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Music as Recording, Music in Culture, and the Study of Early Recording Industry in Ethnomusicology: A Take on Edison Bell Penkala

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Abstract – Résumé
The author discusses the position of commercial recordings in ethnomusicology, identifying several groups of studies, as well as disciplinary privileging of live, participatory performances. Taking the record company Edison Bell Penkala (est. in 1926) as a case study, she examines localization as a business principle of the time, the production of musical flow detached from cultural-political canonization, patterns of consumption, and today's do-it-yourself curation of historical recordings. In doing so, she argues for acknowledging the ubiquity of music as recording, the relevance of the subject for ethnomusicology of the past and present, and specific contributions that ethnomusicologists may bring to overall, inter- and multidisciplinary research.
Keywords: music as recording • music in culture • early recording industry • ethnomusicology • Edison Bell Penkala • Croatia

As recordings make a substantial part of music practices in so many music cultures, scenes and communities, this paper argues that the corporate complex of its production, circulation and consumption, both in the past and present, should be taken accordingly as an integral part of the analysis of music cultures.[1] Due to their methodological and epistemological footholds, as scholars interested in music in/as culture and/or music as social life, music in performance, and music in everyday life, ethnomusicologists should not continue to neglect this indivisible facet of music cultures.

The immediate incentive for this paper comes from two experiences. A few years ago, together with a group of students, I conducted research on *sevdalinka* songs in Zagreb. The more we got into the topic, accompanying our research collaborators in

[1] This paper came into being as a part of the project »The record industry in Croatia from 1927 to the end of the 1950s,« fully supported by Croatian Science Foundation (project IP-2019-04-4175).

their performances and rehearsals, talking with them, and hanging out at various public and private events and venues, the more it became evident that recordings – a library of commercial recordings by renowned performers of *sevdalinka*, nowadays easily accessible on YouTube and similar platforms – make an important part of their everyday in terms of listening to recordings and often singing along, and serve as a pivotal reference point in their own music-making. This reminded me of a number of previous research experiences where recordings captured a comparable position, but nevertheless I overlooked them. The case of *sevdalinka* songs in Zagreb, however, prompted us to redirect the research towards *sevdalinka* in the record industry, from live performances to recordings, and from present to the past, in particular because the whole Yugoslav record industry was, up to the late 1950s, located in Zagreb, and on the other hand because recorded *sevdalinka* represents a basis for its living practice (Ceribašić et al. 2019). Further on, faced with the lack and/or unreliability of data, even concerning the elementary functioning of the record industry and the basic discography, as well as the unavailability of primary sources, the recordings themselves, a group of us, ethnomusicologists, historical musicologists and music archivists, have started an extensive research project into the record industry in Croatia from 1927, when the first Zagreb-based local Yugoslav company started to operate, until the late 1950s, when the era of electrically recorded 78 rpm shellac records came to its end. Some findings related to the first of these companies – Edison Bell Penkala – will serve as a referent example in the following part of this paper.

The second direct incentive comes from experiencing the place of music in the spring 2020 lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Music helped resilience, solidarity, encouragement and similar social values. That is, with the exception of pockets of live performances (such as so-called balcony concerts, or artists on tour in their neighbourhoods), many music *recordings* helped these ends. Almost always, they were composed and presented to give an impression of live music; the most characteristic case in point pertains to puzzle-type videos with musicians who seemingly make music together, albeit from different locations. Even more, the audiences take and comment on such recordings as live performances – at least in the moment of their creation (that one watches and listens to subsequently), but also as live performances in the very moment of watching and listening to them, albeit from a distance and thanks to technological means (e.g., a concert »One World: Together at Home« streamed online and broadcasted by TV networks around the world on 18 April 2020). Rather than interpreting the recording as a simulacrum of the real thing, the live music performance, I would suggest that the time of coronavirus has actually disclosed the real thing, the ubiquity of music as recording. As Pekka Gronow claimed already in 1983: »Records and music are becoming almost synonymous« (1983:73). This may be taken as an enlightening moment for my home discipline of ethnomusicology and

its legacy of privileging live, participatory performances, and representing them as the epitome of music as a whole, everywhere and always.

