift-giving; d) magical-preserving; e) aesthetic; and f) entertaining functions. And, of course, these functions are often combined and constantly transformed in later times. The bride had to dance with all bachelors at the wedding, which was called the *Brautreigen* (Seib 1968, 173). "After the bride's circle dance, the young people dance as they wish, shouts are heard all the time: "Hochzeit! Hopsasa! Juhei! Heisasa! Juchhei!" (ibid., 174). It was desirable to perform the seven-jump dance (*Siwwetersprung*). That is a peculiar and difficult dance, and those who can dance it like to boast: "Koennt'r aach die Siwwe, Sprueng? Ich kann se! Ich kann se!" ["Can you do the Siwwetersprung? I can! I can!"] (ibid.). Of course, in the course of time the fragments of dances on the Volga, as well as other ritual actions were reduced, but the dance traditions were preserved much better than any other customs, and even at the end of the twentieth century, so-called "honour dances" (*Ehrentänze*) lasted quite long (Windholz 1989, 35). According to the author's notes on the Saratov region, even today in every German village (Krasny Yar, Generalskoye, Pavlovka, Lipovka, etc.), at this moment of the wedding the bride always dances three dances, which are usually three waltzes (Shishkina-Fisher 1998, Nos. 41–48). Researchers noted that "Russian dances were danced at German weddings as early as the beginning of the twentieth century – for example Russian Kozachok – if the

wedding was attended by Russians" (Seib 1968, 174). Similar information is available in a publication from the late twentieth century, which states that various dances are performed of the peoples whose representatives attend the wedding (Windholz 1989; AA 1994).

8. Giving gifts to the bride on the first day after the wedding. Gifts (*Gaben* and *Geschenke*) were obligatory in all Volga German colonies, and the gift-giving ritual itself took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during the dancing at the wedding feast after leaving the church. Eduard Seib states that "[t]he gifts consist mainly of paper money, which is pinned to the dress, but also of articles of daily use, cloths, aprons, sashes, and suchlike. Eventually, the bride ends up in a helpless state, covered with gifts" (Seib 1968, 173; translated from German by the author) (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Bride and groom receive gifts at the wedding dinner. The bride is covered with gifts. Modern German wedding in Russia (Orenburg, 1999).[34]

9. The removal of the bridal wreath was the main initiation rite of the bride taking place during the bridal dance; this rite is known under the terms *Der Braut der Kranz abgenommen* ["the bride's wreath removed"], *Brautkranz abgetanzt* ["bridal wreath danced off"], *Brautabtanzen* ["bridal dance-off"], or *Kranzabnahme* ["wreath removal"]. Twentieth-century researchers have

34 Photo by the author.

preserved descriptions of the rite.[35] In Windholz's 1980s recordings of Volga Germans in Kazakhstan and in the author's 1990s field recordings, the dances and dance songs at the moment of wreath removal give way to the lyrical singing of the bride, called *Brautabsingen* ["bridal song"], *Abkränzlied* ["wreath song"], or *Kränzlein absingen* ["singing off a wreath"].[36] According to contemporary records of the expedition, informants consistently refer to the lyrical song *Schön ist die Jugend* [*The Youth Is Beautiful*], which was sung at the time of the wreath removal and which replaced all previous versions of the song (Shishkina-Fisher 1998, Nos. 27–28). The change from the choreographic code of the rite to the song code, i.e. the dancing of the bride to her singing during the wreath removal rite, is a Russification of the form of an important ritual action marking the bride's vertical transition.

10. Content of the second day of the wedding (*Hochzeitsschwanz*) ["wedding tail"]: a ride through the streets on decorated bulls to inform the community of the events; lunch at the bride's parental home (*Dankessen*); transporting the bride's dowry (*Aussteuer*, *Heiratsgut*); and post-wedding party of the newlyweds (*Nachzeit*). This day has a carnivalesque character, with the main focus on various games, mainly involving the dressing up of all the participants, which playfully imitate some of the rituals of the first wedding day, such as the church wedding, the bride's shoes redemption, the presentation of gifts, or the removal of the wreath.

The author's field notes describe jocular bride gifts (*Spottgeschenke*): The bride offered the guests a broom, a stick, or an empty bottle. (AA 1994). The original game of the second wedding day, called *Kehr aus* ["sweep-out"], was to sweep the guests out of the wedding party, to the musical accompaniment of the wedding ditty (AA 1994, German field notebook No. 2).

Typological Features of Volga German Marriage Rituals

The picture of the genesis of the wedding ritual of the Volga Germans was complex, multistage, and polyelemental. The peculiarity of the formation of the wedding ritual of the Volga Germans as a ritual of the late migratory tradition of secondary formation is, of course, based on the complex processes of intertwining of fragments of ritual versions from different parts of Germany (Hesse, Palatinate, Saarland, Baden, Württemberg, Upper Bavaria, Rhenish Hesse), former Austria-Hungary (Tyrol, Salzburg, Transylvania), and Switzerland, going in parallel with the influences of foreign cultural systems, first of all Russian and Ukrainian, and later also Kazakh. Elements of these different

35 Seib 1968, 174–175; Habenicht 1981, 176–177; German Archive, Engels, Russia. Fond 1348, inventory 2, case 111, sheets 188–189.

36 Windholz 1989, Nos. 16, 21; AA 1994 (Walter colony, Krasny Yar, Saratov Oblast).

typological systems obviously appeared in the territory of the region in different proportions, the boundaries of which are currently difficult to define and cannot be the aim of the study. Today it is only possible to outline the historical preservation of the constant components of the ritual as a whole.

The Volga German wedding ritual, as it had developed until the deportations of 1941, represented the first type of ritual in terms of the appearance of transitional situations, i.e. "wedding-fun" with the relative autonomy and independence of two transitional situations, each of which with its own logic and line of deployment.[37] In the Volga-German wedding, the opposition between the groom's party and the bride's party dominates, which is manifested in the following features of the ritual structure: a) the almost equal importance and significance of the two groups of participants and their loci; b) the parallelism of a number of ritual actions performed both in the bride's house and in the groom's house; c) the significant role of all kinds of contacts between representatives of the two parties (feasts, movements from one place to another), including numerous episodes of mock conflicts, which give the wedding a carnivalesque character.

The comparative diachronic analysis of the Volga-German wedding ritual and its versions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries allowed us to draw conclusions about its historical variability and constant cultural transformations, which led to such results as the reduction of ritual elements, texts of sentences, and song melodies, and the transformation of ritual-magical features of the ritual into game forms, with the loss of their original meaning. The following ritual actions are considered to be the most stable: matchmaking, engagement, the bride's visit to the groom's house, inviting guests to the wedding, the noise party (*Polterabend*) on the eve of the wedding, the delay of the wedding procession (*Wegsperre*), paying ransom for the bride, the theft of the bride's shoe, the handing over of gifts to the bride, the bridal dance, the removal of the bridal wreath, the sweeping out of the guests (*Kehr aus)*, the transport of the bride's dowry, and the post-wedding celebrations. We regard these components as essential constants of the ethnic identity of the Volga Germans. Let us consider the integrating attributes of ritual, summarising the variety of descriptions of ritual versions in their historical development.

The image of the bride in the symbolism of German dance folklore remains dominant in the context of the bridal initiation rite. Most of the ritual dances themselves are dedicated to the image of the bride and record the moments of her transition. The culmination of the bride's horizontal transition – her moving into the groom's house – preceded the culmination of the vertical transition (removal of the wreath) and was strictly fixed in the rite by the time and circumstances of its fulfillment. The move was marked by four wedding

37 The definition of the type of ritual is made by the peculiarities of the ritualization of two transitional situations: a) the transition of the bride to another family or community; b) the transition of young people (first of all the bride) to the older age group (Efimenkova 1987, 8–9).

processions (*Hochzeitszüge*), whose complexity of organization, solemnity, and variety of ritualistic details underline the significance and importance of this ritual act. The horizontal transition of the bride was also marked by other ritual actions, e.g.: a) the transport of the bride's dowry; b) the rite of buying back the bride's shoe (*Brautschuhversteigern*) at the wedding feast on the first day of the wedding; c) the wedding feast at the groom's house; d) the rites of the groom and relatives giving the bride money, gifts, and bridal pillows both before the wedding and on the first day of the wedding; e) the rites of the wedding night.

In addition to those described above, the Volga German wedding ritual was characterized by the following features: a) the bed ceremony after moving to the groom's house and in his locus; b) the bride's moving to the groom's house took place before the bed ceremony; c) the bride and groom participated in all the rites, including the wedding feast, which had a sanctioning character. Thus, the traditional wedding ritual of the Volga Germans belongs to the European or virilocal type of ritual with certain remnants of the uxorilocal stage. The latter is evidenced by the elements of the *Polterabend* rite that are of a sanctioning nature: a) bringing a *korovai* with a spruce; b) putting a myrtle wreath on the bride; c) braiding the bride's hair on the first day of the wedding in the bride's house before the groom arrives. The analysis of the wedding processions led to the conclusion that, despite the patriarchal structure of the Volga German families, marriage by kidnapping predominated, reflecting the importance of the groom's role, and this, in the author's view, is a significant difference between the Volga German wedding ritual and the Russian wedding traditions of the Volga region.

Manifestation of Hybridity and Multiculturalism in the Wedding Rituals of the Volga Germans

The study of the codes of the Volga German wedding ritual revealed the hybrid and multicultural character of many ritual actions, resulting from the inclusion of foreign ethnic components (Russian, Ukrainian, and Kazakh) at the level of verbal, actional, and musical codes. Some of these inclusions were observed long before the forced Russification of the Volga German sub-ethnos by deportation, and therefore we can consider the establishment of a multicultural beginning in the basis of this late resettlement tradition of secondary formation as one of the cultural transformations of the isolated island group.

Theatrical and ritual episodes of the Volga-German wedding were preserved in German villages in Kazakhstan and Siberia until the late 1980s, and – in addition to the reduction of ritual actions, the replacement of choreographic elements with songs of non-ritual content – the ritual also included Russian and Kazakh games and dances (Windholz 1989). Since the influence of Russian components has been described by scholars since the early

twentieth century, it is difficult to blame these phenomena of hybridity and multiculturalism solely on deportation and post-deportation processes.

As noted above, the dance and game components of German wedding rituals in general are much more important than the song complex. Many ritual actions at the German wedding were performed within the dance and play complex, and their abundance is only comparable to the Slavic game complexes of calendar rites. Nevertheless, comparative analyses showed the constant inclusion of song material throughout the course of a wedding, although wind and string instrumental music for marches and dances is much more typical of Germany or Austria. In these cultural transformations we see the deep influence of the Russian song complex. It is precisely because of the novelty of this approach that the musical material of the Volga German wedding is so heterogeneous and contradictory, with church chorales repeatedly replacing the missing ritual folk songs.

The author identifies the following hybrid features of the Volga German ritual, common to Volga Russian and Ukrainian weddings: 1) matchmaking as an act; 2) rituals with a *korovai* and a spruce branch on the eve of the wedding that are similar to the Russian bride's party; 3) shots throughout the wedding; 4) the ritual of rejecting the groom through the rite of "putting up a basket", which is reminiscent of the purely Slavic rite of "giving a pumpkin", as in the Volga region Ukrainian elements are also closely intertwined with Russian ones; 5) the disapproval of a girl's behaviour by tarring the gate with tar or dung; 6) the changing of the German word for fidelity money (*Treugeld, money from the groom*) into the Russian word "кладка" (*kladka*, i.e. "money from the groom" – a term common in Russian villages of the Volga region); 7) offering a shirt as a gift from the bride to the groom (a common custom in all Volga Russian villages); 8) the need for engaged couples to kiss at weddings to the cry of "*Gorko*!" (the literal translation of the Russian word *горько* is "bitter", referring to the call for the bride and groom to kiss); 9) the changing of the choreographic code of the rite into a song code, and the "dancing off the bride" to her song – during the wreath removal rite, when there is a Russification of the form of the most important ritual action, marking the bride's vertical transition; 10) the inclusion of not only Russian, but also Ukrainian and Kazakh dances and games in the rituals; 11) the inclusion of Russian drinks, when before the wedding dinner during the dances not only German "*Schnaps*" was served, but also Russian *квас* [*kvas*], called "Kwast" in the German colonies in Russia.

Some of the highlighted actions were noted by researchers long before the forced Russification of the Volga German sub-ethnos through deportation in 1941–1955, and therefore hybridity and the manifestation of multiculturalism are the first cultural transformations of this island group. Of course, the incorporation of multicultural components increased gradually over time and intensified sharply after the deportation.

Conclusion

The process of cultural transformation of the traditional wedding ritual of the Volga Germans in the twentieth century is determined by two main objective conditions. First of all, it is the presence of several cultural layers, which emerged in the process of the historical settlement of the Volga region by Germans and the formation of the Volga German song and ritual tradition as a multicultural conglomerate system through interaction with other peoples. And secondly, it is the destruction of the culture of this community by repressive means.

This article is the first to define the processes of cultural transformation in the context of "rapid reduction"[38] (the author's term), characteristic of peoples subjected to repression, deportation and deprived of compact residence (i.e. "sudden and rapid cessation of traditions"). Being at a late stage of development, the wedding ritual of the Volga Germans – despite the reduction and inclusion of a number of polyethnic components – still represents a complex multifunctional structure. This is shown both by the author's materials and by the publications of J. P. Windholz, I. B. Gräfe, L. Weigel, and K. Boll from those countries where the Volga Germans continue to perform their versions of the ritual (Argentina, USA, Germany, and Kazakhstan).

The rural culture of the Volga Germans, formed on a multicultural basis by the mother cultures of Germany and the peoples of Russia, had distinct regional peculiarities and differences until the first half of the twentieth century. And it was the culture of the Volga Germans, who were completely deprived of their territories and resettled outside the Urals in the middle of the twentieth century, which became an integral part of the culture of the majority of Russian Germans living today in various regions of Siberia, Orenburg Oblast, Kazakhstan, as well as in Germany.

The phenomenon of multiculturalism, which was already observed in the first third of the twentieth century, continued until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Thus, the mixture of the relics of the German culture and the multiculturalism of the Volga German culture has been the basis of the development of the German sub-ethnos in the territory of the region since the end of the eighteenth century and has been maintained in all the historical periods under consideration.

38 The antonym of the term is "slow reduction": the forgetting of tradition that arises in connection with the gradual departure, dying away of those elements of the cultural tradition that are no longer understandable/needed by the inhabitants of the settlement due to new types of management, the emergence of new technology, new residents, etc.

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POVZETEK

Teoretični vidiki ohranjanja in krčenja tradicionalnih poročnih obredov povolške nemške narodnostne manjšine v Ruski federaciji

Delo Šiškine se posveča vprašanjem, ki še niso bila teoretično obravnavana v svetovni etnomuzikologiji in so povezana s sodobno kulturno preobrazbo poročnega obreda povolških Nemcev. V prvem delu prispevka je avtorica ob premisleku o zgodovinopisnih obravnavah nemškega poročnega obredja opozorila na njihovo maloštevilnost in nejasnost. Dela so predvsem etnografska (Düringsfeld in Reinsberg-Düringsfeld 1871; Sartori 1914; Spamer n.d.; Fehrle 1937; Dünninger 1967) in etnolingvistična (Martin 1959–1964, 1983). Edinstvene so tudi objavljene svatovske pesmi iz Nemčije in Avstrije, Weber-Kellermannova klasifikacija obrednih pesmi pa ne temelji na glasbenih zgledih. V drugem delu so predstavljene podrobnosti o avtoričinem terenskem delu v Rusiji (1992–2022), ki je bilo povezano s preseljevanjem povolških Nemcev iz Rusije v Nemčijo v devetdesetih letih 20. stoletja in njihovo kasnejšo delno vrnitvijo v Rusijo. Tretji del opisuje strukturo povolške nemške poroke, razkriva stalna obredna dejanja, ki so ohranjena še danes, in njihovo narečno terminologijo. V četrtem razdelku o poročni tipologiji je slika geneze poročnega obredja povolških Nemcev konceptualizirana kot kompleksna, večstopenjska in polielementarna. Posebnost oblikovanja poročnega obredja povolških Nemcev, kot obredja pozne migrantske tradicije sekundarnega oblikovanja, seveda temelji na kompleksnih procesih prepletanja fragmentov obrednih različic iz različnih delov Nemčije, Avstrije in Švice, ki je šlo vzporedno z vplivi tujih kulturnih sistemov, predvsem ruskega in ukrajinskega, pozneje kazaškega. Poročno obredje povolških Nemcev, kot se je razvilo do deportacije leta 1941, avtor opredeljuje kot »poročno zabavo« (tj. kot prvi tip obredja v smislu pojava prehodnih situacij), za katerega je značilna relativna samostojnost in neodvisnost dveh prehodnih situacij, od katerih ima vsaka svojo logiko in razvojno linijo (Gennep 1909; Efimenkova 1987). Peti del razmišlja o študiji kodeksov poročnega obredja povolških Nemcev, ki je razkrila hibridno in multikulturno naravo številnih obrednih dejanj, ki izhajajo iz vključevanja tujih etničnih komponent, kot so ruske, ukrajinske in kazaške na ravni verbalne, akcijske in glasbene kode. Avtorica na koncu ugotavlja, da je ta prispevek prvi,

ki opredeljuje procese kulturne preobrazbe v kontekstu »hitrega zmanjševanja« (avtoričin izraz), značilnega za ljudstva, ki so bila podvržena represiji, deportaciji in brez kompaktnega bivanja (tj. »nenadno in hitro prenehanje tradicije«). Hibrid med reliktno dediščino nemške kulture in večkulturnostjo povolško-nemške kulture je bil postavljen kot osnova za razvoj nemške subetnične skupine v Povolžju (Rusija) že ob koncu 18. stoletja in se je nato obdržal skozi vsa obravnavana zgodovinska obdobja. Delo temelji na razpoložljivi zgodovinski in etnografski literaturi ter avtoričinih lastnih glasbenih in etnografskih ekspedicijah. Znanstveni skupnosti so predstavljena doslej neznana dejstva o tradicionalni kulture povolških Nemcev.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ELENA SHISHKINA (shishkina.helena@yandex.ru) from Astrakhan (Russia) was born into a family of Volga Germans during their deportation to Siberia (Novosibirsk, 1953). She graduated from the Music College (Makhachkala, 1972), then from Astrakhan Conservatory (1978), followed by postgraduate studies at the Gnessin Russian Academy of Music (Moscow, 1988) and doctoral studies at the Russian Institute of Cultural Studies (Moscow, 1999). She defended two dissertations: on the Russian wedding (1989) and the culture of the Volga Germans (2011). She is an associate professor at the Astrakhan Conservatory, Doctor of Arts Study (2011). As an ethnomusicologist, a director and a collector of folk songs since 1974, she has carried out 68 field expeditions in 400 settlements, collecting an audio-video archive of 198,000 units.

O AVTORICI

ELENA SHISHKINA (shishkina.helena@yandex.ru) iz Astrahana (Rusija) se je rodila v družini povolških Nemcev med njihovo deportacijo v Sibirijo (Novosibirsk, 1953). Diplomirala je na Visoki šoli za glasbo (Mahačkala, 1972), nato na Astrahanskem konservatoriju (1978), sledil je podiplomski študij na Ruski glasbeni akademiji Gnessin (Moskva, 1988) in doktorski študij na Ruskem inštitutu za kulturologijo (Moskva, 1999). Zagovarjala je dve disertaciji: o ruski poroki (1989) in kulturi povolških Nemcev (2011). Je izredna profesorica na konservatoriju v Astrahanu, doktorski študij umetnosti (2011). Kot etnomuzikologinja, režiserka in zbirateljica ljudskih pesmi je od leta 1974 izvedla 68 terenskih ekspedicij v 400 naseljih in zbrala avdio-video arhiv v obsegu 198.000 enot.

