

# KEEPING THE TRADITION ALIVE: ANALYZING THE WORK OF C. DE S. KULATILLAKE

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## Abstract

The present review focuses on the vision, philosophy, and methodology of C. de S. Kulatillake's exemplary contribution to the subject. The methodology of this study is based on a qualitative approach narrative method, and information was collected through interviews, records, autobiographies, and various reports and books written by Kulatillake. Seven in-depth semistructured interviews were carried out at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka, in September and November 2022. The participants were senior academic members and a scientific officer at C. de S. Kulatillake Research Centre. As a sampling method, nonprobability purposive sampling was used. The data were evaluated using content analysis. Kulatillake has always approached folk music from a scientific standpoint, linking it to ethnomusicology. He discovered 36 indigenous singing styles unique to Sri Lanka. According to Kulatillake, the Sri Lankan double-read instrument *horanewa* is a West Asian migrant. The individuality of Sinhala drum music, its peculiar rhythms that do not match the Indian "tal" systems, and Sinhala drum music is an incredibly remarkable performance style incomplete sentence. He discovered that the strange aspect of the *visama nadi* (irregular pulse) movement in Sri Lankan drum music is a unique style and should be accepted as a great feature inherited from the folk music of this country. Kulatillake traced cultural identity and pride; documented, taught, and presented it to national and international audiences; and preserved it for future generations, according to the study. A separate study focusing on trailblazers who used music education as a safeguarding measure would be a worthwhile investigation that would both enrich and broaden the findings of this study.

## Keywords

Cyril de Silva Kulatillake, Sri Lankan ethnomusicologist, Sri Lanka, Music tradition, Preservation

## INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to review Cyril de Silva Kulatillake's contributions to sustaining folk music in Sri Lanka. Kulatillake pioneered ethnomusicology in music education in the country. The study question is how Kulatillake's musical beliefs, interests, and ideas of that were used to uplift Sri Lankan folk music? The present review focuses on the vision, philosophy, and methodology of C. de S. Kulatillake's exemplary contribution to the subject. This study provides new insights into musical heritage, specifically his contribution to popularizing Sri Lankan folk music among the local community and internationally. In this regard, this study will raise public awareness of Kulatillake's knowledge, philosophy, and methodology for preserving and promoting cultural identity. Furthermore, the analysis presented in this study will be useful for future research on the preservation and promotion of musical diversity.

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## METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is based on the narrative method in qualitative research. Narrative research is an inquiry strategy in which the researcher studies people's lives and asks one or more people to tell their stories. It enables us to capture the rich data contained within stories, such as providing insight into feelings, beliefs, images, and time. It also considers the relationship between personal experience and larger social and cultural contexts (Creswell, 2009). The methods of data collection were interviews, records, autobiographies, and various reports and books written by Kulatillake. In order to gain a better understanding of Kulatillake's vision, philosophy, and methods, seven in-depth semi structured interviews were carried out at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka, in September and November 2022. The semi structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks open-ended questions (Given, 2012). The participants were senior academic members and a scientific officer at C. de S. Kulatillake Research Centre. Participants were chosen based on their ability to best inform the research question and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2009). As a sampling method, nonprobability purposive sampling was used. The data were evaluated using content analysis.

## LIFE STORY OF C. DE S. KULATILLAKE

C. de S. Kulatillake was born on December 14, 1926 in Ambalangoda, Sri Lanka, where he mainly resided till his demise on May 21, 2005 (Vidanapathirana, 2018). He lived as a middle-class man. He received his education in English at Ambalangoda Dharmashoka Vidyalaya and began his career as an English instructor at Teldeniya Maha Vidyalaya in the Kandy area in February 1948. After enrolling in the prestigious Visva-Bharati University in Shantiniketan, India, in 1952, he started receiving regular music instruction. Later, at Visva-Bharati University, he learned to play the tabla, sitar, and esraj there. In 1956, he graduated from Visva-Bharati University with a diploma in music. His first position in the field of music came in 1958 when he was hired as a music instructor for the Mirigama Training College. He got the opportunity to work with W. B. Makulloluwa, another innovator in the realm of Sinhala music, while he was at the Mirigama Training College. Kulatillake was appointed as a member of the folk music panel when W. B. Makulloluwa served as the chairman of the Sri Lanka Art Council. He married A. M. Dhanavatie Premasuriya, who was also a teacher, in August 1960.

