

SOUND ARCHIVES AND MUSICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MODERN INDIA: THE CASE OF THE FELIX VAN LAMSWEERDE COLLECTION (1963-2005)

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Abstract

This essay presents a critical social history of the context in which the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection came together. Felix van Lamsweerde (b. 1934), a Dutch collector, cultural anthropologist and impresario, extensively recorded Indian expressive cultures in the Netherlands and India between 1963 and 2005. This collection was digitised and catalogued between 2017 and 2020 at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen and the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv in Germany as part of a German Research Foundation (DFG) project. It includes a wide range of first-hand and commercial audio/video recordings of music, dance and theatre genres from across India along with accompanying notes, photographs, and a vast collection of books, magazines and journals. Van Lamsweerde's journey into studying musics of India and the collection itself points to how India's cultural politics evolved in the immediate decades following its independence from the British in 1947. Whilst historicising the colonial, oriental and nationalist legacies of music collection in India, this essay examines the Van Lamsweerde Collection and archival projects at large through a source critical approach. It attempts to demonstrate the ways in which caste, class, gender and racialisation processes and the sound archive shaped one another in the formation of transnational cultural representations of India. Drawing on discussions in ethnomusicology, social theory and archival studies, this essay offers an interpretation of how musical knowledge and a homogenous construct of Indian culture has taken shape in Western European and American academe.

Introduction

This paper analyses the collection of Felix van Lamsweerde (b. 1934), who extensively travelled, studied and recorded expressive cultures in post-independence India and the Netherlands between 1963 and 2005. The Van Lamsweerde Collection spans over four decades and is institutionalised at the Department of Musicology, Universität Göttingen in Germany. It exemplifies a wide range of audio and video recordings of music, dance and theatre genres from across India, and an extensive collection of photographs, journals, magazines, books and commercial recordings. About 900 first-hand sound recordings from this collection were digitised between 2017 and 2020 at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv followed by completion of an online database available on the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Berlin State Museums) official website. Given that it is newly institutionalised, this essay begins by offering some preliminary impressions of the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection with a view to highlight its scope and the historical context in which it came together. The essay then examines classification, categorisation, inventories and descriptions in the collection to explore how it was informed by the cultural politics of modern postcolonial India. This examination is based on the inventories and notes which clarify the broad scope of this collection, also prompting legacies of Indologists, orientalists, collectors and musicologists such as Anthony van Hoboken (1887-1983), Jaap Kunst (1891-1960), Arnold Bake (1899-1963), Alain Daniélou (1907-1994) and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy (1927-2009). Finally, I draw on my interviews and follow-up conversations with Van Lamsweerde conducted in 2018 and 2019 to support my analysis. These manifold approaches allow me to respond to Walsham's (2016) and Stoler's (2009) call to interrogate the ethnography of archives and collections so as to place them within the politics of power (Cushman, 2013; Foucault, 2004 [1969]; Fox, 2016; Garcia, 2017; Mignolo, 2011; Seeger, 1986; Seeger and Chaudhuri, 2004 et.al.). These approaches allow me to put sound archives 'under suspicion' (Garcia 2017) in a move towards challenging the impulse of

‘the imperial archive’s insistence on expert codification of knowledge’ which is ‘hermetically sealed, contained and unchanging’ (Cushman, 2013: p.116-117). These approaches also help in understanding the role of the collector, communities and individuals who are recorded (and those left out), cultural brokers and institutions involved in the task of knowledge production and dissemination. As a Hindustani music practitioner of two decades, a Marathi (official language spoken in the Western Indian state of Maharashtra) high-caste or brahmin woman, and an ethnomusicologist, I reflect critically on how caste, gender, and class dynamics have shaped pedagogies of music. This background further enables me to draw on my doctoral research, which examined the soundscape of an anti-caste movement in Western India to propound a feminist historiography and caste-based framework to analyze music of modern India. This is particularly important in the case of Hindustani music (also known as North Indian classical music) which was reformed and brought into a nationalist modern public sphere, largely by Marathi high-caste men from Western India. Thus, positioning my experience as a musician on the axis of caste, gender and regional lines helps me to critically examine what constitutes ‘Indian music’ and musicianship in a Western European sound collection of India. How have archives fashioned an understanding of music of India? How can we negotiate with the challenges presented by orientalist modes of knowledge production, particularly the textuality of sound archives? What and who is part of the Van Lamsweerde Collection and who/what is left out? How can we examine the impact of British colonialism and Indian nationalist modernity on this collection? While accounting for contemporary efforts and developments towards repatriation and recovery, how can we locate the potentials of music/sound archives?

I address these and related questions in the following sections, beginning with an introduction of the collector, his journey into the study of India and the context in which the sound collection came together. Then, the essay looks at the structure and content of the Van Lamsweerde Collection by focusing on its classification represented by handwritten notes accompanying each item. This supports an analysis of the history of music collection in India and further revises the history of music’s classification/categorisation (particular classical and folk) and classicisation in the 19th and 20th centuries. Finally, this essay focuses on Van Lamsweerde’s journey as a collector, the content of the collection, the structures that shaped (sound) archives and their influence on academic and cultural spheres at large.

Felix van Lamsweerde: a biography and background to the collection

Born in 1934 and brought up in Amsterdam, Felix van Lamsweerde grew up in a family of artists and was fascinated with music from a young age. He took piano lessons as a child, studied European classical music and grew up listening to diverse musics on the radio. Van Lamsweerde stumbled upon a sarangi recital by Ram Narayan on All India Radio when he was bedridden with tuberculosis as a teenager. He recalled during an interview how deeply moved he was by this sound and wished to pursue his interest further. Van Lamsweerde described this as the very first moment of his deep interest, curiosity and passion for music of India.

Felix van Lamsweerde worked professionally as a sound engineer while completing his education in the Netherlands. He provided background scores for numerous theatre productions and recorded a number of live performances as part of music and dance festivals. From 1956 to 1962, Van Lamsweerde worked at the Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen) as a research assistant under musicologist Jaap Kunst. On Kunst’s advice, Van Lamsweerde majored in cultural anthropology, which would be a stepping-stone to pursue the latter’s interest in musics of India. Van Lamsweerde completed

his pre-doctoral degree in 1962. His thesis examined textual and music records at the Indian Embassy and sources at Leiden University. Commenced under the mentorship of Kunst, this study enabled Van Lamsweerde to enter a network of scholars and collectors of Indian music from the UK, US and other parts of Western Europe.

