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Layne Redmond's Legacy: Digital Handprints of Female Frame Drummers

Karin BINDU*

Abstract

Layne Redmond, a devoted female master drummer, dedicated her life to research about the history and mythology of frame drums in relation to the female spiritual power until her death in 2013. By collecting images, which show statues, carvings, and paintings of drumming women in museums, books and historical sites in Southern Europe and the Middle East, she reconstructed the history of drumming women. Beside various activities for the welfare of their communities, their roles had been related to the devotion of the great mother goddess as symbol of life, as source of nature, transcendence, knowledge, and procreation. Thousands of years women had acted as priestesses, prophetesses and agents of communication between humans and spiritual forces. Around the 3rd century A.D., the Great Mother, worshipped as Kybele in Phrygia, Greece, and Italy, lost her spiritual power. Christianity and male dominated social systems moved towards oppressing female powers including ritual drumming. Among other functional changes the drums have been misused for male activities in the context of war.

Inspired by the ancient history Layne Redmond created her own circles of drumming women ("the mob of

* Dr., Percussionist and cultural and socialanthropologist

angels”), who re-enacted the power of female drumming in the context of new specific public and private rituals. As master drummer and creator of a revitalized female consciousness she remained an idol for many people following her path. Some of her followers founded digital communities to share and promote their experiences. The Facebook groups “Layne Redmond’s Global Friends and fans”, and “When the Drummers Are Women” are among those.

Within these groups I undertook a first attempt to expose categories of contemporary female frame drummer’s intentions based on Redmond’s book “When the Drummers Are Women” and on my own experiences as a female drummer.

Are female drummers basically focused on music, on healing methods, empowerment of women, on spiritual concepts or on other aspects of drumming? What kind of identity could they create in society? Which role models are they creating and representing for future generations? Considering various dilemmas of digital ethnography described by Magdalena Góralaska (2020) and Deborah Lupton (2020), this will nevertheless be one of the first glimpses into my new research project about drumming women. Methodically I combined Art Based Research, Qualitative Social Research, Digital Ethnography and Ethnomusicology. Digital Ethnography is introduced here in historical and methodological perspective including recommended instructions for digital field research.

Keywords: Frame Drums, female empowerment, percussion, Ethnomusicology, digital research, Art based Research, gender, female drummers

Introduction

Frame drums came into my life quite late – I am teaching and playing them for ten years beside other percussion instruments (Djembe, Congas), which I am teaching for more than 20 years. At the time, when Layne Redmond’s book (1999) got popular, my focus had been directed to practise South Indian drums as well as Djembe and Conga drums complementary to my research focus on Shamanism, Trance, and healing as Social and Cultural Anthropologist. I had started to create female music and performance groups in 1996

for the empowerment of female drummers in opposition to male dominated music making spheres. At that period, many women loved to attend West African Djembe drumming workshops, but only few of them were ready to go on stage. So, we felt a bit revolutionary about our music and performance activity as female music group based on drumming. Beside empowerment we felt magic, divine, healing, and mythic vibrations in our play, as if we would have woken up hidden parts of spiritual consciousness.

Besides, I was always fascinated by the relation of drumming with gods and goddesses, and possessed by the complexity of Indian rhythms – that is why I decided to research in South India about *Tālas* (metric cycles) in the *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*, an ancient Sanskrit Drama Performing Art. Those field trips to Kerala between 2004 and 2012 (Bindu, 2013) have shown me, that drumming traditions in spiritual performances were still common and taught in traditional and modern Indian institutions. I was initiated as pupil of K. Eswaranunni to study the main percussion Instrument in the *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* – the copper drum *miḷāvu*. Ritual drumming has been documented in many other parts of the non-European world. Only in Europe sacred drumming traditions seemed to be extinguished except in profane folklore and contemporary music styles. Many of the reasons about this extinction happened already hundreds of years ago, as Layne Redmond (1999:210-212, 248) explained.