In 1963, he was sent to Maharagama Training College. He received two appointments in 1970, that of the head of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Service's (SLBC) Music Research Unit and the music inspector in the Moneragala and Ampara districts, but he began his duties as the head of the Music Research Unit in February 1970. While he was working at SLBC in 1971, Kuckertz, an ethnomusicologist from the University of Cologne Germany, and Dencker, the director of the German Cultural Institute of Sri Lanka, came to the SLBC and gave two lectures (Kulatillake, 1992). Since Kuckertz assisted Kulatillake in obtaining a study trip to Germany in 1974 and later benefited from it as a music researcher, Kulatillake's life would change as a result of Kuckertz's visit. He had the opportunity to visit the Freiburger German Folk Music Archives when he was in Germany. He went to the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, which showcases a huge array of musical instruments ranging from the Eastern jingle to the European piano. He participated in gamelan music lessons taught by Sri Superdjan of Java when he was in Amsterdam (Kulatillake, 1992). He oversaw SLBC's Sinhala music research division for about 16 years.

On October 30, 1986, he left SLBC. He spent considerable time giving guest lectures at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies (IAS), University of Kelaniya. He was hired in 1990 as a Music Research Officer at IAS, which is part of the University of Kelaniya, and served there until his death.

## KULATILLAKE'S MUSIC VISION

The study's first goal was to identify Kulatillake's music vision of enlightening Sri Lankan folk music. Ananda Samarakoon, a brilliant musician and composer, introduced Kulatillake to music in school, and he later assimilated Tagorian ideas in music at Santiniketan. Makulloluwa influenced him to learn traditional music. He was introduced to ethnomusicology and music study methods by Kuckertz in Germany and Skjellstad in Norway. Skjellstad served as the project's director between 1992 and 1995. The project was a collaboration between the University of Oslo, Norway, and the Institute of Aesthetic Studies (IAS), University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka (Inter Music Center Norway, n.d.). Skjellstad (2000) made contributions to the 1990 establishment of the IAS Music Research Center. The Department of Music and Theatre at the University of Oslo has made numerous contributions to the IAS Music Research Centre in the areas of music research and training (Fernando, personal communication, October 7, 2022). Some of the systems acquired included a Macintosh computer complex with a laser writer, HI-8 video cameras, DAT recording devices, and audio–video editing systems (N. Thilakarathne, personal communication, October 15, 2022). He used a signal-analyzing tool included in Macintosh computers to analyze the music signal found in 'Magul-Bera,' Sri Lanka's ceremonial drum music, at a time when computer technology was not yet established in the country (Fernando, personal communication, October 7, 2022). He encouraged other colleagues to adopt this technology and in 1991 compiled 'Magul-Bera, Three Nelum Singers, Fertility and Sex Symbolism in Sri Lankan Ritual Drama' (Kulatillake and Fernando, 1991).