As a result, in 1962 Van Lamsweerde was offered a six-month research fellowship at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London under the supervision of musicologist and collector of Indian music Arnold Bake. This project focused on preparing a fieldwork trip to India together with Bake's assistant Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy. Van Lamsweerde went to study the sitar at Benares Hindu University (BHU) in India on a two-year student exchange scholarship (1963-65) from the Dutch and Indian governments. During the interview, he shared how he was increasingly drawn to sitar, particularly as this was also the era when the instrument came to be associated with the mythical East (not to mention the growing popularity of Ravi Shankar and his collaboration with the Beatles). Van Lamsweerde, however, wanted to learn the sitar from Ustad Vilayat Khan. Due to Khan's busy schedule and residence in Mumbai, Van Lamsweerde could not pursue his training consistently. At music conferences in Delhi, particularly those of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Van Lamsweerde met some of Vilayat Khan's contemporaries and students, one of whom was the latter's brother Ustad Imrat Khan. With a view to taking lessons from Imrat Khan, Van Lamsweerde moved to Mumbai six months into his master's programme. He was registered as a student at the Deodhar School of Indian Music in Mumbai.

In 1963-64, he joined Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy for his field trip to India where he learnt about and recorded music, theatre and dance genres of diverse communities, castes and classes in Central and Western India. Van Lamsweerde also travelled by himself to a number of places during this time to explore his interests in musical traditions based on his early academic study of Hindustani and Karnatik classical music. He shared how he was glad to have developed an interest in both classical traditions since most scholars studied North Indian or Hindustani music. He simultaneously pursued sitar lessons with Ustad Imrat Khan.

On his return to the Netherlands in 1965, the Department of Anthropology at the Royal Tropical Institute appointed Van Lamsweerde as curator of ethnomusicology. Over the next few years, he also curated a number of Indian musical instruments for the collection at the Tropenmuseum. In 1969, he published an article, "Musicians in Indian Society: An Attempt at Classification" based on his fieldwork and preceding review of literature. Additionally, he delivered lectures and designed programs for Dutch radio, which served as introductions to Indian music in Western Europe and North America. Van Lamsweerde continued visiting India to attend music festivals, conferences, and concerts and to meet his teachers, colleagues and friends. But his time in India between 1963 and 1965 seems to be the longest and most significant of all his visits to India.

Van Lamsweerde was also influential in the introduction of some of the most well-known musicians of India to the Netherlands through public and house concerts. These include Ravi Shankar (sitar), Nikhil Banerjee (sitar), Dagar brothers (dhrupad, a style in North Indian vocal music), Vilayat Khan (sitar), Bismillah Khan (shehnai), Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute), Bhimsen Joshi (Hindustani vocal music) and Lakshmi Shankar (Hindustani vocal music), Chitti Babu (veena), among others. Along with these prominent artists, Van Lamsweerde also introduced elite theatre traditions (e.g., Marathi Sangeet Natak) as well as classical dance traditions like Kuchipudi, Bharatanayam, and Odissi to the Netherlands. Within the legacy of collectors of Indian performance traditions mentioned earlier, Van Lamsweerde must be recognised as one of the first collectors and impres-

rios to have introduced ‘Indian music’ to the West with his sound recordings, lectures, and as an intermediary between the Netherlands and Indian cultural spheres in post-independence India. This collection thus represents a compilation of Van Lamsweerde’s musical endeavours from the 1960s until 2005, a long span of over forty years in post-colonial India which witnessed a number of economic, social and political changes. This particular time period is also representative of the emergence and institutionalisation of the discipline of ethnomusicology. Van Lamsweerde’s training in cultural anthropology was strategic in that sense. However, musical analysis in the ethnomusicological sense also was influenced heavily at the time by comparative musicology, orientalism, Indology and the legacy of sound collectors in colonised countries. In the following sections, I will draw on examples from the collection to demonstrate these influences on the content and structure of this collection.

Structure and content of the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection

Van Lamsweerde categorised the entire collection into six series (A, B, C, D, E and F). Series A is currently at the Tropenmuseum, while almost all items in other series are at Universität Göttingen. Given the enormity of this collection and swift changes in recording technology over the four decades, one can find a number of recording formats like open-reel tapes, VHS tapes, CDs, Hi8 tapes, audio cassettes and so on. Many of these contain second-hand recordings of concerts (recorded by other music connoisseurs and collectors) as well as films, documentaries, and radio broadcasts.

Although Van Lamsweerde has not inventoried all items in one consistent format or a single sheet, almost each item is accompanied with a hand- or typewritten note (Figure 1).

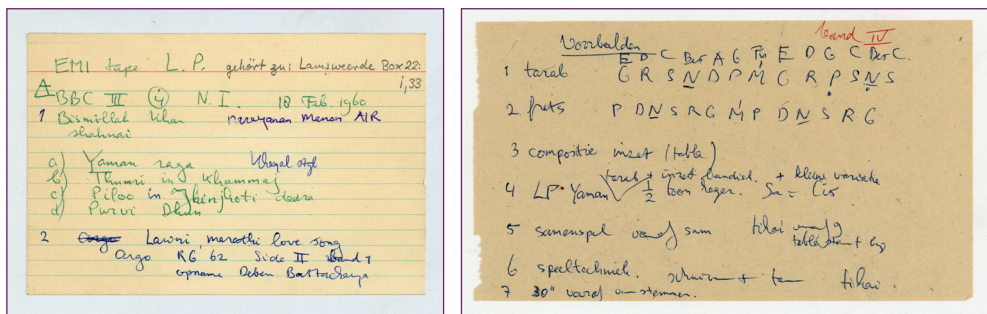


Figure 1. Handwritten notes accompanying two items in the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection.

However, separate inventories do exist for much of the material, often including the same information as on the note accompanying a recording. The style and content of the notes supplementing recordings changes over decades or depending on the recorded genre. These notes offer guidance not only for researchers but also for sound technicians/engineers as metadata. In terms of content, however, certain genres and classification dominate the collection. For example, Karnatik and Hindustani classical music and classical dance traditions like Kathak, Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi make up a significant portion. Names of classical musicians, raags (*melodic patterns or modes*), taals (*rhythmic cycles*), duration of performances, length of each section, and place and year of recording can be found more consistently. In most early recordings, raag names appear in capital and bold type as titles and are followed by names of musicians. These notes serve as an important source to analyse the structure of this collection. For instance, notes of recordings and genres are organised neatly by musical categories (Figure 2, bottom to top: religious music, folk music, tribal music, film music).



Figure 2. Musical categories and classification in a shelf of notes.