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Historical Power Imbalances and the Branding of *Vannam* Dances as Sinhalese Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Vannam is a genre of music and dance associated with the Sinhalese ethnicity of Sri Lanka. This article takes the historical development of *vannam* as a lens to focus on inter-ethnic cultural politics in Sri Lanka and its postcolonial contexts, offering nuance to widespread ideas about cultural heritage and decoloniality.

Keywords: Sri Lanka, *vannam*, ethnic cultural heritage, decoloniality

IZVLEČEK

Vannam je zvrst glasbe in plesa, povezana s singalsko etnično skupnostjo na Šrilanki. V članku uporablja avtor zgodovinski razvoj *vannama* kot lečo, s katero pogled osredotoči na medetnično kulturno politiko na Šrilanki in njene postkolonialnih kontekste, s čimer odkriva nove odtenke v široko razširjenih idejah o kulturni dediščini in dekolonialnosti.

Ključne besede: Šrilanka, *vannam*, ljudska kulturna dediščina, dekolonializem

Introduction

> *"Vannam" is the Tamil-language version of the* [Sanskrit] *term "varna"* ["color"]. […] *Those who believe that* [Sinhalese] *"up-country" dance* [which includes vannam dances] *is purely a Tamil creation try to present their idea as a fact, without doing any historical research. If the Sinhalese have been able to create an independent language, literature, and a tradition of painting and sculpture, why couldn't they have also invented*

> *an independent music or dance tradition?* […] *Whenever the ancient Sinhalese saw that they could draw influence from Indian* [i.e., Tamil] *culture, they were quick to take it in abundance. However, whatever they borrowed, they gave it a national* [i.e., Sinhalese] *appearance and turned it into their own creation. This is how it happened with Tamil "varnam" as well. They* [the Sinhalese] *did not blindly imitate Tamil "varnam". They took only the rhythm* [from Tamil varnam] *and created Sinhala-language "vannam" to match their own environment, based on national* [i.e., Sinhalese] *and religious* [i.e., Buddhist] *texts.*
>
> J. E. Sedaraman (1964, 108–109)[1]

The genre of music and dance known as *vannam* is commonly associated with the majority Sinhalese ethnicity of Sri Lanka. While conventional narratives nominally acknowledge the genre's historical connections to the country's minority Tamil ethnicity, these narratives often minimize the Tamil contribution to that of initial inspiration. This tendency is evident in the above epigraph, which is an explanation of *vannam* by the Sinhalese hereditary ritualist J. E. Sedaraman, translated from Sinhala.

Sedaraman's statement is far from a neutral historical account. Rather, its defensive tone, its dismissal of the Tamil history of *vannam*, its implied conflation of the Sinhalese ethnicity with the entire island-nation of Sri Lanka, and its implied conflation of the Tamil ethnicity with the subcontinental nation of India (despite Tamils having a historical presence in both Sri Lanka and South India) are all symptomatic of the broader inter-ethnic tensions that have plagued Sri Lanka throughout the twentieth century.[2] This article takes the historical development of *vannam* as a lens to focus on inter-ethnic cultural politics in Sri Lanka and its postcolonial contexts, offering nuance to widespread ideas about cultural heritage and decoloniality.

Historiography of Sinhalese and Tamil Ethnicities in Sri Lanka

Humans have lived in settlements on the island of Sri Lanka for millennia. Archeological evidence suggests that populations from outside the island have throughout history regularly passed through or settled there (De Silva 1981). Many of those who settled as immigrants became assimilated as speakers of the Sinhala language (Roberts 1982; Obeyesekere 2019). While other immigrant groups assimilated with speakers of the Tamil language (Tambiah 1986), some groups spoke both languages. In many parts of Sri Lanka, speakers of Sinhala and Tamil likely lived in close interaction with each other.

Around the fifth century CE, Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka wrote down the chronicle known as *Mahāvaṃsa*. Possibly in response to the threat of invasions from South India at the time (De Silva 1981), the chronicle conflates the

1 Translation by the author. The words in square brackets are implied in Sedaraman's text.

2 Sri Lanka became independent from the British Empire in 1948.

unity of the island of Sri Lanka, Buddhist religious practices, and speakers of the Sinhala language. While written in the scriptural language of Pali, the stories of the *Mahāvaṃsa* would likely have in subsequent centuries been retold and interpreted in vernacular Sinhala oral tradition (Deegalle 2006, 8).

Sometime between the fifth and twentieth centuries, there arose a collective consciousness regarding the existence of a Sinhalese race; there is no scholarly consensus about exactly when, how, and in which parts of Sri Lanka this Sinhalese ethnic consciousness came to be. And at some point in history, the foundational story of the *Mahāvaṃsa* chronicle – about North Indian immigrants colonizing Sri Lanka back in the fifth century BCE – became retrospectively understood and invoked as the origin of a singular Sinhalese race.[3]

Speakers of the Tamil language have also lived in Sri Lanka for centuries; scholars today also disagree about when and how the idea of a Tamil ethnic consciousness arose.[4] Contemporary ideas of Tamil ethnonationalism have roots in the north of Sri Lanka, where the population lived largely isolated from Tamil-speaking communities in other parts of Sri Lanka and in South India prior to the twentieth century (Indrapala 2011).[5]

While historians may never agree about exactly when Sri Lankan peoples became conscious of having ethnic identities, it is apparent that, at least by 1948 (when Sri Lanka became independent from the British empire), the ethnic groups of the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority had become defined as being mutually exclusive (Reed 2010, 130). For a variety of reasons – such as the growth of Sinhalese Buddhist ethnonationalist politics and the assumption that Tamils had benefited unfairly under British colonial rule – anti-Tamil hostility grew among segments of the politically self-conscious Sinhalese population, resulting in ethnic riots and retaliations that led to the start of a full-blown civil war in the 1980s (Daniel 1996).

The attitude of defensiveness evident in this article's epigraph (from Sedaraman 1964) is a product of a collective worldview that has persisted among many Sinhalese. This worldview – which partially accounts for hostile attitudes towards Tamils – has been characterized by anthropologist Stanley Tambiah as "the 'motivated' view of a beleaguered majority, a majority with a minority complex with regard to India" (1986, 58). In other words, even though Sinhalese constitute the ethnic majority in Sri Lanka, according to Tambiah, their collective actions appear to stem from a feeling of inferiority in relation to the much larger mainland of India, which also includes Tamils

3 For contrasting views in on these topics, see Gunawardana (1979), Dharmadasa (1992), Roberts (2004), and Obeyesekere (2019).

4 See, for example, Daniel (1996) and Indrapala (2011).

5 For context, in the modern South Indian State of Tamil Nadu, Tamil speakers form the majority of the population; of course, this couldn't be any other way, given that the State boundaries in India were drawn along linguistic lines in 1956.

as part of its population. Indeed, as the American diplomat Howard Wriggins observed in 1960,

> *Many Sinhalese* […] *consider their culture fragile, requiring unusual defences if it is to survive in proximity to the vigorous Tamil culture* […] *Politicians have sought favour in their constituencies by urging the use of state funds to promote cultural revival* […] *Cultural revival, particularly among the Sinhalese, led them to identify the greatness of* [Sri] *Lanka with the Sinhalese alone and to feel that their culture was threatened by the presumably more vigorous Tamil.* (1960, 240–241, quoted in Reed 2010, 137)

This state-sponsored cultural revival referred to by Wriggins included support for dance and music (Reed 2010, 133–134). The implicit ideology of cultural identity promoted through the revivals formed the socio-historical context for Sedaraman's attempt to position *vannam* as uniquely Sinhalese cultural heritage (and by extension, Sri Lankan national culture), vis-à-vis the Tamil art forms that had been revived and reformed in northern Sri Lanka and South India earlier in the twentieth century (ibid., 131–132).[6] In what follows, I summarize a version of *vannam* history that I have detailed elsewhere (Peiris 2024) and address its implications for contextualizing inter-ethnic relationships and cultural heritage in Sri Lanka.

The Multi-Ethnic Roots of *Vannam* in Paracolonial Central Sri Lanka[7]

Sinhala *vannam* poetry is said to have originated in the royal court of the kingdom of Kandy in central Sri Lanka during the seventeenth century (Reed 2010, 87), a time when there was an influx of influential South Indian immigrants to the kingdom of Kandy and to the royal court (Obeyesekere 2017). The Kandyan royal court likely featured poets from South India singing Tamil poetry (Donaldson 2001, 37–38); poetry performances would probably have included an introduction sung with non-lexical vocables, and verses with Tamil words that match the syllable patterning of the introductory vocables (Kulatillake 1982; Peiris 2024). This concept – of Tamil poetry being composed according to syllabic templates – has a long history in South India dating back to the eighth century and can still be found in performances by folk musicians in South India (Wolf 2009, 250–255). Historical Tamil texts sometimes refer to this style of versification as "*vannam*" (Rajam 1992, 207–214).

Similarly structured performances of Tamil language poetry were held in high regard in the eighteenth-century Kandyan court; Sinhala-speaking poets soon assimilated this concept of creating poetry based on templates of

6 As Reed notes, "Sedaraman's writings, like those of other dancers in this period, understandably reflect the prevalent mood and concerns of the Sinhala cultural renaissance" (2010, 139).

7 The term "paracolonial," first articulated by Newell (2011), refers to phenomena that took place alongside or beyond the colonial.

vocables, as evident from the written Sinhala poetry that survives from that era, which feature introductory verses of vocables (Kulatillake 1982, 30–38).[8] Some of these Sinhala poems are labelled as *vannam*, which is (as mentioned earlier) the Tamil word for this style of versification. Such practices of royal poetry performance likely spread to the courts of the Kandyan aristocracy in the countryside surrounding the kingdom of Kandy (Bandar 1908, 130).

The fall of the Kandyan monarchy to the British Empire in 1815 saw the end of royal patronage of professional poets. However, the style of versification known as *vannam* – now associated with Sinhala lyrics – was picked up by performers of the ritualist caste known as *beravā* (Peiris 2024), who in the nineteenth century had been called upon to use their skills in dancing, drumming, and singing to entertain aristocrats (Reed 2010, 84). Rather than employ their sacred ritual repertoire for entertainment, the ritualists chose to use Sinhala *vannam* poems as the basis for creating new entertaining dance pieces, which also became known as *vannam* (Peiris 2024). By this time, the Tamil language inspiration for Sinhala *vannam* versification was likely no longer recognized.

As part of the anti-colonial cultural revival movements of the first half of the twentieth century, elite Sri Lankan nationalists attempted to reinvent the performance practices of the Kandyan ritualists as Sri Lankan national cultural heritage (Reed 2010, 128). Suddenly, the hitherto marginalized lower-caste Sinhala-speaking ritualists were grouped together with the imagined community of the broader Sinhalese ethnicity, and these ritualists' formerly esoteric arts (if not the ritualists themselves) were celebrated as authentic Sinhalese culture (ibid., 156). No acknowledgement was made of historical connections between Sinhalese and Tamil cultural practices. These newly prestigious Sinhalese art forms were subsequently disseminated through the Sri Lankan public school system, having been rebranded as national cultural heritage that could represent Sri Lanka on the world stage (ibid., 140–141). The hereditary ritualist Sedaraman was recruited as part of this nationalist mission to promote Sinhalese cultural heritage; disregarding the protests of some of his ritualist relatives, he published a treatise about performing Kandyan dance and drumming titled *Uḍaraṭa Nāṭum Kalāva* [The Art of Up-Country Dance], which included many verses of esoteric ritualist poetry (ibid., 138–139). Sedaraman's defensive quote about *vannam* poetry being primarily a product of Sinhalese (rather than Tamil) innovation is from this treatise, which also includes the lyrics of several Sinhala language *vannam* poems. Historical evidence suggests that the tradition of *vannam* versification previously involved the frequent composition/extemporization of new verses (Kulatillake 1982); however, following the publication of Sedaraman's treatise in 1964, the texts of Sinhala

8 For comparisons of historical poetic structures, see Kulatillake (1982) (in Sinhala) and Peiris (2024).

vannam poems have become codified as a canonical repertoire that is sung to accompany exhibition dance performances.

This historiography of *vannam* in Sri Lanka, with its gradual disavowal of the historical intertwining of Sinhala and Tamil language cultural production, in many ways mirrors the growing polarisation of the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnicities in Sri Lanka over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[9] It also serves as a caution regarding the complexities of trying to untangle and interpret historical power imbalances, inter-communal relations, cultural appropriations, and cultural inheritances, given how social demarcations (such as caste, ethnicity, and class) and ethical norms within Sri Lankan society have been in constant flux during and beyond the colonial era.

The localized history of *vannam* narrated above did not happen in isolation from the global politics. Rather, the eighteenth-century Kandyan kingdom in central Sri Lanka (in which Sinhala *vannam* versification originated) operated at a time when the coast of Sri Lanka was governed by Dutch (and later British) imperialist interests. When *vannam* dancing originated as entertainment for rural Kandyan aristocracy during the nineteenth century, the entire island was governed by the British crown.[10] And in the early twentieth century, cultural revival movements were driven by strong anti-colonial, nationalist imperatives, which spawned a set of ideologies that resonated throughout the decades following political independence. Accounting for these paracolonial, colonial, and postcolonial contexts of Sri Lankan *vannam* evolution, the following section explores the implications of these histories for discourses of decoloniality.

A South Asianist Perspective on Decoloniality

Consistent with the narrative of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, which is reproduced in many Sri Lankan history books, it is commonly believed that the Sinhalese race subjugated the local indigenous peoples and colonized Sri Lanka in the fifth century B.C.E. This tale of settler colonialism is generally portrayed in a positive light, serving to legitimize the dominance of today's Sinhalese ethnicity in Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic landscape. In contrast, Sri Lankan school textbooks commonly portray the European colonizers who governed Sri Lanka during the Age of Imperialism, i.e., the Portuguese (1505–1658), Dutch (1658–1796), and British (1796–1948), as exploitative invaders who were eventually expelled from the country. Given these contrasting perspectives on colonizing, which depends on when and by whom it was done, what might efforts at decolonising

9 For more details about twentieth-century ethnic politics in Sri Lanka, see Wickramasinghe (2006).

10 Indeed, *vannam* likely constituted part of the repertoire of dances that were showcased for European audiences (Mantillake 2018, 177).

look like on the island of Sri Lanka? This question is timely in today's global academic environment, where "decolonisation" – while often cited as a worthy aspiration – does not have a clear definition or an agreed-upon method.[11] To address this, I return once again to the history of *vannam* performance in Sri Lanka, this time focusing on the percussion patterns associated with the genre.

Today, traditional musics such as *vannam* are often accompanied by drum patterns played on the *gata beraya* and ostinato time-keeping patterns played on small cymbals, for example as heard in the linked recording.[12] Sculptural and written evidence attests to the use of small cymbals in the twelfth century (Kulatillake [1974] 2012, 122), prior to the arrival of European imperialists in the sixteenth century; however, the time-keeping cymbal patterns heard today more likely came to Sri Lanka from South India in the eighteenth century. While the coast of Sri Lanka was governed by the Dutch East India company in the eighteenth century, the kingdom of Kandy in the interior of the island was ruled by kings of South Indian descent who imported court musicians from South India (Kulatillake [1974] 2012, 259–262). As noted earlier, many genres of Sinhalese traditional musics – including *vannam* – have roots in the poetry repertoires documented at the Kandyan royal court. Assuming (as I suggest) that the introduction of cymbal-based time-keeping to the musical repertoires of central Sri Lanka did indeed happen independently of European reach during the time of Dutch rule, it could be usefully characterized as a paracolonial musical development.

As I have argued elsewhere (Peiris 2018), prior to the 1950s, hereditary musicians defined and categorized these time-keeping cymbal patterns simply according to the number of cymbal strokes in an ostinato cycle. In this understanding, rhythm cycles that had the same number of cymbal strokes, but different pulse quantities, were all considered to be the same rhythm cycle.[13] In the post-independence 1950s, elite Sinhalese nationalist musicologists such as Vincent Somapala and W. B. Makulloluwa reinterpreted the above-mentioned cymbal patterns as distinct musical meters that were defined by the number of isochronous pulses within a cycle, rather than by the number of cymbal

11 Here, I take "decolonising" to refer specifically to processes of decentering and remapping forms of knowledge associated with colonial administrations, in the context of academic research and public historical knowledge. I acknowledge that this decoloniality is different from interventions that strive to restructure educational syllabi, diversify human representation in institutions, and lobby for the repatriation of resources, although I believe that these other approaches will be most meaningful when accompanied by a historicizing of knowledge structures.

12 The recording linked here (https://youtu.be/3Bc4Y5HDmfI?si=DuCHj8V16q8dLNqO&t=2) features singing and cymbal playing by Chandrakanthi Shilpadhipathi and drumming by Piyasara Shilpadhipathi.

13 For example, a pattern with three cymbal strokes articulating the pulse pattern 2+2+3 would have been considered the same as a pattern with three cymbal strokes articulating the pulse pattern 2+2+4.

strokes. They did this so that they could introduce the specialized knowledge of the marginalized drumming community to public schools – repackaged as national cultural heritage, and because they believed that having a clearly defined musical system constituted a point of national pride. Their motivation for this was inspired in part by anti-colonial educational initiatives happening in North India, and in reaction to what they considered the hegemony of North Indian musicological discourse that was taking root in Sri Lanka.

Given its popularization in the immediate aftermath of the colonial era, can we consider the interpretation of rhythms according to cycles of isochronous pulses to be a uniquely European phenomenon deserving of the label "colonial knowledge"? I suggest that pulse-reckoning in South Asia is in fact an overdetermined musical technique. After all, rhythm structures based on ratios of short durations have been described in Indian treatises since ancient times (Rowell 1992, 67), for example in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* – a Sanskrit theatrical treatise with oral roots dating back to the first century, and in tabular notations from the seventh century (Widdess 1995, 92). Taking a long view of history in South Asia, we can argue that the link between music theoretical rationalization and musical practice appears stronger when the music is associated with centers of power. Examples of such centers of power include the royal palaces of South Asia prior to European imperialism, which patronized artistic performances (Schofield 2010), and the anti-colonial nationalist campaigns of the early twentieth century, which promoted Hindustani and Karnatak music as Indian cultural heritage that is equal in value to European art music (Bakhle 2005; Weidman 2006). Conversely, the need to codify appears less strong when similar music has been performed in vernacular contexts (Manuel 2015). Upon close examination, this history reveals an ongoing ebb and flow between people who theorize music and performers who react to these theories (Simms 1999, 43) even if the grid-like representations of musical rhythm that arose in the context of the European colonial encounter (Kippen 2006) may have had the widest reach and impact.

This in turn leads to a question relevant to my focus on decolonising: what does it mean for knowledge to be vernacular, emic, or indigenous – as opposed to colonial? Consistent with postcolonial theories of hybridity and internalized discourses, I have emphasized the many layers of thought and agency that have contributed to understandings of rhythm in present-day South Asia, thereby complicating essentialist ideas of "insider" and "outsider" points of view. Today's perceived antagonism between postcolonial and decolonial intellectual frameworks (Johnson 2020) is in my view an unfortunate one, because, although they emerge from the different socio-historical contexts of post-imperialist South Asia and the settler-colonist Americas, I believe that they complement each other in their efforts to interrogate the historical legacies that continue to perpetuate social inequalities. While I do not presume to speak with authority

on processes of decolonising in the settler-colonist Americas and Australasia, I posit that South Asian history presents useful precedents and cautionaries.