What Recordings Capture and Do: Ethnomusicological Findings

Ethnomusicologists are accustomed to work with their own fieldwork recordings, accompanied sometimes for comparative reasons with pre-existing ones. Moreover, such recordings are *differentia specifica* of ethnomusicology in relation to other disciplines of music studies. They document research, serve as major mnemonic device for the researcher (as regards events s/he observed and interviews s/he conducted), and are »crucially useful« as »research tools« (Stock 2010:203) that help learning, close listening, transcription, critical analysis of musical content and social signification, etc. That is, they are primarily tools for the researcher concerned and for the scholarly community. In addition, being attentive to the communities concerned, for the purpose of advocating or promoting their aspirations, and/or guided by educational intentions towards broader society, many ethnomusicologists have produced and made available to the public a selection of fieldwork recordings, either only their own or inclusive of those made by other researchers. The former *UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music of the World* represents a well-known example of a series specialized for publishing scholarly ethnographic recordings. As well, such recordings may help transmission and revivalist initiatives in the originating communities (e.g. see *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 21/2, 2012, dedicated to »Ethnomusicology, Archives and Communities: Methodologies for an Equitable Discipline«). In that, the issues of partial representation of living practices, of mediation, transformation and reification brought by the (act of) recording are constantly present, but they have more to do with overall problems of ethnographic representation than with the recording(s) per se. The latter are taken as representative, evocative and resonant as much as they can possibly be taking into account the constraints of any ethnographic inquiry.

From the described ethnomusicological angle, it still makes sense to differentiate between »commercial and instantaneous or in-the-field« sound recordings (Flanagan 1979:3), that is, between »recordings of music made to document research and recordings made to sell records« (Baily 2010:119). There are several characteristic ways of how recordings »made to sell records« appear in ethnomusicological writings. One circle, starting from the second half of the 1980s, pertains to critical examination of the industrial complex of world music, in particular around the issues of appropriation, (mis)representation and ownership of traditional musics, the poetics and politics of hybridity and othering, and unjust economic stakes and power relations between the West (Western industry and

famed musicians) and the rest (music labourers from the Third World). Acting for the well-being of communities of origin of appropriated material, ethnomusicologists are, as a rule, not only critical but anxious about the developments in the world music market. Well-known case studies that strengthened this research trajectory dealt with the Paul Simon's *Graceland* (Feld 1988, Meintjes 1990) and *Deep Forest* by Eric Moquet and Michel Sanchez (Feld 1996, 2000; Zemp 1996). Related to this group are studies in musical encounters between different music cultures or between homelands and diaspora in the context of global cultural flows. The recordings and labels that enable or support the encounters are in such studies regularly addressed but not specifically analyzed as an industrial complex, probably because they do not incorporate an exploitative dimension present in the previous group of case studies. Similarly, the more the popular music genres and scenes make a customary subject of ethnomusicological inquiry, the more the recordings and the record industry are integrated in the research purview. Yet the focus is often on situations of face-to-face interactions, in line with customary framework of ethnomusicological research.