Descriptions are most often in Dutch and/or English. There are occasional remarks in Hindi (Devanagari script). One sporadically finds lyrics written in Devanagari (which may have been offered by the performer). Notes for some early recordings include staff notation, supplementary details in diacritics and at times, signs and symbols used in an Indian musical notation system (see note on the right in Figure 1). Further, it is interesting to note that Hindustani and Karnatik music recordings most often do not have terms describing genre/tradition like in the case of ‘folk’ and ‘tribal’ music¹ (Figure 3). The note to the right on classical music includes the name of the artists, duration of their performance and year of performance, among other metadata. The majority of first-hand sound recordings constitute Karnatik and Hindustani classical music, while those of folk and Indigenous tribal (known as Adivasi) communities are fewer in number.² In the case of Adivasi music, only the name of the community is mentioned without reference to other contextual details like song-texts, performers or meaning/lyrics of the song. The number of women musicians is smaller and very few appear consistently (e.g., Lakshmi Shankar, Hirabai Barodekar, Pia Srinivasan and Gangubai Hangal). Women performers are however dominant in recordings of classical dance (viz. Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi and so on). Despite the marginalisation of Muslim musicians from the public sphere in the 20th century (see Katz 2017), this collection includes

- 1 I have put both these categories in quotation marks to present their original usage in the archive and to also acknowledge their contestation, given that musical classification was based on class, caste and racial politics in colonial India (see Fiol 2015, 2017).
- 2 Karnatik and South-Indian are terms used synonymously, similar to tribal and Adivasi. It is difficult to provide the exact number of recordings of each kind because each recording often consists of multiple discrete tracks. These details could be explored during further research, as one would have to get through closely listening to more than a thousand items.

first- and second-hand recordings of many Muslim musicians performing vocal styles in North Indian music like dhrupad and khayal.

DATE	TRACK	SPEED	SUBJECT	RUNNING TIME
31-3-67	A	9,5cm	Volkemusik India F.V.L. Jaganath Mahasakti I	20'
14-4-67		TEL 340	" " II	20'
11-10-67	B	9,5	Rajasthan	28'
21-10-67	B	9,5	Punjabs	28'

SVR AGFA	
1 000 - 150	Pandit Jorraj 28'
2 151 - 264	Amjad Ali 1971 28'
3 266 - 300	Bhimsen Joshi 20'
	447
4. 448 - ca 551	MUSI NOS 25/11/79 Een kinderhand is ganz geerd. (Rajamani (ca 500))

Figure 3. Description of folk music ('volkmuziek') on the left and classical music on the right.

While these observations cannot be the sole basis upon which this collection can be analysed, the significance of recordings, notes and their tangibility as a first source of information cannot be understated. What the collection may open up as a result of further enquiry is a matter beyond the scope of the present discussion. My observations on music and musicianship based on the materiality of these recordings and their notes must be situated in the socio-political context of postcolonial India. The socio-economic conditions and meanings around musicianship drastically changed with the impact of British colonial rule, modernity, music's direct link to the crystallisation of a Hindu nationalist ideology, and music's classicisation and institutionalisation. The ways in which notes in this collection are written – descriptions of the traditions which predominantly constitute this collection, the artists, and their socio-economic setting – are an indication of how musicianship came to be regarded in postcolonial India. So, what constituted musicianship in colonial India and how did it change in postcolonial times? What kind of music was leveraged in the formation of the Indian nation-state? Who determined ideologies and pedagogies of music and musicianship which are understood today through institutionalised and archived vocabularies? These processes may throw light on how musics of India are represented in Euro-American academic (and non-academic) spheres and how ethnomusicology, a newly emerging discipline in the 1950s, shaped the understanding of musicianship of modern India (of which Van Lamsweerde was one of the first international representatives). To locate the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection in this context enables a critical engagement with recent studies on politics and the colonial history of archiving, authenticity and analysis (e.g. Caswell, et.al., 2017; Dunbar 2006; Harris 2005, 2007). Current debates focusing on confronting and reshaping institutions (including museums, archives and universities) that have inherited colonial thought (see Chavez and Skelchy 2019; Garcia 2017; Ingle 2016; L'Internationale 2016; Lonetree 2012; Luker 2017; Mbembe 2015; Schwartz and Cook 2002) provide a helpful lens to examine the role of music in reshaping and institutionalising 'culture' in postcolonial societies like India. Furthermore, these debates necessitate an analysis of archives from the standpoint of oppressed communities given their exclusion, underrepresentation or misrepresentation in colonial, postcolonial and national records which may further enlighten us about issues of repatriation, copyright, ownership, cultural rights and archival ethics. In this vein, the following section locates the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection in the legacy of European music collectors and writers of colonial/postcolonial India. It focuses on what role musicianship was to play in the project

of nation-building and how it shaped the music archive of modern India, thereby altering caste, class, and gender relations.

Colonial expositions on Indian music: foundations of nationalism and music's classicisation

Music scholars and historians have noted how European treatises on music of India in the modern period began as an imperial and colonial enterprise (Bakhle, 2005; Ghuman, 2014; Katz, 2017; Weidman, 2006 et al.). The age of exploration and Enlightenment, which sparked interest in musics of the 'other', were driven by agendas designed to represent the superiority of European civilisation and justify colonial rule. Racialisation of communities through music has also been observed as a key aspect of imperialism still reflected in disciplines like historical musicology, music theory and ethnomusicology (see Radano and Bohlman, 2000). This section draws on extant literature to arrive at a conclusion that problematises the modern sources of understanding Indian music and links it to national and regional manifestations of class, gender and caste.

While music has been documented in several forms and modes throughout Indian history, European colonial projects particularly documented and produced discourses that would serve as tools of power which refashioned music's fate in modern India (Bakhle, 2005; Schwartz and Cook, 2002). Musical accounts were extensively found in travelogues of colonial commentators, army officers and civil servants (with Christian missionary passion), who operated on the principle that the pathway to really understanding Indian music was through Indian religions, particularly Hinduism (Bakhle, 2005). Orientalist authors like Sir William Jones and his colonial descendants, for instance, devised a canonical understanding of Indian music which required nation, notation and religion in order for it to become 'authentically classical' (Bakhle, 2005: p.52). Jones's works must in fact be considered as the starting point of what Bakhle (2005: p.51) terms as the 'colonial sociology of music' based on myths, misinterpretations and propaganda as justifications of colonial rule.