He was a bilingual writer who worked in both English and Sinhala. His fluency in English and deep knowledge of folk music opened the door to global acknowledgment. Several foreign nations encouraged him to give lectures and participate in discussions about ethnomusicology and musicology. While working in the Sinhala Music Research Unit at SLBC, he identified that its programs were limited to one particular style, namely, Kandyan, and he felt the necessity of building up a good library of all traditional styles of the country. According to Karpeles (1959:179), a folk music collector must possess several qualifications, the most important of which is a love and understanding of his fellow creatures as well as the material he is collecting. SLBC disk number HSS/1341 Yapanā ardad deepaye jana gee saha Sinhala naada rupa (Folk Songs and Sinhala Melodies of the Jaffna Peninsula), G/6683 Desiyya thurya wadana (Sri Lankan Traditional Instrumental Music Playing), HSS/1433 Daru Nelavili (Lullabies), HSS/3032 Welapum gee (Lamentations), HSS/1223 Lankawe sitina puthugisi saha kaapiri janayage paramparika geeetha (Sri Lankan Kaffirs People Traditional Songs), HSS/2313 Sinhala Kamath gee saha ewata pasubim woo charithra (Harvesting Songs and its traditions in Sri Lanka), HSS/2453 Hewisi wadanaya ('Hewisi' Instrumental Music Playing), HSS/2725 Lankawe Daula wadanaya pilibada rasawath purapurtha ('Daula' Instrumental Music Playing and Related Folklore), and HSS/1779 Veddahs sanjeetha charithra are a few examples of Kulatillake's collection. Accordingly, Kulatillake met all of Karpeles's (1959) most important requirements.

The task of collecting songs was not always simple. He made numerous sacrifices in order to accomplish this. Kulatillake published lists of books, papers, recordings, editions of periodicals, ethnomusicological series, and LP recordings. His writing is comprehensive, as seen by the numerous references. Findings indicated that Kulatillake gathers information from a range of sources and makes conclusions from it in a methodical, restrained, and scientific manner. In fact, all of his writings are not only about music; they are an attempt to grasp the Sinhalese's cultural heritage, of which music is only one component. His books on Sinhala music are not only for music scholars but also for anyone interested in this aspect of the Sri Lankan national life that, while secular in content, is an integral part of the lives of the people despite being in an environment in which the almost clinical discipline of Buddha's religion flourished. He gently and unobtrusively chronicled the nation's cultural heritage at a time when it was on the verge of extinction due to a lack of public recognition.

## KULATILLAKE'S PHILOSOPHY

The second goal of the research was to identify Kulatillake's music philosophy to uplift Sri Lankan folk music. When discussing Sinhala folk music, several characters should not be overlooked. Hugh Nevill spent a lot of time between 1869 and 1886 collecting Sinhala sung verses (Kavi). The British Museum acquired many of the objects collected by Nevill in Sri Lanka (Deraniyagala, 1954). Devar Surya Sena (1899–1981), W. B. Makulloluwa (1922–1984), and C. de S. Kulatillake (1926–2005) were the pioneers in the study and investigation of Sri Lankan folk music (Manaranjanie, 2019:207). Makulloluwa and Kulatillake stand out among them as the most significant collectors of Sri Lankan traditional music. Devar Surya Sena, a Cambridge University alumnus who also attended the London School of Music to study Western music, gave in to his passion for music and dedicated his time to traveling to isolated locations and meeting with residents in order to collect and record Sinhala folk music. To promote Sinhala music, Surya Sena included traditional songs in his shows both local and international. He popularized Sri Lankan traditional music to the English upper class, which exercised a greater influence over the country at the time. Additionally, W. B. Makulloluwa had a significant role in maintaining and advancing the Sri Lankan musical legacy. He went to Santhi Niketan in India to study music. He also sought to develop a unique literary style while in the country, collecting a huge number of Sinhalese traditional poems. He believed that the traditions of the 'Jana Gee' folk music should be upheld in Sinhalese music. He made a significant effort to show how traditional songs are utilized in Sri Lanka, a musically inherited nation, to develop a musical theater and Sinhala ballet (Vidanapathirana, personal communication, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2022).

