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World Music Practices?
The Use of Historical Sound Recordings from Colonial Contexts and the Accessibility of European Sound Archives

Summary

The invention of the phonograph in 1877 revolutionised listening by allowing sound to be recorded and played back independently of its source. Early ethnomusicologists like Felix von Luschan and Carl Stumpf embraced this technology in their field of research, with the aim to preserve the rich musical heritage and cultural traditions of the world, as they stated. In the early 1900s, numerous European sound archives, including the Berlin Phonogram-Archive (BPhA), officially established in 1905, were founded to expand the collection of recordings, especially those from non-European areas, and thereby protect the 'endangered' so-called 'exotic/primitive' musical traditions from being lost under the influence of Western cultures. Today, the BPhA maintains an extensive repository of nearly 17,000 historical recordings, raising important questions about their intended beneficiaries, original purpose, accessibility, and contemporary usage. This article explores the practical context of using these recordings both in the past and present, particularly within the realm of 'world music' practices. It also examines the importance of these recordings and addresses the challenges related to their accessibility by non-European societies.

Music as Ethnographic Artifact

> Contact between foreign peoples [...] causes not only an exchange of melodies [...] but also stimulates the formation of new styles. At the same time, however, the more or less old styles are kept well alive, and this entails a further enrichment of folk music.[1]

1 Cit. after Max Peter Baumann: Weltmusik. In: *MGG Online*. Ed. by Laurenz Lütteken. New York, NY, Kassel, and Stuttgart: Bärenreiter, Metzler, and Springer 2016 (first published in 2008). Available online at https://www.mgg-online.com/mgg/stable/28876: 'Kontakt zwischen fremden Völkern […] bewirkt nicht nur einen Austausch von Melodien – und dies ist noch wichtiger – regt auch zur Ausbildung neuer Stilarten an. Gleichzeitig werden aber auch

In these words, the Austro-Hungarian composer Béla Bartók (1881–1945) emphasised that musical practices can influence each other in human encounters. This is in the nature of things, and just as cultures generally influence each other in every contact, this applies undoubtedly to musical traditions as well. But until the turn of the century around 1900, the influence of different musical styles on each other was not often mentioned. Rather, some scholars were convinced of the disappearance of so-called 'exotic music', often pejoratively referred to as 'primitive music', meaning the music of so-called 'primitive peoples'.[2]

Ethnomusicologists in particular assumed a 'pure' disappearance of 'non-Western' musical cultures, primarily due to 'modernity' and contact with European cultures. The European music genres, on the other hand, were seen in the mirror of evolutionist models as higher developed music cultures, a stage that other cultures would have to reach first in order to be considered 'civilised'.[3] Uncertainty about the future of this so-called 'primitive music' or concern about its disappearance made it an interesting object of research, both for European ethnologies and for the young discipline of comparative musicology at the end of the 19th century. When technology finally made it possible to record and reproduce sound, once intangible and ephemeral, music became an ethnographic artifact. The technology of sound recording, and reproduction was invented in 1877, by Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931). The phonograph, which Edison also called the talking machine, represented a turning point in the history of communication. The enabling of capturing sound was accompanied by the possibility of recording pieces of music, voices, and songs in non-European regions, bringing them to Europe and performing them.[4] These non-European areas included German colonies. The first repository for these recordings in Germany was the Berlin Phonogram-Archive, which, in the logic of saving them from extinction, stored thousands of recordings from all parts of the world and also categorised them so that the archive still has them today. But for whom were these pieces recorded and archived? What was their purpose in the past? To whom are they accessible today and who makes use of them?

Using the Berlin Phonogram-Archive as an example, this article analyses the history of historical recordings from the European colonies with a focus on their context

die mehr oder weniger alten Stilarten gut am Leben erhalten, und dies zieht eine weitere Bereicherung der Volksmusik nach sich.' (English transl. by the author).

2 Cf. Hans-Joachim Koloß: Der ethnologische Evolutionismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Darstellung und Kritik seiner theoretischen Grundlagen. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 111 (1986), no. 1, pp. 15–46, here p. 22.

3 Ibid.

4 On the relationship between the technique of phonography and music as a cultural artifact, see Jonathan Sterne: *The Audible Past. Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction.* Durham: Duke University Press 2003. Johannes Müske, Stephan Puille and Peter A. Leitmeyr: *Die Technisierung der Klangwelt. Phonographen im Deutschen Museum*. Munich: Deutsches Museum 2020.

of use then and now, as well as on their accessibility for people in Germany and from the cultures of origin. Besides and precisely because of their use in the practice of 'world music' in the sense of an integration or transformation of different musical traditions,[5] these historical recordings are thematised in the context of a 'cultural appropriation' strongly influenced by power imbalances. As an outlook, a consideration of how accessibility to these recordings might be decolonised and democratised today is proposed. Although the investigation here is primarily based on experiences with the Berlin Phonogram-Archive, similar experiences could be made in many other European archives or research structures with colonial collections, especially since the same structural questions arise, particularly with regard to how European and German cultural institutions deal with colonial heritage.