In South Asia, the reclamation and popularization of indigenous knowledges has often been appropriated by ethnonationalist political agendas, in the process silencing claims to equal rights by ethnic minorities and culture bearers of lower social status. For example, in South India, the dance practice known as *sadir*, performed in temples and courts by a hereditary community of female performers, was re-invented in the early twentieth century by upper-caste nationalists as the stage-dance form *bharatanāṭyam* (Allen 1997). *Bharatanāṭyam* was positioned as a classical art form that represented the new country of India as a historical Hindu nation, at the same time that the hereditary performers were outlawed because of their supposedly degenerate lifestyles. As noted earlier, in mid-twentieth-century Sri Lanka, a form of ritual dance that was the prerogative of low-caste male ritualists was reinvented as a national stage-dance form representing the cultural heritage of the majority Sinhalese Buddhist ethnicity, while the hereditary performers themselves were further marginalized in society (Reed 2010). In North India, while hereditary Muslim performers have remained the recognized experts in the performance of Hindustani classical music (Neuman 2014), the nationalist revival projects of the early twentieth century that brought this music to the masses have ensured the status of the music as national cultural heritage of India that represents a history of Hinduism (Bakhle 2005).

Considering these histories, it is imperative that future scholarly attempts to decolonise knowledge structures strive to avoid reifying alternative views that might give rise to newer forms of discrimination. This potential risk can be mitigated by regular reflection on the part of researchers about whose ends are being served by scholarly initiatives to decolonise hearts and minds. For example, while it might be true that the system of counting beats in Sri Lankan *vannam* performance is a recent phenomenon inspired by European and North Indian music theories (Peiris 2018, 19–21), preaching this "decolonising" fact to hereditary ritualist musicians in Sri Lanka whose oral tradition knowledge is already marginalized in society may in fact create more epistemic violence than reduce harm. Given the extractive nature already inherent in ethnographic knowledge production, a more ethical approach to decolonising repertoires might involve more focus on repatriating historical recordings to hereditary performers and working to raise the public profile of musician communities whose historical contributions have been under-recognized in conventional narratives.[14]

14 I offer these suggestions in a spirit of solidarity, convinced that all our varied approaches to decolonising can only benefit from an ongoing attitude of reflexivity, accountability, and reciprocity, an acknowledgement of the nuanced thinking required when applying academic theories cross-culturally, and an openness to revising opinions.

Conclusion

This article has presented a historical account of the genre of Sri Lankan *vannan* that differs from conventional Sinhalese-focussed narratives by emphasizing connections with Tamil ethnolinguistic cultural connections and the impact of colonial political contexts. The two topics addressed through this lens, namely, the uncovering of complex histories of inter-ethnic cross-influence and decoloniality, both concern the recognition of historical power imbalances that continue to impact today's cultural landscapes. It is my hope that shining light on the intertwined nature of cultural histories can serve as a step towards more historical accountability and better cross-cultural understanding, and provide a catalyst for open dialogue between groups who believe that their present circumstances stem from past injustices. While our search for historical truths can only ever be partial, I suggest that trying to balance a sensitivity towards the complex nature of historical trajectories with a consideration for the needs of marginalized peoples is an important way in which scholars can strive for a humanism that truly benefits humanity.

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POVZETEK

Zgodovinska neravnovesja moči in označevanje plesov *vannam* za singalsko kulturno dediščino

Vannam je zvrst glasbe in plesa, ki jo običajno povezujejo s singalsko etnično skupnostjo Šrilanke. V članku uporablja avtor zgodovinski razvoj vannama kot lečo, s katero pogled osredotoči na medetnično kulturno politiko na Šrilanki in njene postkolonialnih kontekste, s čimer odkriva nove odtenke v široko razširjenih idejah o kulturni dediščini in dekolonialnosti. Jezika Singalcev in Tamilcev sta se razvila v zadnjih dveh tisočletjih in med govorci teh jezikov na Šrilanki se je sčasoma razvila zavest o pripadnosti (večini) singalski ali (manjšinski) tamilski etnični skupnosti. Vendar pa je kulturna ustvarjalnost teh dveh skupnosti imela stoletja dolgo skupno zgodovino. Priznanje te skupne zgodovine je v nasprotju s postkolonialnimi etnonacionalističnimi pripovedmi, ki zvrsti glasbe in plesa pripisujejo določenim etničnim skupinam. Članek je poskus revizije zgodovine *vannama*. Medtem ko ga ustaljene pripovedi prikazujejo kot edinstveno singalsko stvaritev, ki jo je navdihnila glasba južnoindijskega izvora, tukaj predstavljena zgodovina nakazuje kompleksno interakcijo med tamilskimi jezikovnimi oblikami verzifikacije, izvedenimi na kraljevem dvoru Šrilanke v osemnajstem stoletju, singalsko poezijo, oblikovano po tej poeziji, in ljudske obredne tradicije plesa in bobnanja. Ustaljene pripovedi so prikazane kot zgodovinsko pogojeni rezultat kulturnih oživitev sredi dvajsetega stoletja, ki so skušale vzpostaviti šrilanško nacionalistično zgodovino singalske kulturne produkcije. To opozarja na težavnost poskusov razpletanja in interpretacije zgodovinskih neravnovesij moči, odnosov med skupnostmi, kulturnih prisvajanj in kulturne dediščine, če upoštevamo obseg sprememb družbenih razmejitev (kot so kaste, etnična pripadnost in razred) in etičnih norm v šrilanški družbi med kolonialno dobo in po njej.

Članek ponuja tudi pogled na težnjo po dekolonizaciji, pri čemer se opira na zgodovino kolonializma in postkolonializma v Južni Aziji. Pri tem se osredotoča na način, kako so bile v poskusih postkolonialnih kulturnih oživitev tolkalne spremljave, povezane z izvedbo *vannam*, na novo konceptualizirane kot ritmi na metričnih vzorcih. Ker so takšne konceptualizacije povezane s kolonialno glasbeno teorijo kot tudi s starejšimi načini južnoazijskega diskurza, se postavljajo vprašanja o tem, kaj točno lahko razumemo kot dekolonizacijo in komu bi lahko koristila.

Zgodovina *vannama* na Šrilanki služi kot eden od številnih primerov iz Južne Azije, v katerih so se obnavljanja in popularizacije domorodnih znanj polastili etnonacionalistične politični programi, pri čemer so utišali zahteve po enakih pravicah etničnih manjšin in kulturnih nosilcev nižjih družbenih slojev. Glede na pretekle izkušnje je nujno, da si bodo prihodnji znanstveni poskusi dekolonizacije struktur znanja poskušali izogibati ponovnemu ustvarjanju alternativnih pogledov, ki bi lahko povzročili nove oblike diskriminacije.

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The Indigenous Historical Trauma of Naga Society and Its Musical Manifestations

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on theories of historical trauma and colonial trauma, this article discusses the cumulative impact of colonial and postcolonial conflict, Christian proselytization, and Westernization on the societies, cultures, and songs of the Nagas, a South Asian ethnic minority inhabiting parts of northeast India and northern Myanmar.

Keywords: Nagaland, Indigenous communities, historical trauma, colonial trauma, music and conflict

IZVLEČEK

Članek na podlagi teorij o zgodovinski travmi in kolonialni travmi razpravlja o kumulativnem vplivu kolonialnih in postkolonialnih konfliktov, krščanskega spreobračanja in zahodnjaštva na družbe, kulture in pesmi Nagov, južnoazijske etnične manjšine, ki naseljuje dele severovzhodne Indije in severni Mjanmar.

Ključne besede: Naga, domorodske skupnosti, zgodovinska travma, kolonjalna travma, glasba in konflikt

Introduction

Around the world, wars and armed disputes have inspired songwriting for centuries (Pettan 2010, 177). Musicologists have studied the interrelations between music and nationalism since the 1940s (Mayer-Serra 1941), and ethnomusicology has thematised music and conflict since the 1960s (Elder

1964; Araújo 1988). In recent decades, studies have looked more closely at the complex relations between music, nationalism, and political movements in many parts of the globe (Revill 2000; Turino 2003; Gong 2008; Bohlman 2011; McDonald 2013; Kuruoğlu and Hamelink 2017). Ethnomusicologists investigated the global dimensions of music and conflict, recognising the ambivalent powers of music "to promote conflict and to further conflict resolution" (O'Connell 2011, 117), as well as "to foster intercultural understanding and to promote intracultural healing through music education and music therapy" (O'Connell 2010, vii). However, there has been little research on music and political conflict in South Asia. Similarly, research on music, trauma, and music therapy has primarily focused on Western countries, the Middle East, and South Africa (Sutton 2002), examining how music can aid in processing traumas caused by military conflict (Bensimon, Amir, and Wolf 2008), xenophobic violence (Sweers 2010), sexual abuse (Amir 2004), and in alleviating posttraumatic stress (Landis-Shack, Heinz, and Bonn-Miller 2017). More recently, ethnomusicologists reflected more broadly upon the ubiquity of human experiences of mourning and trauma (Bohlman 2024). Yet, there is little research on music and trauma in cultures of the Global South, particularly regarding colonial contexts.

Regarding South Asia, scholars have studied the relations between music, nationalism, and conflict in some regions of South Asia in different historical contexts (e.g., Magnusson 2011; Geeti and Habibullah 2016). However, there has been little research on this topic regarding the performing arts of the eight northeastern states of India (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim), which span an area of immense ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. To a significant extent, this lacuna exists because several of these states have been affected by violent insurgencies since Indian independence, which impeded fieldwork in the region for decades.[1] These insurgencies were caused by political campaigns for national independence pursued by different ethnic minorities, including the Nagas, whose history will be addressed later in this article.

For this reason, there is relatively little research on the immense variety of the music and dance traditions of the various Naga communities inhabiting parts of northeast India and northern Myanmar (Kauffmann and Schneider 1960; Mongro 1999; Kaiser 2008, 2013; Marschall 2008; Oppitz 2008; Toy 2010; Longkumer 2023; Kenye 2023; Poske 2023a, 2023b). Only three of these studies dealt with music and conflict to some extent. Sentienla Toy's PhD thesis *The Politics of Affect and Acoustemology in Nagaland* draws "from postcolonial and coloniality theorists to address the transformations of affective qualities

1 Amongst others, there were separatist movements in Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, and Assam after 1947, each of them entailing prolonged military conflicts.

of Naga traditional music and their relation to the colonization of musical perception in the socio-political context of Nagaland" (Toy 2010, v). Secondly, Arkotong Longkumer's book chapter "The sonic guru: Rewben Mashangva, folk, roots and the blues" includes a brief discussion of the pacifist activism of the Tangkhul Naga musician Rewben Mashangva concerning the Indo-Naga conflict (Longkumer 2023, 67–68). Lastly, the author of this article reconnected a Naga family with the wax cylinder recordings of the British colonial administrator-anthropologist John Henry Hutton (1885–1968) who recorded one of their ancestors, resulting in a study examining the continuing influence of colonial interactions on social hierarchy in Nagaland (Poske 2023b). Nonetheless, there has been no research yet on how Naga songs have thematized the cumulative impact of colonial and postcolonial conflict on Naga society, which constitutes the topic of this article.

Music has played a significant role in the political resistance movements of Naga communities for centuries. From the late 15th century onwards, there were eastward intrusions by the Ahom kingdom (1228–1838) into Naga territories. Nagas thematized these encounters in songs about their battles against the Ahoms (Haksar and Hongray 2019, 12–14). Later, Nagas composed songs about colonial incursions into their homelands, their participation in colonial expeditions (Hutton 1921a, 369; 1921b, 363–364), the impact of World War Two on their homelands, Naga nationalist leaders,[2] and factional infighting among Naga nationalist organizations in the late twentieth century, which illustrates the deep impressions that political and military conflict have left on the collective memories of Naga communities. Traditional Naga songs have been transmitted orally for centuries and are still transmitted in this way, particularly in rural regions. Nonetheless, modes of transmission are gradually changing due to better access to education and modernization. Literacy increased significantly in the second half of the twentieth century due to proselytization,[3] and the arrival of the radio and television occurred in the same period, changing modes of music consumption. Today, the internet offers avenues for online music teaching and learning. Moreover, Naga nationalist organizations utilize the internet to disseminate their music, as will be discussed later.

The prolonged suppression of political dissent by the British colonial administration and the Indian state heightens the continuing significance of Naga songs as a means of communication. Thus, the ethnomusicologist Adelaida Reyes reminds us that "music is particularly useful in situations where

2 An example is the song *Zapu Phizo* about the Naga nationalist leader Angami Zapu Phizo (1904–1990): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-B65xB4_Xk, accessed 24 April 2024.

3 Nagaland's literacy rate stood at 10.52 percent in 1951 and 79.6 percent in 2010, compared to 74.04 percent in India overall in 2011 (https://www.ceicdata.com/en/india/literacy-rate/literacy-rate-nagaland and https://knowindia.india.gov.in/profile/literacy.php#:~:text=The%20literacy%20rate%20in%20the,Mizoram%20(91.58%20per%20cent), accessed 19 June 2024).

freedom of expression cannot be taken for granted" because of the capacity of music to hold and transmit meaning "powerfully yet ambiguously" (Reyes 2010, 127). This statement is highly relevant in the context of Naga society, whose civil rights and freedom of expression have been suppressed for long.

Precolonial and Colonial Conflict and the Birth of Naga Nationalism

Today, the term "Naga" is used for a cluster of communities inhabiting the hills of the Indian states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, and parts of the Sagaing Region and Kachin State in northern Myanmar (Fig. 1). But who are "the Nagas", and where did they come from? Late nineteenth-century publications indicate that the communities nowadays known as "Nagas" did not refer to themselves as such till the late nineteenth century (Peal 1889, 91). Rather, they defined their cultural identities through affiliations to home villages or groups of villages (Woodthorpe 1882, 57). This changed when British administrator-anthropologists such as John Henry Hutton (1885–1968) and James Philips Mills (1890–1960) began to use the term "Naga" as a common denominator for the cluster of culturally related communities they encountered in the Naga Hills District and adjoining regions of British India (Kaiser 2008, 233).[4] Specifically, they popularized the use of the term through their monographs, including *The Angami Nagas, With Some Notes on Neighbouring Tribes* (Hutton 1921a), *The Sema Nagas* (Hutton 1921b), *The Lhota Nagas* (Mills 1922), *The Ao Nagas* (Mills 1926), and *The Rengma Nagas* (Mills 1937). These works influenced the cultural self-perception of Naga communities and contributed to an emerging notion of an overarching Naga identity.[5]

Oral tradition suggests that Naga communities migrated centuries ago from the Yunnan region of China to the hills of the Patkai mountain range, which divides northeast India from northern Myanmar (Haksar and Hongray 2019, 11). While the exact period of this migration remains unclear, written chronicles of the Ahom dynasty (1228–1838) indicate that Naga communities lived in the Patkai hills by 1227–28, when they encountered the army of the Ahom King Shukāphā crossing their homelands (Barua 1930, 45). According to the Ahom chronicles, there were confrontations between Ahoms and Nagas during the reign of sixteen of the forty Ahom kings, indicating that intrusions into Naga territories were quite frequent in this period. The earliest of these intrusions (1227–28) later became a historical reference point for Naga nationalist organizations campaigning for national independence in the

4 There are different theories on the origin of the term "Naga" (Poske 2023a, 8).

5 Today, the State Government of Nagaland recognizes fifteen Naga major communities as inhabitants of the state: Angami, Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khiamniungan, Konyak, Lotha, Phom, Pochury, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Tikhir, Yimkhiung, and Zeliang, alongside the non-Naga communities Kuki and Kachari (https://nagaland.gov.in/pages/nagaland-profile, accessed 11 June 2024). Further Naga communities reside in adjoining Indian states and northern Myanmar.

twentieth century, who referred to the thirteenth century as the beginning of Naga nationalism (Haksar and Hongray 2019, 12–14).

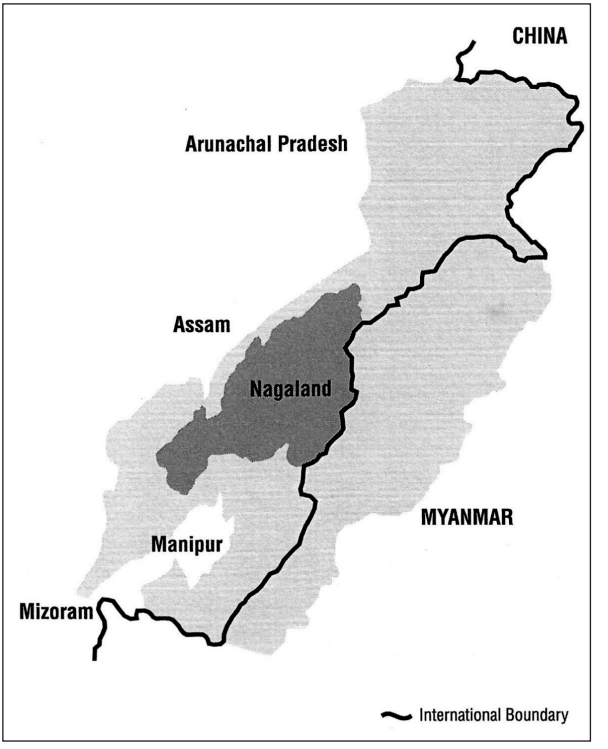

Figure 1: Naga-inhabited areas of India and Myanmar.[6]

The British entered western Nagaland in January 1832 when Captains Jenkins and Pemberton marched with a troop of seven hundred soldiers and eight hundred porters from Manipur to Assam to establish a route of communication between the two colonies. Facing resistance from Angami Nagas, the expedition burnt one of their villages, inflicting casualties on their opponents who were unfamiliar with firearms. The following year, another expedition faced stiff resistance from an alliance of Naga communities, which was nevertheless defeated. In response to Naga raids of tea valley estates and attacks on British allies, the British then conducted ten punitive expeditions between 1839 and 1851, inflicting considerable damage and suffering on the Nagas but without the desired effect of preventing their raiding (Moffatt Mills 1969, 114–141). During these expeditions, the British killed resisting Nagas, burned

6 Shimray 2005, 23.

their villages, and forced survivors to escape into the jungle (Verrier 1969). The British then tried to control the Nagas by restricting their access to Assamese markets, which was similarly unsuccessful. Finally, the British created the Naga Hills District as part of the Assam Province in 1866 and subjugated the Angami territory of western Nagaland by military force. In the following decades, they gradually expanded the district eastwards and secured control over the whole region of present-day Nagaland by the 1940s, a campaign that was "one of the most violent chapters in the history of British conquest of the sub-continent" (Baruah 2005, 104). The British administration squashed political resistance by executing Nagas who challenged their rulership, a prominent example being the Naga leader Jadonang Malangmei (1905–1931) who was jailed and hanged in Imphal (Haksar and Hongray 2019, 18–19). During World War II, the Japanese army invaded northeast India from Burma and battled the British army in the region in 1944, thrusting Naga villages between the frontlines. After several months of fighting inflicting heavy casualties on both sides, British and British Indian troops repulsed the Japanese and forced them to retreat. Today, the Kohima War Cemetery bears testimony to the Allied casualties of the Battle of Kohima.

Under British colonial rule, American Baptist missionaries began to convert Ao Nagas in the early 1870s (Thong 2012, 896). In the following years, Baptists established missions among other Naga communities, which set off the Christianization of Nagaland. The percentage of converts rose to just about 5 percent in Nagaland until 1921, but the following decades saw a steep rise in this number, which reached about 80 percent by 1981 (Eaton 1997, 246).[7] Thus, religious affiliation became a factor that put the Nagas at odds with Hindu-majority India and Buddhist-majority Myanmar after WW2, which was utilized by Naga nationalist outfits in the second half of the twentieth century.

The Indo-Naga Conflict and Indian Domestic Policy Towards the Northeast

After Indian independence, Naga demands for greater political autonomy led to a six-decade conflict between the Naga National Council (NNC) and successor organizations and the Indian state. This conflict was marked by extensive and prolonged human rights abuses by the Indian military forces (Iralu 2017 [2000]; Nuh and Lasuh 2016, 187–192), who punished civilians for supporting Naga insurgents by destroying their villages, making them refugees at home and abroad. These human rights abuses were particularly pronounced in 1959–60 when the Indian administration pursued the infamous policy of

7 About 88 per cent of Nagaland's population followed the Christian religion in 2011 (Census of India 2011) (https://censusindia.gov.in/census.website/data/census-tables, accessed 16 January 2024).