The supremacy of texts on music must be highlighted here, despite the dominance of aural/oral modes of transmission of music across the Indian subcontinent. The written text was not only assumed to be the primary method of accessing knowledge about music, but in turn was used to reshape it. Jones's (in)famous *On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos (1789)*, a treatise on Indian music which he drafted after living in India for a year, cited his sources as 'Pandits and Rajas', not musicians (Bakhle 2005: p.9). While he did not know or learn Sanskrit at the time, he referred to transliterated versions of Sanskrit texts to describe musicological terms and claimed that all Indian knowledges emanated from the Vedas (ibid.).³ Colonial writers like Jones referred to Sanskrit texts on music such as Damodar's *Sangitdarpan (17th century)*, Ahobal Pandit's *Sangit Parijat (17th century)* and Somanatha's *Ragavibodha (17th century)*, rather than speaking to musicians themselves (ibid). Jones and his orientalist descendants like Augustus Willard and Sir William Ousley linked Indian music to a unitary classical Hindu civilisation, philology, etymology and music theory (ibid.). The modes of Indian music that these authors studied were part of Hindustani musical tradition (mostly khayal) which was primarily associated with hereditary Sunni Muslim musician families (gharanas), which operated as semi-professional groups patronised by princely courts. It is striking then, that despite the predominance of Sunni Muslim hereditary musicians, Jones' key respondents were

3 The term 'Hindoos' in this title and throughout his treatise is indicative of the British discovery of 'Hinduism' and the communalisation of music in the 19th century (see Doniger, 2009; Marshall, 1970).

pandits (high caste males) and his sources Sanskrit texts. However, the British discovery of Hinduism in the 18th century (Marshall 1970) led to the emergence of Indology, its disciplinary form (with Max Mueller), which reified racial, sexual and religious discourses on virility, particularly of Hindu and Muslim men (see Figueira, 2002; Omvedt, 2006; Sinha, 1995; Tzoref Ashkenazi, 2015). These, among other socio-political processes gradually institutionalised the equation of India as a Hindu nation. Such divisions were central for the solidification of British colonial rule.

Colonial literature, particularly works authored by Jones, was increasingly disseminated in the public sphere in the 19th century. The emergence of music appreciation societies led by the elites (brahmin and Parsi men, particularly in Western India) were a response to claiming the music of an ancient Hindu culture (Bakhle 2005). Bakhle shows us how music appreciation societies uncritically drew on the treatises and claims of William Jones and his pedigree (2005). The societies weaponised music to claim that the ancient (Hindu) tradition of music had always been religious and scientific, was appropriated by Muslims and needed to be urgently rescued and sanitised (Bakhle, 2005; Katz, 2012, 2017). Indian nationalism in the 19th century was based on similar logics of religious and caste divides that preserved high-caste status and power. Consequently, the task of notating and institutionalising music was taken up in late 19th and early 20th centuries by music reformers like V.D. Paluskar and V.N. Bhatkhande (both Marathi chitpawan brahmin men)⁴. A number of studies have shown in recent years how elites, particularly brahmins, stole livelihoods by usurping khayal (and in certain cases dhrupad) traditions which were until then practised by Muslim hereditary musicians as well as performance traditions of caste-hereditary musicians like Dalits (described as outcaste musicians) to create a dichotomy of classical/national and regional music and dance forms (Bakhle, 2005; Katz, 2017; Putcha, 2013; Soneji, 2012; Weidman, 2006 et. al.).

Influenced by the nationalist project, brahmin male figures like V.N Bhatkhande travelled extensively across the country to research and collect music in order to trace the history of this ancient tradition (Bakhle 2005). His extensive research across the country became the basis of his famous five-volume work, *Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati*. He asserted the primacy of Sanskrit and delineated the history and theory of Hindustani music through compositions of a number of couplets in Sanskrit. He also compiled thousands of compositions he learnt from Muslim hereditary musicians during his travels. Like Bhatkhande, V.D Paluskar devised his own notation system. Considered as the moderniser of music today, Paluskar successfully institutionalised Hindustani music as a religious practice and developed an authoritarian sacralised pedagogy that upheld what he believed to be the only true faith of India, Hinduism. Through his written works such as *Bharatiya Sangeet Lekhanpaddhati*, and the founding of the nation-wide institution Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Paluskar essentially propagated a brahmanic Hindu sacral-ity. He championed for music to be rescued from the so-called non-native authors and ignorant classes, namely Muslims and Dalits,⁵ whilst simultaneously racializing them and claiming music as a devotional phenomenon that belonged to a religious-caste-racial group. From being an unmarked practice in the 18th century, music came to be classicized in the 20th century, with an entirely new authorship (from Muslim heredi-

4 This detail needs to be emphasized as chitpawans, among the many brahmin sub-castes, assume their descentance from Aryans in Western India and pride themselves on their fair complexions and green-grey eyes – a form of racial superiority based on a myth of origin (Figueira 2002).

5 Bhatkhande's and Paluskar's books form a significant part of the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection, like most schools and institutions of Indian music across the globe. Their distinct notational styles and musical works are considered seminal in the study of music of India to this day.

tary musicians to predominantly brahmins, Parsis and other elites) and with a Hindu religious/nationalist pedagogy. Ironically, in their sacralised vision of an anti-colonial nationalism, nation, notation and religion did become inseparable to music as prophesised by William Jones.

These processes reveal the paradox and complexity of how projects of modernity, nationalism and a unitary notion of Indian culture were developed by colonial and native elites through the weaponisation of music. Music came to be taxonomized, canonised and thus regimented in ways that would only favour elite classes. Not only is this history central to how sound archives of India are shaped, but is also neatly institutionalised in Indian, European and American universities today without much critical reflection – at least not in pedagogical or performance spheres. Classical Indian music and other elite performance genres are central to musicology curricula even today. Classical music is the key representative of ‘Indian culture’ and the nation within diasporic and transnational public spheres. As we critically examine musical categorisation/classification and its modern representations, we need to further enquire the basis on which it became possible to uphold classical or classicised music against other forms of musicianship and aural traditions of performers from oppressed caste groups. What was placed in opposition to classical music that led to its valorisation whilst demoting other musics and their authorship, whilst at the same time displacing the latter from their professional and economic sphere?

Folklore studies, music/sound collection and regionalism

Folk music collection in 19th and 20th century Europe played a strong role in the formation of nations, particularly, the need to define an authentic ‘national’ music and culture. Folktales, folksong lyrics, melodies and rural speech were collected and turned into operas and rhapsodies among many other forms in the ‘national spirit’ for the urban bourgeoisie (Rice, 2014).⁶ The collected material was also transcribed, notated and compiled into books by composers and found a place in national libraries beside art music and literature (ibid.). The interest in the music of the ‘other’ persisted and found a new place in European academia with the emergence of the field of musicology or Musikwissenschaft. New nations that emerged after the overthrow of European colonial regimes in the 20th century also became interested in developing their own national musics.

The emergence of folklore and folk studies in South Asia⁷ in the late 19th century was foundational to music collection in India initiated primarily by three groups: European missionaries and women, British military and administrative officers who wrote as scientific scholars and finally, elite Indians (dominant castes and classes) who worked with the colonial civil service (Fiol 2015: p.319). These groups collected a vast amount of data and classified it into discrete genres such as superstitions, myths, rituals, ballads, songs, stories, proverbs etc. (ibid.). These collected works were shared among the three groups mentioned above who communicated about them exclusively in English, aiming for an elite readership (ibid.). Korom (2006: p.30) rightly points out that the folk concept evolved as a result of the ‘colonial encounter between British and Bengali social elites...