In her legendary book “When The Drummers Were Women,” she described the history of forgotten and hidden aspects of women’s spiritual heritage (1999:12). Having been a frame drummer herself she dedicated her life to frame drums. She followed traces of their ritual use, visible as drawings in caves of ancient Europe and numerous statues of women with frame drums in the middle east, up to the mystery cults of the Roman empire. Her research showed parallels between the ban of the drum in religious life and the loss of power for women in the west and middle east. Christianity and male dominated social systems oppressed female powers including ritual drumming. The drums were taken over by men and misused in the context of war. Pagan rites were forbidden by emperor Theodosius in 392 A.D., the use of the tamburin in the 6th century by the Pope Johannes III. The inquisition of the middle age in the 13th century destroyed many old traditions, millions of people got killed for the victory of Christianity (Redmond 1999:206).

Layne Redmond was teaching and performing with frame drums until her death in 2013. She explained the excitement of the audience and her pupils caused by drumming and listening to the drums by the fact, that framed drums satisfied the cultural need for the recovery of our rhythmic connection with nature and with each other. With her group called “The Mob of Angels” she created new rituals and re-enacted old traditions for women’s ceremonies from the middle east. Far away from copying them, her aim was to create

a modern kind of non-traditional music in the rhythmic pulse of an archaic language, and to free female energies by music and consciousness about the presence of the eternal divine feminine (Redmond 1999:241-242).

In one of her interviews (Goldenseedmusic, 2012) she talked about her fascination of playing drums since her youth. Her career as a drummer started later after she had met the great frame drummer Glen Velez, who became her teacher and colleague. Glen Velez had collected more than 200 slides from frame drummers of the ancient worlds. From 5600 B.C. until 400 A.D., statues and mural carvings have been found. They most notably showed female frame drummers including well known goddesses such as Hathor from Egypt and Kybele from Anatolia. Additionally, the frame drum turned out to be universally used in all cultures of the world until today. It represents a kind of archetype among the drums of the world. While the frame drums of healing Shamans were and still are played with a stick, the frame drums for goddesses were played by hand. According to Layne Redmond (1999:34) their purpose was similar: they both served as technique to connect with nature, other beings and to change mental consciousness.

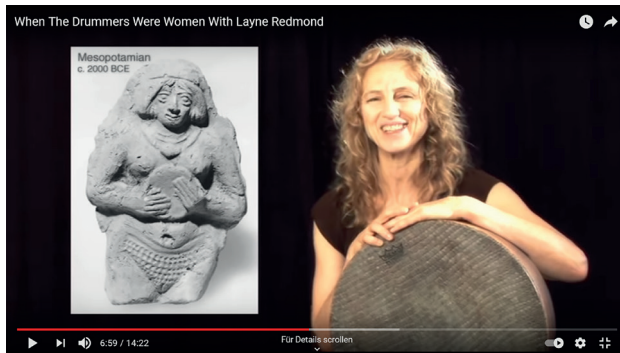


Photo 1: Layne Redmond, YouTube Interview in Goldenseed 2012, Screenshot 2021

Research About Female Drummers

In her book Layne Redmond (1999:13) pointed out, that the revival of the drum and female drumming in our modern world has rarely been a topic among sciences. Few references to her book are found in Lucia Mennel's work about Fe/male drums in Havanna (Cuba). She mentioned, how the frame drum was introduced by Layne Redmond as attribute of the goddess Kybele, as instrument of the earth goddess Rhea und later as Instrument of the Dionysos's Satyres (Mennel 2005:14). Mennel also referred to the work of Fernando Ortiz,¹ who stated, that even in modern times hand drums such as Panderetas and Small Percussion Instruments in South European Areas still

¹ Ortiz, F. (1991). *Estudios etnopsicológicos*. La Habana: Editorial de ciencias sociales

were primarily in women's hands. All other insights of Mennel's research were dedicated to female aspects of drums and drumming in Afro-Cuban rituals, where initiated drummers for the deities only could be male according to the temporary "impurity of menstruating women."

Paz (2007) undertook a study considering gender-related contexts of drumming in Iron Age II in Israel (1000-586 B.C.) based on archaeological, ethnographic, iconographic, historiographic, archaeomusicological and biblical data. Fertility cults as well as the accompaniment of "victory songs" had been related to drumming by females, while the drummers of the Canaanite Orchestra had been exclusively males. Gender roles and their activities influenced archaeological material findings. Paz described reciprocal influences: "Certain objects reflect gender ideology and are influenced by it, while influencing it in return, and contributing to the formation of gender identification." (Paz 2007:6).