"grouping" in retribution for the logistic support that Naga villages provided to the NNC. In this period, the Indian army systematically torched Naga villages, randomly killed civilians, and forced entire village populations to march into internment camps, where army personnel subjected them to dehumanising acts of mental and physical torture, including food and sleep deprivation, forced labour for the sake of psychological humiliation, corporal punishment, and mock executions.[8] In a failed attempt to appease Naga nationalist demands for greater political autonomy, the Indian Government carved Nagaland out of Assam in 1962, making it a separate state of India in 1963. Nonetheless, the Indo-Naga conflict continued, with Naga insurgents travelling to Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) and China to receive training and weaponry for their military operations (Lintner 2011, chap. 5).

In 1975, members of Naga underground organisations signed the Shillong Accord of 1975, which obliged them to lay down their arms and accept the Constitution of India. However, some Naga underground factions rejected the Accord, leading to the foundation of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in 1980. Banking on the fact that Nagaland had become a Christian-majority state by then, the NSCN resumed the struggle for Naga independence under the slogan "Nagaland for Christ" (Lintner 2011, chap. 6), formulating claims for a sovereign Naga state called "Nagalim" ["Land of the Nagas"] or "Kuknalim" ["Land of Victory"], covering all Naga-inhabited regions of northeast India and northern Myanmar. In 1988, the NSCN split into the NSCN-IM and NSCN-K, named after their leaders Isak Chishi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah (NSCN-IM) and Shangwang Shangyung Khaplang (NSCN-K), who disagreed on the feasibility of negotiations with the Indian Government (Shimray 2005, 199–200). The Indo-Naga conflict persisted, with NSCN-IM and NSCM-K resuming their struggle for an independent Nagaland from the India-Myanmar border region. Censorship and persecution continued to silence Naga voices, while military violence and factional infighting caused Nagas to emigrate abroad, including to the USA, UK, Thailand, and Australia (Sanyü 2018). Since the late 1990s, cease-fire and peace agreements between insurgent groups and the Indian Government have reduced armed violence significantly. In Myanmar (then Burma), successive military governments fought against Kachin[9] and Naga insurgents since the 1960s in the north of the country, leading to the exodus of Nagas to neighbouring India. To resolve these and other ethnic conflicts that have shaken Myanmar since independence, the National Convention of Myanmar included insurgent groups in consultation processes when drafting the third constitution of the

8 In April 2023, I talked to a Sumi woman who experienced these things in an internment camp in the district of Zunheboto in Nagaland between 1959–60.

9 The Kachin people are an ethnic minority inhabiting parts of northern Myanmar, northeast India, and southwest China.

country in the 2000s, leading to the creation of the Naga Self-Administered Zone (NSAZ) in the western part of the Sagaing Region in 2008.

As a result of the Indo-Naga conflict, special legislation remains in force in Nagaland and parts of adjoining Indian states in the form of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) of 1958, which gives the Indian military far-reaching powers to arrest without warrant, shoot to kill, search houses, stop and search vehicles, and destroy hide-outs of suspects while providing army personnel legal immunity. In this way, the Act provides a legal justification for the Indian government to maintain a highly militarized presence in Nagaland and northeast India to protect the extractive natural resources policies pursued by the Indian Government in the northeast, which include oil drilling and coal mining (Kikon 2019). These policies have led to deforestation and environmental degradation, threatening the traditional lifestyles of Naga communities whose livelihoods depend on traditional agricultural practices such as *jhum* (slash and burn) cultivation and foraging (Kikon 2024). These adverse effects on the lives of Naga communities are likely to exacerbate through the amendment of the Forest Conservation Amendment Act passed by the Indian parliament in 2023, which includes a provision to exclude from environmental protection forest lands located within 100 km of the international border, a geographical expanse covering more than three-quarters of Nagaland.

Nonetheless, Indian domestic policy also includes legislative tools to provide socio-economic support to Indigenous communities such as the Nagas. One such instrument is the Scheduled Tribes Order of 1950, allocating special quotas in education and employment to members of the so-called "scheduled tribes", including all Naga communities. While the law supports the integration of these population groups into Indian society, it also perpetuates notions of backwardness associated with the term "tribe", a category of ethnic classification introduced to South Asia during the British period, when it was used for administrative purposes but never clearly defined (Béteille 1986, 299). Thus, the continued use of this term in South Asia went along with a perpetuation of paternalistic attitudes towards ethnic minorities rooted in "nineteenth-century European views of non-western peoples, particularly those formalized in classic anthropological assumptions of unilinear social evolutionism from a state of 'savagery' or 'barbarism' to that of 'civilization'" (van Schendel 1992, 102). Thus, notions persist in South Asia that "tribal" hill peoples are "backward and childlike, and therefore need to be protected, educated, and disciplined by those who are more advance socially" (ibid., 103). As a result, Nagas and other northeastern ethnic minorities face racial discrimination in India because of their East Asian looks (Kamei 2017). More subtle forms of discrimination exist, too, including because of the eating and cooking habits of internal migrants from the northeast, whose food is labelled as smelly and dirty according to Hindu upper caste concepts of contamination, filth, and hygiene (Kikon 2022).

These prejudices have also influenced how Indian music and dance scholars have written about Naga performing arts, often drawing on colonial sources rather than conducting fieldwork in the northeast. For example, Kapila Vatsyayan speaks of "types of sound patterns with a repetitive refrain of Ho-Ho" in the context of Naga vocal music (Vatsyayan 1976, 84), a characterization seemingly based on Hutton's descriptions of Angami and Sumi Naga singing (cf. Hutton 1921a, 90; 1921b, 84, 113–114, 154). Moreover, there are incorrect statements about Naga music, such as the assertion that "[t]here are no string or wind instruments" (Vatsyayan 1976, 84). Other publications feature generalizing and derogatory statements about "tribals". Thus, Ragini Devi states that "[t]he folk dances and songs of the peasants, hill folk and aboriginal tribal peoples bring happiness and recreation to their simple communal life" (Devi 2002 [1972], 181), while Shovana Narayan ascribes "a very spartan and primitive way of life" to "the tribals" (Narayan 2004, 10). Such statements echo how British colonial anthropologists portrayed the lives of ethnic minorities as "primitive" (e.g., Hutton 1921a, 37) and conveniently ignore the modernization processes that have significantly altered the lives of South Asian ethnic minorities. In this way, Indian musicologists continue to assign the music and dance traditions of these ethnic minorities a low rank in the supposed development of South Asian performing arts from so-called primitive music and dance, over folk music and dance, to Indian classical music and dance (Barthakur 2003; Deogaonkar and Deogaonkar 2003), applying evolutionary paradigms of twentieth-century Indian musicology (Gosvami 1957; Deodhar 1966; Prajnanananda 1979; Gautam 1993 [1989]) rooted in outdated theories of comparative musicology about the presumed cultural evolution of music worldwide (Sachs 1943).

Despite these misrepresentations, Indian cultural policy also includes endeavours to promote the performing arts of northeastern ethnic minorities as part of India's cultural diversity, amongst others through the annual music festival "The Octave – Festival of the North East", introduced in 2006, showcasing cultural heritage of the northeast in different parts of the country every year. Moreover, there are annual events like the Ziro Music Festival in the Ziro valley of Arunachal Pradesh, featuring Indian artists performing Hindustani and Carnatic music, performers from the northeast, and bands from abroad, thereby contributing to cultural exchange. Some artists from the northeast have also been awarded civil honours, such as the Tangkhul Naga musician Rewben Mashangva who received the prestigious Padma Shri award from the Government of India in 2021.[10] These developments illustrate that Indian cultural policy aims to support the integration of northeastern ethnic minorities

10 Amongst others, Mashangva composed songs calling for Indo-Naga reconciliation, which may have contributed to the award (Longkumer 2023, 67–68).

into Indian society by promoting their performing arts as part of the cultural diversity of India.

The Indigenous Historical Trauma of Naga Society

The anthropologist Jelle J. P. Wouters points out that much of the existing literature on the Indo-Naga conflict pays "virtually no attention to the dialectical interactions between the Naga Movement and Naga society, to the particularistic state-society relations that protracted conflict and capricious violence produces, and to the wider consequences and carry-overs of conflict on the fabric of Naga society and political life" (Wouters 2018, xiv). Yet these consequences are felt by the population. A study found that "[t]he vast majority of the women interviewed [in Nagaland] were of the opinion that moral values had deteriorated in Naga society because of the prolonged conflict situation, often leading to substance abuse, absence of respect for traditions and elders, corruption and high cost of living due to artificial inflation, disrespect for law and order etc." (Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research 2011, 20). It also highlighted that "[v]ery little by way of documentation exists especially of issues like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD], the links between trafficking, drug and substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and conflict, or the escalation of domestic violence and sexual abuse in areas affected by armed conflict" (12).

Research from around the world points towards the causal connections between military conflict, mental health issues, and substance abuse in conflict-ridden regions (Branas et al. 2013; Lai 2014; Bahati et al. 2023). Similarly, studies examining the links between military conflict and mental health among Nagas found causal connections between the witnessing of military violence and post-traumatic stress disorder (Chasie 2005, 263). Moreover, there is a lack of role models in Naga society, leading to identity crises and lack of self-esteem among the younger generation (ibid.). Yet social stigma often impedes the addressing of mental health issues (Sophie 2019). Moreover, militarization has increased incidences of sexual violence against Naga women (Kikon 2015). Regarding substance abuse, a study from 2019 found that there were 4.7 % cannabis users and 6.5 % opioid users among the surveyed population of Nagaland (10 to 75-year-olds) (Ambekar et al. 2019), not least because the state is located close to the Golden Triangle that covers northeastern Myanmar, northwestern Thailand and northern Laos, one of the largest opium-producing areas of the world. Moreover, alcoholism is an issue in Naga society, including among women (Koza 2018). These studies suggest that prolonged military conflict had a profound impact on Naga society, leading to mental health issues, domestic violence, and addiction problems.

The sociological theory of 'historical trauma' offers a useful framework to investigate these phenomena. The concept was first posited by the Native

American social worker Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart to describe the cumulative and intergenerational effects of violence inflicted on the Native American community of the Lakotas (Brave Heart 1998). It has been defined as "a collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group identity or affiliation — ethnicity, nationality, and religious affiliation", and as resulting from "the legacy of numerous traumatic events a community experiences over generations", encompassing "the psychological and social responses to such events" (Evans-Campbell 2008, 320). Historical trauma has led to mental and physical health issues and addiction problems among North American Indigenous peoples (Nutton and Fast 2015) and Indigenous populations worldwide (Mitchell, Arsenau, and Thomas 2019, 76). These facts are relevant to our understanding of Naga society, which has been impacted by colonial occupation, prolonged military violence, denials of national sovereignty, forced displacement, and loss of traditional culture through proselytization, Westernization, and modernization, like North American and many other Indigenous peoples around the globe. Correspondingly, Naga society has been affected by cultural identity crises and mental and physical health issues, as outlined above. These topics also appear in Naga songs on colonial and postcolonial conflict, which underscores the relevance of the concept of 'historical trauma' as a theoretical framework for examining traditional and contemporary Naga performing arts.

Remembering the Past: Naga Songs on Colonial and Postcolonial Conflict

Traditional and modern Naga songs reflect diversely how prolonged political conflict and military violence have inflicted historical traumas on the collective memory of Naga communities. In this section, I discuss three song examples from the colonial and postcolonial periods, which illustrate how historical conflicts have engraved themselves in the collective memories of Naga communities, and how they have processed the resulting collective historical traumas musically. Moreover, the examples shed light on how the different socio-cultural backgrounds of composers and performers have influenced the textual themes of their songs, their choices of music styles, modes of presentation, and means of musical transmission and dissemination. A well-known example from the colonial period is "*Khwünomia Geizo*" ["*Poem of Khonoma*"], an Angami song about British colonial incursions into Naga territories (Sanyü 1996, 149; Haksar and Hongray 2019, 15). The German ethnologist Thomas Kaiser recorded the song in the village of Khonoma in 2004.[11] According to

11 Thomas Kaiser recorded songs and oral traditions of various Naga communities in Nagaland, Assam, and Manipur between 2004 and 2011 (Kaiser 2008, 2013). The Ethnographic Museum Zurich now holds his collection of over 2000 recordings.

Kaiser's recording participants, the song was probably composed around 1879 during the second Anglo-Angami war. Written in the Tenyidie language of the Angami community, the song is still performed in the village of Khonoma today. Musically, the rendition recorded by Kaiser has an austere character with three male singers performing the song at a slow speed without instrumental accompaniment, singing in parallel fifths, following the traditional musical conventions of their village community. An English translation of the lyrics is given below:

***Khwünomia geizo* ["*Poem of Khonoma*"]**

From unknown valleys far beyond the earth
rather ghost-like humans came,
carrying all kinds of children's toys.[12]
At the time of new grass sprouting, they came in their unstoppable anger,
they attacked the neighbouring villages, they spied upon our own village —
stop it, go away!
The place up on that ridge — ha!
Next to the spirit [*terhomia*] it's us who are the heirs of this land —
never leave and give our village to others, village youngsters!
Our villagers are good, doing better than our neighbours:
many children are born, there is plenty of rice, too, wine, too.
Our villagers perform feasts of merit [*chü metsia*], so console yourselves (even though we go to war).
Our clans do well, they do good work,
they never ponder about anything, easily they are joking;
let epidemics and plague be diverted from our villagers.
let them take the vehicular road back to their unknown valleys,
let our enemy be the losers;
let our luck be strong so we can chase and kill the enemy
at the earliest, and let the time of mourning end.

Song performed by Michael Sophi, Mekhviekhotso and Koto Yalie, recorded by Thomas Kaiser in Khonoma on 21 September 2004. Translation by Rokongulie Meyase and Thomas Kaiser (Kaiser 2022, 43), with amendments by author.

According to Kaiser's informants, "[t]he song was composed by Yaniü, an old woman who lay sick in bed and couldn't leave the village when the British attacked" (Kaiser 2022, 43). As such, the song testifies to how a physically incapacitated individual supported the resistance of her community against foreign

12 The composer had never encountered firearms and hence likened the rifles of the British soldiers to wooden toy sticks that Naga children use for play.

occupation by composing a song to morally support her community members who were able to fight. Significantly, the original Tenyidie lyrics include references to traditional Angami Naga belief and culture, including through the terms *terhomia* ["spirit", "deity"] and *chü metsia* ["feasts of merit"], given in italics in the translation above. Thus, the composer leveraged traditional religious and cultural concepts to support armed resistance against British military forces in a period when Christianity had not yet established itself among the Nagas. The fact that the song has been orally transmitted till today testifies to the traumatic effects of the siege of Khonoma, which etched itself into the collective memory of the village's population.

As Nagaland saw a steep rise in the percentage of converts among its population in the second half of the nineteenth century, political songs of Naga nationalist organizations like the NNC and the NSCN increasingly diverged from traditional singing practices, getting different in terms of musical style and textual content, with Western musical influences and Christian textual themes becoming increasingly prominent. An example of this is the song *Victory to Thee* written by the Tangkhul Naga composer K. Wungchan, accessible on the YouTube channel of the user "Nagalim".[13] The song features an elaborate multi-part choral arrangement with instrumental accompaniment including piano, guitar, drums, and bass, illustrating the influence of Western music genres on Naga nationalist music of the early twenty-first century. Judging from the upload date (4 January 2007), the song was written before the NSCN-IM signed a peace agreement with the Indian Government in 2015. The original English song lyrics are as follows:

Victory to Thee

Verse 1:
Oh come let's sing the victory chorus of Nagalim.
Vibrating through the hills and plains, echo this heroic song,
Raise high the banner of vict'ry,
Let's all sing in joyful spirit
Oh come let's praise and sing in the name of Jehovah.

Chorus:
Sound the trumpet of Victory (trumpet of Vict'ry),
Let the trumpet blow up louder (yes, blow up louder),
Let the victory flag fly higher (the flag fly higher)
With the emblem, peace on the earth,
The rainbow and the guiding star!

13 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-lNYCnu7JQ, accessed 12 June 2024.

Let us bow down to the flag and give our highest honor,
Let's proclaim Victory!

Verse 2:
Oh brave men, women indeed have laid down their lives for it,
Fearless and selfless all but for love of their motherland,
Penned are their names in the Nagas histr'y with indelible ink,
The flame of this spirit shall ever remain aglow.

Chorus

Verse 3:
This motherland, this ancestral land so precious and whole,
Dare who can deprive and alter, our bound'ry of Nagalim,
With God our landmarks and terrains remain forever and ever,
Let us as a Nation sing and praise with one accord.

Chorus

Victory to Thee! Victory to Thee!
Victory to Thee! Victory to Thee!

Joy, Joy, Kuknalim!

Transcription by author, based on YouTube subtitles.

The lyrics blend religious with political themes, corresponding to the NSCN's political ideology that has been characterized as "a mixture of evangelical Christianity and revolutionary socialism" (Lintner 2011, chap. 5). In the song, this blending happens ambiguously through phrases that can be interpreted either religiously or politically (e.g., "sound the trumpet of victory", "the flame of this spirit shall ever remain aglow", "Victory to Thee"). The second verse refers to the victims of the Indo-Naga conflict, praising their sacrifice for the Naga cause. The third and final verse underscores the NSCN's claims for a sovereign Naga state ("Nagalim") with a veiled threat to those opposing its aspired territorial expanse ("Dare who can deprive and alter, our bound'ry of Nagalim"). The song ends with the Nagamese phrase "Joy, Joy, Kuknalim!" ("Long live the country of victory!"), referring to the same aspired state.[14] In this way, the song commemorates the suffering of Nagas during the Indo-Naga conflict and conveys a strongly nationalist sentiment through its lyrics.

14 Significantly, the Indian national anthem ends in a similar way with the words "*jaÿa hē, jaÿa hē*" (Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Section, n.d.).

This sentiment is supported by the videography of the song video, which begins with a frame showing the Naga national flag blowing in the wind (Fig. 2).[15] Subsequently, the song video shows scenes of foot soldiers parading at the Naga Republic Day celebrations of 2006 at Camp Hebron, the headquarters of the NSCN-IM in western Nagaland, a section that is accentuated musically through a military fanfare played on a keyboard with trumpet sound.

Figure 2: Naga national flag blowing in the wind[16]

This is followed by scenes of a mixed military choir performing the song on a stage with a banner on top carrying the bible quote "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Peter 1: 16) (Fig. 3). The choir comprises male and female singers in military uniforms standing behind a group of four women dressed in Western shirts and jacket tops and Tangkhul Naga skirts. At the end, all choir members raise their right fists rhythmically from the phrase "Victory to Thee" onwards. The video concludes with a scene of a meeting of NSCN-IM functionaries, followed by a standing ovation from an applauding military audience

15 The flag epitomizes claims for Naga national sovereignty and remains a controversial topic in India, where it was hoisted in parts of the northeast during the Indian Government's "*har ghar tiraṅga*" campaign that asked citizens to display the Indian tricolour at their homes (Choudhury 2022). Contrastingly, the Naga flag features a stylized rainbow on a light blue background symbolizing the sky with a white Star of Bethlehem in the top left corner representing Christianity.

16 Mirrored image from YouTube song video.

at Hebron camp. Thus, stage choreography and videography merge Christian with nationalist themes like the lyrics. In this way, the video illustrates how the NSCM-IM uses the internet to spread its political messaging musically and visually via online video platforms.

Figure 3: Mixed military choir performing the song *Victory to Thee*.