6 The impetus to collect music was indeed not the same in every part of the world (viz. nationalism). But in the context of the present paper, European nationalist legacy of music collection defined the course of musicianship in India.

7 There is much to be explored about the emergence of the folk concept in India evolving from the German ‘Volk’ and English ‘folk’ which overlaps with the Sanskrit ‘lok-a’ (people). The translation of ‘lokasangeet’ as folk music has come to be criticised for its mistranslation so as to justify profit for colonial and native elites (see Fiol 2015).

who subsequently channelled this concept into self-serving colonialist and nationalist ambitions respectively' (Korom 2006: p.39). The emergence of folklore and folk studies served to validate the narrative of superiority of the colonial elite and their racial and cultural unity against the primitive colonised subject, particularly Dalits, Muslims, and Adivasis (Fiol 2015). They reified orientalist notions such as the Aryan migration theory which affirmed the supremacy of the brahminic, Sanskritic Indo-Aryan, thereby contributing to the nationalist agenda as seen in the previous section (Figueria 2002; Fiol 2015).

Music collection and classification was thus central to the project of nation-building and was predicated on caste, racial and gender relations. In different parts of India, these processes were replicated in order to assert regional identity (Rege 2002). The cultural politics that played out during the formation of Indian states based on linguistic grounds in 1956 is of particular importance. Different musics were conceived of and categorised as folk, tribal and so on in opposition to the complex and superior classical music based on racialisation, class and caste hierarchy. This implied that all musics placed in opposition to classical somehow did not require much skill, that they were simple and amateurs could sing/perform them. For instance, in the formation of the present-day Western Indian state of Maharashtra, lavani, tamasha and powada became some of the most important representatives of folk genres to be employed for asserting regional identity and are recognised as such today. However, the folk category is hinged on economic exploitation of Dalits or caste-hereditary musicians - the hereditary authors of these genres - at the hands of dominant castes (mostly brahmins and Marathas), given that many of the former were dependant on performance as the only source of income. Lavani (erotic song) was stigmatised for its sexual content and Dalit female authorship, while powada (war musical/ballad) became a site of caste contestation among brahmin and non-brahmin men who extensively collected and composed (new) powadas in the quest to reclaim or refute an Indo-Aryan past (Ajtikar 2019; Rege 2002). Thus, the exploitation of musicians was embedded in their caste-class-gender locations. Regional and national cinema, and Sangeet Natak (elite Marathi musical drama/theatre) continue to celebrate (and exoticise) hereditary genres in contemporary Maharashtra when hereditary musicians bear the brunt of the high caste takeover of the performance sphere (see Ajtikar 2019).⁸

The construction of the folk category in the process of classicisation of Hindustani music largely shaped post-independence nationalism and regionalism for other states too. It paved the way to further capitalise on folk traditions through modern technology and media. Indeed, music archivists and collectors, whether native or European, played a key role in reshaping music based on orientalist ideas of India.

This is also evident in the legacies of other collectors of musics of India. With the advent of recording technology in late 19th and commercially-available recording technologies in the 20th century, institutional sound archives began and music collecting took on a new dimension. While music recordings of different genres became part of a massive industry, it also became viable to record sound in addition to written texts for early ethnologists, comparative musicologists and collectors. Among the most well-

8 It may be interesting to note that the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection includes a very small number of lavani and powada recordings, which are titled 'folk music'. Recordings of Sangeet Natak, the elite Marathi musical theatre, on the other hand, represents classical theatre thereby assuming the primacy of the latter. This is also evident in the fact that Van Lamsweerde was also instrumental in bringing a Sangeet Natak troupe to perform in Amsterdam in 1999. The play, *Sangeet Sanshaykallol* was also translated in Dutch.

known European collectors of Indian music in 20th-century British India were Arnold Adriaan Bake (1899-1963) and Alain Daniélou (1907-1994). Their legacy persevered with John Eijlers (1943-2004), Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy (1927-2009) and Felix van Lamsweerde. The prominence of Dutch music collectors in this trajectory is intriguing and could be for a number of reasons including the modern establishment/institutionalisation of Indology/ Indian studies in the Netherlands and Dutch colonial relations with India lasting nearly two centuries (17th to 19th).⁹

Poske's (2017) re-study of the Arnold Bake Collection at the British Library indicates that Bake may have been the first Western European (Dutch) scholar to record sound/music across the Indian subcontinent between the 1930s and 1950s. Himself a trained musician in the European classical tradition, Bake's interest in musics of India may have been sparked because of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) visit to the Netherlands in 1920. While Bake studied Sanskrit and other South-Asian languages in Leiden and Utrecht, he decided to finish his doctoral dissertation on *Sangit Darpana* (17th c.) at Vishva-Bharati, the university founded by Tagore in West Bengal. On his return to Europe, Bake delivered a number of lectures and gave demonstrations of songs (ibid). In significant ways, Bake carved a pathway for collectors and musicologists in the following decades including Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, who was his student at SOAS University of London as well as for Felix van Lamsweerde, who worked as Bake's assistant briefly in 1962. It is striking then, how Bake's musical journey closely resembles that of Van Lamsweerde and Daniélou.¹⁰ In 2019, I was intrigued to find a resemblance between a portion of Jaap Kunst's collection at the University of Amsterdam and that of Felix van Lamsweerde. The cataloguing and naming styles in Kunst's archival material had close affinity with Van Lamsweerde's method and style, which the latter, most certainly learnt during his early work with Kunst. These networks of Western European collectors (all of whom happen to be men) who have built on each other's work and vision to produce the modern sound archive of South Asia encapsulate what Sara Ahmed (2013) terms as the politics of citation: 'a rather successful reproductive technology, a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies...These citational structures can form what we call disciplines...The reproduction of a discipline can be the reproduction of these techniques of selection, ways of making certain bodies and thematics core to the discipline, and others not even part' (Ahmed 2013). These reproductive technologies not only reproduce disciplines and the ensuing techniques, but also institutions (like archives) and the practices that sustain them. The sound collections of India/South Asia demonstrate how the politics of citation are played out over generations. They also emphasize my earlier contention about the ways in which colonial and local elites together shaped nationalist modernity and Indian culture through music. The role of women in shaping this nationalist modernity was central and remains somewhat underrepresented in the study of sound archives.

9 For more on this, see Van Straaten's upcoming essay in the themed issue on postcolonial archives in *The World of Music Journal*.

