CHAPTER SEVEN

CONSTANT VAN DE WALL, A EUROPEAN–JAVANESE COMPOSER

Henk Mak van Dijk

[English translation by Wim Tigges]

When starting my research on the lives and works of Dutch composers in 2004, in collaboration with the Nederlands Muziek Instituut, I had no idea that so much unknown yet extraordinary music was to be uncovered. Here were compositions in which a Western, romantic or impressionistic idiom were, to a greater or lesser extent, mixed with elements of the music indigenous to the then Dutch East Indies: *Indisch* classical music.¹ These pieces were written from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards by a small group of Dutch composers who were either born and bred in the Indies, or else had lived or worked there for some time: Constant van de Wall (in Surabaya and Batavia), Paul Seelig (Bandung), Linda Bandara (Bandarrejo and Yogyakarta), Berta Tideman-Wijers (Batak), Hector Marinus (Deli), Theo Smit Sibinga (East Java), Frans Wiemans (Bandung), Dirk Fock (Batavia), and Fred Belloni (Bandung).² They felt connected with Europe as well as with the Indies: on the one hand they were rooted in a Western musical tradition and participated in the Western musical world, on the other hand for new ways of composing and were inspired by indigenous culture, which included gamelan music, *wayang* (shadow-play), dance, *Indisch* opera and *kroncong* (a small guitar), classical Javanese poetic forms and Malay quatrains (*pantun*). Certainly, they were not unique in paying attention to oriental music, but their specific interest in music from the *Indisch* archipelago was shared with, at most, a handful of

¹ *Indisch* is a specifically Dutch term, commonly but often confusingly applied. Originally a person of mixed blood with one Indonesian parent or ancestor would be called *Indisch*, hence Indo(–European). Later on, *Indisch* was also used to indicate people who were born in the Dutch East Indies or who had lived there for a considerable time, irrespective of their skin colour. In this paper, *Indisch* is mainly used to refer to the cultural mixture or combination of European and Indonesian music. There is no unambiguous translation for this word. Applying these definitions to Van de Wall you could say he is three times *Indisch*.

² Extensive information about *Indisch* composers can be found in Mak van Dijk (2007).

Image 7.1 Constant van de Wall, The Hague 1907 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

foreign composers from the West. If there are many examples of exotic³ compositions, there are only a few of specifically *Indisch* music.

Constant van de Wall (Surabaya 1871–Nice 1945) occupies a prominent place in the above list of composers because of a number of uniquely European-Japanese compositions: songs, pieces for piano and for orchestra, chamber music, and the opera *Attima*.⁴ From these, it is evident that his eyes and ears were open to the country where he was born and raised. According to Van de Wall, ‘Java’ could support Western music, give it momentum and lead to brilliant compositions. He considered Western romantic music, with its sequences of harmonies providing tension and relaxation, to be most appropriate to this end and, according to him, it should continue to dominate in the blend of East and West. He positioned himself as the ‘only representative of the oriental element in music’⁵ and as ‘*compositeur javanais*’,⁶ and he received favourable reviews in the Dutch, *Indisch*, and French press alike. Yet, he felt unappreciated by his colleagues, because they so often failed to notice or to value ‘the work of *Indisch* composers’.⁷ After his death, Van de Wall was soon consigned to oblivion.⁸ Nowadays, international textbooks on exoticism or orientalism – out of ignorance – fail to show any trace of his *Indisch* music.

Singular Indisch Compositions

In this paper, I want to discuss Van de Wall’s most important works that were inspired by Java: compositions in which the Malay and Arabic languages, the *pantun*, Islam, *wayang*, Javanese dances and gamelan music

³ I will use a definition by Taylor (2007: 2): ‘Exoticism’ in music refers to manifestations of an awareness of racial, ethnic, and cultural Others captured in sound.’

⁴ For a biographical sketch of Constant van de Wall, see Mak van Dijk (2007: 117–150).

⁵ See Van de Wall (1917a: 292).

⁶ As mentioned on his concert programme 4th of April 1921 in Hotel Negresco in Nice. Coll. H. Mak van Dijk.

⁷ Constant van de Wall, in ‘Causerie over Indische muziek en Indische componisten’, *Het Vaderland*, 27 april 1928.

⁸ A headline in the daily newspaper *Haagsch Dagblad* ran: ‘Forgotten composer from The Hague’ (18 December 1948), and ten years later Van de Wall remained ‘unrecognized as a composer’. In the Fifties, his works would occasionally appear in programmes of concerts performed in The Hague. In 1962, the music publicist Wouter Paap wrote an interesting analysis of Van de Wall’s oeuvre, and the Hague daily *Het Vaderland* offered a second complete post-war outline of the composer’s life, ‘inspired by the East, connected by the spirit of France’ (2 January 1965). Since then, very little was heard about Van de Wall until the Nineties. His life story was not published until 2007. See also note 2.

3

Doodenzang.

(Prière arabe pour les Morts.)

Grave ma non troppo lento.
(Ernstig, niet te langzaam.)

Constant van de Wall, Op. 41.

Canto.

Al - lâ - ho, al.lâ.ho — Ak.bar! A - sja - do an

Pianoforte.

la il.lâ.ha il.lâ, il.lâ.ha, il.lâ - ha, — il.lâ.ha, — il.lâ.

ha — Al.lâh! A - sja - do an - na - Mohamma.

p *r.H.*

*) Kan ook zonder piano worden voorgedragen.
Eenige slagen op een Oostersche trom of tamboerijn dienen dan tot begeleiding.

Graveerwerk en Druk van Breitkopf & Härtel te Leipzig. C.v.d.W.

Image 7.2 Song of Death (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

were first introduced on the concert stage. Surprisingly, he did not write these in the Indies, but rather in Europe, in The Hague between 1898 and 1907, and in The Hague and Nice in the period 1914–1921. A final *Indisch* composition dates from 1929. As has been said, the Western, romantic or moderately modern idiom is dominant and the specifically Javanese element is subsidiary. The works in question: Two Javanese Rhapsodies (*Rhapsodies javanaises* I and II) for solo piano, the first from 1904 and the second written in 1930; two Islamic songs for voice and piano: *Arabische Doodenzang* (the Arabian Song of Death) from 1905 and *Mohammedaansch Gebed* (the Mohammedan Prayer) from 1915; (*Maleische liederen* (the Malay Songs), written before 1906; the songs *Schimmenspiel* (Shadow-play) () from 1918 and *Tropische Nacht* (Tropical Night) from 1919, for voice and piano, and *Een Wajang-Legende* (A Wayang Legend) (for string orchestra (1917); finally, the opera *Attima*, which features a complete gamelan performance. The first ideas for *Attima* probably date from as early as 1902.