Today, popular music is the music style favoured by most Naga youths. In this domain, Nagaland displays an immense variety of genres, including pop, rock, heavy metal, jazz, fusion, country and western, gospel-pop, and rap, which constitute not only a form of entertainment industry but also a means for artists to comment on the current state of Naga society. Arguably, the most well-known Naga rapper is Moko Koza, whose stage name is a simplified version of his birth name "Mvüko Koza". As a descendant of a Chakhesang family from the village of Khezhakeno, he grew up in Nagaland's state capital Kohima, whose townscape is characterized by a blend of Naga, Indian, and Western culture. Koza's YouTube channel characterizes his music as multi-lingual folk fusion rap.[17] His songs, written in Nagamese, the lingua franca of Nagaland, regional Naga languages, and English, comment not only on the frictions between traditional and modern Naga culture but also on the prejudices that Nagas face in India today. An example is the song *Tribally Savage*,[18] which plays with the colonial cliche of Naga "savageness",

17 https://www.youtube.com/@MokoKozaOfficial, accessed 14 June 2024.

18 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZMvfTjq9pI, accessed 23 June 2024.

epitomized by the traditional but nowadays abandoned head-hunting practices of Naga communities, to create a modern-day bad-boy rapper image, including corresponding misogynist language (Weitzer and Kubrin 2009). In this way, the song illustrates how Koza addresses persisting ethnic prejudices against Nagas through his music. Moreover, it shows how he re-interprets the underlying cliches to create a commercial song product oriented at Western rap culture. The song video shows him alternately in traditional Angami and Western dress, a means of visual representation alluding to the cultural disorientation of contemporary Naga society (Figs. 4 and 5).

Fig. 4: Screenshot from song video of *Tribally Savage*.

Fig. 5: Screenshot from song video of *Tribally Savage*.

Other songs by Koza concern societal issues like corruption, a topic that appears in the songs "*Puisa*" ["Money"][19] and "*Naga Manu*" ["Naga People"],[20] both written in the Nagamese language. Moreover, the song "*Naga Manu*" also addresses the ethnic discrimination of Nagas, in this case, prejudices based on their food habits and looks:

Naga Manu

(...)
Listen to this song and come together everyone
We'll show them who we Nagas are
Let people[21] judge us because of our food habits and our ways
What I eat and how I look is none of their business
(...)

English subtitles from YouTube song video

Notably, the song also includes a section referring to the factional infighting of Naga nationalist organizations during the Indo-Naga conflict, where Koza sarcastically cites the NSCN slogan "Nagaland for Christ":

We say, Nagaland for Christ!
But we [keep] fighting among ourselves

English subtitles from YouTube song video (with corrections by author)

Subsequently, he raps about corruption and bribery, unemployment, and alcoholism, as the video shows a bar fight (Fig. 6) and a drunken young man tumbling through the streets at night (Fig. 7). Thus, the song provides a comprehensive critique of the issues affecting Nagas today due to their ethnic minority status, prolonged military conflict, and economic mismanagement. Significantly, Koza has performed the song not only at live concerts in Nagaland but also on the Indian TV channel NDTV, where his rendition of the song amounts to a public demonstration of cultural self-assertion.

19 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_fOyfLMNo8, accessed 23 June 2024.

20 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vylA2NHVCIo, accessed 14 June 2024.

21 Here, the English subtitles do not capture the full meaning of the Nagamese lyrics, which use the phrase "*bāhar manu*" ["outsiders"] at this point, implying Indians.

Figure 6: Screenshot from song video of *Naga Manu*.

Figure 7: Screenshot from song video of *Naga Manu*.

Yet, it is Koza's song *Boy from the Hills*,[22] released in September 2023, that illustrates most strikingly how military conflict has resulted in the genesis of intergenerational traumas among Naga communities. The song, which highlights the experiences of Koza's grandmother and other Naga elders during the

22 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWZo7LZA-KE, accessed 23 June 2024.

Japanese invasion of Nagaland and Manipur, combines spoken eyewitness accounts with English rap and a traditional Naga lullaby, blending tradition and modernity seamlessly. The song video begins with a short text appearing on the screen, introducing viewers to the song's historical context. Subsequently, there are two scenes of elders from the village of Khezhakeno narrating their experiences of British and Japanese occupation, including the witnessing of executions, physical abuse, and forced labour, resulting in fear and humiliation among Nagas (Figs. 8 and 9).

Figure 8: Screenshot from song video of *Boy from the Hills*.

Figure 9: Screenshot from song video of *Boy from the Hills*.

The video then shows Koza rapping in the streets and surroundings of Kohima, dressed in a hoodie. This is followed by a scene showing the Angami singer Nourhe Zatsu singing a Tenyidie lullaby softly with a baby in her hands in a dimly lit room, the music underlaid with the same heavy beat. Subsequently, the video switches back to the village of Khezhakeno, as Koza raps the following lines in traditional dress:

Boy from the Hills

(...)
There were bombs going off, there were houses being burnt
The whole family had to hide in the forest
It wasn't even safe when the baby was born
Mama had to feed her when the rain starts pouring
The whole year harvest, went to the soldiers
The Japanese troops made camps and took over
On a meagre meal they were forced to survive
(...)
My grandma told me stories how she ran away from home

English subtitles from YouTube song video (with corrections by author)

The video then intersperses a scene showing his grandmother walking on a road while narrating how the Japanese torched her village and how she fled on foot to Kohima. Towards the end, the video shows Koza embracing her, followed by the final frame showing her performing a song that she and her fellow villagers sang after the Japanese had left. In this way, Koza's song vividly shows how Naga communities maintain their collective memory of colonial conflict through intergenerational oral transmission and how contemporary Naga artists address traumatic historical incidents self-reflexively through their music. Placing the spotlight on his grandmother, the song also underscores the importance of considering women's views in such contexts, as female perspectives on political conflict remain underrepresented in Naga public life.

Conclusion

Though necessarily selective, the song examples discussed in this article illustrate that since the mid-nineteenth century, music has been a significant means for Naga communities to commemorate traumatic collective experiences of political conflict and military violence and express support for military resistance in political contexts where open dissent remains problematic. Furthermore, the songs suggest that contemporary Naga artists are keenly

aware of the cumulative effects of prolonged military conflict and rapid cultural change on contemporary Naga society, which is affected by a range of problems such as identity crises, mental health issues, and addiction problems, as outlined previously. This article suggests that the concept of historical trauma is a useful lens to examine the manifold cultural expressions not only of Nagas but of Indigenous communities around the globe thematizing colonial subjugation, postcolonial struggles for national self-assertion, and the cumulative impact of colonization, proselytization, Westernization, and modernization on their societies. Deeper investigations on personal and collective levels are required to shed more light on the question of how songs have aided Indigenous musicians and communities around the world in processing intergenerationally transmitted traumas of military violence, specifically regarding the question of how processes of composing and performing may have a cathartic function of releasing emotions of grief and mourning. This topic touches the domain of music psychology, which has neglected the music traditions of the Global South, as highlighted in the introduction of this article. The musical examples given in this article illustrate that there is a need for further efforts to examine these questions cross-culturally to arrive at a deeper understanding of how performing arts have aided Indigenous peoples around the globe in processing collectively endured traumas of colonization, military violence, forced displacement, loss of traditional culture, denials of national sovereignty, and resulting identity crises and mental and physical health issues in their societies, in order to develop a comprehensive theory framework for exploring applications of the concept of historical trauma in ethnomusicology.

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POVZETEK

Domorodna zgodovinska travma družbe Naga in njene glasbene manifestacije

Kako so pesmi pomagale ljudstvu Naga pri prizadevanjih za vzpostavitev nacionalne države, katere predvidene meje so bile v nasprotju s tistimi, ki jih je zapustil Britanski imperij v Južni Aziji? Kako so se pripadniki ljudstva Naga s svojimi pesmimi odzvali na kolonialne in postkolonialne oborožene spopade v svojih deželah? Številna kulturno različna ljudstva Naga prebivajo kot rasne, etnične, jezikovne in verske manjšine v Nagalandu, Assamu, Manipurju in Arunachal Pradeshu v severovzhodni Indiji in sosednjem severnem Mjanmaru. Od leta 1832 so te domovine ljudstva Naga doživele globoke spremembe zaradi britanskega kolonialnega podjarmljenja, prozelitizacije in zahodnjaštva. Med letoma 1832 in 1947 so Britanci v nizu vojaških posegov postopoma kolonizirali ozemlja Naga od zahodnega do vzhodnega Nagalanda. Misijonarji so sledili njihovim stopinjam, kar je sprožilo pokristjanjevanje Nagalanda, ki traja še danes. V drugi svetovni vojni so se britanske in japonske čete spopadle v Nagalandu in Manipurju, vasi ljudstva Naga pa so potisnile med frontne črte. Kasneje je propad Britanske Indije raztrgal skupnosti Naga ob novi mednarodni meji med nastajajočima nacionalnima državama Indijo in Burmo. Nagovski nacionalisti so se odzvali s šest desetletij trajajočim bojem za suvereno državo, ki bi zajemala vsa z ljudstvom Naga poseljena ozemlja obeh držav, ki pa je na koncu propadel zaradi indijske in burmanske vojaške premoči. Na podlagi teorij o zgodovinski travmi (Brave Heart 1998) in kolonialni travmi (Mitchell, Arsenau in Thomas 2019) ta članek razpravlja o kumulativnem vplivu kolonialnih in postkolonialnih konfliktov, krščanskega spreobračanja in zahodnjaštva na družbe, kulture in uprizoritvene umetnosti ljudstva Naga, ki živijo v severovzhodni Indiji. V ta namen preučuje tri pesmi o kolonialnih in postkolonialnih konfliktih, ki so povzročili hitre kulturne spremembe, izgubo življenj in sredstev za preživetje, notranje razseljevanje ter rasno in etnično diskriminacijo, kar je kumulativno vodilo do težav z duševnim zdravjem in težav z zlorabo substanc v sodobni družbi ljudstva Naga. Tri pesmi ponazarjajo, da je bila glasba od sredine 19. stoletja za skupnosti Naga pomembno sredstvo za spominjanje na travmatične kolektivne izkušnje vojaškega nasilja in izražanje odpora proti tuji okupaciji v političnem ozračju, kjer je bilo in ostaja odkrito nasprotovanje nevarno. Poleg tega pesmi ponazarjajo, da je kulturna sprememba skozi čas slogovno spremenila politične in družbeno-kritične pesmi Nagov, ki združujejo tradicionalne kulturne izraze Nagov s krščanskimi temami in uvoženimi sodobnimi zahodnimi glasbenimi slogi, medtem ko internet vedno bolj oblikuje načine prenosa in širjenja glasbe.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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O AVTORJU

CHRISTIAN POSKE (poske@mdw.ac.at) je etnomuzikolog, ki je diplomiral in magistriral iz instrumentalne glasbe (sitar) na univerzi Rabindra Bharati v Kolkati ter doktoriral iz glasbe na univerzi SOAS v Londonu in British Library, kjer je delal kot avdio katalogizator in bengalski katalogizator. Njegove raziskave se osredotočajo na uprizoritvene umetnosti vzhodne in severovzhodne Indije ter Bangladeša. Raziskuje jih prek množičnega sodelovanja s skupnostmi kulturne dediščine, ki vključuje ponovno kroženje arhivskih zbirk, pobude za raziskovalno usposabljanje, regionalne projekte arhiviranja in dogodke za ozaveščanje, kot so zvočne razstave. Prejel je številne štipendije in nagrade, vključno z nagrado »Collaborative Doctoral Award od Arts and Humanities Research Council UK«, »Cultural Exchange Scholarship« in »Junior Research Fellowship« od »Indian Council for Cultural Relations« ter zagonsko štipendijo od »Music and Minorities Research Center« (Dunaj), kjer vodi triletni raziskovalni projekt, financiran s strani avstrijskega znanstvenega sklada, ki preučuje razmerja med glasbo, nacionalizmom, konfliktom in travmo v kontekstu zgodovine ljudstva Naga. Je sopredsednik posebne interesne skupine za glasbo in nasilje Društva za etnomuzikologijo in predstavnik uredniškega odbora za Azijo časopisa *Journal of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives*.

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Belonging in the Mix: Indigenous and Minority Popular Musics in the Canadian Hip Hop Mainstream

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ABSTRACT

Whose sounds fit in the nation-state? Countering histories of erasure, this essay investigates the role of hip hop music in articulating Black and Native histories and presence in Canada. Analysis of music by Kardinal Offishall, Webster, and Winnipeg's Most demonstrates how minority and Indigenous groups express belonging and sovereignty, respectively.

Keywords: Indigenous music, hip hop, national belonging, race, Canada

IZVLEČEK

Čigavi zvoki sodijo v nacionalno državo? V nasprotju z zgodovino izbrisa, ta esej raziskuje vlogo hip hop glasbe pri artikulaciji zgodovine in prisotnosti temnopoltih in staroselcev v Kanadi. Analiza glasbe Kardinala Offishalla, Websterja in Winnipeg's Most prikazuje, kako manjšinske in domorodne skupine izražajo pripadnost oziroma suverenost.

Ključne besede: glasba staroselcev, hip hop, nacionalna pripadnost, rasa, Kanada

Introduction

Whose sounds fit in the nation-state? Always a politicized question, an exploration of popular music that enters the mainstream offers one way into interconnected questions about belonging. In Canada in particular, a recent history of racial and ethnic minority pop musics influencing mainstream sounds shows how artists and media professionals respond to histories of not-listening. What music sounds Canadian, and to whom? And how do Indigenous groups who live in what is now Canada interact with the nation-state while still maintaining sonic sovereignty? This essay delves into questions of racialized belonging by exploring expressions of Black Canadians, linguistic minorities, and Indigenous people in Canada through hip hop music. Musicians' experiences of minority or Indigenous status differ and converge in instructive ways. As Canadian hip hop was coming into its own in the early 2000s, Indigenous hip hop artists told stories with sonic and visual markers that trope particular ideas of Blackness. These were heard alongside Black Canadian hip hop, which fought for airtime in a national context whose radio waves have often sounded whiter than the nation itself. The essay traces histories of erasure, building on Rinaldo Walcott's theorization of intelligibility. As part of the analytical framework, the text conveys critical readings of songs by musicians in these sometimes-overlapping groups, notably Kardinal Offishall, Webster, and Winnipeg's Most, to hear how minority and Indigenous groups express belonging and sovereignty, respectively. In so doing, the analysis opens into discussion of how national belonging forms and reforms over time and across minority and Indigenous groups, raising questions relevant across particularities and borders.

There are a multitude of ways to tell the story of a nation. While official anthems and national celebrations often tell a coherent story of unity, hip hop musics are expressions through which more nuanced narratives of belonging can emerge. Hip hop storytelling, presented in lyrics, music, video, and performance, is a rich medium through which belonging is articulated and contested. This essay connects the cultural history of racialization in Canada with how this history is represented in music, focusing on examples that crystalize ideas of how Blackness and Indigeneity fit with conceptions of nationhood. This essay's arguments unfold through musical close readings, offering multiple vantage points into the songs under discussion. These are grounded in a specific hip hop context, which is detailed through a targeted analysis of racialization in Canada. Because music and music video present opportunities for audience members to bring their own perspectives and experiences, these are offered as possible readings; tensions and layers of meaning are presented in order to invite readers to listen critically for what they bring, as well as to offer musical readings that are grounded in a particular musical place and hip hop lineage.

Belonging and the Nation-State

What does it take to sound Canadian? With a distinctly recognizable force, electronic percussion immediately snaps in a catchy four-beat bar. The fully electronic instrumentals offer descending melodic lines, their buzzy timbre repeating through the eight-bar intro. In a call-and-response, two vocal lines converse: Two pieces of an intersecting hocket, "that girl" and "dangerous" zipper together to complete the sung chorus.

Across the three verses on this song, rapper Kardinal Offishall plays with his voice. He dips into a low-pitch register when he delivers metaphoric innuendo: "the big dog tryin' to get her little kitty to purr".[1] He often stays at a repeated pitch, so each move up or down brings special attention. Talking about her curves, he raps: "Body's like weapons of mass eruptions"; the first syllable of "weapons" strains into the pitch stratosphere, an exuberant yelp. His speech combines multiple vernaculars. By the third verse, the Jamaican patois that has peppered the rapped flow takes it over. Kardinal Offishall's vowels change shape. They stretch and elongate. His references shape-shift, too. Known for his Toronto slang, Kardinal Offishall brings a range of speech patterns that can be heard on that city's streets.

The influences of Jamaican dancehall speak through the album as a whole. The rapper brings this verbal style to his music, notably in verse three, where he raps about the "girl" from the chorus, whose "good body shape" and dance moves create a huge impression: "When she do her ting, man can't walk straight / That biscuit fi' soak up erry-ting' on her plate." He finishes the verse connecting her look and her moves to the dance music, and a shouted "jah" from the same Jamaican patois: "Itty bitty waistline, moves with the bass line / One lick of punch, I'm fine, jah!".

Kardinal Offishall was born in Canada. But this single, "Dangerous," from the album *Not 4 Sale* was released on the US-American record label Geffen Records. Released in 2008, the album charted on the US Billboard 200 and peaked at number 3 on the Mainstream Top 40 in September 2008 (Billboard 2022). Kardinal Offishall's intelligibility as both Black and Canadian can be read through what Rinaldo Walcott calls the "problem" of Blackness in Canada (Walcott 2003, 12). The rapper was born and raised in Toronto, but his presence in Canada is heard by some through his parents' immigration from Jamaica; his location as a diasporic subject invokes his second-generation status. This understanding could allow listeners to avoid the potentially disjunctive ongoing presence of Black Canadians that stretches back pre-Confederation.

1 Kardinal Offishall, featuring Akon, 2008. "Dangerous". Kon Live/Geffen Records. All subsequent citations from this song are from the official music video version, 4:12, posted online by Kardinal-Offishall416, November 22, 2009. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro7yHf_pU14. All lyrics quotations in this essay are transcribed by the author.

The slow and rocky acceptance of Black Canadian music into the Canadian music industry suggests a larger resistance to the idea of Black music being heard as fundamentally Canadian. Even in cosmopolitan Toronto, a national center for the media industry, the development of hip hop and urban radio was slow. With popular support from hip hop, R & B, and urban music artists and fans, an application for a broadcasting license for a station that would play hip hop was submitted to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in 1990, but the license went to a country station.[2] When another attempt to launch a similar station in Toronto in 1997 was denied again, "[t]he result of this ruling and denying a station for the second time sparked outrage in the African-Canadian community, many of whom believed the CRTC's rulings to be racist".[3] CFXJ-FM (99.3 FM in Toronto) finally went on the air in 2001 as Canada's first all-urban format station, as well as Canada's first Black-owned radio station. This offered a pivotal opportunity for Canadian and international hip hop to reach a mainstream broadcast audience, and to diversify the musical genres reaching a broad swath of listeners.

Active forgetting is integral to the creation of cultural narratives that whitewash Canada. This is part of the ongoing myth of Canadian Blackness being only post-1950 and urban; it connects to the erasure of the ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples. Despite the centuries-old presence of Black communities and a two-hundred-year history of slavery in what is now Canada, Katherine McKittrick finds that Black communities continue to be constructed as "non-Canadian, always other, always elsewhere, recent, unfamiliar, and impossible" (McKittrick 2006, 99). Like Walcott, she argues that Canada has erased geographic presences and ignored nonwhite histories. Walcott traces a move to associate Blackness with the Caribbean and recent migration. To these two spaces that Walcott identifies, McKittrick adds US-American migration as well, but the result is the same: Black people and Black communities are conceptually relocated outside Canada. Place names from early Black Canada, and places themselves, have been bulldozed; with physical erasures comes much intentional forgetting. At the same time, Black communities in Canada are pathologized in similar ways as in the United States. The hypervisibility of Black individuals and communities related to criminalizing and pathologizing state policies operates alongside historical and cultural erasure. Contemporary national narratives minimize or erase histories of slavery in Canada, though colonists held Black slaves under both British and French colonial rule (Henry 2010; Bristow et al. 1994). Under the same governance, Indigenous peoples

2 In Canada, the CRTC administers licenses for radio broadcasting, and regulates telecommunications. See "Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission", https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/home-accueil.htm.