According to Paz, numerous studies on material culture and gender in archaeological perspective have been done since the 1990s, others focused on figurines and gender in different cultures, such as Elizabeth Brumfiel's work on Aztec figurines in 1996.

Drum-related artefacts from Eretz-Israel and ceramic figures, as well as other findings connected to music were described and analysed by the author in great detail concerning context, dates, manufacture of figurines, and regional distribution. The only material, which has not been found in Israel was a drum itself. That is why she integrated descriptions of drums from studies in other cultural areas into her research. The Old Testament was used as written source, other sources were writings from Mesopotamia and Egypt (Paz, 2007:7-8). The following quote describes names and times of origin of the frame drum:

The word "drum" (top in Hebrew) occurs several times in the Old Testament. In each instance the context indicates the small hand drum. It is the only biblical word designating a membranophone, and it is related to the instrument's name in Sumerian (dup/tup), and in several Semitic languages: tuppū in Akkadian, tuppa in Aramaic, and duff in Arabic. The drum also appears by its biblical name (tp) in an Ugaritic text citing several instruments (Mitchell 1992: 132). The name also appears in Greek as typanon, later tympanon, and in Latin as tympanum (Meyers 1991: 21). The drum apparently originated in the 3rd millennium BCE in Mesopotamia, whence it spread to Egypt and other regions in the ancient Near East (Paz, 2007:11).

While Layne Redmond built numerous mythological and symbolical material around the images of goddesses and drumming women, as found on the slides of Glen Velez and researched in museums, Paz categorized and described catalogues of archaeological material in all details. She found parallels in archaeological findings relating to drumming from the ancient Near East including artefacts, musical, instruments, wall paintings and figurines from Egypt, scenes painted on vessels and figurines from Cyprus, figurines from Phoenicia and Mesopotamia, seals, and stamps from Syria, among others. The female drummers' roles were not only linked to fertility rites in the domestic sphere, but also to public occasions, where they followed official orders. Apart from that they were means of resistance to uphold old traditions, threatened by extinction or replacement by new patriarch systems (Paz, 2007:125).

The diverse functions these figurines performed stress and perpetuate in clay the significance of drumming – the tension between the official and popular ideologies, and the resistance of the subject classes, especially of women, to the élite's attempt to impose upon them new ideas and regulations. The extensive use of the figurines in the household cult was a form of compensation for the loss of the goddesses on the public level, and the concentration of women on private observance answered their needs after have been excluded from the public cult (Paz, 2007: 126).

The expression of those daily tensions was central due to Paz' interpretations about women in Iron Age Israel.

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DRUMS, WOMEN, AND GODDESSES



Figure 3.2. Two pairs of identical figurines produced in the same mould, and discovered in different sites: 1. A.27 from Rehov (Hebrew University) and 2. A.2 from Beth Shean (IAA); 3. A.26 from Rehov (Hebrew University) and 4. A.45 from Tell el-Far'ah (N) (Chambon 1984: pl. 63: 2).

Photo 2: Identical figurines with frame drums, discovered in Israel (Paz 2007:58)

Other studies about drumming women in a profane context contain biographical surveys of famous female Jazz, Pop, Punk and Rock drummers on drum sets, who nowadays are gaining more and more presence and significance by their exposure in digital platforms. This would be another huge research topic to follow. Let's not break the mould of that article but jump right into the world of digital research methods, which influenced my research project presented in this article.

Digital Research

Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz (2014:4-5) placed the birth of the term “cyberculture” into the 1990s, derived from the notion of cyberspace taken from the novelist William Gibson in 1984. Since then, the term “cyberspace” or “virtual space” was used as synonym for the Internet itself. New kinds of social activities were discovered by first social studies in connection with the side effects of the medium such as virtuality, disembodiment, and disintegration, among others. The term “virtual community” was created in 1994 by Howard Rheingold based on his personal experiences by a long-term participation in virtual forums.

Virtual communities develop shared systems of norms, values, beliefs, and habits.

Cyberspace worked as a unifying ethnographic field site to describe all kinds of social life occurring on the Internet, aligning different artifacts, uses, and practises. The metaphor of cyberspace has also contributed to the idea of the Internet as a unified object of study with inherent characteristics and properties (Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, 2014:5).