Rhapsodies Javanaises, *Opus 19 and Opus 51*

Opus 19 is the first *Indisch* piano piece by Van de Wall, and opus 51 his last one. Both rhapsodies are good examples of his mixed style, and they are two of the few Dutch compositions for piano from that era to contain sounds imitating the gamelan. They have been written in a Western tonality, feature great dynamic variation, and remain caught in a traditional Western musical form, that of the rhapsody. In this respect, Van de Wall followed in the footsteps of composers who created rhapsodies with an exotic or ethnic timbre. To mention a few examples: the *Rhapsodie maurisque* (Saint-Saens), the *Rhapsodie cambodgienne* (Bourgault), the *Rhapsodie norvegienne* (Lalo), *Romanian Rhapsodies* (Enesco) or the *Rhapsodies javanaises* by the Dutch composers Paul Seelig and Dirk Schäfer. They followed Franz Liszt, who had used this form in order to combine gipsy music, which to his ears sounded exotic, with a romantic idiom. The results of this were the enormously popular and virtuoso Hungarian rhapsodies.

What makes Van de Wall's pieces for piano so singular is the imitation of the sounds of the gamelan. This cannot be found in Dutch compositions of that period. Audiences had not been particularly impressed by the performances of Javanese gamelan orchestras, which could be attended at exhibitions in Arnhem (1879), Amsterdam (1883) and The Hague (1898). In 1879, for instance, only one composer had been captivated by the ensemble of instruments and its natural pitches: Daniël de Lange. After 1900, originally only Van de Wall, Seelig and Bandara showed any interest. In

France matters were different (see also the chapter by Matthew Cohen in this volume); French composers, including Debussy, were fascinated by the Javanese gamelan, which performed in Paris at the World Exhibitions of 1889 and 1900.

In the colony, appreciation of the gamelan was virtually non-existent. For a long time Europeans were rather dismissive of this type of music. In contemporary thought about progress, Western culture and Western music were held to be superior, and gamelan music – often experienced as monotonous and soporific – was considered the inferior music of natives. Moreover, to play a gamelan instrument was literally a down-to-earth matter. Therefore, hardly any Europeans did so, and for a long time there was no mutual musical interaction.

When he was still a boy Van de Wall will undoubtedly have heard gamelan in the town where he spent his youth, Semarang, a centre of gong-smiths; most likely, he will have visited the Kampong Insulinde in The Hague; maybe he went to Paris in 1900 to visit the *Exposition*. Was it there that a girl by the name of Attima had danced in a gamelan ensemble, a girl he might have noticed and whose name he used for his opera? Or, was it his brother Hans, who kept him informed about musical life in the Indies through letters, newspaper articles and art reviews from the colony? Whatever his sources, gamelan music became his inspiration for the first Javanese rhapsody, written in a romantic idiom, combined with *pelog* and *slendro* scales. Particularly remarkable was the use of *pelog*; never before had such a scale been applied in Western classical music. Indeed, Debussy's famous 'gamelan' piece for piano *Pagodes*, published around this time, only uses *slendro*. Opus 19 was given its opening performance in The Hague in 1905 by the renowned pianist Steven van Groningen. On 4 April 1921, the rhapsody shone forth at a presentation, which was entirely devoted to the *Indisch* work of the '*compositeur javanais*' (see image 7.3), in the prestigious Hotel Negresco, a conspicuous building on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice. The piece was announced in the programme with the subtitle: '*melodies populaires et thèmes du gammelan (orchestre javanais)*', and was performed by the French pianist Marie Panthès.

Opus 51 was written by Van de Wall in Nice in 1930, probably in response to severe criticism of his work from The Netherlands, to which I will return. Both rhapsodies were greatly appreciated in his time and, in addition to Van Groningen and Panthès, a number of renowned pianists included it in their repertoire: Carel Oberstadt, Marinus Salomons, Johannes Röntgen, Dirk Schäfer, José Iturbi and Elo Moussard. Years later, Oberstadt's wife Anna wrote to the Van de Walls: 'We are so delighted

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Image 7.3 Negresco, announcement concert of the Van de Walls 1921 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

that that Javanese Rhapsody [I] is so very successful still. What a pleasant and interesting time it was when it was first performed – What pleasant memories of youth we do have' (4 April 1940).⁹

Arabian Song of Death, *Opus 11* and Mohammedan Prayer, *Opus 9*

Song of Death, in Arabic, for voice (choir) and piano, was first performed on 25 January 1905 in the Diligentia concert hall in The Hague, at a 'Van de Wall recital', together with the first *Javanese Rhapsody* and excerpts from the music drama *Attima*. A large audience had flocked to the performance and it was given a favourable press. In all likelihood, the *Song of Death*, with its Arabic text *Allâho Akbar! Asshaddo an la illâha Illâh Allâh!* is one of the first compositions by a Dutch composer in the Arab language. It is a prayer for the deceased, recited by his bed or by his grave to accompany the soul to heaven. The text is identical to that of the *Adzan*, the *muadzin's* call to Islamic prayer, even the confession of faith by every Muslim. However, the *Adzan* for the deceased is slow and *khidmat*, serene, in character. It has a piano accompaniment, but the song can also be performed without, or with a percussion instrument.

Mohammedan Prayer, for voice and piano, in Malay, was published in 1915. The text of this song dates from the 8th century and is by imam Abu Abdallah Mohammad bin Ismael, also named El Bokhari. It is about the greatness and omnipotence of Allah. This monumentally composed song rises towards a grand climax; its mysterious and introverted opening with its Arabian-style arabesque tone is related to *tabirkan* or inward prayer; the ecstatic ending to *talilkan*, extraverted avowal. The *Prayer* was sung at one of the popular National Song Evenings in Zaal Diligentia in The Hague, by the then (1918) well-known concert singer Tilly Koenen, together with *Song of Death*. 'Both songs are surely the most powerful works of this evening. They testify to a deep passion as well as to a meekness, piety and fantasy such as can only be expressed by an oriental soul. Tilly Koenen understands this oriental soul splendidly', reported The Hague weekly *De Hofstad*.¹⁰

⁹ Letter from Anna Oberstadt to Constant van de Wall in Nice, 4 April 1940. Coll. H. Mak van Dijk.