Phonography and Evolutionist Ideology: The 'Rescue' of 'Exotic/Primitive Music'

In 1907, it is said to have been a dance song called *tengenyenge* among the Zeramo people in Tanzania, which was then the still German colony of German East Africa. The translation of the lyrics into English is: 'The husband is jealous, I want to get his wife / we want to dance the *tengenyenge* / when I grab her by the arm, he was ready, he was allowed; / I'm not a pot of beer, you can (not) get to him.'[6] The meaning of the song in the source language (Zeramo) is supposed to be obscene, because 'arm' is used figuratively for the vulva. The ending, however, means: 'You can't tell if I've 'loved', like a pot of beer if [someone] has taken a sip from it'.[7] These information were provided by the German linguist and ethnologist Otto Dempwolff (1871–1938), who recorded the song with a phonograph, on 10 February 1907, in the city of Iringa (German East Africa).[8] The recording was digitised and is now in the Berlin Phonogram-Archive, along with the accompanying documentation and the original wax cylinder itself.[9] In the documentation, Dempwolff also noted the name of the person whose voice he recorded. It was a 25-year-old man named Salim Bin Ali, whose occupation, according to Dempwolff's notes, was that of a 'servant'.[10]

5 Cf. Baumann: Weltmusik (see nt. 1).

6 SMB/EM/BPhA (Berlin Phonogramm-Archive, Department of Ethnomusicology of the Ethnological Museum of the National Museums in Berlin, Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), fonds: Dempwolff Drei Sammlungen (Three Collections), 1906–1910, South Seas + East Africa I + II, Kopien und Material (transl. into German by Dempwolff; translated into English by the author.)

7 Ibid. (transl. into German by Dempwolff; transl. into English by the author).

8 Cf. ibid.

9 Cf. SMB/EM/BPhA, VII W 1647 Dempwolff East Africa I DWF OA Z 1 Neue Kopie.

10 Cf. Dempwolff Drei Sammlungen (see nt. 6).

The recording with Salim Bin Ali is one of a total of over 130 recordings made by Otto Dempwolff between 1906 and 1917 in the German colonial territories in German East Africa and the South Seas. The sound recordings served him as a basis for research into the languages and music of the colonised people. Thus, he was then and still is considered one of the leading experts on Austronesian languages, although he did not have a degree in linguistics: he was a trained physician. He studied medicine in Königsberg, Marburg, Berlin and Tübingen and received his doctorate in Berlin on 12 March 1892.[11] He worked as a medical officer in many different places. From 1895 to 1897 he worked with the New Guinea Company and from 1898 to 1911 in the German colony of German Southwest Africa, he joined the colonial forces ('Kaiserliche Schutztruppe') in German East Africa[12], and in between he was employed as a medical officer for the colonial administration in Berlin.[13] Between 1901 and 1903, he represented Robert Koch (1843–1910) and the Foreign Office on two malaria research expeditions to New Guinea.[14] During his stays in the colony he also took photographs which he would later use for his linguistic and ethnological 'studies', published in numerous journals.

Like Dempwolff, many ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, missionaries, physicians, and colonial officials in the German colonies made phonographic recordings that they sent to Germany. Many of them improvised themselves into (music) ethnologists and were later considered experts on non-European cultures. In their eagerness for phonographic recording, they answered the call of prominent ethnologists and ethnomusicologists such as Felix von Luschan (1854–1924), Erich Moritz von Hornbostel (1877–1935), and Carl Stumpf (1848–1936), who warned against the disappearance of non-European musical traditions. 'There is great danger that the rapid spread of European culture will wipe out even the last traces of foreign singing and saying. We must save what can still be saved [...]', urged Hornbostel in 1905.[15] In order to preserve the recordings for research, Carl Stumpf founded the Berlin Pho-

11 Michael Duttke: Website *Otto Dempwolff, Biography*. Available online at http://www.dempwolff.de/biography.html (accessed on 12 December2022).

12 Cf. ibid.

13 *Heikles Erbe. Koloniale Spuren bis in die Gegenwart.* Ed. by Alexis von Poser and Bianca Bauman. Dresden: Sandstein 2016, p. 56. Available online at https://verlag.sandstein.de/reader/98-250_HeiklesErbe/18/ (accessed on 9 December 2022).

14 Cf. Karl Baumann, Dieter Klein, Wolfgang Apitzsch: *Biografisches Handbuch Deutsch-Neuguinea 1882-1922. Kurzlebensläufe ehemaliger Kolonisten, Forscher, Missionare und Reisender*. 2. Edition. Berlin: K. Baumann 2002, p. 71.