3 Jabbari Weekes, "Exploring the History of 'O.T.A. Live': Toronto's Most Beloved Radio Show". *Vice*, October 27, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en/article/ota-live-ty-harper-rez-digital-flow-935-interview.

were captured and sold as slaves, though this too remains underacknowledged in the present (Rushforth 2003; Helg 2019).

Black and Native Histories and Presence

Thinking through the ongoing resonance of Black and Native histories, and their intersections, is crucial to understand contemporary expressive culture. This begins with recalling histories that have been excluded from many national narratives. As detailed by Peggy Bristow, "[a] history of Black women's lives in Canada must start with our arrival here as slaves. Black women, like Black men and like First Nations peoples, were enslaved here, beginning with the seventeenth century, first by the French and later by the British. We were brought here to labor" (Bristow 1994, 71). But the story does not end there. Black Canadians and other people of color have played pivotal roles in continuing to shape the country.

These stories course through sung histories, as heard on rapper Webster's collaboration "QC History X". When I first listened to this song, it stood out in part because of its unusual intro. It is not the only song on the album, *Le Vieux D'la Montagne*, to start with a downtempo minor melody, nor is it the only one to use a violin to deliver part of the tune. However, in this song, there is an interruption that marks the opening: the sound of a record scratch enters, and an English-language voice asserts: "Wake you up, out of your brainwashed state" (Webster and Ouellet 2007).[4] When I listen again, thinking through the history of the past several centuries in what is now Canada, I hear the interruption that marks the intro as a parallel for interruptions that mark the entire song. The record scratch interrupts the violin, the vocal line in English interrupts the previous songs' French-language flow, and Webster and Karim Ouellet proceed to interrupt recent narratives of Canadian history.

In the first verse, the rapper promises to bring the listener back in history. Webster says he will "Vous dévoiler des faits / Qu'on n'apprend pas forcément" [reveal to us the facts that one doesn't necessarily learn].[5] He promises to teach us what isn't taught in school about Indigenous and Black peoples, reminding his listeners that history is "romancée, manipulée" [romanticized, manipulated]. Thus the subsequent verses offer what I hear as one interruption after the other: Canadian historical figure Samuel de Champlain's narrative is nuanced. The rapper recalls that the language interpreter and free Black man Mathieu Da Costa was indeed on Champlain's ship in 1604. A whitewashed history is again interrupted as the rapper names Olivier Lejeune, a Black man enslaved in Québec City, who is brought there in 1629. He lists the names of specific heroes and gestures toward thousands unnamed over the past four

4 Webster, with Karim Ouellet, 2007. "QC History X", *Le Vieux D'la Montagne* (Universal / Coyote Records). All subsequent citations from this song are from the same album version.

5 Transcriptions and translations of lyrics are by the author.

hundred years. Québec history has a problem; the rapper explains that national histories want us to believe that Black people arrived in the 1970s, while in fact, their presence can be traced through business, the army, trade, and more for hundreds of years prior to this time.

The French-language lyrics call their listener's attention to genocide against Indigenous people, drawing parallels between those who have been located outside of Québec's history even when they are inextricably part of it. The lyrics mark "Genocide à grande echelle," wide-scale genocide against Indigenous peoples, and describe the kinds of distancing that settlers attempted against Indigenous peoples, the "viol culturel / Être vu en étranger / Sur sa propre parcelle / De terre ancestrale" [cultural rape, to be seen as a stranger on one's own piece of ancestral land].[6]

In conversation with other recountings of Canadian and Québecois history, this song can be heard to consciously remember free Black people and Black slaves back into the history of what is now Canada. It also makes explicit connections between Black Québecois and other groups, including Chinese immigrants. The rapper narrates, "Au 19e siècle, c'est pas du tout fini / Ils ont envoyé les Chinois faire les chemins de fer / Dans tout l'pays / Détonateurs vivants / On les envoyait creusé la roche / Avec d'la nitroglycérine" [In the 19th century, it's not at all over / They sent the Chinese to build the railroads / Over the whole country / Living detonators / They were sent to dig the rocks / With nitroglycerine]. In a reparative history, the lyrics tell how this dangerous work was set for racialized new immigrants, Chinese Canadians taking on labor that was both high-risk and essential to the building out of the nation. The speaker implies that their lives were not considered as important as the work to which they were assigned. Directly following, the verse names related ways in which the nation state has taken advantage of a group of people for its own ends. This time, the lyrics tell the shameful history of settlers intentionally spreading disease among Indigenous people: "La mémoire des Amériques est à jamais entâchée / Les premières bactériologiques / On leur donnait des couvertures imbibes d'varioles / Tu vois la suite" [The memory of the Americas is forever sullied / The first bacteriologists / They gave them infested blankets / You see the rest]. The rapped lyrics specifically outline ongoing connections with Indigenous peoples whose presence on their own ancestral lands far predates settlers and settler histories and continues to this day. As historian, scholar, rapper, and storyteller, Webster interrupts and reconnects.

Webster and Karim Ouellet share what could be called conscious rap in this example. Using the song's lyrics, they re-tell a story that reminds listeners

6 While French is an official language in Canada, across the country, English is dominant in most provinces. Québec is French-dominant and has policies to support language and francophone culture at the provincial level.

that Black people have been part of the history of what is now Canada before it became a country, and reminding listeners of the histories of displacement and inequities that impact Black Canadians, Chinese Canadians, and Indigenous people in Canada alike. They focus on shared experiences, while there are of course nuanced differences to the interactions with white settlers over time.

Race and Urban Belonging in Canada: Sounding for a City

As Canadian hip hop was coming into its own in the early 2000s, Indigenous hip hop artists told stories with sonic and visual markers that troped specific ideas of Blackness. These narratives were heard alongside Black Canadian hip hop, which battled for airtime in a national context whose radio waves have often sounded whiter than the nation itself. Kardinal Offishall is an important figure in this regard. He is from Canada, but became popular on a US label first, only afterwards finding mainstream success at home. The story of how one group of Indigenous hip hop musicians came to be the face of rap in a major Canadian city demonstrates some of the tensions around racialization and national belonging, which has implications for other geographies and contexts. Winnipeg is the capital of Manitoba, a central Prairie province, which also has a large urban Indigenous population. The rap group Winnipeg's Most helped define the sound of hip hop for the city, while sometimes relying on racialized tropes from US-American mainstream commercial rap. These tropes play on social conceptions of race, presenting recirculated ideas packaged for an audience.[7] Listening to their most well-known music video allows for an exploration of the sounds of belonging.

A siren wails, sounding the approach of a fire engine, even as visually, the vehicle is already parked outside a smoking building.[8] Ominous drum crashes and minor-key electronics mean viewers could be anywhere, danger both approaching and already arrived. Movie soundtracks have taught us as audience members to be nervous for anyone who enters the scene now. But we as viewers are not just anywhere: we're on a street corner; the pole with crossing street names is in focus

7 A trope can be understood as a recurring figure in music or art, in which an idea in one piece connects to already-circulating ideas in a cultural context. Racialized tropes occur in popular music. See Imani Perry, *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Cheryl Keyes, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). On race and gender in rap, consult Imani Kai Johnson, "From Blues Women to B-Girls: Performing Badass Femininity", *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 24, no 1 (2014): 15–28. For more on how tropes of North American Indigenous peoples circulate in media, see Michelle Raheja, *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010).

8 Winnipeg's Most, 2010. "All That I Know" (Heatbag Records/ Rezofficial Music). All subsequent citations from this song are from the official music video version, directed by Stuey Kubrick, 4:26, posted online by Heatbag Records, March 3, 2011. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VAF3ypMS84.

in the frame. Even as the camera continues to circle around the vehicle and the firefighters, "Powers Ave" remains clearly in view. I can almost hear the crunch of hardened snow, full of footprints already. The camera pans to the bare tree branches of this wintry deciduous urban canopy. Rows of two-story houses and apartment buildings typical of this neighborhood extend into the street beyond. The video cuts to downtown buildings. One bus ride away, skyscrapers reach upward; even from the camera's vantage point several stories up, their apexes are out of reach. Buses pause in the roads below, and some rooftops of multistory buildings are visible, covered in snow with vents expelling hot steam. A government building is branded above its highest windows with the word "Canada". The hip hop group's name appears on-screen, also naming the city: "Winnipeg's Most".

Throughout the video, specific visual tropes overlap with images of a particular part of the city. Black and blue hoodies, shiny large necklaces, baggy jeans, and caps with prominent logos present urban fashion on the men who stand steadily eyeing the camera, their hands nonchalantly in their pockets. Visual and lyrical references suggest illicit commerce: indoors, images of stacks of money flash on screen, and Charlie Fettah sings, "I could've took a nine-to-five, but the hustle life is what I chose." Focusing on a tattoo on a man's forearm, the camera shows an unapologetic message: "I'd rather be hated for what I am than loved for what I am not." Back outside, the part of Winnipeg in which this music video takes place becomes clear: a chain-link fence is topped with barbed wire, a wall is covered in graffiti tags, rapper Brooklyn makes a call in front of a neon hotel sign, a "cold beer vendor" advertises its services from 9 am to 2:30 am. These city snapshots complement the club scene, where women wearing short dresses dance in slow motion holding red plastic cups. A handle of Grey Goose vodka appears, along with a pool table and a series of quick close-ups in the club and on the rooftop, as the rapper says, "monster", "goonies", "soldiers". Groups of men are shown around the city with streets behind them, or on a rooftop with the city below, the rappers positioned as leaders in front with their crews.

As in iconic hip hop videos like Snoop Dogg's "What's My Name" and Eminem's "My Name Is", the audience has no excuse for forgetting the name "Winnipeg's Most". Viewers see it on bandanas, T-shirts, and hats; close-ups zoom in on the group's name on necklaces (Figure 1). Prominent markers of the city's downtown and North End neighborhoods show us where we are, piles of snow, street signs, and specific businesses behind the rappers as they flow, "I'm a Winnipeg boy. That's who I am. And my name more feared than the ghosts of the damned." A "peg city vet" is surrounded by others known in the scene, the "team" a constant presence as the men walk through the streets. The railroad tracks that separate the North End from farther south feature in the visuals and the lyrics, the wrong-side-of-the tracks metaphor hard to miss.

Figure 1: Still from the YouTube video of the song "All That I Know". The necklace reads "Winnipeg's Most".

The rappers use their group name and repeated visual and lyrical references to highlight the city they are from; they come to stand for the city of Winnipeg for many audiences in the early 2010s. Yet their music does not span the whole city. They have not chosen the manicured gardens and playgrounds of Assiniboine Park, the bike paths along the Assiniboine and Red Rivers that flow through the city, its historic churches or hip coffee shops. They show their neighborhood, and reference ways previous videos have focused on urban disinvestment, police presence, drug trade, and violence. These specific visual images and lyrical references reinforce each other. Charlie Fettah, taking the second verse, raps about how he chooses to move "fast", to make "money in a hurry", to drink and smoke. Referencing an often-repeated interaction with the criminal justice system, he says his parole officer is the only one who really "holds his leash".

By the third chorus, the rapper Brooklyn is outside on Selkirk Avenue: He raps using language that tropes the ghetto and the club: "In the ghetto and I love it. Money making is nothing". Money changes hands; men walk in groups. Brooklyn raps that he has to watch his back because he's so successful, that he's "clubbin'", that the jacuzzi is "bumpin'", that his family came around to love that he was "thuggin'". The group's name flashes on-screen after the final chorus. The lasting visual is this name and the three men together, the city of Winnipeg repped by the rappers of Winnipeg's Most.

Mainstream Radio and Racial Tropes

Hip hop trio Winnipeg's Most was frequently played on the radio in Winnipeg. They performed "All That I Know", one of the group's most popular songs,

live in studio at the urban station Streetz FM and shared the video online through the station's official channels. Even as members Jon-C, Charlie Fettah, and Brooklyn respond to their lived realities, they make choices to tell a story with sonic and visual markers that come from US-American hip hop and that trope Blackness in a particular way. This aural and visual narrative resonated with many audiences. Their music, to some extent, became iconic of Winnipeg hip hop as it solidified. Canadian hip hop was coming into its own in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and then, "All That I Know" became a popular urban anthem for the city — including Indigenous and non-Indigenous hip hop fans — in 2010. Winnipeg's Most went on to win multiple Aboriginal Peoples' Choice Music Awards in 2010 and 2011. The three MCs pursued group and solo projects over the next several years.

Through accessible distribution, broadcast and online media shape public discourses about urban Indigenous artists and audiences. In cities like Winnipeg, broadcasters often encounter stereotypes about Native Canadians in the area as being linked to crime and violence. This is a stereotype that some Winnipeg rappers — notably members of Winnipeg's Most — have been criticized for playing into. Some listeners have noted that these musicians celebrate drug use, misogyny, and violence and worry that they are not the strongest role models for young people. Violence, including gun violence, appears as a trope in the group's older music videos, as do portrayals of women as silent or sexualized background figures. Some of this is done in such a way as to trope constraining depictions of monoracial Blackness as packaged and sold in US-based hip hop for a mainstream audience (Traber 2012).[9]

And yet, the rappers choose how to tell their stories, the control of which is a crucial piece of sonic sovereignty. For Indigenous artists, the ways in which they are able to craft their own narratives and speak to audiences on their own terms can become a manner in which they enact sovereignty through sounding culture (Przybylski 2023; Rickard 2017). Winnipeg is located on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Nehiyawak, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. The area was a location of cultural exchange before the founding of Canada; Winnipeg continues to be home to over 102,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit residents, making it the city with the largest urban Indigenous population in Canada. The capital city's province of Manitoba's population was over 18 % Indigenous in 2021.[10] And yet, in an article that sparked much discussion, Winnipeg has been identified as the most racist city in Canada (Macdonald 2015). The 2014 murder of First

9 Ideas of Blackness have been used commercially to sell rap music to a multiracial audience.

10 Data available from Statistics Canada, 2021 Census, at https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/index-eng.cfm as well as CBC News, "Winnipeg Indigenous population highest in Canada again: StatsCan", September 21, 2022, at https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/statistics-canada-indigenous-population-1.6591058.

Nations teenager Tina Fontaine sparked outrage, protests, and solidarity actions in the city. Fontaine, who was from Winnipeg and whose parents were from the Sagkeeng and Bloodvein First Nations, was taken into foster care after the death of her father. Activists point to the lack of care she encountered in that system, as well as in interactions with police services, as indicative of larger problems in which Indigenous children are treated inequitably as compared to their white peers. Across Canada, Indigenous people face higher rates of poverty and incarceration; Indigenous women and girls are as much as ten times more likely to be kidnapped or killed than white women.[11] In the face of systemic discrimination, many Indigenous musicians are opting to recount their stories and showcase their art in their own ways. In this context, for Indigenous rappers to come to represent the city of Winnipeg can be heard as a way that musicians are taking back their narrative in a way that resonates with audiences. Rappers admit that their stance on displaying violence in their music has changed over time; later songs offer more nuanced messages. In spite of criticism, rappers like group members Jon-C, Charlie Fettah, and Brooklyn have taken on roles as leaders, speaking from the marginalized urban location of Winnipeg's North End. Notably, they called attention to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, which is particularly drastic in the neighborhood they consciously represented (Burelle 2018; Sleeper-Smith, Ostler, and Reid 2021). Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people are at increased risk of harassment and violence; community activism and leadership within Indigenous communities have been driving forces to report on and reduce this violence (Native Women's Association of Canada 2023). In 2012, the three men purchased headstones for the slain Indigenous women Carolyn Sinclair and Divas Boulanger. Brooklyn explained: "This is what we can do. This is our part. If everyone did something, it would slowly take the target off our people."[12] All three MCs have been criticized, and none claimed to be perfect. Upon Brooklyn's untimely death in 2015, many people took time to reflect on how he, and Winnipeg's Most, had helped open up opportunities for Indigenous artists to get onstage, to win awards, to get on the air.

Ruptures in the Mainstream

What does it mean to belong to the Nation, and to serve as a mainstream musical voice that can speak for it? The examples from Kardinall Offishal, Webster

11 For data as well as community and musical responses, see Liz Przybylski 2021, "Singing Resilience: Indigenous Women's Leadership Counteracting Gender-Based Violence", in *Violence and Indigenous Communities*, ed. Susan Sleeper-Smith et al. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press): 203–221

12 CBC News, "Winnipeg's Most Buys Headstones for Slain Women", November 15, 2012, www.cbc.ca.

and Karim Ouellet, and Winnipeg's Most problematize the way whiteness has been inscribed and re-inscribed into a Canadian nation-state. As with selective myopia in the mainstream public imaginary regarding Indigenous People in Canada, ignoring an enduring history of nonwhite people in Canada both sanitizes shameful instances of state violence and invisibilizes the creative accomplishments of nonwhite Canadians going back hundreds of years, in the case of Black Canadians, and since the very beginning, in the case of Indigenous people in what is now Canada.

When listeners pay attention to Kardinall Offishal today, it matters whether or not they hear this Canadian-born rapper as Canadian. When audiences really look and listen to music videos by Winnipeg's Most, it is possible to observe racialized tropes from mainstream rap, even as rappers attempt to convey their reality speaking from urban centers that have experienced palpable disinvestment. Rap trio Winnipeg's Most helped define the hip hop sound of a major Canadian city by connecting its downtown and North End neighborhoods to urban ghettos of cities that were already prominent in hip hop. Critically analyzing this music can prompt audiences to ask how racialized commercial tropes can be problematic, even as artists create their own stories around them. When listeners hear Canadian history retold by Webster and Karim Ouellet, we have the opportunity to hear them drop knowledge. This knowledge, sometimes held as the fifth element of hip hop, here corrects an intentional forgetting of nonwhite stories that stretch before Canadian confederation and suggests pathways for mutual belonging for years to come. When popular music today destabilizes dominant racialized mythologies, it creates space for conceptualizing belonging differently, in the past and into the future.

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POVZETEK

Pripadati mešanici: domorodna in manjšinska popularna glasba v kanadskem hip hop mainstreamu

Čigavi zvoki sodijo v nacionalno državo? Vedno politizirano raziskovanje v mainstream vstopajoče popularne glasbe, ponuja eno pot do medsebojno povezanih vprašanj o pripadnosti. Še posebej v Kanadi nedavna zgodovina pop glasbe rasnih in etničnih manjšin, ki je vplivala na običajne zvoke, kaže, kako se umetniki in medijski strokovnjaki odzivajo na zgodovino neposlušanja. Kaj je potrebno, da zveni kanadsko? In kako domorodne skupine, ki živijo v današnji Kanadi, sodelujejo z nacionalno državo, medtem ko še vedno ohranjajo zvočno suverenost? Ta prispevek se poglablja v vprašanja rasne pripadnosti z raziskovanjem izražanja temnopoltih Kanadčanov, jezikovnih manjšin in staroselcev v Kanadi skozi hip hop glasbo. Izkušnje glasbenikov glede statusa manjšine ali domorodca se razlikujejo in zbližujejo na poučen način. Ko je kanadski hip hop v zgodnjih 2000-ih prihajal na svoj račun, so avtohtoni hip

hop umetniki pripovedovali zgodbe z zvočnimi in vizualnimi označevalci, ki na poseben način povezujejo »temnopoltost«. Te je bilo slišati skupaj s temnopoltim kanadskim hip hopom, ki se je boril za čas v nacionalnem kontekstu, katerega radijski valovi so pogosto zveneli bolj belo kot narod sam. Esej sledi zgodovini izbrisa in gradi na teoriji Rinalda Walcotta o razumljivosti. Kot del analitičnega okvira besedilo posreduje kritično branje pesmi glasbenikov v teh, včasih prekrivajočih se skupinah, zlasti Kardinal Offishall, Webster in Winnipeg's Most, da bi slišali, kako manjšinske in domorodne skupine izražajo pripadnost oziroma suverenost. Pri tem se analiza odpira v razpravo o tem, kako se nacionalna pripadnost oblikuje in preoblikuje skozi čas ter med manjšinskimi in domorodnimi skupinami, pri čemer se odpirajo vprašanja, pomembna prek posebnosti in meja.