10 For more on Alain Daniélou, see his autobiography *The Way to the Labyrinth: Memories of East and West* (1987), <https://www.alaindanielou.org> and L. Cimardi's work on Daniélou's IITM Collection.

Gender in the making of a postcolonial sound archive

The crystallisation of a nationalist ideology in 19th century British India was a result of the formation of ‘Hinduism’ as a monotheistic and a supra-local identity as established in the previous section. High caste men in particular were the chief proponents of what is often termed as ‘Hindu nationalism’, characterised by theories of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and culture that had roots in post-Enlightenment European and oriental texts. Many of these texts misinterpreted the word ‘arya’ in Vedic texts in racial terms rather than in terms of language and observance of caste regulations and thus, provided an incentive for colonial scholars studying India (Doniger 2009, 2014; Figueira 2002; Sinha 1995; Thapar 1992).¹¹ As philology showed the relationship between Sanskrit and European languages (including Latin, Greek, German and English) and despite the discovery of apparently non-Aryan Indus Valley civilisation, the assumption that Indo-Aryans were originators of Indian civilisation was reinforced. The brahmin in the Aryan theory of race had supposedly preserved the purest Aryan strain with racial exclusivity maintained through the endogamous caste system. Brahmins regarded themselves as descendants of ancient Aryans in order to reassert their self-esteem under colonialism, thereby ensuring a continued superiority and dominance of their culture and social location. Without much evidence, this nationalist ideology presented the vision of a glorious past marked by high culture of which Aryans were the sole creators, deeming Dravidians, low castes, Adivasis and Muslims as barbarians (ibid). While the trope of the barbarian was flexibly utilised based on religion, caste and community, the Aryan always represented the epitome of civilized culture, establishing a dichotomy of the civilised Aryan as functioning against the barbarian Other. Surely, the non-Aryan influences were represented as the reasons for degradation of a social order of the truly pure and superior race and culture (ibid).

In reinterpreting Vedic scriptures and ancient texts, brahmin men – the indigenous custodians of knowledge such as Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883), Vivekanand (1863-1902) and Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), among many others – rewrote the caste system as ‘meritocracy and presented a discourse on the retrieval of an ‘Aryanised’ Hindu masculinity’ (ibid, 119). In other words, the Aryan theory of race as interpreted in British India was deeply rooted in the articulation of the loss of brahmin masculinity attributed to India’s subjugation and England’s use of colonial power to assert masculine superiority (Figueira 2002; Sinha 1995). Such a sexualised and gendered construction had an oriental legacy of British writers who often invoked the ‘softness and indolence of Hindus’ (Tzoref Ashkenazi 2015: p.82). Mrinalini Sinha (1995: p.1) also underlines how the dynamics between ‘colonial and nationalist politics are best captured in the logic of colonial masculinity’ as seen earlier.

This process of remasculinisation necessitated reshaping womanhood through social reform. ‘Since identity was text-centred, the Aryanization of the modern Indian male centred on reading Vedic canon as texts written against the female body’ (Figueira 2002: p.120). Sinha (1995, 1999), Sarkar (2001) and Mukherjee (2011) profoundly reveal the construction of a Hindu domesticity wherein the Hindu brahmin male, having allowed himself to be colonised from the West and having limited influence in the colonial public sphere constructs the wilfully surrendering chaste Hindu woman as marking that difference of the Hindu from the West. Such a womanhood was an intriguing combination of Victorian and Hindu values which glorified suffering and self-sacrifice as justification

11 Hock’s (1999: p.15) reminder that a racial interpretation of premodern texts and societies is an ‘invention of early modern European colonialism and imperialism’ is important here.

for the subordination of women. These observations link to the ideals of middle-class womanhood, wifehood and motherhood central to the pedagogy and performance in Hindustani and Karnatik music as well as in elite theatre genres like Sangeet Natak (Marathi elite theatre), whilst replacing Dalit and Muslim hereditary female performers.

In Paluskar's pedagogy, women were encouraged to learn vocal music so their offspring could be initiated in this music tradition from an early age. The honour and respectability conferred upon women by their caste location was to represent the honour and purity of Hindustani music itself. Paluskar wanted women from respectable households (*kulin stri*) to be confined to the domestic sphere and companionate marriage while engaging in music education as the 'noble upholders of nationalist ideology' (Bakhle, 2005: p.173). This was further affirmed by the music appreciation schools where the dual trope of 'wife/whore' reappeared to promote a modern nationalist vision. For instance, a philanthropist named K.N. Kabraji founded the *Parsi Gayan Uttejak Mandali* in 1870. Through this music appreciation society, Kabraji linked musicianship and prostitution and believed that 'if respectable women could learn music, they could prevent their husbands from leaving them at night for extramarital nocturnal entertainment' (Bakhle, 2005: p.72). Kabraji further reminded connoisseurs of the divine status of music and warned those who loved music too much to not tolerate the "presence of whores" (*ibid*).

Indian music's purity and sacrality was linked to high caste or respectable women (perhaps Parsi women and others from elite backgrounds), endogamous companionate marriage and emerging notions of bourgeois religiosity. It aimed at preserving brahmanical patriarchal control of high caste men which dictated disposal of the performance spheres of Dalit and Muslim women who were, in the first place, labourers and authors of traditions that are classicised today.¹² Singing and dancing emerged as two separate spheres of performance to draw a clear line between respectable women and courtesans/entertainers, thereby defining the margins and meanings of womanhood. Similar processes materialised in different parts of India where musicianship/dance embedded in caste-based hereditary occupations were usurped and sanitised to preserve caste-class-gender dominance and divisions (see Katz, 2017; Putcha, 2013; Soneji, 2012; Weidman, 2006). Interpreting the modern history of music through the lens of caste, racialisation, gender and sexuality thus lends us certain suppositions about the colonial/postcolonial music archive.

With this, I will return to my initial questions about the postcolonial music archive of India: Can the history traced in this essay be read as background to the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection? What comprises this music collection and what is excluded from it (intentionally or unintentionally)? As a result, what music and performance genres and traditions are preserved and what remains marginalised or excluded? What can we decipher from the ways in which musical knowledge is constructed, represented and disseminated through collections like the one in focus in this essay?