¹⁰ *De Hofstad*, 26 February 1918.

In the present-day field of tension between Christianity and Islam, these pieces with their unmistakeable religious message acquire a new charge, which is why they have become a daring choice in a classical concert programme: Who would bring these ‘texts’ as a performance in a concert hall out of their religious context, for example in Indonesia? How will they be received?

Six Malay Songs, *Opus 6*

These simple diatonic songs for voice and piano or orchestra have not been dated, but they must have been written before September 1906. They were published in 1913, by Alsbach (Amsterdam) in an album with a fine batik cover and a large photograph of the composer inside. Later, in Nice, Van de Wall would compose two new Malay songs, opus 37: *Tjari sobat* (In search of a friend) and *Tidak seneng* (Not happy). They were intended to be collected in one volume with the others, but such a publication never materialized.

In an explanatory preface to the score, Van de Wall pointed out that he had been touched, not so much by the *kroncong* or *stambul* melodies, which were well-known in the Indies, as by the beauty of the French translations of so-called *pantuns*: short four-line poems in the Malay language that were very popular in the Indies, and in which love and eroticism played a major part. Yet, he had aimed at *couleur locale*; the first song was loosely based on a *pantun* melody, and the melody of the final song was that of the already existing and universally known *Nina bobo*. As an example of a ‘charming, simple and serious’ *pantun*, he cites the fourth poem:

<i>Apa goena pasang palita</i>	Why light a lamp
<i>Kalok tidak dengan soemboenja?</i>	if it does not have a wick?
<i>Apa goena bermain mata</i>	Why flirt
<i>Kalok tidak dengan soenggoenja?</i>	if you are not sincere?

To understand why Van de Wall did not wish to be associated with *kroncong* at this time needs a little explanation. On Java, *pantuns* were often used by wandering musicians as texts for their *kroncong* melodies. With song, *kroncong*, violin and flute play, they serenaded in sultry tropical nights, singing about love and seducing nice girls. The *kroncong* musicians, however, had a bad name because they were regarded as a nuisance, as fighters, and as a threat to morality. ‘Therefore, if as an *Indischman* you

wanted to be as European as possible, *kroncong* was taboo – a decent *Indisch* boy or girl did not listen to this kind of music' (Tangkau 1995).

Kroncong music had blown across from Portugal and was much loved by Indo-Europeans in the Indies (see the chapter by Mutsaers in this volume). Originally, the genre was known as street music with a doubtful reputation. It was played in the criminal districts of the big towns. Around 1900, however, *kroncong* benefited from the success of the so-called *Indisch* opera, the *Komedi Stambul* (Stambul Comedy). In the songs that served as accompaniment to the comedy, *kroncong* elements were gradually introduced and, in turn, *kroncong* players started to use the well-known *stambul* songs. Little by little, the genre became enormously popular in wide circles of the native community, being spread by means of musical boxes, musical scores, gramophone records and radio. Only a small top layer of the (Indo-) European élite qualified it as 'indecent', 'tasteless' and 'sentimental'. Dutch ethnomusicologists such as Bandara, Kunst and Brandts Buys even spoke of degenerate music. They also saw the threat of gamelan music having to yield to simple songs in the popularity of *kroncong*.¹¹

A fine example of a *kroncong* scene ending in a brawl is provided by Constant's brother Hans van de Wall, in his well-known novel *The Paupers* of 1912. The aforementioned song *Apa goena passang palita* plays a role in it. The protagonist is Boong portalis, a handsome *Indisch* boy and a brazen fighter. He is adventurous and possesses 'a sensual nature'. Together with two friends he goes '*kronconging*' to chat up a cute Chinese girl. They set off in a dogcart:

So, on they went, at a moderate trot, along the moonlit, deserted roads, towards the Chinese camp, while accompanied by Krol's guitar and Lammers's violin, Boong's warm and sensual baritone sounded through the quiet night. He sang the Malay love song '*Apa goena passang palita, kaloek tidak dengan soemboenja?*' with a rich and tender voice, which quivered with unrestrained passion in the moonlit night. His lovesick, voluptuous nature betrayed itself altogether in the sentimentally heartfelt way in which he sang the pantun. And the warm sound of that amorous masculine voice

¹¹ At a later stage, foreign musicologists rose to the defence of *kroncong* as a worthwhile musical blend with an interesting history. For instance, in her article 'In defence of *kroncong*' from 1978, the ethnomusicologist Bronia Kornhauser speaks of a successful artistic heritage of a mixture of Portuguese, Indo-European and Javanese musical culture. Other fine recent articles on *kroncong* are Yampolsky (2010) and Keppy (2008). Matthew I. Cohen (2006) wrote about the *Komedi Stambul*. In The Netherlands, *kroncong* as an expression of Indo-European culture gained ample interest once again at the Pasar Malam in The Hague from 2006 onwards. However, a standard work on *kroncong* music has not yet been written.

seemed to belong with the broadly lit landscape, creating an operatic scene in a natural setting [...].¹²

Because the girl is not at home, they slink off in a restless mood to run amuck in a nearby *kampong*.

In Holland, *kroncong* was less burdened with such connotations and it fairly rapidly became popular through the arrival of *Indisch* students. Various *Indisch* fraternities liked to play this music and at artistic evening parties, *kroncong* songs were often combined with gamelan playing. In the Netherlands, recordings of the genre were made as early as 1904 by a Dutch female singer, to be followed somewhat later by ensembles such as Eurasia, Insulinde and the Indische Club Amsterdam.

Evidence that in composing his songs Van de Wall blazed a trail can be found in the *Encyclopedie van Nederlandsch-Indië* (The Dutch East Indies Encyclopaedia) under the heading of 'Musical Art in the Netherlands Indies': 'He was one of the first to transform the Malay Pantun into Art Song and to introduce Malay and Arab songs into European concert halls, were they were sung in their original languages' (Van de Wall 1921: 405–406). Certainly, Van de Wall had written this piece himself, but that he was one of the first is definitely true. Especially the *Malay Songs* were, in those days, an original, modern and unsophisticated choice of repertoire.