The authors mentioned that ethnographic methods have been used since the early beginning of the Internet as a research strategy with reference to network relationships, social studies, moral orders, and conditions of media consumption, reception, and production. Ethnographic methods originate in the works of Bronislaw Malinowski.² Its way to observe by participation got adapted to Internet research and was categorized into terms like “Netnography,” “Digital Ethnography,” “Virtual Ethnography” among others. The Internet maintained a double function: it was regarded as field and object at the same time.

According to Christine Hine (2000)³ the Internet, as an object of study

² Malinowski, B. (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. London: Routledge & Sons

³ Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual ethnography*. London: Sage

for the social sciences, could be seen as cultural form or as a cultural practice. Digital cultural forms contain online values, norms, ways of behaviour, use of emoticons, among others. They are practised by virtual players, bloggers, webcam users and other people socializing into groups dominated by digital media. As a cultural practice the Internet represents a “cultural artifact”, as Hine pointed out. Practises such as video making for YouTube, sharing photos on digital services, and others, which are not only specifically attached to the Internet, but use online possibilities are counted as cultural practices.

Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz (2014:3) differentiate three methodological approaches for “Digital Ethnography:” Virtual Ethnography, having started in the 1990s, Connective Ethnographies (online/offline) until 2005, and Ethnographies of Internet in daily life (“Media Ethnography”) until today. In the first aera of studies about virtual communities, online communication was regarded as socially weak, virtual worlds were studied as “subcultures”. In the early 21st century peoples Internet activities were integrated in daily life, so ethnographic studies focused more on fieldwork “inside and also outside the screen”, using the term online/offline research. This period comprised the second approach (Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, 2014:7).

Due to a developing new media landscape, ways of production, consumption and circulation and advertisement changed a lot. It strongly effected relationships between audiences and production in the cultural sector. The audience was getting more productive, clear limits between the just mentioned spheres began to decline. The third approach called “Media Ethnography” provided “a methodological tool to understand people’s motivations and engagements with media. Moreover, media ethnography involves studying media practices beyond the parameters set down by theoretical assumptions of cultural production, based on the circulation of media products.” (Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, 2014:8-9).

Media practices may be understood as a wider set of practices most of them with, around, and through digital technologies relating to creative processes carried out by individuals, collectives, governments, transnational corporations, and other social agents with different goals and purposes (Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, 2014:9).

Postil & Pink (2012:124) suggested two main methods to treat social media as research site: web content analysis of large data sets and social network analysis. Whereas large data sets provide more statistical material, social network analysis refers to social media as social, flexible, and experimental fieldwork environment. The authors term “internet-related ethnography”

describes “ethnography that engages with internet practices and content directly, but not exclusively” (Postill & Pink, 2012:125). They also emphasize the fact, that the same media is used as subject and as research tool.

Postill and Pink (2012:128) described five routines as social media researcher: “catching up, sharing, exploring, interacting and archiving.” Postill primarily used Twitter as “human-mediated RSS feed” by following less than 120 Twitter users and their “retweets” as filtered updates from others over the researched topic. The authors emphasized the sharing skills of the researcher, which will increase the chance to get content shared by “adding value to a shared link”.

Social media ethnography therefore does not mean doing fieldwork in or about one particular social media platform – such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube. While the latter is possible, it is complicated by the fact that most internet users constantly criss-cross a range of platforms through aggregators, search engines, hyperlinks and other devices. Moreover, the movement of the digital ethnographer involves traversing interrelated digital and copresent contexts (Postill and Pink, 2012:131).

Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz mentioned important requirements for digital fieldwork (2014:10-14,19) as follows:

- definition of the empirical research site
- being clear about the access to settings and research subjects
- consideration of ethical dilemmas
- topic of interest should be chosen before defining the field
- definition of modes of communications, locations
- carefully considered initial self-presentation to the research subjects
- following of subjects online/offline across different ethnographic contexts and settings
- participant observation and interviews
- development of researcher's technological skills (web design, online communication, instant messaging on mobile phones, use of emoticons, among others).
- digital media to generate data by using digital visual and sound recorders, computers, laptops for the documentation of field works, collection of data with the same devices.
- creation of a blog for personal exposure, social media profiles (Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, among others) linked to the blog
- online interviews using chats, messengers, email, video conference tools (Skype, Zoom), textual interviews, anonymous surveys

- methodology to create knowledge by being aware, that technological shifts influence theories.