15 Cit. after Raimund Vogels: Demografie und kultureller Wandel am Beispiel der Musik. In: *älter – bunter – weniger. Die demografische Herausforderung an die Kultur.* Ed. by Stiftung Niedersachsen. Bielefeld: Transcript 2006, pp. 163–171, here p. 163 (transl. by the author).

nogram-Archive in 1905 as part of the Psychological Institute of the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin, which he directed.[16] He himself initiated the phonographic collecting practice in Germany by recording chants and music from a Siamese orchestra at a folk show in Berlin in 1900. These served as the foundation stone for the archive.[17] With the establishment of the Phonogram-Archive, the collecting practice intensified, and more and more recordings came to Germany, enabling the archive to preserve to this day, despite significant losses during the two world wars, up to almost 17,000 wax rolls with historical photographs taken between 1899 and 1953 in various places around the world.[18]

The rescue narrative of the elite of German comparative musicology (e.g., scholars like Hornbostel and Stumpf), leaned heavily on evolutionist assumptions. Just as the evolutionist currents of the 18th and 19th centuries divided human cultures into 'primitive' and 'civilised' cultures, into 'primitive peoples' and 'civilised peoples',[19] some ethnologists and ethnomusicologists of the early 20th century were also very much in favour of this ideology. This ideology also accompanied them in their research on these so-called 'primitives'. Thus, the early protagonists of German ethnomusicology, such as Stumpf and Hornbostel, saw in the music of certain non-European people archetypes of European music which, according to their evolutionist assumptions, was already in the 'civilised' final stage. According to their own understanding of art, non-European music was usually considered 'exotic' and, regarded as 'primitive' and inferior in comparison to European music.[20] Following this logic, Hornbostel suspected in the 'exotic music' 'startling analogies to earlier forms of [his] own music', of which however, Western scholars 'know only a fragmentary tradition'.[21] Also the Musicologist Anna Maria Busse Berger newly critically analysed how music historians hoped to gain insights into the nature of medieval music in Europe from the latest discoveries of music in so-called 'primitive' societies. She claimed that Erich Moritz von Hornbostel played a central role in this encounter.[22]

16 Cf. Kurt Reinhardt: The Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv. *The Folklore and Folk Music Archivist* 5 (1962), no. 2.

17 Ibid.

18 Cf. Susanne Ziegler: *Die Wachszylinder des Berliner Phonogramm-Archivs*. Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 2006, p. 20.

19 Cf. Koloß: Evolutionismus (see nt. 2), p. 15.

20 Cf. Jaap Kunst: *Ethnomusicology. A Study of its Nature, its Problems, Methods and Representative Personalities to which is Added a Bibliography*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff 1974, p. I.

21 Erich M. Hornbostel: Die Erhaltung ungeschriebener Musik / The Preservation of Unwritten Music. In: *Das Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv 1900–2000. Sammlungen der traditionellen Musik der Welt / The Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv 1900–2000. Collections of Traditional Music of the World*. Ed. by Arthur Simon. Berlin: VWB-Verlag 2000, pp. 90–95, here p. 93.

22 Cf. Anna Maria Busse Berger: *The Search for Medieval Music in Africa and Germany*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 2020.

The world view of ethnomusicology at that time becomes clear from the patterns of thought that were considered the only correct ones at that time. Thus, at the beginning of the 20th century, German ethnomusicologists researched 'primitive peoples', which included populations from German colonies. Accordingly, in their publications on music and cultures from non-European areas, terms such as 'primitives', 'barbarians', 'savages', 'primitive peoples', 'cultureless', 'lacking in culture', 'exotic music', 'exotic languages' appeared – referring exclusively to 'non-Western' populations, including the colonised.[23] As a more developed 'race', according to the reasoning of some scientists, it was their task to record, preserve, classify, and research the musical traditions of these 'primitive peoples' before they became extinct. The classification reflected the hierarchy between the cultures, which was shaped by their worldview. For example, in contrast to the 'primitive' music from the African colonial areas, Hornbostel referred to the traditional music of Romania as (European) 'folk music', and in the case of the Japanese, the music of advanced civilisations.[24]

Scholars like Otto Dempwolff also took their cue from the Berlin School of Comparative Musicology (Hornbostel and Stumpf), as well as prominent ethnologists like Felix von Luschan, who always worked closely with the Phonogram-Archive and also commissioned several recordings in non-European territories. Otto Dempwolff, like many others, reproduced the same clichés, used the same terms to confirm himself in his way of thinking. Dempwolff was interested in the colonised people of the South Seas, who he also photographed and whose languages he researched on. In his Diary of the Western Isles, he describes his experiences in these areas. He reported about two ethnic groups that he considered as 'children of nature' who were lazy in thinking[25]: one ethnic group – not mentioned by name – that he called 'savages', who knew no indifferent strangers and saw only enemies outside their clan[26], and the other (the Malays) that he counted among the 'semi-cultural peoples'.[27] He often referred to the languages of the colonised as 'exotic language', just as he considered their music to be 'exotic music'.[28] In his reflections on the 'education' of these people in the South Seas regarding work, he took the position that they were not capable of working.[29] Since,

23 Carl Stumpf: Das Berliner Phonogrammarchiv. *Internationale Wochenschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik 2* (1908), pp. 225–246, here pp. 243–244.