The composer was very fortunate that one of Holland's best known female singers, Java-born Tilly Koenen, included some of his *pantun* songs in her repertoire. Early in 1906 she wrote from Berlin: 'Now that I have begun to work at your songs, I just have to tell you that these little musical pieces are growing ever dearer to me. Every song bears a different character, but the *Indisch* type which you so admirably represent is never lost out of sight'.¹³ She also asked for the exclusive right to be allowed to perform them, and announced that she would first present them to an audience in The Hague on 26 January. Eventually, she was to sing the songs with

¹² Ido 1912: 68–69. The original Dutch text: 'En voort ging het, op matige draf, over de maanlichte, verlaten wegen, naar de Chinese kamp, terwijl onder begeleiding van Krol's gitaar en Lammers' viool de warme, sensuele bariton van Boong door den rustigen nacht klonk. Hij zong het Maleische minnelied 'Apa goena pasang palita, kaloek tidak dengan soemboenya?', met volle, weeke stem, die in den mane-nacht lichtelijk beefde van onbedwongen passie. Heel zijn minzieke, wellustige aard verried zich in de sentimenteel-innige wijze, waarop hij de pantoen zong. En dat warme geluid van die verliefde mannenstem scheen te behoren bij het klaarverlichte landschap, vormde een opera-scène met natuurlijke décors [...].'

¹³ Letter from Tilly Koenen to Constant van de Wall. Berlin, 9 September 1906. Van de Wall Archives, NMI.

great success in European capitals, as well as in a number of American cities. Having attended one of her recitals, Queen Wilhelmina asked her to perform the *Malay Songs* as part of the programme for a *soirée musicale* at court in the Hague, as well as at the court of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

Years afterwards, the songs would still shine in Koenen's repertoire. On 19 October 1931 she reports from London about her concert in Wigmore Hall, four days earlier, to Maria van de Wall:

Just have to tell you and your husband that I have had an enormous success with the Malay songs in my most recent recital over here. I was so happy to be able to let people hear them once again. The Mohammedan Prayer went very beautifully, indeed it is a splendid composition, I have always had a special affection for this song. Enclosed I am sending you the programme with texts, it may interest you how neatly everything has been translated into English, so that everybody could easily follow the meaning of the song.¹⁴

The Dutch press extolled these unsophisticated songs to the skies. A little promotion volume accompanying the third impression cites a number of reviews in an occasionally florid prose, which definitely resounds with admiration of the exotic Indies.¹⁵ *De Vlaamse Gazet* writes: 'In our arts, the Indies are slowly but surely taking up more space. Only the day before yesterday I heard five Malay songs; Beautiful! Delightful! Those Malay songs! They breathe forth an enchantment similar to that of an oriental flower, an orchid in the quite unfamiliar golden light of the divine Indies'. And *De Avondpost*: 'The soft melodious sounds of the eastern language appear to lend themselves eminently to song. In addition, the melodies and the harmonic arrangement of these songs possess a truly original exotic tone, and this music radiates an extraordinary charm'.

The *Malay Songs* had a surprising march of victory in the United States, where from 1914 onwards they became part of a Javanese promotion tour undertaken by the French Canadian singer Eva Gauthier. She had lived on Java for a number of years, had made the acquaintance of Van de Wall as well as of the *Indisch* composer Paul Seelig, and had been fascinated by the indigenous music. Back in the New World, she intended to propagate 'Java' in song and dance. Thus, for instance, she performed in a vaudeville

¹⁴ Letter from Tilly Koenen to Constant and Maria van de Wall. London, 19 October 1931. Coll. H. Mak van Dijk.

¹⁵ The following press citations are mentioned in a volume promoting the *Malay Songs*, compiled by Constant van de Wall, probably dating from 1921. Van de Wall Archives, NMI.

show in which among other things she executed some songs by Van de Wall and Seelig, in an act named 'Songmotion'. She also included the *Malay Songs* in other programmes she called 'From Java to Jazz'.

In France, a highlight was the successful presentation of the songs, together with other *Indisch* work, in Hotel Negresco in Nice, already referred to. Van de Wall was announced as a Javanese composer, Maria Panthès played his pieces for piano, and Maria van de Wall sang the eight *Malay Songs*. The programme also included the dancer Mirah Srikandi, who was to perform *Indisch* dances from *Attima*. Who could that be? It was Maria van de Wall herself, dressed in traditional Javanese dancing costume, probably the first acquaintance of the city of Nice with Javanese dances.

Other female singers of renown included the songs in their programmes as well and they generally scored a triumph with them. By multiple requests, in the Thirties Van de Wall even made an instrumentation for a small orchestra, inserting brief preludes, interludes and postludes, which do not occur in the original version. They are now executed once more, for instance, at the *Pasar Malam* in The Hague, which recently devoted a lot of attention to *Indisch* classical music. In 2001, the Indonesian composer Sinta Wullur made contemporary adaptations of Van de Wall's *pantuns*, including them in the repertoire of her Duo Merpati (voice and piano).

Tropical Night, *Opus 13*, Shadow-play, *Opus 26* and A Wayang Legend,
Opus 28

Van de Wall's interest in Javanese art appeared from a series of informative and wittily written discussions of the Javanese Orchestra dating from 1919 and 1920 ('Out of six million Dutch people there must surely be six who care a little for Javanese music') (Van de Wall 1919a and 1919b), and on the Javanese shadow-plays, the *wayang*, in *Caecilia en het Muziekcollege* (Van de Wall 1920a, 1920b and 1920c). These publications certainly reinforced his reputation as an *Indisch* composer. The stories about *wayang* had a musical counterpart in his compositions *Tropical Night*, opus 13 (1919), *Shadow-play*, opus 26 (1918) for voice and piano, and the *Wayang Legend*, opus 28, for string orchestra (1917). The Dutch song texts are by Van de Wall himself.

Shadow-play (subtitled: *In popular tone; Javanese*) gives musical expression to an episode from the *Mahabharata* epos, and relates the adventures of the Javanese hero Arjuna who combats the wicked Raksasa (giant). The song opens in *pelog* tone with a piano accompaniment representing the sounds of a gamelan. The text opens as follows:

The sun has plunged away in flames.
 The evening spreads its darkness round the silent grey desa
 And there it brings sweet scent of distant, ancient times...
 The Dalang [story-teller] speaks with singing voice, proudly moved;
 The people squat and watch and listen:
 Arjuna, Çiva's chosen one, combats Raksasa, Titan, enemy of Indra's realm.¹⁶

In the song *Tropical Night* the young princess Angreni, a character from Javanese mythology, dances 'stately as a lotus flower', a traditional dance. The song is written in long pentatonic lines, supported by the piano with a mostly pentatonic accompaniment; bass tones imitate Javanese gongs, and in the interludes the piano imitates a gamelan orchestra. The singer sings: 'The deep note of a gong breaks through the silence of the dark night. Tones of the kenong follow in a compact row of pearls, and soon resounds, in thousand beauties, a full orchestra in tender pomp of sounds [...].'¹⁷

A *Wayang Legend* for string orchestra was given the subtitle 'Arjuna's wedding feast'. The story is derived from the Minta-Raga legend. The information explaining the title reads: 'Arjuna – the noblest figure from Javanese mythology – has been elected by the gods to save Indra's Realm which is threatened by destruction from a powerful enemy. Arjuna succeeds and is rewarded with a kingdom and the most beautiful nymph (*widadari*), as his bride'.¹⁸ This work was first performed in The Hague on 8 March 1917, played by the Euterpe string orchestra. After Van de Wall's death, the work still continued to feature in concert programmes in The Hague. Director Dirk Balfoort performed the piece on several occasions with the Museum Chamber Orchestra in Zaal Diligentia, for the first time in December 1949, and lastly in December 1961.