In addition, he conceptually blended folk songs into new pieces. To acquire primitive folk songs for his field study, Makulloluwa hired Kulatillake as a partner. However, Kulatillake had a whole different take on folk music. The key thing is that Kulatillake illustrated folk music with a scientific basis and tied it to ethnomusicology (R. Fernando, personal communication, October 7, 2022). Like others, he was passionate about music and collected folk songs. He investigated musical expression among the public as a social activity in order to understand not only what music is but also what it signifies to its practitioners and audiences. He was gifted in music and had a strong research, analytical, cultural awareness and communication abilities. Findings indicated that his research had not just been theoretical; he had also produced several works that draw on the rich tradition of native Sinhala music and dance, which have been highly welcomed by a grateful public. The book 'Jana sangeetha sidantha' was written by him as a result of his concept that a student learning music needs not only performing skills but also knowledge of his/her country's folk music as well as music from other places throughout the world. Because there were few books written about folk music in Sri Lanka at the time, he began writing books to provide step-by-step knowledge about the folk music field in Sri Lanka and around the world.

He believed not only that Sri Lankan music should be primarily based on Sinhala folk songs but also that Indian and Western music should also be included in Sri Lankan music. His book '*Viswa sangeetha sesthra* (World music)' demonstrated his view and knowledge of the music cultures in other countries. Through this, he aimed to give a basic understanding of world music systems to musicians and music academics in Sri Lanka. He believed that apart from the Indian music tradition, the music traditions of the other parts of the world should be publicly examined and that the knowledge of musical practices of other places was also very important in developing the music of this country.

## KULATILLAKE'S METHODS TO KEEP THE FOLK MUSIC TRADITION ALIVE

The third aim of the study was to identify Kulatillake's methods for keeping the folk music tradition alive. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, C. de S. Kulatillake made all those great field recordings by

touring Sri Lanka and gathering music from every community. In his early field recordings in 1970, Kulatillake used a Tandberg (mono) tape recorder, but after 1974, he used an Uher 1400 machine with mostly 5" spool tapes at 3.75 speed and a few at 7.5 speed (Kulatillake, n.d.-b). In order to avoid duplication while maintaining authenticity, Kulatillake started working on a code of ethics for field recordings. According to that document, all singers should be over 30 years old and have a good background in music tradition. They should be chosen based on singing with good voice qualities rather than their knowledge of folklore, and they should be encouraged to use instrumental accompaniment as found in traditional and group performances. He advised against locating recording centers near busy roadways or inside concrete building enclosures; he instead suggested a half-walled school, temple, or mud and wattle shed with a cadjan roof. Authentic and rare materials such as old sindus, eulogies, and supplications to local deities; old vannams that have gone out of practice; and all nelums sung by groups in their pristine lush tones flowed into the tapes (Kulatillake, n.d.-c). The criteria of the collection were mainly aimed at the styles of singing rather than the number of verses. Another important point in the field recording was that every singer was expected to give the title of the song or drum cut in his/her own voice. This reflects his methodical approach to gathering folk music. His advice was that all folk melodies should be recorded in an authentic environment (Uthpalakandage, personal communication, October 31, 2022).

Kulatillake modified impressive traditional tunes into light songs and distributed them over the radio (Panapitiye, personal communication, October 25, 2022). He vigorously promoted and spread musical expertise through radio. As part of the folk song documentation project, he had the opportunity to compile nearly 250 tapes into four comprehensive volumes and took 14 years to compile and visited 180 areas all over the island (Kulatillake, n.d.-c). He labeled tapes and scripts with indexes. Vijaya-kuvani, the story of the mat, Padura, Kiri-amma worship, Goddess Ratnavali of the Chandalas threshing floor traditions, Kohomba-Kankari, Portuguese dialect, baila Kaffir Manja songs of Puttlam Kaffiris, Pirith Chanting styles including old Gana-Sajjayana styles, hymns and kantarū of the Christian population, Sokari folk drama, Riddi-Yaga, Tamil folk songs, and ancient raja-rata vannam are some of the themes discussed. In his research work, he made many unknown folk songs and melodies accessible. A collection of rare songs recorded from the Monaragala and Ampara districts is available in the SLBC music research unit library tape on MR/7/28 (Kulatillake, n.d.-d). Kulatillake spent a lot of time traveling around Sri Lanka studying folk music. He discovered 36 native singing styles that are unique to Sri Lanka (Ariyaratne, 2020: 97). He collected Christian geethika (hymns), Portuguese baila, and Kaffrinha gee in addition to Tamil songs that were rejected as folk music by ruling politicians (Ariyaratne, 2020: 87). Using field recordings, he published a series of popular anthologies 'Reference Guide to Sri Lankan Folk Songs and Music.'