24 Cf. Hornbostel: Die Erhaltung (see nt. 21), p. 94.

25 Cf. Otto Dempwolff: *Tagebuch von den Westlichen Inseln 1902 / Diary of the Western Islands 1902*. Ed. by Michael Duttge and siblings. Norderstedt: BoD 2019, p. 42.

26 Dempwolff: *Tagebuch* (see nt. 25), p. 33.

27 Cf. Otto Dempwolff: Die Malaien / The Malaians. In: *Unter fremden Völkern*. Ed. by Wilhelm Doegen. Berlin: 1925, pp. 85–87, here p. 85.

28 Cf. Otto Dempwolff: Sprechapparate bei dem Unterricht bei der Namasprache / The Talking Machine in the Lessons of the Nama Language. VOX 23 (1913), pp. 246–255, here p. 246.

29 Cf. Otto Dempwolff: Die Erziehung der Papuas zu Arbeitern [The education of the Papua to Become Workers]. *Koloniales Jahrbuch. Beiträge und Mitt. aus dem Gebiete der Kolonialwissenschaft und Kolonialpraxis* 11 (1899), pp. 1–14, here p. 1 (transl. by the author).

according to his observation, they work only out of habit and compulsion, he recommended that the colonial government convince them of the necessity of work, so that compulsion would become habit.[30] To this end, he emphasised his understanding of the role of Christian missionary societies in colonial rule:

> It may be doubtful whether the capabilities of the race and the conditions of the climate will ever permit the coloured people to equal the whites in accomplishments. But to develop them to what they are capable of, to make them as accessible as possible to our culture, there is no better method than to bring Christianity to them.[31]

Otto Dempwolff saw the 'natives' as children who were to be raised by German colonisers and missionaries into a superior 'race' and used or exploited as a labour force. Under these conditions and with these preconceived notions, he researched on the languages and music of the 'natives' in the colonies, which earned him the honorary title 'Titularprofessor' on 5 June 1918.[32] On this basis, he taught at the Seminar for African and South Sea Languages at the University of Hamburg from 1919 – even before his habilitation on *African and South Sea Languages* – to 1938.[33]

Despite their racist and biased research bases, scholars like Dempwolff were expected to fulfil their so-called duty to save the music pieces from these 'non-Western' populations, that is, to record them and make them available for documentation and research. Today, a total of 133 digitised individual recordings (from original wax cylinders and copies) are inventoried among Otto Dempwolff's collections in the Berlin Phonogram-Archive.

Dempwolff was not alone in his way of thinking and dealing with the colonised. Based in their rescuer's point of view, many researchers made recordings and studied them with the same preconceived notions. After the recordings were filed in the archives, they were sometimes studied and interpreted by various other scholars (linguists, ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, psychologists, etc.). Many of them saw music as a means of classifying the populations under study into predefined 'racial' and 'cultural' levels.

30 Ibid., p. 7.

31 Otto Dempwolff: Notwendigkeit der christlichen Mission für die Kolonisation [About the Necessity of the Christian Mission for Colonisation]. *Flugschriften der hanseatisch-oldenburgischen Missions-Konferenz 18* (1914), p. 13 (transl. by the author).

32 Cf. Duttke: *Dempwolff Biography* (see nt. 11) and Hamburger Professorinnen- und Professorenkatalog, Universitätsarchiv Hamburg, available online at https://www.hpk.uni-hamburg.de/resolve/id/cph_person_00000148 (accessed on 11 October 2023). The status of a Titularprofessor can be compared to that of a senior lecturer today.

33 Duttke: *Dempwolff Biography* (see nt. 11).

Colonialism and the Production of Sound Recordings

Through their 'collecting activities' (production of sound recordings) various Germans in the colonies made the Berlin Phonogram-Archive one of the most important archives in the world in terms of early recordings from non-European territories. While the invention of the phonograph and the founding of the Berlin Phonogram-Archive are among the primary preconditions for the emergence of sound recordings, they were not the only ones. The history of the archive's collections is not conceivable to the extent it is without German colonialism.