The abovementioned songs have been given a new lease of life: in the Netherlands by Dutch soprano Renate Arends and Javanese baritone Joss Wibisono in song recitals with *Indisch* music,¹⁹ and in Indonesia by the

¹⁶ The original Dutch text: 'De zon is vlammend weggedoken. / De avond spreidt zijn duisternis om de stille grijze desa / En brengt er zoete geur van verre, oude tijden... / De Dalang spreekt met zangstem, fier bewogen / De menschen hurken neer / En zien, en luist'ren: / Ardjoena, Çiwa's uitverkoorn', / Bekampt Raksasa, den Titaan, / Die vijand is van Indra's rijk.

¹⁷ The original Dutch text: 'Daar breekt een diepe gongtoon de stilte van de donkere nacht. Kenongtonen volgen in dichte paardenrei en dra klinkt, duizendschoon, een vol orkest in tedere klankenpracht...'

¹⁸ The original Dutch text: 'Ardjoena – de edelste figuur uit de Javaanse mythologie – is door de goden uitverkoren om het Rijk van Indra te redden, dat een overmachtige vijand dreigt te vernietigen'.

¹⁹ See the CD *Angin timur gelumbang barat; Indische klassieke liederen* (Arends and Mak van Dijk 2006).

youthful Jakarta-born singer Bernadeta Astari, who on her tour of Java in 2008 included *Tropical Night* in her repertoire.

Deuxième Rhapsodie Javanaise, *Opus 51*

Opus 51 for solo piano, from 1930, is the last composition coloured by Java, and it shows a complex design: in it we can hear romantic harmonies and impressionistic sounds as well as the atmosphere of the gamelan. The fifths and fourths in the overture, imitating the grand sound of gongs, and the pentatonic scales suggesting *slendro* and *pelog*, are clearly recognizable. It also includes passages reminiscent of Debussy by their use of the whole-tone scale. The slow movements sound like gamelan music because of a melody in *pelog* in the middle register with swift figurations in the descant.

The piece seems to have been written in reaction to a polemic between Van de Wall and the authoritative Dutch composer Sem Dresden who, in 1928, had expressed forceful criticism of his work. The controversy originated in some denigrating reflections Dresden made in the third edition of his *Ontwikkelingsgang der muziek van de oudheid tot onze tijd* (The growth and development of music from antiquity to the present day, 1928 [1923]), regarding the quality of the work by Dutch composers in the Dutch East Indies. Van de Wall had felt himself to be uncommonly unappreciated, because ever since February 1925 he had exerted himself by means of correspondence to have his name included in this survey. In the first two editions *Indisch* music was not even mentioned at all.

A heated debate ensued, whereby Van de Wall referred to his knowledge of the country and its people as well as to his familiarity with Javanese music. This baggage, together with the romantic idiom, could definitely result in a fine ‘European-Javanese’ composition, whereas most modern harmonies were less appropriate to this end, Van de Wall argued. Dresden, adept in modern French music, failed to be impressed: in his opinion, the composer lacked true knowledge of Javanese music and, even worse, made use of an old-fashioned type of harmony, which did not do justice to oriental music. In short: Debussy could do it, but Van de Wall could not.

The latter replied by admitting that he did indeed belong to the old romantic school. However, at one time he too had been modern, namely by incorporating gamelan music into his own style, in which few others had followed him. Moreover, the new harmonics of the ‘Young French school’ he thought to be more suitable for a generally exotic composition

than for a specifically 'European-Javanese' piece of music. He also pointed out that he had written his *Indisch* oeuvre between 1904 and 1921, that is to say, some ten to twenty years before. Was it not curious to blame a composer that his work of a quarter of a century ago was not modern enough? Altogether, Van de Wall questioned Dresden's affinity with gamelan music as well as his expertise in judging European-Javanese pieces.

Dresden concluded the polemic with a venomous response. His commentary on the value of Van de Wall's music seems to reflect great anger about the fact that his experience and expertise had been put in doubt: 'Really, your music is not ultimately insignificant as it may or may not be congenial to the eastern psyche. By itself and apart from any poetic considerations it is, page by page, *greatly below the normal level* (...) You speak a musical jargon which is no longer understood in the modern world' (Dresden 1928: 478). Thus the debate came to an end.

It is not known whether or not Van de Wall responded to this, but from a letter by Carel Oberstadt in October 1928 it is clear that he had put the aforesaid discussion before his musical friend. The latter answered:

If originality is a hallmark of value, your compositions are already approved for that reason alone. For at a distance of ten paces I could already tell from the notes that the music was yours. Equally so from hearing them. Actually, as a composer you are a most remarkable phenomenon. On one hand you are very modern, even though it might not seem so at first. But you just move more diatonically than those later ones who rather seem to find their special enjoyment in sharp harmonies, and that is why on the other hand yours show a touch of moderation.

Possibly, the second Javanese rhapsody from 1930 – a piece in which romantic, impressionistic and Javanese idiom contend for the mastery – was an artistic reply to Dresden's critique and a satisfaction to Van de Wall.

Attima in The Hague

Particularly successful was the performance of the music drama *Attima, Episode from the Life of the Javanese People*, which Van de Wall had originally composed as a long one-act piece in the years between 1903 and 1910, but which he later expanded into three acts. Because of the occurrence of a complete gamelan performance in the first act, *Attima* is the first and only Dutch opera prior to 1945 to use gamelan motifs and to include Javanese dances.