Of greater relevance for this paper are ethnographies of technology-facilitated musicking, located in the recording studio (from book-length studies such as Meintjes 2003, Scales 2012, Bates 2016, to edited volumes such as Greene and Porcello 2005, Neuenfeldt 2007, to research papers of these and other authors, e.g. Barnat 2017). They have shown how recordings and their making contribute to the creation of meaningful sound, i.e., humanly-organized sound, i.e., music, and represent a normal, ordinary part of activities for musicians around the globe, including »traditional« musicians, singled here out because they are key fieldwork collaborators of ethnomusicologists around the globe. This is in tune with *music as recording* in the title of this paper. Second, the recording studio prompts us to pay attention to a scope of actors involved in the creation of music, from musicians, to engineers, producers and other music-industry personnel.[2] Their different, often also conflicting aesthetic and commercial values and goals allow us to experience the creative process in the making, how and for whom all these snippets of processed sound matter. At the same time, the recording studio has appeared as a profoundly contextual site, entangled by social and political currents of the society in question, and the business of producing music as no less constitutive for music (as) culture than, say, festivals and similar public events. Last but not least, the vast majority of case studies concerned elucidate how musics get *produced as live* (how are they »mediated as live«, cf. Porcello 2002, that is, mediated »for the purpose of sounding live«, cf. Scales 2012:265), along with

[2] Ethnomusicologists are very seldom involved in the record business. Among such exceptions, who also reflected on the experience in their writings, are Christopher Scales who worked as a recording engineer (Scales 2012) and Lucy Durán who worked as a producer (Durán 2011). On an uneasy alliance between academic work and marketplace on the example of Alan Lomax see Williams 2015.

questioning the dichotomies between tradition and modernity, and live and mediated music in relation to cultural authenticity. This is here especially relevant since the practice of live music, and the »politics of participation« (cf. Turino 2008), seems to be one of main causes for a rather insignificant place of the recording industry in ethnomusicological writings. Similarly, Scales discusses ethnomusicological »fetishization of liveness as an index of authenticity« (2012:265). An engineered liveness on a recording brings a challenge to the discipline, strongly grounded in its ethnographic approach and its devotion to live, face-to-face, participatory performance. As if the former colonial interest for the exotic got its replacement in the fascination with participatory performance.

The last group of ethnomusicological studies in commercial recordings is historically the earliest and is closest to the research that a group of us has started. It deals with the spread of the early Western-based multinational recording companies and their subsidiaries in other parts of the world, starting with Pekka Gronow's invitation »to the study of commercial (...) records and the role they have had in the formation, evolution and diffusion of various musical styles« (1963:225), his research into historical commercial recordings of »ethnic music« in the Soviet Union (1975) and in the Orient (1981), and Ali Jihad Racy's history of commercial recordings in Egypt (1976, 1978). Subsequent ethnomusicological contributions, since the 1990s, include case studies from India (Farrell 1993), former Malaya (Tan 1996-1997, 2016), Korea (Maliangkay 2007), Portugal (Losa 2013) and other countries, as well as studies into the impact of recording culture on specific genres (e.g. Qureshi 1999; Tan 2005, 2013), accounts from the perspective of individual artists (e.g. Bendrups 2010, Kunej and Kunej 2017, Rios 2017), research focused on recording expeditions (e.g. Ospina Romero 2019), etc. Historical junction and disjunction between the recording industry and ethnomusicology have also been examined (e.g. Kaufman Shelemay 1991, Cottrell 2010). The vast majority of these studies is limited to the period up to the introduction of tape editing and multitrack technology, that is, a period which is the most akin to ethnomusicological predilection for »documentary realism« (Scales 2012:265-267), especially thinking of electrical recordings introduced in the mid-1920s.[3] Electrically recorded 78 rpm shellac records make the world's greatest sound archive (cf. Gronow 2014), which calls us as ethnomusicologists to give it the attention it deserves. It should be borne in mind that this was a period of marked localization of the record industry, a period in which the market model implied proliferation of the offer of local musics with the aim of expanding the sales of gramophones as financially the largest part of earnings. Due to its emphasis on

[3] Another technology, also historical from today's perspective, that caught the attention of ethnomusicologists were audio cassettes and the democratization of recording and circulation of recordings that they afforded (e.g. Sutton 1985, Castelo-Branco 1987). Roger Wallis and Krister Malm in their multi-local and many-sided research (1984) also to a large degree deal with cassette technology.