Looking at the Phonogram-Archive's total holdings of early recordings, it is immediately apparent that the formal colonial period was the best time to acquire sound recordings. More than one third of its holdings made until 1954 came from German colonies. Overall, the German colonies also prove to be the best recording locations. Recordings were made in all of the German colonies by a wide variety of Europeans and sent to Berlin. As with ethnological objects for museums, the established apparatus of power in the colonies facilitated cooperation between colonial officials and the Berlin Phonogram-Archive, as well as other European sound archives, in the acquisition of sound recordings. However, the recording situation is rarely described in the texts and reports written by the recorders (ethnologists, colonial officers, physicians etc.). A lot of research has already proven that the 'natives' sometimes resisted the phonographic practice and that the colonial apparatus of power was significantly involved in the creation of some recordings in the colonies.[34] In any case, German scholars (such as Carl Stumpf and Felix von Luschan) consistently legitimised colonial rule and pragmatically based their arguments on colonial aspirations to justify the necessity of the existence of the archive and its supposed rescue of 'exotic music'. In addition to economic exploitation, scientific exploitation was also necessary for effective colonial rule, according to Carl Stumpf. This exploitation context highlights the importance of the archive, which, by preserving, classifying, documenting, and researching recordings of the music and language of the colonised, enabled to better know and consistently exploit them.[35] In order to make the public build a 'primitive' image of the colonies, the museums offered not only objects but also music from the German colonies to listen to, music that was thought to have been saved.[36] At that

34 Cf. Annette Hoffmann: Was Wir Sehen. Zur Kritik einer anthropometrischen Sammlung aus dem südlichen Afrika. In: *Was Wir Sehen. Bilder, Stimmen, Rauschen. Zur Kritik anthropometrischen Sammelns.* Ed. by Annette Hoffmann, Britta Lange, Regina Sarreiter and Pergamon-Palais. Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien 2012, pp. 13–42; Annette Hoffmann: *Kolonialgeschichte hören. Das Echo gewaltsamer Wissensproduktion in historischen Tondokumenten aus dem südlichen Afrika*. Vienna and Berlin: Mandelbaum 2020.

35 Cf. Stumpf: Phonogrammarchiv (see nt. 23), pp. 244–245.

36 Cf. Felix von Luschan: Einige türkische Volkslieder aus Nordsyrien und die Bedeutung phonographischer Aufnahmen für die Völkerkunde / Some Turkish Folk Songs from Northern

time, the means of acquisition of the recordings were not important. Rather, they were once regarded and researched in Germany as 'authentic' sources on the cultures of the people recorded, in the hope of gaining 'exact results' from them.[37] At the same time, the emphasis on the authenticity of the recorded sounds served to justify the production of recordings and the associated scientific research. However, the insufficient information about the use of the sound recordings from the Berlin Phonogram-Archive suggests that the actual use of these recordings was limited.

From 'Exotic/Primitive' to World Music

The phonographic recordings from the German colonial period are still used today in the course of 'world music' in various projects. The concept of world music, which emerged at the beginning of the 20th century (see also the contribution by Britta Sweers in this volume), has been redefined, reevaluated, and recontextualised several times over the years.[38] Today, according to the musicologist Max Peter Baumann, it is vague and multidimensional, and it instigates controversial discussions:

> If for some it means above all the hegemony of one's own aesthetic experiences, with which one claims a world-valid contemporaneity for oneself, for others world music is discussed in the sense of a form of expression for the segregation, integration or transformation of different musical traditions. For the third, world music means the hybridization of various building blocks, especially Western popular music and its technology with music of other cultures. The listening and producing consciousness consciously or unconsciously adopts, rejects, selectively perceives, or transforms other musical forms in different ways. Ethnic and functional musics are thus detached from their original contexts and placed in the new, multiply coded context of mass media, festival events, and the music industry.[39]

In the following, the term 'world music' will be used exclusively in the sense of an integration or transformation of different musical traditions. Accordingly, the use of musical practices from historical sound recordings from the former German colonies in the practice of European classical music can be placed within the framework of the concept of world music.

The historical sound recordings of the Berlin Phonogram-Archive have long been used or appropriated by European artists for their artistic activities. They discovered the recordings in the past, among other things, through public lectures by the so-

Syria and the Significance of Phonograph Recordings for Ethnology. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 36* (1904), no. 2, pp. 177–202, here p. 202.

37 Letter by Dempwolff to Hornbostel, dated 8 July 1911, SMB/EM/BPhA, Dempwolf: Drei Sammlungen (see nt. 6).

38 Cf. Daniel Siebert: *Musik im Zeitalter der Globalisierung. Prozesse – Perspektiven – Stile*. Bielefeld: Transcript 2014, p. 143.

