

**WOMEN AND SEXUALITY IN THE INTERWAR CROATIAN POPULAR MUSIC THROUGH THE LENS OF
EARLY RECORD INDUSTRY**

ABSTRACT

The domestic production of popular music records begun in Croatia in the late 1920s, within the Zagreb-based Edison Bell Penkala factory. It represented a repertoire of diverse music genres, including foreign and domestic popular music. Part of the repertoire and performers presented on these shellac-period records, belonged to the then-existing Zagreb cabarets and Music Halls, transporting the atmosphere of that segment of Zagreb night life into private homes. Cabaret repertoire also occasionally included songs with a more or less explicit sexual content. Such content was most often published with a label indicating a *kuplet*, a song type recognized as “frivolous” and possibly vulgar. Less frequently, the record label came with a more direct warning about the content of the recording, stating, for example, that it was “for intimate circles only”.

This paper will attempt to interpret the transmission of this repertoire from the public to private domain within the Zagreb socio-political context and gender relations of the time. Some authors interpreted the interwar cabarets in bigger metropolises (Berlin, Vienna) as places of gender-transgression and political progressiveness and this romanticized view of cabarets was transmitted into the later popular culture. The localized perspective from the periphery will offer a different interpretation built on the repertoire of the early Yugoslavian record industry and the insight into the inter-war periodicals and newspapers.