After digital fieldwork digital Data must get analysed and described in an ethnographic way. For this process Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz (2014:15-16) suggested the use of field diaries, audio and video records, screen shots, social bookmarkings, Wikis and blogs used as fieldwork diaries. They advised to differentiate clearly between private notes (fieldnotes) and public notes (blogs, postings, websites) and to use qualitative Data software (ATLAS.ti, NVivo). The Ethnographic description should contain analyses, distinguish analytical categories of the theoretical framework from those coming from the field (etic and emic perspectives). Emic perspectives should be treated with respect, a collaborative aim should be added:

What is important to note is that, in any case, the people who participate in the ethnographic research not only are familiar with the ethnographer but also contribute to the configuration of the object of study and to the ethnographer's knowledge of the empirical situations. They are more than passive subjects of study, but active respondents and, somehow, coparticipants of the research process with the ethnographer (Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, 2014:17).

Postill and Pink (2012:129) additionally suggested cloud platforms and social media for archiving, such as Drop Box and Google Docs. They had collected bookmarks on the bookmarking site Delicious.com (now unavailable), tagged web content and attached keywords to bookmarked content. In comparison to classic forms of coding field notes, tagged material is characterized by its "public nature." The authors advised: "Social media fieldworkers must find a balance between tagging and diary keeping." (Postill and Pink, 2012:129).

New forms of coding led to the existence of the "hashtag sociality" due to the circumstance, that hashtags not only index conversations in Twitter, but also are used as mode of self-expression:

The hashtag can therefore be thought of as integral to the nature of Twitter as a social medium. As such, it produces the experience of being 'in the digital crowd'. Being a mobile social media ethnographer does not only involve following the (digital) action, but also getting caught up in it, being carried along the trail and becoming entangled with others as the ethnographers' tweets

become interlinked with those of others and they move forward together (Postill and Pink, 2012:131).

Górska Magdalena (2020:49-50) reminded us of ethical considerations during digital research, and provided further advice fitting for pandemic times:

- patience, lots of interviews online might get refused
- carefully reading of ethics for participant observation online
- handle the overwhelming by the shower of data material generated by online research and learn how to catalogue data in high numbers
- controll your own mental and physical health, specially during lockdown, take regular breaks
- check out healthy work-life balance, go offline
- set clear fieldwork boundaries – less is more
- add digital components to your offline fieldwork
- rethink research strategies (“go back to school”).

The author expressed her concerns about the development of ethnography during and after the global pandemic situation, in which the concept of physical field research represents the most affected aspect:

With every week that has passed by since the pandemic outbreak, ethnographers have been jumping back onto the fieldwork wagon, trying to put things back together or enquire into novel corona-related social and cultural phenomena. In both cases, due to the present circumstances, they are usually turning towards the only accessible way of collecting ethnographic material, which comprises the variety of digital technologies that make up the digital places we go to and the ways we communicate with others. One can only hope that the multiplicity of coronavirus/ lockdown/quarantine ethnographies will not turn out to be an overabundance of ad hoc interpretations (Górska Magdalena, 2020:50).

Another collection of methods and ideas for doing fieldwork in a pandemic situation was recently revised by Dora Lupton (2021). She emphasized, that not online approaches are documented in that crowd-sourced document, but also useful recommendations for situations, where digital access is not available for researchers and participants likewise. Her new YouTube webinar series “Breaking Methods” introduce numerous innovative research methods.

Layne Redmond’s digital followers

Based on the method of social network analyses (Postil & Pink, 2012:124), digital field research recommendations from Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, and qualitative content analyses (Mayring, 2007:59-63), I analysed two Facebook Groups in May 2021. Opposed to the complexities of digital research methods mentioned above, this study can only be regarded as “first glimpse” into a slowly growing research project of larger dimensions. I would not see myself as “digital native”, but I am using the Internet for 20 years, I am cultivating a Facebook profile for ten years and I set up my own homepage⁴ two years ago. As a member of both groups, I follow its postings whenever I find time to do so, and sometimes I am posting announcements for concerts with my female music groups.