39 Cf. Baumann: Weltmusik (see nt. 1) (transl. by the author).

called researchers or through public performances of music from the Berlin Phonogram-Archive. In April 1952, the Berlin daily newspaper reported on a performance of 'exotic' music in the Berlin Phonogram-Archive with the following content

> [...] a music whose subliminal charm, whose almost magical spell one could not escape. Comparisons with works of modern European composers, for example with Igor Stravinsky or also with the 'Jeune France', imposed themselves unasked – and turned out (if one may say so) in favor of the 'originals', namely in favor of the exotic music, from which modern composers have been drawing many inspirations for several decades.[40]

In the time of its highest productivity (especially between 1900 and 1914), the archive also cooperated with prominent European artists and composers such as Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965) and Béla Bartók.[41] Just as contemporary artists have been inspired by African art, such as Pablo Picasso with his so-called primitivism[42], some European composers have also benefited from the music of African cultures, with which they also came into contact through sound recordings made by the Berlin Phonogram-Archive. For example, the Austro-Hungarian composer György Ligeti (1923–2006) confirmed to Arthur Simon, then director of the Berlin Phonogram-Archive, that the African music to which he gained access through the recordings of the Berlin Phonogram-Archive did have an influence on his artistic work:

> The archive is not only important for the public and for professionals. The acquaintance with African music also had a great influence on my own compositional work. That, too, has a tradition. Béla Bartók was already interested in the work of the archive and exchanged letters with the director at the time, Erich von Hornbostel.[43]

To this day, such historical recordings are used again and again by artists for their work, whether for exhibitions, art projects or compositions. Heiner Goebbels is one of the German composers whose work is classified as 'world music'.[44] On his website, he already published an excerpt from an article from 2022, which counts his music among them.[45] Whether Goebbels professes world music is not made explicit at this

40 *Der Tag* on 2 April 1952 (transl. by the author).

41 Cf. Arthur Simon: Die musikalischen Traditionen der Menschheit im Berliner Phonogram-Archiv 1900–2000. Sammeln, Bewahren, Forschen und Vermitteln / The Musical Traditions of Mankind in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archive 1900–2000. Collecting, Preserving, Researching and Communicating. In: *Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv 1900–2000* (see nt. 21), pp. 47–64, here p. 53.

42 Cf. Baumann: Weltmusik (see nt. 1).

43 Grußwort von György Ligeti / Greeting address from György Ligeti from 19 July 2000. In: *Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv 1900–2000* (see nt. 21), pp. 11–12, here p. 11 (transl. by the author).

44 Cf. Ljubisa Tosic: *Wien Modern. Heiner Goebbels' Weltmusik!* [Vienna Modern. The World Music of Heiner Goebbels]. Available online at https://www.heinergoebbels.com/en/archive/texts/reviews/read/1541 (accessed on 12 December 2022).

45 Ibid.

point, but he is perceived that way by the general public. In his compositional project *A House of Call. My Imaginary Notebook*, the result of which he released in 2021 as a CD and material edition, he used historical recordings from the Berlin Phonogram-Archive.[46] More than half of the pieces on this project album consist of voices from sound recordings from the Berlin Phonogram-archive.[47] As part of the Musikfest Berlin 2021 and the festival edition Wien Modern 2022, his composition was publicly performed by the orchestra Ensemble Modern. Goebbels himself accompanied the rehearsals as well as the performance in Berlin.[48] During the demonstration, various audio recordings were played in front of more than 1000 audience members.[49] An article in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* celebrated Goebbels' actions as follows:

> Many of the early recordings that were picked up by Goebbels show a chilling connection between oppression and traditional music. For example, the recordings of Georgian prisoners of war made in Frankfurt an der Oder in 1916. Or the famous Armenian folk song 'Krunk', arranged by the legendary singer, priest and ethnomusicologist Komitas, sung by two stars of Armenian music, Armenak Shahmuradian (1914) and Zabelle Panosian (1917). In this way Goebbels commemorates the Armenian genocide. A recording of the chorale 'Nun danket alle Gott' from 1931, sung in Nama in what was then German Southwest Africa, commemorates the genocide of the Hereros. One third of the 15,000 wax cylinder recordings made by the Berlin Phonogram-Archive up to 1954, on which this chorale recording can also be found, come from the African colonies.[50]

Like many other artists, Goebbels was able to access the sound recordings of the Berlin archive because they were located in Germany or in Europe, his place of residence. The use of these recordings in the most diverse artistic formats and thus the pursuit of the forms of expression understood as 'world music' directly benefited and benefits today in most cases only Europeans. One could see it positively that Goebbels with his *House of Call* tries, among other things, to come to terms with colonial history, at least that is what he claims. In Germany it is indeed often claimed that by integrating sound carriers into artistic projects such as exhibitions, compositions and performances, history is reappraised, the sound carriers are restituted and good is done to the cultures of origin. This view is held both by the Berlin Phonogram-Archive itself, which issues CDs with sound recordings from the German colonies, and by numerous artists and scholars who work with these sound recordings.[51] Whether this brings

46 Heiner Goebbels: *A House of Call. My Imaginary Notebook* (2 CDs with additional material). Berlin: ECM DDD 2021.

47 Ibid., p. 10.

48 Cf. Reinhard J. Brembeck: Das Röhren des leisen Rebells. *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on 31 August 2021.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid. (transl. by the author).