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LIZ PRZYBYLSKI (liz.przybylski@ucr.edu; www.dr-lp.org) is a popular music scholar working in hip hop and electronic music. A Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of California, Riverside, Liz is the author of *Sonic Sovereignty: Hip Hop, Indigeneity and Shifting Popular Music Mainstreams* (NYU Press, 2023) and *Hybrid Ethnography* (SAGE, 2020), and an awardee of the National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Fellowship. Recent publications focus on online/offline research in Indigenous hip hop, gender in the music industry, and popular music pedagogy. Dr. Przybylski's writing has appeared on music journalism websites including *I Care if You Listen* and *Artbound*. Liz teaches courses on ethnographic methods, popular music, Indigenous music, and gender and sexuality studies. On radio, Liz hosted "Continental Drift" (WNUR) and conducted interviews for "At the Edge of Canada: Indigenous Research" (CJUM).

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Claiming Indigenous Sovereignty Online: Ponay's "Yuan (Indigenous)" Style Cover of Mandopop Songs on YouTube

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ABSTRACT

Taiwanese Indigenous youths utilize social media to assert Indigeneity. However, while egalitarian technologies provide a platform for self-representation, fetishism and multiculturalism might misrepresent their Indigeneity. This study focuses on Ponay's covers of Mando-pop songs on YouTube to reclaim Indigenous popular music history and challenge Han-centric aesthetics and heteronormativity.

Keywords: cyberspace, Indigenous sovereignty, Taiwanese Indigenous people, Mando-pop

IZVLEČEK

Tajvanska domorodna mladina uporablja družabna omrežja za uveljavljanje domorodnosti. Medtem ko egalitarne tehnologije zagotavljajo platformo za samoreprezentacijo, lahko fetišizem in multikulturalizem napačno predstavljata njihovo domorodnost. Študija se osredotoča na Ponayeve priredbe pesmi Mando-popa na YouTubu, da bi povrnila zgodovino domorodne popularne glasbe in izzvala Han-centrično estetiko in heteronormativnost.

Ključne besede: kibernetski proctor, domorodska suverenost, tajvanski domorodci, Mando-pop

Introduction

In 2020, Ponay, a young Indigenous artist from the Amis Folalacay tribe in Taitung, Taiwan, launched his YouTube channel "Ponay's Yuan Style Cover". The "Yuan Style" refers to the "Indigenous style" in Mandarin, corresponding to the term "原住民" describing the Taiwanese Indigenous people. There, in Ponay's bedroom, he began to share his unique style of covering Mandarin pop songs by incorporating Indigenous popular musical elements, what he calls "tribal style karaoke". While there are many Taiwanese Indigenous singers in the popular Mandarin music scene, Ponay is the first artist to consciously use the concept of Indigenous "tribal style" karaoke as a defining feature of his performance, as this style had been excluded from the Mandopop aesthetic. In some videos, he also performs queerness in his Yuan style. While Taiwan remains a Han-Taiwanese-centric society that has settled on and colonized Indigenous Taiwanese lands, this approach challenges Han-centrism, heteronormativity, and even Han-centric queerness. It extends the presence of Indigenous subjectivity in the popular music scene through their presence in cyberspace, and vice versa, which leads to an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty.

The establishment of Ponay's YouTube channel originated from his simple intention to document his life, highlighting joyfulness through his videos. He describes his Yuan style performances as a reflection of the happiness he feels from singing karaoke with his tribe. When I asked him what the most important thing for him to express was, he replied: "Happiness […] if my video is not fun and full of joy, I will not post it." Thus, he invites his friends to dance or sing with him in the video as they always do behind the screen, and he also releases vlogs other than regular cover song videos to share his life with friends. Even as he integrates a variety of social issues into his videos – particularly focusing on Indigenous and gender issues and the preservation of native languages – he describes these topics as reflections of his daily life. He insists that these messages should be expressed within a framework of joy. As the performance of joyfulness attracts a wider audience, Ponay's channel serves as a platform for Indigenous youth to tell their thoughts and voices, sharing their perspectives.

In this article, I analyze Ponay's cover songs and my interview with him to illustrate how he performs the "Yuan style" to interpret and express the joyfulness of his daily life, transforming it into an expression of Indigeneity from an Indigenous worldview. By applying discussions of Indigenous sovereignty in cyberspace (Duarte 2017; IllumiNative 2020; Caranto Morford and Ansloos 2021; Przybylski 2021b; Heth 2022) and the theory of joy from Indigenous queer studies (Driskill 2004; Whitehead 2020; Belcourt 2021), I theorize Ponay's performance as a joyful vision of the future for Indigenous queerness in both cyberspace and the popular music scene. The analysis reveals that while Taiwanese Indigenous culture has been objectified and commodified under

Han-hegemonic and multiculturalist-national narratives in Taiwan, Ponay's covers challenge these narratives by re-telling Indigenous queer experiences in Taiwan. I argue that, even though Ponay does not explicitly position his performances as a claim of rights, his videos still contribute to the sovereignty of Taiwanese Indigenous people, creating an Indigenous space in both cyberspace and the popular music scene.

This article consists of three sections. The first portion provides an overview of Taiwanese Indigenous rights movements and reviews the ongoing struggles in Taiwan, specifically focusing on the internet discussions. The next section introduces the obstacles Indigenous singers face under Han hegemony concerning race, gender, and national identity in the popular music scene, including both the Mandopop and indie music scenes. The third part analyzes two of Ponay's covers, "The Bygone Years" and "Womxnly", to understand Ponay's method of using "Yuan style" with joy to retell Indigenous music history and redefine Indigenous queer bodies.

Indigenous Sovereignty in Taiwan

Taiwan is a settler-colonial country, where Han Taiwanese are the settlers who have colonized Indigenous land. The Taiwanese Indigenous movement has been a long-standing struggle, encompassing various approaches such as protests, lawsuits, and political involvement. Activists engage in diverse fields, including law, territory, culture, education, and politics. In the 1980s, the Taiwanese Indigenous Name Rectification Advocacy opened the four decades-long Indigenous rights movement. In 1994, Taiwanese laws were enacted to incorporate Indigenous rights and autonomy, and the Taiwanese government changed the way of referring to Taiwanese Indigenous people from mountain compatriots [山胞, *shanbao*] to Indigenous Peoples [原住民 *yuanzhumin*]. In 2002, the Council of Indigenous Peoples was established from its former institution, the Council of Aboriginal Affairs, and three years later, the Indigenous Peoples Basic Law was promulgated to "protect the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples, promoting their subsistence and development and building inter-ethnic relations based on co-existence and prosperity".[1] The protest against the construction of the Taitung Miramar Resort in the early 2010s ignited a renewed peak in the long-standing fight for the autonomy of Indigenous traditional territories, marking a significant moment in the Indigenous rights movement. In 2016, former president Tsai Ing-Wen officially apologized on behalf of the Taiwanese government to Taiwanese Indigenous people for the four centuries of settler-colonial oppression.

However, rather than positing Indigenous people as an equal sovereign to the Taiwanese government, these legal changes are still at the level of recognizing

1 https://law.moj.gov.tw/Eng/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?PCode=D0130003.

Indigenous presence under the scope of the Han-Taiwanese nation-state. Taiwanese Indigenous people keep encountering conflicts and are marginalized while asserting Indigenous sovereignty within the cultural, political, and legal domains. In 2015, the Bunun hunter Tama Talum was prosecuted for possession of an illegal firearm and illegal poaching weapon that violated the *Controlling Guns, Ammunition and Knives Act* and the *Wildlife Conservation Act*, even though hunting is a crucial cultural practice of Bunun (Lin 2023). In 2017, a year after President Tsai's apology, the Puyuma singer Panai Kusui and her allies occupied Ketagalan Boulevard, the boulevard right in front of the Office of the President, to protest against the new regulation of Indigenous traditional territories and lands enacted by the Council of Indigenous Peoples, which excludes the privately-owned land that legitimates the settler-exploitations of Indigenous territory. Until today, even after the end of President Tsai's second term of presidency, Panai and her allies still have not received any responses (Wang 2024). These incidents have shown that Indigenous people's rights are still confined by the Han-centric legislation. Furthermore, even though the revision of the Indigenous Peoples Basic Law in 2015 advocated for the creation of Indigenous public corporations to push for Indigenous autonomy, scholars have criticized that this corporation has yet to confer rights from the government (Kao 2016). Also, this autonomy is recognized and executed by settler-state processes that diminish Indigenous politics to municipal status (Hatfield 2020).

Indigenous Sovereignty in the Cyberspace

Given that the Taiwanese Indigenous population constitutes only 2.5 % of the total population and is dispersed across the country due to geographic distances and forced rural-urban migration, social media has become a vital platform for Indigenous activists. It allows them to combat discrimination and assert their Indigenous identity against the essentialization and objectification imposed by Han-Taiwanese people. For instance, the Indigenous Youth Front [原住民族青年陣線][2] responds to human rights movements with Indigenous perspectives on their Facebook page, and the podcast *Dear Han People*[3] serves as an academic and critical voice for decolonizing Han-hegemony. Since the 2010s, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and more recently Threads, have become primary tools for disseminating news about the Indigenous movement and cultural advocacy, rallying supporters for offline protests and community formation. Between the mid-2010s and the 2020s, there has been a notable increase in the number of Taiwanese Indigenous content creators dedicated to revitalizing Indigenous culture and language on social media and self-media platforms like YouTube and

2 https://www.facebook.com/IndigenousYouthFront.

3 Podcast *Dear Han People*: https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/%E8%A6%AA%E6%84%9B%E7%9A%84%E6%BC%A2%E4%BA%BA/id1523247165.

podcasts. Examples include the Bunun cultural advocacy 每天來點布農語啊 *mapasnava Bunun saikin*,[4] Amis language lessons on 都市美族生活 ["Urban Amis Life"],[5] and the Paiwan language advocacy on 排灣經典 *Payuan Classic*.[6] Additionally, self-media offers Indigenous musicians a platform free from the constraints of the conventional music industry to promote their creations, such as Ponay, Kivi, and 潮州土狗 [CZ Dogg]. Some of these musicians, including Ponay, have gained recognition in the popular music scene.

Through the spaces provided by social media and self-media, Indigenous artists and activists draw public attention to Indigenous political and cultural discourses, amplifying their voices and causes. However, as many Indigenous scholars have pointed out, online space is also where discrimination and oppression are obvious, and this has become a significant point of pressure for the assertion of Indigenous rights (Carlson and Kennedy 2021). Taiwan is not exceptional. In May 2023, during the presidential elections of the student association at the Department of Economy at National Taiwan University, the student candidates included "Reducing the admission quota for Indigenous students" as a part of their campaign initiative, which was publicly posted on the official Facebook Fanpage of the student association (Lín 2023). In the same month, at the school fair of the Taichung First Senior High School, a class of students titled their vendor "C5H5Na", which in Hokkien was pronounced as "dead barbarian", a pejorative word used to call Indigenous people (Huang 2023). These two educational institutions are among the most prestigious in Taiwan, and neither institution has yet announced any punishment or training for these students. These events reveal the institutional complicity to racism and the omnipresent colonial oppression against Taiwan's Indigenous people in the online and offline space.

As the Internet became the space for self-expression among Taiwanese Indigenous people, the two discrimination incidents reflect what Shzr Ee Tan states: "the ubiquity of the digital world is taken for granted in contemporary life in a way that Indigeneity is not" (Tan 2017, 29). René Lysloff and Leslie Gay argue that technology is integral to cultural systems and social institutions (Lysloff and Gay 2003). Lysloff further asserts that online communities are as real as their offline counterparts, though they operate in different social spaces (Lysloff 2003, 236). Moreover, an online field is not confined by geography and extends temporally, being both synchronous and asynchronous (Przybylski 2021, 9). The nature of online spaces and communities reveals that these digital realms are extensions of offline institutions and social structures. Additionally, online oppressions persist, extend, and even continue to harm Indigenous people beyond spatial and temporal barriers.

4 每天來點布農語啊 *mapasnava Bunun saikin*: https://www.instagram.com/bununeveryday/.

5 都市美族生活 ["Urban Amis Life"]: https://www.instagram.com/amisitokay/.

6 排灣經典 *Payuan Classic*: https://www.instagram.com/payuan.classic/.

Cyberspace, therefore, is also a battleground for Indigenous sovereignty, paralleling and intertwining with the sovereignty movement in offline spaces. Indigenous perspectives about the internet regard cyberspace as fundamentally land-based and relational, challenging the notion of it as landless, universal, and democratic (Caranto Morford and Ansloos 2021; Duarte 2017). This view highlights the replicated colonial violence and cyberspace norms, disregarding Indigenous concepts of community and space (Caranto Morford and Ansloos 2021, 295). Yaqui scholar Marisa Elena Duarte articulates that the internet can be a tool for educating younger generations in Indigenous knowledge, supporting tribal enterprises, and fostering the creativity of Native peoples despite colonization. This, she argues, lays the groundwork for future sovereignty exercises (Duarte 2017, 144).

These concepts offer a decolonial discourse on cyberspace, where Indigenous linguistic projects, political gatherings, and cultural performances take place. Regarding the online practice of ancestral knowledge during the pandemic, scholars in Indigenous studies view online performances and storytelling as continuing acts of cultural resistance (IllumiNative 2020; Przybylski 2021b; Heth 2022). Ashley Caranto Morford and Jeffrey Ansloos describe cyberspace as a place where Indigenous sovereignty is enacted, arguing that crafting and sharing tweets in Indigenous languages is a powerful demonstration of ongoing Indigenous sovereignty and survivance (2021, 301). Drawing from these scholars' perspectives, I apply the concept of cyberspace as a space where sovereignty is enacted and observe how such sovereignty is asserted through Ponay's musical performances.

Han Hegemony in the Popular Music Scene

In Taiwan, the most dominant music genre is Mandarin popular music (Mandopop), which the public typically considers mainstream in contrast to the underground scene, despite the diminishing barriers between them. Both scenes predominantly share similarities in their sonic aesthetics and use of the Mandarin language, but they usually cater to different audiences and political stances. Indigenous singers are desired but objectified in both contexts. In Ponay's videos, the sovereign assertion in cyberspace arises from challenging the Han hegemony present in both the mainstream and underground music scenes.

Mandopop is a trans-regional genre that has followed the shifting Han Chinese cultural centers since its emergence in 1920s Shanghai (Tsai, Ho, and Jian 2019). The Mandopop scene adheres to a constrained Han Chinese-centric and heteronormative framework. This framework persists, especially as China becomes the primary market for Mandopop. Within the Mandopop industry, the identity of Taiwanese Indigenous musicians has shifted from being

obscured to being highlighted, reflecting a journey from being masked to commodified under the influence of Han-cultural hegemony (Li 2000). Before the late 1990s, the identity of Taiwanese Indigenous singers was largely ignored. However, as more Indigenous singers who embrace their identities gain popularity, music that addresses Indigenous cultures has increased. Despite this, the stereotypes toward Taiwanese Indigenous people did not diminish with the popularity of Indigenous music. Instead, the success of these Indigenous singers was often oversimplified as merely a reflection of Indigenous people's inherent musical talent. The Mandopop industry still capitalizes Indigenous identity as marketable symbols, viewing Indigenous people through a settler-colonial lens as naturally talented singers. Indigenous singers are often sexualized more than their Han-Taiwanese counterparts. While Han-Taiwanese singers typically present themselves in an attractive yet conservative manner to align with Chinese cultural virtues, Indigenous singers are portrayed in a more sexualized way. This reflects a fetishization of Indigenous people, who are perceived as being more sexual (Moskowitz 2010, 81).

Ironically, although Indigenous singers are welcomed in the Mandopop industry and satisfy audiences' desires for exoticism, the music is often categorized as "world music" or "indie music" when based on Indigenous traditions, as it is considered "too Indigenous" for mainstream popular music. Only those Indigenous artists who conform to Han-centric musical aesthetics are celebrated within the mainstream music industry. While more Indigenous singers have broken into the popular music scene today, the challenge of blending Indigenous roots with popular music elements for a broader audience remains a significant concern for Indigenous artists.

Indigenous music has also become a symbol of multicultural nationalism (Hatfield 2020), which the Taiwanese government seeks to celebrate by supporting indie music to re-center Taiwanese popular music within the Chinese-speaking world (Tsai and Lin 2019). For four decades since the Republic of China retreated to Taiwan, this regime had endeavored to maintain its legitimate authority in China by centering Han-Mandarin culture through cultural assimilation policies under the dictatorship in Taiwan. In China, the People's Republic of China (PRC) gained global recognition in the 1970s that threatened ROC's authority of China. Meanwhile, in Taiwan, the democratic movements challenged the authority of the ROC and its Han-centric perspective. While China's annexation of Taiwan looms ahead, the surged political rivalry between China and Taiwan contributes to the increasing construction of a postcolonial multicultural Taiwan that distinguishes itself from the imposed Chinese nationalism in China. Under this political transformation, Taiwanese Indigenous cultures, as well as those cultural minorities whose culture were suppressed during the dictatorship, have become the symbols of multicultural Taiwan (Guy 2001). As a result, the importance of Indigenous music culture

has been tokenized and appropriated as an indispensable component of Taiwanese multicultural nationalism (Go 2008; Hatfield 2020), and simultaneously subordinated to "the structure of settler colonialism" to eliminate Indigenous sovereignty (Kauanui 2016).

Indigenous artists are commodified in multicultural nationalism. Amidst the ongoing conflict between China and Taiwan, Taiwan's Mandopop music, especially prominent in the 1990s and 2000s, is used to assert Taiwan's cultural significance in the Chinese-speaking world. In this context, Taiwanese Indigenous music is commodified as the symbol of Taiwanese uniqueness to differentiate it from China. To sustain this cultural prominence as China increasingly dominates the Mandopop scene in the 2010s, the Taiwanese government also invests in indie musicians – from production and promotion to local and international performances – to reinforce Taiwan's central status in cultural creativity and authenticity (Tsai and Lin 2019). Taiwanese Indigenous indie musicians are welcomed within this narrative, which brought them many overseas performing opportunities. However, the requirement for authenticity in Indigenous music often involves singing in native languages and focusing on traditional themes. This emphasis on authenticity is prominent in indie music, further marginalizing Indigenous artists within the broader popular music mainstream. There seems to be a thick wall that separates Indigeneity from popularity in music, and Indigenous singers have to choose one side or another, making it hard for them to receive commercial success without being criticized as "too mainstream". Indigenous musicians lend Indigenous elements to Taiwanese people's national identity to mark a distinction from China. Yet, their own cultural expressions and identities continue to be sidelined in the popular music sector.

Ponay's Negotiation and Re-Articulation through Yuan Style Cover

Ponay's cover of Mandopop significantly shifts the audience's expectations of both the Mandopop and indie music scenes. Unlike typical popular music videos that feature well-filmed music videos or live performances and cover videos that focus on teaching the vocal techniques of the original singer, Ponay's cover diverges from these norms. Instead, he reinterprets Mandopop in his unique Yuan style. This approach not only deviates from the conventional Mandopop scene but also challenges the indie music scene's expectations. Despite his innovative style, Ponay neither performs his own creations nor sings chants considered authentic to Indigenous culture, which the indie music scene typically anticipates.

While there is a barrier that confines Indigenous singers' development in both scenes, Ponay does not choose to break it. Instead, he creates a different space to interpret popular music with joy under his Indigenous subjectivity on self-media. In this section, I exemplify Ponay's cover of the Mandopop song

"Those Bygone Years"[7] to show how Ponay parodies the song for joy and fun, challenging the Han hegemonic conventions in Taiwan's popular music.