Historicity of sound objects

Data preserved in sound collections and archives cannot be treated as reliable, unquestionable or authentic sources or representations of history. Perhaps the questions music scholars need to address should concern the corrective practices that could emerge out of revised histories which question the foundations of archival knowledge and their scope. What could be addressed are concerns about how postcolonial archives still re-

12 See Chakravarti's (2003) conceptualisation of brahmanical patriarchy.

produce colonial, oriental, and nationalist knowledge structures. As Garcia reminds us (2017: p.14), music or sound collection as institutions/archives are rooted in the 20th century scientific and 'positivistic imaginary' that sounds were things to be collected. And today, the way we understand the act of collecting is what Garcia (*ibid*) terms 'harvesting and accumulating' as a means to control representation. Collections are not free of the collector's influence and indeed cannot be removed from their contexts or alienated from their creators (*ibid*). Sound collections in fact operate on these terms and further represent musical and cultural knowledge in textual terms discursively, aesthetically, materially and ideologically (*ibid*). In this sense, Western European sound collections, like European classical music, are bound by textuality. Their descriptions and organisation are meant for a specific reader/listener/audience and ensuing literacy (see Yamomo 2016, 2018). If one were to examine a collection only on the basis of its sound recordings, the reader/listener/audience would need a socio-political lens to make meaning out of these sounds, or the assumption would be that the reader/listener/audience is disembodied. A sound recording brought out of its socio-political context (i.e. from South Asia to Western Europe in this case, or from the Global South to the Global North for many others), can make meaning only through textual descriptions, which are inherently situated in ideological and political worldviews. Technological mediation, the collector's intention, locations of cultural broker(s) and musical categorisation at large further add to these power dynamics. Sound collections/archives of musics of India in the colonial and postcolonial periods present themselves with more or less the same configurations. Representations of music and culture are derived from social relations, in this case, the intersections of caste, racialisation, gender and sexuality.

It becomes clear from the previous sections that music's classicisation in India was one of the most significant shifts that redefined musical knowledge and authorship. The dominance of classical music traditions (Hindustani and Karnatik) and their predominantly brahmin authors in the Van Lamsweerde Collection testifies the reinforcement of high caste cultural nationalism in India. Indian music, perhaps not perceived as a unitary musical identity of a nation, was certainly characterised by the assumption of superiority of classical music, which still remains to be critically questioned in entirety. Classical music placed against all other musics, particularly folk, explains the latter's subordinate status as discussed earlier. Collectors' aural literacy, then, is intimately linked to the historicity of sound objects.

An important aspect of such literacy in the Van Lamsweerde Collection is that of connoisseurship and eclecticism. This is not only because of the wide-ranging performance traditions and genres recorded over four decades in this collection, but also because of the ways in which they are structured, categorised and represented. Alaghband-Zadeh (2017) analyses the embodiments of music connoisseurs (*rasikas*) as a matter of social class, particularly middle and high class in case of Hindustani music. She shows through ethnographic research how 'embodied ways of attending to music are intertwined with issues of history, status, class and prestige' in postcolonial India (Alaghband-Zadeh, 2017: p.210). Listening is performed to characterise a sense of expertise that carries moral and ethical dispositions (Alaghband-Zadeh, 2017; Rahaim, 2012). Alaghband-Zadeh (2017) demonstrates how prescriptions and discourses of aurality with regard to an ideal connoisseur of classical music are marked by values of 'good' and 'bad' listening, open-mindedness, sincerity and expertise. Musicking bodies, after all, are 'always already embedded in social relations' (Rahaim, 2012: p.109). In this sense, those collecting and naming musicianship are also musicking bodies and so are the collections themselves; in this case then, the Van Lamsweerde Collection embodies this connoisseurship envisioned in the making of modern postcolonial musicianship in India.

The diverse musical, dance, and theatre traditions and the rigour behind studying and recording them over decades present the eclecticism and open-mindedness of this collector. It resonates also with preceding collectors such as Arnold Bake. Indeed, Van Lamsweerde himself summarised this during an interview (Lamsweerde, 2018) when he shared about his musical endeavours over the decades: 'I am a music lover and a big fan of Indian music. My taste is not exclusive but inclusive'.¹³ Along with sound and video recordings, the Van Lamsweerde Collection consists of textual materials, some of which date years before Van Lamsweerde started learning about musics from India. His journey into Indian music is also representative of the orientalism of hippie counterculture as represented by Ravi Shankar, who went on to become a sitar icon (see Hall 1968). Van Lamsweerde studied the sitar in particular and familiarised himself with the pedagogical and aesthetic schools of the instrument. The written notes accompanying each item in the collection, especially early recordings from the '60s and '70s show a clear pattern of a specific kind of connoisseurship learnt from the elite nationalist pedagogy of music. All these observations reflect a sense of sincerity, patience, dedication, open-mindedness and willingness to cultivate expertise.

According to Alaghband-Zadeh (2017), these qualities are representative of middle-class values that emerged in postcolonial India and are embedded in the ways that music connoisseurship is understood today. While this observation is important and may lead to further analyses of Western European middle-class morality and ethics in archival research, what remains to be stated is how such a connoisseurship fits within modern musical pedagogy in the context of India. Sincerity, patience, dedication, open-mindedness and expertise were qualities also of the sacred, devotional (bhakti), religious and casteist nature of music of modern India (Bakhle 2005). Alaghband-Zadeh (2017) further goes on to show how the ethical and moral dispositions, the 'good' and 'right' ways of listening and performing restrict access along lines of expertise, exclusive only for a certain social class; in this case, the connoisseurship of dominant castes and classes (particularly brahmins).

Further, Amanda Weidman underlines how training in classical traditions 'inculcates and hones gendered and classed sensibilities' (2014: p.214). Schofield (2010) explores music and gendering processes, particularly how contemporary connoisseurship of North Indian classical music reproduces masculine sensibilities and socialities. The Van Lamsweerde Collection thus reflects through its structure the quintessence of modern connoisseurship envisioned in the nationalist imagination based on caste-class-gender lines. It also presents how institutionalised forms of (musical) knowledge are produced through collaborations of cultural brokers. The very small number of first-hand recordings of women featured in the Van Lamsweerde Collection testify to these observations. But numerical statistics can support arguments only partially. Feminist ethnomusicologist Ellen Koskoff's (2014) reminder about fieldwork gender dynamics may be noteworthy here. She explains how in the early years of anthropological research, men in the field often ended up accounting only for the voices of men in the community often due to reasons related to access, thus interpreting a partial worldview of that community and reinforcing male-dominated narratives. Thus, knowledge which came to represent an entire community (culture, or nation) was produced mostly based on the experiences of men. This is reflective of the extent women were accounted for in the Van Lamsweerde Collection and opens up broader discussions which need to be addressed

13 While Van Lamsweerde's training as a sitarist was relatively inconsistent, he certainly regards himself as a serious connoisseur of classical Indian music.

independently. In this light, the patterns of collaboration between Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy and Felix van Lamsweerde, Rabindranath Tagore and Alain Daniélou or Arnold Bake makes one curious. They draw on each other's life-worlds to further common goals. A revised feminist history of music in modern India presented in this essay also points to how women's names documented in this archive, either as dancers or singers, are mostly middle class brahmins. While one can listen to a number of women performers in the collection, their namelessness or representation as 'dancing girl' or 'folk singer' further complicates the ways in which one could infer caste dynamics and gender-based stigmas of musicianship in India.