Promoting folk music to listeners, in general, was difficult at the time. Although folk songs are a part of a country's culture, they provide little entertainment. The lyric writers also dislike folk songs because they leave no room to display their musical talents. Folk songs in Sri Lanka developed in musically illiterate circles with little access to instrumental scales. Every folk musician has his/her freestyle scale. In order to grab the interest of the broad audience, Kulatillake gathered folk music and songs and then altered the arrangements to near instrumental scale in the studio. A few carefully selected professional performers gave the voices for the tunes (R. Fernando, personal communication, October 7, 2022). The radio programs called 'Sinhala Melodies and Rhythms,' 'Understanding Sinhala Music,' 'Drum Music of Sri Lanka,' and 'Musical Traditions and Folklore' are examples of this. 'Peduru malaye gi,'<sup>2</sup> the first of these new arrangements, uses 'Gana tel sadun' by Riddi-yage, also known as ratayakuma. According to Kottegoda (1996), Riddi-yage is a Sri Lankan low-country ritual conducted to bless women. 'Peduru malaye gi' was voiced by Jayarathne and Kusuma Perera with the bass violin and the reverberating tones of the Yak-bera. Ariyaratne (2020: 98–102) listed 57 rearranged songs done by Kulatillake.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44R2FXfbUbo>.



In his most active time, Kulatillake adapted the lyrics of the so-called ‘light’ (an Indian category of not so strict songs that was taken over in Sri Lanka) song *Bedda watata sudu moramal pipila* from a type of Sinhala folk song called ‘Bambara gee’. Villagers harvest honey from wild bee honeycombs while singing the Bambara gee song. Lamentations are used in the lyrics. A light melody with rhythm has been used to accompany this Bambara gee. The song’s opening is composed of a repeated three-matra pattern. *Dethata walalu mal muthuwal mala potai* is a nelum-gee-based song rearrangement. Nelum gee is sung by women folk while weeding the fields. Their beauty, dress, and mobility are described in this type of song. The nelum gee melody and lyrics of *thel gaalaa hisa peeran nano* have been utilized in creating this light song.

Research on music cannot be considered as that which can be esthetically appreciated. He altered a few folk tunes so that radio broadcasting mediums might use them since music research can be used for amusement. He came up with the appropriate musical notes and arrangements to do this. He worked with expert vocalists including Neela Wickramasinghe, Edward Jayakody, and Rohana Beddege to determine the songs’ suitable idiom. He also gave careful consideration to which musical instruments should be employed for this. The table, a representative piece of Indian music, was not utilized in this project. In actuality, he seldom ever used the guitar – often considered to be a Western musical instrument. He employed the arpeggio style technique rather than the guitar rhythm method when doing so. To avoid rhythmic patterns while using strumming techniques and polytonality (chord sounds that are not typically employed as accompaniment in Sri Lankan music traditions) but give successive tones of a chord, arpeggios were played (R. Fernando, personal communication, October 7, 2022).

In coordination with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Sri Lankan Ministry of Culture, IAS, the University of Kelaniya produced the Multi-Cultural Festival of Asian Music in Colombo. In his letter to the management board of IAS, on December 28, 1998, he stated that the festival objectives were as follows:

“To understand, tolerate and appreciate other ASIAN Music cultures, especially of East Asia, and to ease the ethnic differences of the region. IAS pays little or no attention to East Asian music cultures. The students are unaware of the styles of the Gamelan of Indonesia, an area studied by almost all universities of the West. The distinct style of Thailand and Iran too is important in the evolution of music in Asia” (C de S Kulatillake Research Centre, 1998).