Ponay's video creates an intimate space where he is the host, inviting the audience to join. In his cover of a popular Mandopop song, "Those Bygone Years", he is wearing a tank top and a cap in front of the camera. He faces his MIDI keyboard and Mac laptop, and his bed and a small desk are behind him. He is in a space that fully belongs to him. The vision of this video tells his audience that he is showing everyone his private space and off-stage time. Instead of a music video, Ponay's cover reminds viewers of a private karaoke space, where the boundaries between participation and presentation have been blurred so that audiences feel more intimate with him. In this private space, he is not obligated to perform as a representative of his Indigenous culture, as is often required in popular music presentations. This allows him the freedom to sing as if he were in front of close friends and to share inside jokes, presenting his normal daily life.

For an Indigenous viewer, Ponay's performance is intimate and familiar. For non-Indigenous viewers, Ponay creates a distinctive yet welcoming space that is visually familiar but audibly unique. Ponay says at the beginning of the song: "Our guest ordered this song, a lively and brisk song: *Miss*[8] from Hu, Xia (in Mandarin)." Ponay's mode of presentation is orientated at the common opening format used in karaoke videos, which usually start from the same welcoming script on the screen. This song is originally about mourning the missed lover of his youth. Unlike the original version, which is sung in a straightforward vocal style that emphasizes the lyrical content and the sentimental emotion in a decontextualized story, Ponay uses many ornamentations and is melismatic in his vocals. His body and hands move in conjunction with his melisma, and his face always squeezes together when he is singing higher pitches, which makes him look involved in the song.

In this intimate space, Ponay keeps playing with the song narrative and twists it into a story more reflective of his life experience. He adds his own narration and lyrical repetition. Sometimes, he adds his native language, Amis, to the song. He starts to improvise when he is singing the second chorus, using the Amis word *ci apa* ["the foolish"] to replace some of the original words. He also likes to add narrations to his cover. At the end of this video, he says, "Let us give this song to the person we missed. My idol once said, 'No matter how sad you are, we still need to face it with a smile because the hard times will pass away day by day'." This is a cliché that Taiwanese people often hear from others when feeling upset, and this also

7 YouTube link to Ponay's cover of "Miss" (originally "Those Bygone Years"): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqE2Q8Vo2hs.

8 The original title of this song is "Those Bygone Years", but Ponay loves to give his covers a new name.

makes the audience wonder which great figure he is quoting. However, he suddenly says, "This quote is from the 2019 smiling representative – Sung, Mei Chun!" and shows the YouTube link in the video description space; obviously she is just a person he knows. After the quote, he ends the video with the script "Guests please applaud" – also a common feature of karaoke videos – echoing his beginning.

He only uses the keyboard as his accompaniment, which is an iconic symbol in the tribal karaoke and cassette culture. His MIDI keyboard plays the pre-recorded chords, beats, and melody of the song in a minor tone. The melody is played with a melodica timbre. He loves to add abrupt sound effects at the end of phrases. In a phrase before the chorus, he presses the applause sound effect on a MIDI keyboard three times and shouts "OO-A!" three times after he sings the chorus, "Who sat with her in the classroom and who loved her?" which has nothing to do with the celebratory sound effect. Rather than reflecting the lyrical content in his singing, he likes to remind audiences that the chorus is coming and invites audiences to sing with him. He also changes the beat of his cover to make the song danceable for a group of people. "Those Bygone Years" is originally an undanceable ballad song. Actually, ballad is the most prominent style in the Mandopop industry, and most of Mandopop, either music videos or cover videos, are presentational performances, so Ponay's interpretation creates a different sonic and visual aesthetic in the Mandopop scene.

The captions in the video are also important for his self-expression. These captions present the lyrics, explain his word choice, and tease him in the background. His captions imitate the captions of a music video used in karaoke. He is very good at utilizing homonyms and making fun of his accent in his captions. As Mandarin is a tonal language, the meaning will change when the tone changes. In one phrase, a word is supposed to be pronounced as "*jǐn jǐn*", meaning "tightly" [緊緊], but he pronounces it as "*jǐng jìng*", which is similar to the original singer's pronunciation due to the pitch. The caption in the top-right corner of the video provides the transliteration of "*jǐng jìng*" using Zhuyin, the transliteration system for traditional Chinese, and even adds three question marks to tease Ponay's incorrect pronunciation. Moreover, Ponay does not write the correct word, 緊緊 ["tightly"], in the main caption, which displays the lyrics at the bottom of the video. Instead, he writes the Chinese characters "莖莖" ["penis"], which is pronounced as "*jīng jīng*" (Figure 1).

Ponay's Yuan style reverses the public stereotype of the MIDI keyboard accompaniment, evoking an impression of local karaoke, which is defined as vulgar. Ponay's usage of MIDI keyboard also reflects a way of singing that is popular in Taiwanese Indigenous music culture, especially common in karaoke nowadays, which is an important form of entertainment among tribes. This musical style was significantly shaped by the cassette tape period in the 1980s

and 90s. According to Chun-bin Chen (2013), in the 1980s, the affordability and portability of these tapes helped build a pan-Indigenous musical aesthetic, allowing Indigenous Taiwanese people to create and share their contemporary music and stories. These cassette tapes, reflecting daily lives, became popular in various Indigenous contexts like karaoke, social dances, ritual ceremonies, and festivals, fostering a distinctive musical culture and aesthetic. To maximize profits, cassette tape companies opted for cost-effective production, leading to the widespread use of MIDI keyboards, which allowed a single player to produce a range of sounds. This technology not only made production cheaper but also brought in cultural influences from Hokkien and Mandarin popular music through the keyboard players, many of whom were part-time "Nakasi players", folk musicians who traveled to perform for a living, evidence of which can be traced back to the Japanese colonial occupation era in the first half of the twentieth century.

Figure 1: The blue caption above states the pronunciation "*jǐng jìng*".
The white caption below displays the Chinese characters 莖莖 ("*jīng jīng*", meaning "penis").

Impacted by these Nakasi musicians, elements like melismas and nasal resonance in Ponay's Yuan Style have roots in Hokkien popular music, which has a deep influence from Japanese *enka*, a sentimental musical genre usually associated with traditional and authentic Japanese musical expression (Mitsui 2014, 75). Japanese *enka* was also popularized among the Taiwanese Indigenous community. The Indigenous cassette tape music, blending elements from various

Indigenous cultures and the colonial music influences of both Han-Taiwanese and Japanese, is conspicuously missing from the popular music scene and the albums of Indigenous popular music artists. Ponay's decision to embrace this style marks a notable deviation from the prevailing social and cultural norms. It effectively retells the history of Taiwanese popular music from Indigenous viewpoints, challenging the dominance of Han-Mandarin centrism.

From these aspects, Ponay transforms the song into a playful and danceable tune that twists the standardized aesthetic. Furthermore, he infuses the karaoke experience with insider jokes that are shared only with Indigenous people or those familiar with the culture to create intimacy with his audiences. Inside Ponay's space, he refuses the Han-colonial gaze, which expects Indigenous performers to play as cultural representatives under multicultural nationalism. Such a breakthrough creates a space for Indigenous music history to be expressed, which has not yet been included in the Mandopop space.

The Indigenous Queerness of Joy

Ponay also challenges the heteronormativity in popular music narratives via his covers, even though the heteronormativity has been loosened by the constant gender and sexual equity movements in the 2010s. Marc Moskowitz (2010) states that Mandopop songs have blurred the line between femininity and masculinity, focusing on women as the subject of the music while altering masculinity by highlighting the gentle, considerate, and feminine as well as the independent and hard-hearted. Indeed, the pronoun in Mandarin allows the listener to apply their own sexuality to the love stories in songs, and in recent days, songs dedicated to LGBTQ communities have increased, yet most of the love song narratives still assume a love relationship between the male and female. In the indie music scene, even though indie musicians are more open to expressing their support to LGBTQ communities, the scene remains heterosexual and patriarchal. While Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage in 2019, this progression has become an important symbol to mark a multicultural and inclusive Taiwan to differentiate Taiwan from China, a useful approach to assert Taiwanese nationalism. In this celebration of nationalism, Indigenous queers refuse to be represented under the Han-centric queer narratives.

In 2018, the first Indigenous LGBTQ music festival, the Adju Music Festival, launched to tell the stories of Indigenous queers that tried to alter the heterosexual norms emphasized by Christian churches, the central gathering space for Indigenous communities. The term *adju*, referring to "sisters" in the Paiwan language, was used between female friends and later borrowed by Indigenous transgender men. Now, this word has become a term of identity for the broader Indigenous LGBTQ community. Instead of using homosexual

(*tong-xing-lien* or *tong-zhi*) in Mandarin to refer to this community, the festival founder, Remaljiz Mavaliv, explains that using *adju* also means to refuse the modern Western LGBTQ discourses and Han-centrism (2017). He tells the *Indigenous Sight* reporter, "The term 'tong-zhi' is too Han-centric. In Paiwan, we all refer to each other as 'adju'" (Liang 2020). In Ponay's performance, I also see such resistance to breaking the Han heteronormativity and Han-centric queer narrative in popular music.

In 2020, Ponay released the cover of "Womxnly"[9] featuring Paiwan dancer Aulu as a promotion of the Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association, which has been providing consultations for the LGBTQ community and their families for decades.[10] His choice of the Mandopop superstar Jolin Tsai's song "Womxnly" is understandable by Taiwanese audiences. Better known by its Mandarin title, 玫瑰少年 ["The Youth of the Rose"], "Womxnly" is a tribute to the LGBTQ community and has won the "Song of the Year" award at the National Golden Melody Awards because of its political meanings. In this cover, Ponay plays a MIDI keyboard and improvises melismas and nasal vibration vocal technique over the melody's lyrics, which are the characteristics of the Yuan style.

In Jolin Tsai's original version, her vocal interpretation is full of grief but also encouragement. The song is inspired by a tragedy that occurred in 2000. In a middle school in Taiwan, a ninth-grade student, Yung-Chi Yeh (葉永誌), was found dead in the restroom at school after years of being bullied and discriminated against due to his queer identity. While incorporating the common expressions of sorrow and loneliness found in Taiwanese popular music, Jolin Tsai interprets this tragedy with greater strength by including elements of a hip-hop dance tune. However, Ponay's cover takes a different approach, opting for an interpretation that is full of joy.

At the beginning of the song, Ponay plays a marching-paced, zither-plucking sound from his keyboard, which reverses the warm and sorrowful arrangement from the original version. Unlike Jolin Tsai's vocals, which are more mellow, Ponay emphasizes the first word of each lyrical line with exaggerated accents, adding ornamentation to nearly every line. Noteworthily, Ponay does

9 The YouTube link to Ponay's cover of "Rose Rose" (originally "The Youth of the Rose (Womxnly)"): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZtObeXq81OQ.

10 Although Ponay and Aulu have chosen not to explicitly disclose their sexual identities, Ponay's channel and performances have cultivated a space where indigequeers can share their voices and express themselves. In an interview, Ponay explained that his indigequeer performances are inspired by his experiences with indigequeer friends, aligning with his broader intent to incorporate elements of his daily life into his other videos. His decision to maintain privacy about his identity does not diminish his commitment to expressing indigequeerness as an integral part of his everyday life. His performances have been widely recognized and celebrated by indigequeer individuals, earning him invitations to perform at the Adju Music Festival and collaborate with the Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association.

not introduce the song with the correct title; instead, he introduces it under the title "Rose Rose", which reminds Mandopop listeners of another old song from the 1940s, "Rose, Rose, I Love You". Ponay usually gives his covers new titles, usually taking part of the original song title or borrowing from other titles he finds connected in a playful way. For Taiwanese viewers, Ponay's reversals will be perceived as a playful and innovative jest born from a brilliant sense of humor.

The caption in the video indicates the playful and joyful atmosphere of the performance. It not only presents what Ponay says but also teases the performance from the viewers' or producers' views. At the beginning, when Ponay introduces the song, the captions fly through, stating "Is there a light ocean this time?", teasing the room decoration. Subsequently, the captions playfully tease Ponay once more. After Ponay announces, "Our guest, Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association, ordered this song which has 'extraordinary demeanor and wisdom', Jolin Tsai's 'Rose Rose'", the caption humorously queries, "Are you sure they ordered this song?".

While the dancer Aulu appears shirtless, wearing a pink bucket hat and pink bike shorts, the caption humorously comments, "How did they find these big flowers?", referencing the moment when Aulu presents his two large flowers (Figure 2). This caption not only aids viewers in understanding but also amplifies Aulu's humor. For instance, when Ponay sings the phrase "till you really being free", he elaborates on the word 'really' five times, as opposed to the original version's two. The caption cleverly transliterates these repetitions into five common Mandarin names, each pronunciation sounding like "Lu, Yi-li/lin," which sounds similar to "really". The caption then adds a playful query, "Who are you calling?". Moreover, the main white caption at the bottom of the video playfully spells "really" as "reaal" (Figure 3). Although not visible in this video rendition, the captions also play a crucial role in bridging linguistic gaps. They translate Indigenous languages into Mandarin when Ponay speaks Amis or other Indigenous languages. Additionally, the phraseology and grammar of the captions mimic the common manner in which Indigenous people speak Mandarin.

From Ponay's own perspective, the purpose of his joyful reinterpretation is simple. He just wants to share the joy he experiences in his tribe with his people to the public and present the daily experience of Indigenous people to improve understanding of his community. Ponay's cover reminds me of Billy Ray Belcourt's theory of joy (2021). According to Belcourt, joy is a "durational performance of emotion, one that is caught up in an ancestral art of world-making in the most asphyxiating of condition", so "[j]oy is art is an ethics of resistance" (Belcourt 2021). Even though this was not Ponay's intention, I see his joy overthrowing the Han-centric Mandopop aesthetic, which values sorrow and emotional expression in music.

Figure 2: The caption at the top right corner reads: "How did they find these big flowers?"

Figure 3: The pink captions around Ponay are five different Han-Chinese Mandarin names, but they all are pronounced as "Lu, Yi-li/lin". The green caption in the middle above Ponay reads, "Who are you calling?" teasing Ponay for calling out these names. The white caption misspells the first "really" as "reaal".

Ponay and Aulu's collaboration also resonates with Belcourt's theory of joy, which is deeply rooted in Indigenous queerness. This Indigiqueer joy manifests in the dancer Aulu's performance, which is both joyful and erotic. In Aulu's dance and clothings, I perceive the embodiment of Qwo-Li Driskill's concept

of "sovereign erotics", a means to revive the diminished Indigenous bodies and reclaim sovereignty over them (2004). This echoes Joshua Whitehead's statement, "[W]e've lived in torture chambers, we have excelled under the weight of killing machinations, we've hardened into bedrock – see how our bodies dazzle in the light?" (2020, 12). In the context of Han-heteronormativity prevalent in the Mandopop scene and broader Taiwanese society, Indigenous queer bodies, often diminished by sexualized and racialized processes, reclaim their sovereignty through Aulu's dance. This act of reclamation is further celebrated in the video caption, "Isn't this person a bit beautiful?".

Also, the collaboration between Ponay and Aulu challenges the Han-centric norm of bodies. Before becoming a YouTuber, Ponay was a professional dancer with the renowned Indigenous contemporary dance group Bulareyaung Dance Company, where Aulu was his colleague. Ponay regularly features Aulu in his videos, and Aulu's expressive dancing often captures more attention from the audience. This is a deliberate choice by Ponay, who aims to challenge the notion that dancers are merely backup performers in Taiwanese society. During my interview with him, Ponay highlighted that dance is a fundamental aspect of the everyday life of many Indigenous people and is not just an accompaniment to singing. Ponay also mentioned that Aulu's dances are entirely improvised, reflecting their habit of improvisatory dance to any music. This spontaneity is important to Ponay, as he seeks to highlight the freedom and fluidity of the Indigenous body through this attention to joy.

With joy, Ponay's work disrupts the dominant Han-centric music aesthetic in sound, lyrics, and body performances. It centers the Indigenous queer subjectivity, allowing Indigenous youth to find representations of their lives and stories. Ponay even alters the landscape of popular music, evidenced by the increasing participation of non-Indigenous Mandopop stars in his videos. Amidst an increase in Indigenous singers and content creators, I argue that Ponay and these Indigenous artists are shifting the Han hegemony in popular music, opening a path toward Indigenous sovereignty.

Conclusion: Cyberspace and Indigenous Sovereignty

Ponay's cover is a powerful demonstration of how joyful performances can challenge and transform the norms of aesthetics, bodies, and history within the context of Han heteronormativity in the popular music industry. It cannot be done without Ponay's usage of self-media, which gives him opportunities to alter the music industry convention. On the other hand, Ponay's challenges of popular music conventions also help voice out Indigenous presence in cyberspace. While cyberspace is full of colonial violence against Indigenous people, Ponay creates the space for Indigenous subjectivity to narrate their own music history as an interpretation and resistance to Han settler colonization. Even though Ponay does

not deem his performance as any reclamation of rights or sovereignty, Ponay's YouTube channel claims a safe space for Indigenous people to position themselves in the center to celebrate their bodies, senses, thoughts, and memories, which I believe leans toward an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty.

Furthermore, his performance online serves as a rallying point for the Indigenous community, leveraging the vast reach of the Internet to connect Indigenous people who are often isolated due to small populations and geographical distances among tribes and the diaspora. Ponay's success on platforms like YouTube has opened up possibilities for other Taiwanese Indigenous artists to expand the Indigenous cyberspace.

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POVZETEK

Zahtevanje avtohtone suverenosti na spletu: Ponayeva priredba »Yuan (avtohtonega)« pesmi Mandopop v YouTubu

Od leta 2010 so mlajše generacije tajvanskih domorodnih glasbenikov razvile nov spletni glasbeni prostor prek Facebooka, Instagrama in YouTuba, da bi predstavile, razpravljale o in slavile svojo domorodnost. V zvezi z internetom strokovnjaki za domorodne študije trdijo, da bolj egalitarne tehnologije domorodcem zagotavljajo prostor za predstavitev, hkrati pa se zavedajo fetišizma, komercialne modernosti in multikulturalizma, ki bi lahko napačno predstavljali njihovo domorodnost (Tan 2017; Duarte 2017; Hatfield). 2020). V odzivu na ta diskurz trdim, da tajvanski domorodni glasbeniki na internetu pridobivajo večjo moč, ko lahko sami definirajo svojo domorodnost in celo zavračajo fetišizem s tem, da izpodbijajo kolonialno-glasbeno estetiko in zahtevajo svojo suverenost. Moja študija primera se osredotoča na domorodnega pevca Ponaya in njegov YouTube kanal »Ponay's Yuan (Indigenous) Style Cover« in razpravlja o tem, kako njegove priredbe mando-popa izvajajo veselje nad ponovnim razkrivanjem porekla tajvanske domorodne glasbe – od predkolonialne dobe, prek japonske in han-kitajske kolonialne dobe, do sodobne popularne glasbene scene – da bi proslavili svojo domorodnost. Za razliko od drugih pevcev priredb Mando-popa, ki posnemajo izvirno različico, zvok Ponayeve spremljave s klaviaturami spominja občinstvo na domorodno kasetno kulturo, njegov vokalni slog pa spremeni pesmi Mando-popa v slog plemenskih karaok. S tem Ponay vznemirja diskurz moči, ki ga v popularni glasbeni industriji obvladuje han-kitajska estetika. Ponay se v svojem stilu Yuan dotika tudi *queerness*, da predstavi veselje domorodnih *queerjev*. Ta pristop izziva Hanovsko heteronormativnost in celo Hanovsko-centrični *queerness*. Trdim, da - medtem ko je han-tajvanska družba fetišizirala domorodna telesa in kulture - Ponayeve priredbe vračajo moč interpretacije in predstavljanja domorodnosti v kolonizatorski glasbi, kar je dejanje zahtevanja suverenosti v spletnem in nespletnem svetu.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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