Various companies were interested in putting this work on stage. The first to come forward was Cornelie van Zanten, who led a singing academy in The Hague and under whom Maria van de Wall had actually studied. Presumably it was the high cost of production that caused her to abandon the idea after all. Subsequently, both the French and the Dutch Operas showed interest. Eventually, *Attima* was performed by the Théâtre de l'Opéra Royal Français de la Haye, directed by Leopold Roosen. The composer himself had made the Dutch libretto, but the opera was presented in a French translation by the Belgian Léon Paschal. The first night of *Attima* was in the Royal Theatre in The Hague on 8 January 1917, followed by four more performances. Arrangements were made for performances in the new season, but in the next year the French Opera was dissolved.

The story is that of a young girl, Attima, lead dancer in the gamelan troupe of Prawiro. She has promised to marry the Javanese Kartono, who plays the *rebab* in the orchestra. When the troupe dances and plays at a party at the Regent's palace, she meets the white, fair-haired Armand, a non-commissioned officer in the Royal Dutch *Indisch* Army, with whom she falls in love. Three days later they arrange to meet in the market place. Her rival, the dancer Aïssa, who actually desires to have Kartono to herself, hears about this affair, seizes the opportunity and informs him. In a fit of rage, Kartono kills both Armand and Attima.

Image 7.4 Scene from *Attima* (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

What makes this opera, which is written in a romantic style, so special, is the imitation, in the first act, of a gamelan performance with song and dance. The gamelan, made of papier-maché and imitated by Western instruments, plays the *Gamelan Prelude*, during which one of the dancers, Raden Mas Jodjana, a Javanese who was studying in The Hague at the time (see also the chapter by Matthew Cohen in this volume), performs a solo dance. Attima sings her sorrowful aria *The Little Golden Butterfly* and in three dances she impersonates characters from Javanese mythology: *Bingah* (Dance of Joy), *Bojong* (The Elopement) and *Bekso penganten* (The Bridal Dance). Although the titles suggest otherwise, these dances were written in a style that most resembles that of Grieg's music. In order to avoid monotony, Van de Wall had chosen to contrast the gamelan-inspired Prelude with romantic sounds.

Cohabitation

The opera's theme was the (im)possibility of a relationship between white and brown, at the time a common type of relationship in the Indies, called cohabitation or 'concubinage', in which a native woman had a shorter or longer relationship with a white man. She would become his *njai* (literally 'sister'), his *Indisch* housekeeper/companion/lover. Such relationships had increased enormously in number as more and more single male Europeans arrived. In particular after 1870, cohabitation – 'he lives with his housekeeper' – had become a common option in all social layers of the colony's European community, much more free and attractive than marriage with a native woman, which was full of obligations, irksome, and experienced as problematic. It has been estimated that more than half, i.e. some 20,000 to 25,000, of the (Indo-)European men in the colony cohabited with a native concubine, and this was a common phenomenon, which was accepted by many (Baay 2008: 35–37, 62–64).

These *njais* were not only to be found in civilian society, but also on the plantations and in the barracks of the *Indisch* army. The children from such relationships were sometimes called pre-marital. Whether or not they were legitimized remained to be seen. If that was not the case, they would disappear into the *kampongs* often under needy conditions. Christian morality disapproved most strongly of cohabitation and emphasized official solemnization of Christian marriage. With this story, which of course had been written before 1904, Van de Wall not only broached a topical theme, but it also touched upon his personal history. After all,

there had once been such a native mother on his mother's side. Discussing such matters was generally held taboo, and people much preferred to keep silent about them.

Van de Wall did give the Javanese a voice of protest in his opera, for instance when the village elder sings to Attima: 'How can you do this, what affliction do you bring to us! All this about a strange man, utterly hostile to us. One of those men who once overcame our people in order to bend it to their will. By Allah! As a soldier, he will lodge you in barracks and suddenly dispose of you. Or else he will chase you away for another woman, or he will return to his own country'. And also: 'Never will he see his equal in you. Moreover, Attima, your child will be a bastard!' In her grand aria, Attima sings: 'Yes love warms me, yes love consumes me! Him I love, shining in his fairness, equal to a god'. Yet, she also expresses her uncertainty with regard to her lover Armand: 'you occidentals only care about the slender bodies of Javanese women'. And Kartono, the proud Javanese, is furious: 'a white mug instead of a real Javanese! A white dog!'

Appreciation of Attima

The press spoke of a deserved triumph and praised the melodious and original music, the intriguing drama, the excellent costumes and the picturesque scenery. A good impression can be obtained from the following review in the Hague daily *Het Vaderland*:

Yesterday Constant van de Wall saw his own opera – he modestly calls it *Episode from the Life of the Javanese People* – performed to a full house. It has definitely been a success and undoubtedly the opera, with its flowing music, its colourful oriental costuming, its painterly scenery and its very characteristic dances, will have many more performances. The way the orchestra sketched the gamelan was very artistic. The climax I consider to be the dances to gamelan music. These indeed breathed an extraordinary charm, which captivated the whole audience. The costumes were excellent in style, the scenery most picturesque (Van de Wall 1917b).

The Hague reviewer Louis Couturier (1917) added some critical words to his appreciation in *Het Muziekcollege*. The division into three acts he found to be disruptive – which naturally went at the expense of the arc of suspense – and the French opera singers' dances he considered but a meagre reflection of the real Javanese ones. This was all the more noticeable because of the authentic dancing skills of the Javanese dancer Jodjana, who had assisted with *Attima* by performing some dances himself. Moreover,

Couturier could not appreciate the often awkward and laboured Dutch text. Fortunately, the singing was in French, which according to this critic came across more 'readily' and hence more credible.

The composer himself provided some surprising little insights into the opera in the periodical *Caecilia*, at the same time revealing some of his private observations about 'the Javanese' (Van de Wall 1917b: 3–10). He concluded that the great gulf between East and West could hardly be bridged, in particular as regards the musical dramatization of Javanese scenes. The rift between the refined Javanese manners, which Westerners sometimes regard as incomprehensible and inexpressive, and the Western expression of emotion, would constitute a major obstacle. No matter how great the emotion a Javanese experienced, there would always be an apparent peace of mind, self-command and suppression of the passions. He also mentions the simplicity of the Javanese psyche. Kartono was unable to analyse the situation he found himself in and could only fly into a blind fury. That is why Van de Wall thought his opera was psychologically less complex than, for instance, Bizet's *Carmen*.