He served as the festival’s coordinating secretary. This festival, which took place in February 1999, featured a group of performers from Thailand (royal piphet orchestra), India (pure classical traditions), Iran (with its traditional music), Indonesia (with its Gamelan music), and Sri Lanka (Tamil and Sinhala items) (Bentharage et al., 2014:510).

The article named “Samudragosha Metre and the Seepada Styles” of Singing in Lanka was published in German Society for Music of the Orient, Mitteilungen, Issue 13, 1974 (Kulatillake, 1974). This article explains the “Samudraghosha” metre and its variant of the *seepada* style that is popular in the country in both fields of poetry and folk song (Kulatillake, 1974:39). Kulatillake (1976a) published “A Background to Sinhala Traditional Music of Sri Lanka” in English medium. This book explains the music history of Sri Lanka, institutions of music in ancient periods, gradual localizing of the Portuguese Kaffrina and Baila tunes among the Sinhala groups, popularization of South Indian music and North Indian classical music among the Sinhala groups, music styles, “*Sivpada*” Sinhala folk melodies, and Sinhala Songs categorization according to the merits of both melody and content. Metre, melody, and rhythm in Sinhala music written in English were published by him in 1976. In this book, the author explains and deals mainly with traditional music styles (Kulatillake, 1976b).

Under the series, “An Anthology of South-East Asian Music” Sri Lanka-Singhalese Music: Singing and Drumming LP format was released and published by the Institute for Musicology of the University of Basle in 1980. This LP contains various Sri Lankan traditional songs and music including *Nelum-gi*, *Nelum-sindu*, *Andahera*, Harvest song, “*Tika*” *sivpada*, songs to honor the local gods, *Talamala—gi*, Cradle-song *Pel-gi*, Gajag-vannama, Mangala astaka, Magul-bera, and ritual

songs with drum (yak-bera) accompaniment—Samayan-bera. Those songs and melodies were recorded on March 3–5, 1972 by Josef Kuckertz in the Kandy and Matale regions and Ambalangoda; 13th–14th selections were recorded in 1976–1977 by Cyril de Silva Kulatillake (Hooker, 1993:234).

Buddhist Chant in Sri Lanka, Its Structure and Musical Elements was published in 1982. This chapter explains the evolution of Buddhist chanting from the fifth century in Sri Lanka and the choral styles of the didactic *pirit sajjayana* (Kulatillake, 1982). Kulatillake (1982) stated that chanting *pirith* should not be entertaining music. Kiri-Amma worship and its ritual songs article was published in Samskrti Journal Vol 18 No.1 in 1984. According to Kulatillake (1984a), Kiri-ammās are an array of female deities who are supposed to inflict sickness on children, and the origin of this worship is found in the Veddah community.

He created a recording of *Kolam* masked theater performance (recording) from Sri Lanka's southwest coastal region between 1979 and 1982, and the Institute for Musicology, University of Basel, published it in 1983 (Ellingson, 1987:187; Kulatillake, 1983, Reese, 1985). This was the first disc about *Kolam*'s masked performance released on the international market (Kulatillake felicitation committee, 1988:23). This LP recording consisted of commentary, photographs, and descriptive notes in English and German with Sinhala text (Ellingson, 1987). Ellingson (1987) praised the significance of this tape in his assessment. He had a performance in 1984 with the 07 Traditional Percussion Orchestra at the Nagoya music specialists conference. Five songs were picked by the UNESCO Asian Cultural Center for their collection of traditional music from throughout the world (Ariyaratne, 2020:87; Kulatillake felicitation committee, 1988:27).