The first group I want to introduce – „Layne Redmond’s Global Friends and fans” – is directly following Layne Redmond’s spirit in many ways. Consisting of 714 members (May 2021), the group’s description says: „This space is dedicated to Layne Redmond. Here friends, fans, students, and global hives can continue to meet, network, share memories, stories, photos, videos, inspirations.”⁵ My “catching up” (Postill and Pink, 2012:128) through a post about the planned article was not successful at all. At least one member was suggesting posting the article into the group once it will be finished. I had also asked in vain if somebody was ready for an online interview. Ethical concerns as described by Góralaska (2020) are another reason why my research glimpse stayed anonymously. Basically, I went through the short profile descriptions of 235 members, mostly female by scrolling down through the member profiles and selecting few members for a deeper insight. By generalization, reduction, paraphrasing and abstracting, I found nine basic categories of activities in connection with women’s frame drumming as described in Layne Redmond’s book: goddesses, mystery, healing, musicians, shamanism, drum circles, creativity, research, and shops. Each category is linked to aspects of the other categories, they are not regarded as enclosed topics.

Goddesses	Mystery	Healing	Musicians	Shamanism	Drum circles	Creativity	Research	Shops
5,9 %	14 %	22,12 %	31,48 %	2,13 %	11,49 %	4,68 %	4,68 %	2,55 %

Chart 1: Activity categories of 235 members of the FB group „Layne Redmond’s Global Friends and fans”

⁴ <https://www.rhythmuse.at>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/128228924183611/> retrieved July 2021

The first category “Goddesses” meant “drumming for Goddesses” is related to Layne Redmond’s descriptions about numerous goddesses, who had been praised by drumming. One of the last ones, who even was worshiped in Europe was the ancient mother goddess Kybele (10th century B.C.). Prophecies of oracle priestesses had been consulted by queens, kings, pharaohs, and common people before decisions were made. One of the most famous temples for Kybele was built in Ephesos, where pilgrims came to participate into festivals, such as the spring festival “Ephesia”. Rituals with ecstatic dances and frame drums for the deity were common. Music and dance served as medium for states of trance, in which prophecies were vocalized (Redmond 1999, 164-165). Within the Facebook group fourteen people among 235 offered workshops, rituals, seminars for the worship of Kybele and other female deities, including drumming.

According to Kremser (2001:265-266) rituals including music presume the existence of supernatural beings, who offer their “answers” to initiated people. Rituals symbolise and regulate the transfer of spiritual and material elements between the earth and supernatural spheres. As specialist for ethnological religion and consciousness research, Kremser saw parallels between new virtual realities and old spiritual worlds (2001:29). Research should try to correlate both spheres of consciousness with each other. Both are immaterial, platonic, magic, and ethereal. They are based on the principle of communication between the individual and “bearers of infinite knowledge.” Both relate back to earth, where humans, animals, stones, plants, and deities communicate, melt into each other, and separate to recreate in a permanent process (Kremser, 2001:23). Sound invokes supernatural entities and provokes the communication between present and past times, between earth and supernatural worlds. As synthesis, created by two kinds of elements (for example human and drum) sound forms a dynamic third element. That is one of the reasons, why the number “three” is associated with movement – the third element transforms the pendular movement, which only remains between two poles, into the infinite dimension and dynamics of space (Kremser, 2001:265).

In my analysis the second category “Mystery” describes offers (new) of rituals for self-discovery of female power. This category relates to Redmond’s descriptions, how she realized the effect of her drumming in the heart and consciousness of listening and participating women: some people used to have visions, others felt “coming home”, others felt connections to unknown old times, memories to their existence as babies in the womb of their mothers, among others. Redmond herself felt to get dragged down into the fire of the earth while playing and connected herself to the primal ground of female energy (Redmond 1999:238-240). With her female music and performance

group “The Mob of Angels” she revitalized and recreated drumming of old Mediterranean traditions for female ceremonies, hereby regaining control over the elements: drums strokes themselves relate to the elements of earth, fire, air, and water. 35 people among the analysed group members offered workshops and seminars to discover wisdom beyond mystery.