These observations resonate also with folk music collected from different regions of India carrying titles like 'folk songs and dances of Bihar', 'folk music from four states in India', 'folk music of Kashmir' and so on. A number of notes such as 'beggar's song in Bombay', 'tribal song', 'watchman singing (Benares)' among others sit awkwardly with the properly inventoried items of classical music. While counter-hegemonic musical cultures (like Ambedkari jalsa, bhingeet or buddhageet from Western India) performed by Dalit and anti-caste musicians were extremely popular from the late 19th century and especially in post-independence India, these performances do not make up a large part of the collection, despite the fact that they were widely broadcast on radio and performed in live settings. Certainly, a collection cannot possibly include everything. Neither is it analytically useful to accuse a collector of not being interested in all performance traditions. However, what must not be forgotten is the structural basis upon which certain cultures and people remain on the margins or tend to be entirely excluded. The modern postcolonial elite subject is prescribed to consume and identify specific markers hinged on caste, class and gender. A form of citizenship is built through our sonic/musical sensibilities that have come to be shaped through processes controlled by hegemonic structures and the ways in which we employ them as performers, listeners and cultural agents (Andrisani, 2015; Ingraham, 2016; Punthambekar and Mohan, 2017). This can also be observed in cultural policy of the Indian government: the Films Division documentaries are a rich source of how the postcolonial Indian elite was moulded in the initial decades of independent India (see Sutoris, 2019).

It is worth the mention then, that despite the brutal marginalisation and exclusion of Muslim gharana musicians in the nationalist project, the Van Lamsweerde Collection includes a number of first-hand recordings of Muslim artists like Bismillah Khan, Vilayat Khan, Ali Akbar Khan, Imrat Khan, Rais Khan, the Dagar brothers and others. Muslim women performers of thumri like Zohra Bai, Kali Jan and Gauhar Jan also constitute a small part of this collection, although as commercial recordings. What also makes this collection special is the reasonably large number of first-hand Karnatik music recordings with diverse instruments and vocal performers, as most scholars of South Asia have tended to focus on the North Indian context. Van Lamsweerde himself expressed anguish for the conflation of North Indian music with Indian music, and rightly so.

Given that music collections such as the one associated with Van Lamsweerde present an opportunity to examine complex socio-political and economic processes in postcolonial India, it may be worth making some remarks and posing questions about the potential use of the material in this collection for further enquiry. If we assume archives as memory institutions have 'a collective mandate to document and preserve national cultural heritage', the Van Lamsweerde Collection fits into the nationalist vision of India (Sutherland 2017: p.1). However, this essay has attempted to critique not just the role of collections, but also of the ensuing ideas of nation, nationalism, archives and colonial histories that produce them in the first place. Such approaches

towards examining archives have recently been addressed in critical archival studies and encourage positing ‘practical goals for how archival research and practice can and should change’ (Caswell, Punzalan, and Sangwand 2017: p.2). What counts as cultural heritage, and what is deemed worthy of preservation, and for what purposes? Given that a number of recordings in the Van Lamsweerde Collection may present ethical dilemmas, how can materials in this collection be used towards narrating corrective histories and presents? Can materials in this collection be repatriated and to whom? How can copyright issues be addressed, particularly in the case of nameless musicians? Most importantly, to what extent can music archives such as the Van Lamsweerde Collection be used to disrupt Indological and orientalist assumptions (of which the archives themselves are laden), thereby shifting the lens from a purely culturalist analysis within disciplines? Can digitisation, database creation and open-source accessibility be leveraged to that end? While these questions are crucial, addressing them is well beyond the scope of the current essay, and can be taken up in future research.

What may be useful to emphasise here is the importance of a source critical approach while analysing sound archives. In the process of understanding and entering the world of a (new) archive or collection, such an approach ensures a critical reading and interpretation of history. While this approach will (and must) preserve original classification and examination, one needs to be able to read between the lines. It would be crucial not only for a researcher to be equipped with the politics of archives, but also for other stakeholders, like archivists, technicians and historians. Such an approach will directly impact how metadata are captured or what can be found in a database beyond original categories and descriptions, thereby arriving at more complex conclusions as opposed to simple historical ‘facts’. Similarly, an ethnography of the archive or collection whilst placing the collector at the centre when possible, would enhance a source critical approach. It may be important to offer a caveat: it is certainly not my suggestion that a collection or archive is only an inept historical source or that the collector is only a challenging figure (I do not intend to criticise Van Lamsweerde, but to place his work in a political context, often not afforded by music studies). Collections are much larger than an individual when they are also inscribed in the collector’s vision. I echo Bithell’s (2008) pertinent insight on this matter when she places ancestors of anthropology and ethnomusicology in their own historical context. Our ancestors, she says —

lived in a different age, ‘knew’ different truths, incubated different complexes, learnt from different mistakes... some, at least, of those... were pretty radical in their own time. An anachronism does not have to be discredited. We don’t have to throw out the grandfathers with the bathwater. How quaint might our carefully formulated pronouncements sound to our own grandchildren? On what account or charge might we be exorcised in our turn? And what would we say in our defence? (Bithell 2008: p.77)

Closing remarks

With a focus on the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection, this essay has traced the impacts of colonialism, orientalism and nationalism on the postcolonial music archive, musicianship and the epistemologies of music in modern India. Particular examples from the Van Lamsweerde Collection as well as his life journey further illustrated how music in India was perceived in the modern imagination. These examples also illuminated the caste-class-gender-based construction of musical connoisseurship (and authorship) in

the sphere of classical music and the affordance of eclecticism. Finally, this essay has attempted to put forth a feminist historiography of music and the importance of source critical approaches in examining archives.

On the one hand, the Felix van Lamsweerde Collection is a continuation in the legacy of most European music collectors and authors of Indian musics and on the other, it presents much more inclusivity and impartiality. While it reproduces orientalist and nationalist tropes, it also presents a critical history by documenting voices of hereditary musicians from both Muslim and Dalit communities. Despite these contradictions, there is no doubt that this collection would prove to be rich material for performers, students and scholars of musics of South Asia, particularly those interested in Karnatik and Hindustani classical styles. Additionally, the innumerable live recordings of recitals, particularly house concerts in the Netherlands and India, the rare live recordings of artists who are now deceased and a number of tapes that include largely unheard-of artists and raags characterise the affluence of this collection. Ultimately this collection will provide an opportunity for scholars to theoretically and practically reflect on how we envision music archives of the future where curation and representation would present historiographies and knowledges that would avoid reproducing elite interests.

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