51 Cf. Merle Krafeld: Wer darf in Zukunft dieses kreative Wissen nutzen? *VAN Magazin* on 21 June 2021. Available online at https://van-magazin.de/mag/humboldt-forum-rueckgabe-audio/ (accessed on 12 December 2022).

anything positive to the once colonised, while everything is performed in Europe – and not in Africa or elsewhere – is questionable. The ethical framework of the use of these recordings today, should be carefully examined.

Decolonising and Democratising – Outlook

So far, the recordings from the German colonies in the Berlin Phonogram-Archive seem to be of use mainly to artists and scientists from Europe or to the Europeans themselves. Meanwhile, hardly anyone in the former German colonies knows of the existence of these recordings or of the projects being carried out with them in Europe. It is doubtful, for example, that Goebbels' *House of Call* and its performance were of any direct benefit to the descendants of the Ovaherero and Nama. What is quite certain, however, is that this composition remains part of Goebbels' work and thus contributes to his career, and in a positive sense – his composition is sold as CD (with accompanying catalogue), on streaming platforms and, as press reports indicate, this generates capital. At the same time, hardly any artist and composer from the former German colonies knows about the existence of these recordings, or even use them for their artistic work, unlike European artists and artists living in Europe.

Here a parallel to the past becomes clear. Thus, Dempwolff, also with the help of his recordings, became a renowned professor in Hamburg, where he directed the Seminar for Indonesian and Pacific Languages (1931–1938) until his death.[52] During the colonial period, it became a common practice, almost an 'unwritten law', that colonial officials distinguished themselves not only by their involvement in colonial affairs, but also and especially by their collections and their 'scientific research' on the colonised. This included the acquisition and research of ethnographic objects and sound recordings from the colonised areas.

Whether in the past or in the present, whether in art or in science, so far Europeans have profited more from these records than the recorded people and their descendants. The fact that this circumstance persists until today is a continuation, worthy of criticism, of the colonial logic and colonial violence from which these records emerged. While at that time the rhetoric of rescue or of 'exotic/primitive music' was used, today the term 'world music' is applied when these recordings are used in a European composition of classical music. The exclusive access to sound recordings from the colonies by European artists is in practice more like the continuity of a musical-cultural appropriation, and this should urgently change. For historical recordings with songs like *tengenyenge*, which certainly do not sound Prussian or German, today belong to the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, a peculiarity for which it is hard to imagine a more fitting definition than colonial heritage.

52 Website: *Dempwolff Biography* (see nt. 11).

Only few people from the former German colonies who work with these recordings today, usually discover them by chance when they are in Germany. But until these people come to Germany for scientific purposes, they are often disadvantaged by structural inequalities. Even getting a visa for a research stay in German happens often under difficult conditions. As late as January 2022, the German consulate in Cameroon denied the scientific team of the prominent Germanist and cultural scientist Albert Gouaffo a visa for a research trip to Germany, which was even supposed to take place at the invitation of a German state-funded institution. One of the reasons for the refusal in the case of one scientist, for example, was the assumption that she might not return to her home country after the end of the meeting.[53] In the German press, this event was rightly called structural racism.[54]

Such structural disadvantages are compounded by the fact that the existence of the Berlin Phonogram-Archive (team, ongoing projects, contact details, inventory list) can hardly be found on the Internet. These restrictions significantly impair the research of non-Western scholars, the circulation of knowledge, scholarly exchange, and the accessibility of colonial archives by people from the former colonies. This creates not only a scientific monopoly of Europeans on certain topics, but also a continuation of the colonial appropriation of knowledge about the colonised, and thus a continuation of the colonial logic and exercise of power that made this possible during the colonial period.

But how can research and scholarship be advanced in this situation? How can research be done successfully when one group of people in the respective networks is in a very disadvantaged position from the start? What can the Berlin Phonogram-Archive do and what can individual scientists do about it? Decolonisation and democratisation should be the mission of the archive itself, but also of the scholars who deal with the recordings from the colonial period from the archive. Today, the Berlin Phonogram-Archive has too many collections from the German colonies to be able to process them in the next decades without the descendants of the former colonised. Without colonialism, the recordings would not be so extensive today. Decolonisation and democratisation mean that the Berlin Phonogram-Archive should open itself more to the non-European world. But this should not only consist of publishing CDs with recordings that are mostly produced in Western countries and distributed there.

53 Hubert Spiegel: Deutsche Botschaft verweigert Forschern aus Kamerun die Visa [German embassy withholds visas for researchers from Cameroon]. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 14 January 2022. Available online at https://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/debatten/deutsche-botschaft-verweigert-forschern-aus-kamerun-die-visa-17730073.html (accessed on 12 December 2022).