Most group members are represented in the categories “Healing” and “Musicians”. Offers for healing do not only refer to the healing of people, but to healing of the earth itself. Healing is offered in form of retreats in combination with dancing, drumming, and performing rituals, but also numerous ways of massage, music therapy, herbal treatments, essentials, and mental therapies are offered by those 52 members. 74 members use the platform to announce and advertise their drumming classes, concerts, performances. Although most of them relate to other categories as well, they focus on production of music and teaching. According to the pandemic situation offers for online classes increased in 2020, 2021. Besides, workshops in beautiful natural settings – on the beach, at historical places, in appealing decorated and balanced seminar houses – are advertised.

Only five people of “Layne Redmonds Global friends and fans” could be counted into the category “Shamanism”. Layne Redmond (1999:236) mentioned the meagre acknowledgement of Shamanism in western cultures, although the frame drum is used by Shamans worldwide as medium for mental healing journeys in extraordinary states of consciousness since prehistoric times. Since the growing significance of music therapy and scientific studies measuring the activity of brain waves, breath and heart beats, people have started again to believe into the healing and heart connecting capacities of drumming. These studies follow an intense period of research and publications about altered states of consciousness related to Shamanism as well as trance states in Afro-American religions.

Angelina Pollak-Eltz (1995:18) wrote about the use of rhythmic music, dance, fasting, hyperventilation, and hallucinogenic drugs for altered states of consciousness. In the 1970s numerous studies about these states in trance and incorporations during religious settings of Afro American religions, led by Erika Bourguignon,⁶ have been undertaken in Ohio.

The next category “Drum circles” comprises offers for community experiences related to certain festival seasons: spring and autumn equinox, summer solstice and others. Huge groups of people would gather to celebrate occasions with drumming. Redmond (1999:244-245) described equinox celebrations in a cave in the state New York with 700 people, who were happy to connect with nature and other people during the ritual. 27 people of

⁶ Bourguignon, E. (1973). *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change*. Ohio: Ohio State University Press

Redmond's followers offer drum circles related to transformation, new rituals, renovation, and reconnecting with others. Related to audience participation, multiculturalism, but also generally to music performances, Leavy (2009: 114,116) offers interesting insights into the creation of a "third space": the participation of the audience in performances opens common spaces, where coalitions are built, consciousness gets expanded, and social movements find their preconditions for a common ground. The relationship between music and multiculturalism forms music as space for hybridity – different elements and musical aspects from various cultures are mixed for new creations. This so called "third space" (Leavy 2009:105) has increased due to globalization and cultural exchanges.

Third spaces are also created by the next category of group members: further eleven people are working in various fields of "Creativity" – be it media, painting, acting, arts and crafts, different hand made products. All show connections one or more of the other mentioned categories. Another eleven people focus on "Research" about drums and drumming – mostly male members –, and six members are running "Shops" for drums and drumming supplies.

All categories fit into the three principles of the "cyberculture", as it was called twenty years before: the connection between all people, the formation of virtual communities and the creation of a collective intelligence (Kremser, 2001:336).

Additional to the Facebook Group "Layne Redmond's Global Friends and fans", I analysed a smaller number of group members "When The Drummers Are Women." This group, who had taken the name of Layne Redmond's English book title, consists of 2500 members. It was founded in April 2014 by Ubaka Hill, and promises to be "The place to Network, Learn, Share Knowledge, Information and Everything about the Lineage and the Legacy of Women Drummers of All Drums, All Nations, All Cultures, All Traditions. Unity Builds Community".⁷

Although the group description implicates a wider spectrum of activists, I have attached the analysed 175 members into the same nine categories. All categories can be regarded as "hybrids", as suggested by Patricia Leavy. They are connecting old traditions and new rituals with individual concerns and consciousnesses of the group members themselves.

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WhenTheDrummerAreWomen/> retrieved July 2021

In comparison with the group of Layne Redmond followers there are a lot more musicians and creative people from various artistic branches. Drummers in this group integrate all kinds of drummers: Drum set players, Djembe players, Conga players, among others. While drumming activities related to goddesses and mystic experiences are much less represented than in Redmond's followers' group, the percentage of people among the category "Healing" is comparable high. This fact would lead to the presumption, that connections between drumming and healing are strongly manifested in the consciousness of female drummers.

