

Re-study of Arnold Bake's Recordings of Vedda Music in Ceylon (Sri Lanka): 1938-2024

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Arnold Adriaan Bake (1899–1963), a Dutch ethnomusicologist, dedicated his scholarly pursuits to the investigation of the music and cultural intricacies of South Asia. Bake meticulously documented and studied traditional music in India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. The aim of this study is to investigate the contemporary status of the aboriginal Vedda people's songs Bake recorded and documented using his recording catalogue as a guide and to determine how the music has changed overtime. The methodology integrates analyzing archival material with contemporary ethnographic fieldwork to comprehensively investigate the dynamism of Vedda music from 1938 to 2024. Bake's archival materials are taken from University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) archives. However, it is noteworthy that the original recordings by Arnold Bake are currently preserved and archived in the British Library Sound Archive. As part of the community engagement process, historical Vedda recordings from the Bake's collection were shared with the Dabana Village Veddas, followed by interviews to investigate the evolving nature of their musical traditions. During the interviews, participants were unable to identify the singers featured in Bake's audio recordings. The study illustrated significant discrepancies between Bake's recordings and contemporary Vedda songs by highlighting variations in melodic patterns, lyrical and phonetic changes. We will argue that these changes are due to dynamics in Vedda formal education, interaction and intermarriages with other ethnic groups. This illustrates the interplay between cultural heritage and external factors, shedding light on the intricate processes shaping the musical and linguistic expressions of the Vedda people over time.

Keywords: Arnold Adriaan Bake, Bake's Vedda Recordings, Intangible Cultural heritage, Re-study of Bake's Recording, Vedda Music

A short bio (100 words) of the Authors

Kamani Samarasinghe is a Ph.D. scholar and Senior Lecturer at the University of the Visual & Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is a member of the National Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)-Sri Lanka, International Society for Music Education (ISME), International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance (ICTMD) and the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA).

Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy is an adjunct professor of ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Herb Alpert School of Music. Her research, writing, teaching, curatorial activities, and multi-media publications often have an applied focus, aimed at community development of minority traditions, especially in diasporic settings. She conducts field [The 2nd symposium of the ICTMD study group on Indigenous Music and Dance with a joint day With the ICTMD study group on Music and Minorities - Taiwan](#)

research in India during winter quarters, continuing to work with the Sidi Literacy Project in Gujarat, and to restudy Arnold Bake's 1938 documentation, most recently with Mappila Muslims of Malabar. In 2018 she received the honorary title of Bake-Jairazbhoy Chair Professor, Indian Ocean Studies from PSMO College, an affiliate of Calicut University, Kerala.