He continued his discussion by explaining, to some extent, the instruments placed on the stage. Although the audience thought it was a real gamelan, it was an imitation made of papier-maché, zinc and other materials, which the scene-painter of the French Opera had ingeniously put together. Once again, he emphatically pointed out that the reason he had not wanted a real gamelan to be played was that it would not show to full advantage in a closed space. On stage, the actors might make believe, but he thought that the music ought to be treated in a Western manner and had to be performed by a Western orchestra.

Attima in Batavia

On 8 December 1922, another performance of *Attima* took place, in the Municipal Theatre of Weltevreden in Batavia, this time by an amateur company led by Constant, and with Maria, aged 41 by now, in the lead as Attima. Once again, the couple worked with an accomplished Javanese dancer, Raden Kodrat, whose dancing guaranteed authenticity. Its success was even greater than had been the case in The Hague: the press reported lengthy acclamations, taking the form of an ovation – after every single act – and an enormous floral tribute. The composer was pulled onto the stage and received a glowing homage. The governor-general and his retinue were present at the performance as well. After the first act, Constant

Image 7.5 Raden Kodrat, in *Attima*, 1922 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

was summoned by the governor, who conversed with him at some length, complimenting him upon his work.

Maria received favourable reviews as *Attima*; her 'pithy' stage-figure was praised and she was complimented upon her excellent costume, make-up, carriage and her fine, well-schooled, if not powerful, soprano voice. At the same time, the press pointed out the danger of executing a Javanese opera on Java: what in the West possessed the charm of the strange and the exotic lost power to a 'home' audience. The *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* (9 December 1922) mildly waived possible objections, but all the same it did mention the improbability of a romance between a *ronggeng* (dancing girl) and a military man, as well as mistakes in costume and the actors' un-Javanese behaviour. Working with dilettanti also remained problematic: although the performance of an opera by amateurs was called 'a risky enterprise' and 'an extraordinary achievement', the orchestral music turned out to be too loud for the voices of most singers, and the acting was often less than satisfactory.

Image 7.6 Front page music drama Attima (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

Attima in Later Days

Attima would also be discussed in appreciative terms somewhat later, in a biographical sketch of the composer by the musical publicist Wouter Paap in 1962. He thought it was composed with fantasy and professional skill, and in particular that the gamelan performance was an attractive and charming part of the opera, with ‘for those days a quite acceptable compromise between the eastern and the western musical elements’. Paap even extols Constant van de Wall as one of the few Dutch composers from that era with a pronounced talent for opera. *Attima* sometimes reminds him of Puccini, and he remarks that *Madama Butterfly* had been written only shortly before, in 1904 (Paap 1962: 76–80).

In May 2008, the opera was executed once again, with great acclaim and in the presence of a large audience, in the Royal Theatre in The Hague, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Pasar Malam Besar* in the city. This was a community project in which both professionals and amateurs participated. The stage-management emphasized the here and now, including all kinds of foreign tourists in the market scene, and put the accent on emancipation and the individual choice of the woman. *Attima* is forced into a marriage, but against the prevailing tradition she makes her own choice in favour of her love. The murder can be interpreted as revenge for the sake of honour, which is now a topical theme in the Netherlands.

A debate arose between critics about the quality of *Attima*: was it *couleur locale* on behalf of the *Pasar*, or an unjustly forgotten opera, deserving of inclusion in the repertoire again? Reviews, for instance, spoke of ‘a rare example of a Dutch romantic opera and a missing link in the history of Dutch music’. Also of the ‘heartrending verismo’, of ‘emotional and imposing music drama’, of ‘two cultures in conflict’, and ‘*Attima* demands a follow-up’.²⁰ The renowned opera periodical *Orpheus* devoted a sizeable article to Van de Wall’s ‘*vergessene Oper*’ (forgotten opera), thereby giving international publicity to *Attima* (Clarke and Mak van Dijk 2010: 11–13). It is not illusory that one of the many opera companies in Europe will perform this work once again. In any case, we may conclude with

²⁰ *Attima* reviews: Mark Duijnste, ‘Hartverscheurend verismo in *Attima*’ (about verismo and ‘a missing link in the history of Dutch music’), *Opera Nederland*, 30 mei 2008; Paul Korenhof, ‘Mix van authenticiteit en eigentijds’ (about ‘emotional and imposing music drama’), www.opusklassiek.nl, 30 mei 2008; Winand van der Kamp, ‘In opera *Attima* botsen twee culturen’ (about ‘two cultures in conflict’), *Algemeen Dagblad*, 22 mei 2008; Aad van der Ven, ‘*Attima* vraagt om een vervolg’ (‘*Attima* needs a follow-up’), *Den Haag Centraal Cultuur*, 30 mei 2008.

Image 7.7 *Attima*, The Hague, Royal Theatre, 2008 (collection: Henk Mak van Dijk).

certainly that *Attima* is the first Western opera to include Javanese dance and music, and in that respect it is unique. A prominent place in the international exotic canon seems justifiable.

Conclusion

Constant van de Wall was pre-eminently a composer who allowed himself to be enchanted by the exotic East and especially by Java. Various characteristics of oriental musical style are to be found in his music: the free form of the rhapsody, pentatonic scales, specific intervals such as the fourth and the fifth, octave runs, melodies of limited range, appoggiature in semitones, ground bass, the use of Malay and Arabic, the imitation of gamelan instruments, specific instrumentation and repetitions in order to suggest oriental monotony. This is why he became known as a composer of works with an oriental signature. Malay *pantuns* were heard for the first time in a concert hall, compositions like *Mohammedan Prayer* and *Arabian Song of Death* were unusual and original, and his opera *Attima*, which included a gamelan performance, could be admired in the theatre. Personally, he would refer to his *Indisch* music and his way of composing as the oriental element in his musical artistry. He knew the Indies: he had been born on Java, had spent his youth there, and in Surabaya and Batavia

he had had every opportunity to listen to indigenous music. The reason he gave for his specific manner of composing was that 'Java' ran in his blood, so that his music meant more than the usual fantasies of colleagues.

Yet, it is unlikely that Van de Wall made a thorough investigation of the Javanese gamelan. He may have regularly heard the gamelan in his boyhood, in particular in Semarang. In addition, he will have visited the Kampong Insulinde in The Hague, possibly Paris, or occasionally the princely courts of Yogyakarta and Solo, where he may have become familiar with Javanese court music. For sections of *Attima* he certainly made an effort to fathom gamelan music. Its *Gamelan Prelude* is a fine orchestration of the gamelan, suggesting *pelog*, and an early, original example of exotic music in the Netherlands. Informative as they are, his publications about the Javanese orchestra and shadow-play (*wayang*) appear to be no more than general introductions about Javanese gamelan and the art of dancing. Nevertheless, their musical counterpart, the songs *Tropical Night* and *Shadow-show*, are singular because of their rare musical expression of Javanese dance and *wayang*.