When I remember my previous and present female music groups, I can confirm that fact: drumming is provoking the consciousness of healing by the creation of a hearts connecting "flow" among people and by awakening oppressed energies. This "flow" acts like a mirror. It makes blockages in body and mind visible, which are getting less by drumming. Among my co-musicians there have been healers, performers, teachers, actresses, dancers, and artists. My new group "Rhythm Sistas Unlocked" only survived the mental hardships of all lockdowns of the past year by regularly drumming.



Photo 3: Rhythm Sistas Unlocked, "Auf Achse", Vienna 2021 (Foto: Gustav Glück)

Goddesses	Mystery	Healing	Musicians	Shamanism	Drum circles	Creativity	Research	Shops
1,71 %	5,71%	21,14 %	39,43 %	1,71 %	9,14 %	14,28 %	1,71 %	5,14 %

Chart 2: Activity categories of 175 members of the FB group "When the Drummers Are Women"

Summary

Layne Redmond can be characterized as “legend.” Her lifelong dedication to rediscover forgotten female spiritual powers by researching and drumming inspires thousands of today’s frame drummers. She designed the history of frame drumming by analysing cave drawings, statues and figurines of women holding frame drums, pottery paintings and other artefacts in ancient Europe and the Middle East. Archaeomusicological studies about drums and goddesses in Israel’s Iron Age II by Sarit Paz dated the origin of the frame drum in the 3rd millennium B.C. It spread from Mesopotamia to Egypt and other regions in the ancient near east. Even today frame drums with different names are played all over the world.

Both authors described that frame drums had been played by women in ritual contexts. Drumming was used to accompany rituals for female ceremonies, fertility rites, for the worship of deities, for prophecies in public and private areas. From 1000 B.C. onwards drumming in public spheres was taken over by men. While Paz interpreted and contrasted the tensed role of female domestic drumming or drumming according to public orders to the role of the male Canaanite Orchestra in Israel, Redmond described parallels between the ban of the drum and the loss of power for women in the West and Middle East. Christianity and male dominated social system oppressed ritual drumming by females until pagan rites were forbidden for the first time in 392 A.D. In the 6th century A.D., the use of the tamburin was forbidden by Pope Johannes III and during the middle age in the 13th century many old traditions were destroyed. The Phrygianum – main temple of the mother goddess Kybele in Rome – was replaced by the Vatican.

Redmond characterized the loss of rhythm as “lapse”. During her recreated rituals, where lots of people came together to drum, dance, listen to drums and take part into rituals, she felt an urgent common need for resonance with the cycles of earth. The distance of modern people to nature is causing numerous kinds of illnesses, feelings of disintegration, disorientation, disembodiment, and others. To reconnect with the context of nature, with its rhythm, could be one way for healing, regaining the respect for beings, reawakening of divine power, and serving as role model for further generations. By drumming, by experiences, sharing and research, by creating online and offline networks with drumming women worldwide, we continue to correlate the spheres of consciousness of digital realities with old spiritual worlds, as Kremer suggested twenty years ago.

Members of the Facebook groups “Layne Redmond’s Global Friends and fans”, and “When the Drummers Are Women” are constructing and deconstructing their identities online and offline likewise. As drummers, healers, devotees, musicians, teachers, artists, researchers, and businesspeople we

leave digital hybrid handprints in the “third space.” Female drummers of all nations must move forward into fast developing digital technologies and digital research methods, if they want to be seen and heard. Werner (2019:8) characterized the role of digital media technology as “co-creator” for various meanings about gender, race, and other aspects of diversity. New modes of production, reception, and technological infrastructure led to new forms of gendering music, but often reproduced old stereotypes about masculinity and femininity. She pointed out, that feminist studies on sound, performance and lyrics are preferably based on music known by the masses, while studies of gender and music production focus on alternative music realms, mostly in the categories of rock music, Djs, and electronic music. Studies on female drumming are still rare, but should be increased to rediscover, recreate, re-enact, reconnect with our ancestors. Let’s reclaim female spiritual power – to heal, share knowledge, and make peace.

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