Raban Sellama and Its Music is a journal article published in 1984. This article describes Viridu (a genre of music) and the musical instrument known as “Rabana.” It also explains different types of Raban, Banku-Raban, and At-Raban/Viridu-Raban and their uses. Furthermore, the article demonstrates Raban Sellama's group performance by singing, playing the At-Raban, dancing, and spinning the At-Raban on fingertips (Kulatillake, 1984b). In 1987, Prof Kjell Skjellstad, University of Oslo, and Kulatillake recorded Sri Lankan Kohomba Kankariya and Riddi Yaga with the support of the Norwegian National Humanities Research Grant (Kulatillake felicitation committee, 1988:14).

The heritage of music in the Mahaweli settlements is also an English medium book published in 1988. He popularized Sri Lankan ethnomusicology not only locally but also internationally and represented his country at international music conferences, such as the 22nd International Music Council session in Stockholm (1984). He attended a series of talks on Sri Lankan ethnomusicology with the invitation of the Department of Music and Theater at the University of Oslo in Norway. When the academic discipline of ethnomusicology was barely known in Sri Lanka, Kulatillake introduced the ‘Ethnomusicology and Ethnomusicological Aspects of Sri Lanka’ textbook in 1991. This book critically examines Sri Lankan customs, folklore, history, philology, and other aspects in addition to studying Sri Lankan musical traditions. The history and development of music as a form of expression among the Sinhala people are covered in this book. Kuckertz provided him opportunities to share Sri Lanka's music tradition with the Western world. To honor German ethnomusicologist Josef Kuckertz, Kulatillake authored an article in 1992 titled ‘Prof. Josef Kuckertz: The Recent Cultural Link Between Sri Lanka and Germany’.

## CONCLUSION

Kulatillake collected, preserved, and examined Sri Lankan folk songs and music over nearly 79 years as an ethnographer and folklorist. The yearly *Nadagam Kolam Puppēt Baliyaga* shows in *Polwatta* village as a youngster his sitar-, dilruba-, and mandolin-playing skills learned in school as well as the sound of upcountry drums from traditional art institutions and *nelum gee* heard in the area where he went to work, subsequently learning music on an academic basis at Shanti Niketana; all influenced his musical beliefs and taste. His albums, writings, and musical output expressed his musical opinions

and interests. He documented the music in community life that he did not belong to. He conducted research and made an engaging presentation of the information from his music research work. For his radio research songs, he rose to fame. Additionally, Kulatillake was very knowledgeable about regional music and national musical tastes. He also became internationally a resource person. Additionally, he made comparisons of local musical instruments with foreign musical instruments. According to Kulatillake, the Sri Lankan double-read instrument horanewa is a West Asian migrant instrument. The etymologies of our horane and the Persian term quarna are very similar (Kulatillake, 2000:11–25). The individuality of Sinhala drum music, its peculiar rhythms that do not match the Indian “tal” systems, and Sinhala drum music is an incredibly remarkable performance style (Kulatillake, 1991:65, 1999:89–98). He discovered that the strange aspect of the *visama nadi* (irregular pulse) movement in Sri Lankan drum music is a unique style (Kulatillake, 1999:95–98) and should be accepted as a great feature inherited from the folk music of this country (Bandara, personal communication, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2022).

The current study findings suggest that Kulatillake had a thorough understanding of music theory and practice. After analyzing Kulatillake’s story, it is clear that he worked hard to collect musical identity that came down from our multifaceted past and make it relevant and present to the current time. All his books, articles, studies, and recordings are memorials to the folk music revival, a collective cultural discovery. He traced cultural identity and pride, researched it, documented and presented it using new methodologies to national and international audiences, and preserved it for future generations. He has thus put researchers in the direction of a road they can take to contribute to the traditional music field he has so skillfully pioneered. The study discovered that in order to ensure the long-term viability of folk music, he interacted with the media and technology as the primary entities. An additional study focusing on trailblazers who used music education as a safeguarding measure can be recommended as a worthwhile investigation that will both enrich and broaden the findings of this study.

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