54 Ibid.

Sometimes they are not even produced with proper ethical standards.[55] Today, in the age of digitisation, you can find a website, a phone number and an e-mail address for many institutions right away on the internet. But searching for 'Berlin Phonogram-Archive' will not deliver such information immediately, and a thorough research does not help either.[56] Unlike most European phonotheques, which are also not free of criticism with regard to their colonial past, the Berlin Phonogram-Archive neither does have its own website, nor is there a section dedicated to it on the website of its sponsoring institution (*Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz*).[57] This is probably one of the reasons why musicologist mêLe yamomo has spent four years trying in vain to obtain these historic recordings.[58]

Scientifically, the situation is unfair because it is much easier the other way around. European scientists can travel much more easily to the former German colonies, visit institutions and archives there, interview people, produce knowledge about them and their cultures and publish their results, often in European languages, carry their projects out, position themselves, without these people in the former colonies being able to benefit in the slightest. This resembles a kind of knowledge extraction, a practice that already existed in colonial times and that the same researchers today actually claim to fight.

Decolonisation and democratisation, of course, do not mean 'Africanisation', 'indigenisation', or 'subalternisation', and certainly not that only Africans should study African history or have access to its sources. Nonetheless, access to the sources of shared history should be as easy for others as it is for Western scholars. And where politics prevents it anyway, scholars and institutions should not interfere. At this point, it should be mentioned that in recent years more and more interesting scientific projects have emerged in Europe that deal with the issue of sonic repatriation.[59] It is worth praising that such projects exist, and one cannot reproach the scholars for dealing with such objects and the topic of repatriation, or for dealing with colonial

55 Michael Fuhr and Matthias Lewy: Buried in the Colonial Graveyard? Indigenous Sound Ontologies, Repatriation and the Ethics of Curating Ethnographic Sounds. In: *Postcolonial Repercussions. On Sound Ontologies and Decolonised Listening*. Ed. by Johannes Salim Ismaiel-Wendt, Andi Schoon. Bielefeld: Transcript 2022, pp. 133–152, here pp. 137–138.

56 Status: 12 November 2022.

57 The mailing addresses one can find are also no longer valid. Until November 2022, only the e-mail addresses of Dr. Susanne Ziegler and Dr. Ricarda Kopal, two former directors of the archive who have not worked there for years, were available on internet as representing the Berlin Phonogram-Archive.

58 Cf. Christoph Möller: *Der Klang des Kolonialismus* (Audio Podcast). *Deutschlandfunk* on 16 May 2019. Available online at https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/sound-performance-echoing-europe-der-klang-des-kolonialismus.807.de.html?dram:article_id=448881 (accessed on 12 December 2022).

59 See *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Repatriation*. Ed. by Frank Gunderson, Robert C. Lancefield, and Bret Woods. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2019.

history and opening a discourse, although they also have structural advantages in doing so. The question arises, as in the case of Goebbels, whether engaging with these phonographs and the topic only has a benefit (careerist, academic, and artistic) for themselves, or whether there is also a benefit for the cultures of origin associated with it. Access to sources needs to be decolonised and democratised at all levels and in all directions. It is therefore extremely valuable to support projects like 'Decolonizing Southeast Asian Sound Archives'[60] or the workshop 'Voix de nos aieux'[61]. Among other things, these initiatives are working to educate the communities of origin about the existence of these recordings and to provide them with full access to them. Through this dedicated work, a deeper awareness and inclusive use of the recordings is emerging to create a more equitable and respectful connection to the cultures of origin.

After the appeal at the beginning of the 20th century to collect everything that can be collected, this contribution is a call to share what can be shared. Decolonisation and democratisation, then, means that the Berlin Phonogram-Archive, whether it has done so consciously or unconsciously until now, should finally stop hiding its identity and become more transparent. Individual European scholars, who have so far done the opposite, should in turn show more solidarity and stop benefiting from the privileges that politics has created for them in the context of dealing with the heritage of shared history – even if they have little direct influence on the political structures. They should stop using the subaltern knowledge bearers of the world as mere sources of knowledge or objects of knowledge production, but also consider them as participants in the common history and its heritage. To this end, they should seek more collaborative projects.

The recordings of the Phonogram-Archive are now digitised and can be shared with less effort than before. For various reasons, it is not possible to simply make the recordings available on the internet. But there are certainly institutions in the former colonies that have approaches and also know best how these recordings could be made available there. To do this, however, they must first be informed that these recordings exist. But the initiatives must come from Germany, because you can only be interested in things if you know that they exist.

60 Cf. About DeCoSEAS. Available online at https://www.decoseas.org/about/ (accessed on 19 May 2023).

61 Cf. Felix Gräfenberg: There and back again – Von Westafrika nach Westfalen und wieder zurück. *Westfalen/Lippe – historisch* on 22 April 2022. Available online at https://hiko.hypotheses.org/1034 (accessed on 19 May 2023).