The Javanese element in his music plays a subordinate role because he was convinced of the rightness of western civilization and of the superiority of West European music. 'Where Javanese and European music associate, the western notion of composing will have to stand out strongly', Van de Wall (1928) stated. There is an obvious parallel with the concept in contemporary colonial politics of associative partnership, which meant that the Netherlands and Java were insolubly connected: Holland, superior and modern, dominates an indigent and primitive Java, which, however, can raise itself to independence under a just and strong leadership. A critical note by Van de Wall is found in just a single song, which is not, however, set on Java. This is *The Suez Coal-heavers*, which has a tinge of socialism in its text about the burdensome existence of coal-heavers in the harbour. In his music drama *Attima* he also ventured to raise a topical social theme, that of cohabitation. Other compositions rather indicate an exotic picture of the Indies: 'The beautiful Indies'. His in 1914 written piano pieces *Reminiscences of Java*, for instance, touch upon life in the *desa* (the village), pounding rice, weaving sarongs and the like. In other works, mention is made of sultry tropical nights through which the gamelan sounds mournfully, temples rising up in sound, Javanese *wayang* heroes, refined and gracious female dancers, sultans' daughters, and snake-charming fakirs. They refer to an exotic image of Java, which was then generally current: the island with its beautiful nature, its age-old civilization, and the refined culture of its court. It is quite possible that during his stay in the Netherlands Van de Wall saw the Indies more and more as his land

of dreams and as the paradise where he had spent his youth. After all, he lived in Holland from his eleventh until his thirty-sixth year. Only after his return from Surabaya did he start once more to compose in the *Indisch* style and was he able to profit from the popularity of *Indisch* culture in a city like The Hague in promoting his work. If there was not yet any interest in *Attima* in The Hague in 1904, in 1917 the cultural climate did favour its performance.

It is remarkable that whereas in the Indies he profiled himself as director and teacher of European classical music, and hardly composed at all, in Europe he distinguished himself as an *Indisch* composer. Here, his European-Javanese work was of course found to be singular and exotic, whereas in the Indies it was probably regarded as having a familiar colonial style. In The Hague, the market scene and the Javanese dances in *Attima* were definitely exotic to the audience; in Batavia, on the other hand, the spectators, used to colourful *pasars*, perceived nothing special in this scene from the first act and perhaps not even in the gamelan performance. The *Malay songs*, for instance, sounded familiar to colonial ears, and a comparison with *kroncong* was quickly made. In Europe they were perceived as surprisingly different, just because of the use of the Malay language. As was the case with other popular music (think of the tango), *kroncong* music was revalued: through Van de Wall's *Malay songs*, street music, which was popular with Indo-Europeans and had a bad name in the Indies, was performed in the Netherlands by a famous concert singer as art music, and was to be heard in all the big cities of Europe and at the courts of Queen Wilhelmina and her consort Prince Hendrik.

How different perceptions can be may appear from the following example. A Dutch singer may now wish to acquire the *Malay songs* because she wants to sing something original and exotic; an Indonesian singer because of the *pantuns* in her own language and the arrangements 'from Holland'; and the Indo-European because they remind her of *kroncong* and *tempo dulu*. An Indonesian audience would find the 'white' singer interesting because she is trying to sing in Malay; a Western audience embraces the Indonesian singer because of her authenticity and because she hails from the very country in question. I work with a male singer who lives in The Netherlands but was born on Java. Here, he is an exotic curiosity as a 'classically schooled singing Javanese', especially when he is in Javanese costume including batik.

Looking back on Van de Wall's music in 2010, what is particularly significant is its trail-blazing character, its originality and its (rare) European-Javanese idiom. Of course, the latter is an advantage to Indonesian

listeners, and the youngest generation of Indonesian musical students derive their identity from it. In fact, this is European music in which at last Indonesia plays a role, however small. There are instances of Indonesian musicians who want to perform this music in their recitals. Thus, for example, piano pieces and songs by Van de Wall have already been performed on Java, and in London the *Trois danses javanaises* (Three Javanese dances) by Paul Seelig. And in the Yogyakarta town hall, where in 2007 I was able to present my book *De oostenwind waait naar het westen* (The east wind blows west), the Javanese were surprised and proud that the Javanese element had already figured in European classical music so early in the twentieth century, and that it had been heard all over the world.

Similarly, Van de Wall's *Indisch* music has served by way of example to the Indo-European community which, by mouth of its leading man Tjalie Robinson, came to be aware of this composer's Indo-European roots. As early as 1955, Robinson had had plans to write Van de Wall's biography and to make him an example to his yet to be founded Art Club. From the Nineties onwards, Tjalie's relatives, meanwhile involved with the *Pasar Malam Besar* in The Hague, started to concern themselves with his life and works. Classical musicians were invited to play on their platforms during the cultural Tong Tong festival (part of the *Pasar* in The Hague), and on the occasion of their fiftieth anniversary *Attima* was performed anew in the Hague Royal Theatre. Last but not least: there is a Dutch public that considers itself often connected to the Indies and to Indonesia, and which generally lends *Indisch* classical music a willing ear.

To conclude: in an era in which many Europeans in the Netherlands and in the colony hardly appreciated gamelan, European scholars readily dismissed *kroncong* as being hybrid and inferior, and 'pure' European music was regarded as superior, Constant van de Wall (1928) ventured – with an appeal to his Indo-European roots ('the exotic runs in my blood') – as one of the first to introduce the *Indisch*-oriental element into his western compositions. Countless compositions concretely reflect his (musical) experiences in the Dutch East Indies, and testify to originality, professional skill and a love for the country.

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Archives

The Van de Wall Archives can be found in the Nederlands Muziek Instituut (NMI, National Music Institute), The Hague (www.nederlandsmuziekinstituut.nl).

Discography

Music from Constant van de Wall can be heard on two CDs:

- Arends, Renate (zang) and Henk Mak van Dijk (piano). *Angin timur gelumbang barat: Indische klassieke liederen* (The east wind blows west: Indisch classical songs), for voice and piano. The Hague: NMI, 2006.
- Mak van Dijk, Henk (piano). *Herinneringen uit Java: Indische klassieke piano muziek (Reminiscences of Java)*, for piano solo. Veenendaal: Dutch Record Company (DRC), 2009.