local musics, albeit torn out from their »normal« contexts, it was an era comparable to ethnomusicological proceedings. On the other hand, this body of research departs from ethnomusicological emphasis on participant observation and ethnography insofar as it deals with a rather distant past which does not afford oral testimonies but reliance on written sources, often very fragmentary (on methodological problems in working on such sources see Pennanen 2005). However, despite the fragmentation of contextual data, historical recordings »do give access to 'how the music really sounded', not necessarily in (...) live performances, or even to the musicians and engineers in the studio, but to people who bought and heard« them (Tackley 2010:169–170); they have »the ability (...) to transcend and blur past, present and future and to be heard anew in multiple historical and geographical contexts« (*ibid.*: 170). A growing online availability of historical recordings and a lively contemporary scene of their aficionados, re-recordists, curators and researchers in their leisure time make them a very ethnomusicological subject, including the issue of collaborations beyond academic and institutional walls. It also goes without saying that historical dimension is indivisible from any practice, which also, for all the reasons listed above, call us to take the commercial historical recordings seriously and regularly in our business as usual, musical ethnographies of living practices.

In considering the literature, guided by the effort towards biethnomusicologicality (cf. Ceribašić 2019), I paid equal attention to the Anglo-American ethnomusicological mainstream and other ethnomusicologies. The former once again proved to be predominant. Nevertheless, research on commercial recordings and companies is firmly embedded in some other ethnomusicologies, such as the Finnish, probably at the instigation of Pekka Gronow as a prominent and internationally influential proponent of commercial recording research, or the Portuguese, probably due to the close intertwining of fado, record industry and national imagination (cf. Nery 2012, Losa 2013, Sardo 2017). In the post-Yugoslav countries, the noted researcher is Drago Kunej (e.g. Kunej 2014, 2017; Kunej and Kunej 2017),[4] while the findings on early discography in Bosnia and Herzegovina are almost exclusively thanks to Finnish ethnomusicologist Risto Pekka Pennanen (2007, 2016). Some ethnomusicologists occasionally dealt with the early record industry (e.g. Lajić Mihajlović and Đorđević Belić 2016), and some have touched on it by focusing on radio programmes (e.g. Dumnić 2013, Vesić 2013). The most productive researcher in Croatia is Veljko Lipovšćak (1997, 2000, 2019), who belongs to the circle of experts and enthusiasts outside the academic sphere.

[4] From 2009 to 2012 Kunej led the project »Sound material from phonograph records as a source for ethnomusicology and folklore research«, focused on recordings of Slovenian folk music. Some of the results were published in the thematic volume of *Traditiones*, 43/2, 2014 (articles by Drago Kunej, Pekka Gronow, Mojca Kovačič, Charles F. Debevec, Rebeka Kunej, Marija Klobčar, Urša Šivic, Marjeta Pisk and Marjetka Golež Kaučič).

IRASM 52 (2021) 2: 323-354

A Take on Edison Bell Penkala

In the mid-1920s, the world was ruled by two global concerns with a number of companies at the national and regional levels: on the one hand, Columbia International (which included companies and labels such as Parlophon, Odeon, and Beka), and on the other, Gramophone Co. associated with the Victor Talking Machine (which included His Master's Voice, Electrola, and other labels) (cf. Tschmuck 2012:57–58). A few years later, in 1931, they merged into the new, mammoth concern EMI, which would dominate for a number of further decades. Both concerns (i.e. one after 1931) were present on the Croatian and Yugoslav market and, as elsewhere, strengthened their efficiency by localizing the offer, engaging local musicians and repertoires, supporting the translation of foreign pieces into local languages, as well as through other means.

The British company Edison Bell (EB) operated independently, outside the two concerns, and to illustrate the relationship of power it is worth mentioning the profits made in 1926–1927, at the time when the Zagreb-based Edison Bell Penkala (EBP) started operating: EB earned £32,100 that year, Columbia (the British business) £180,442, and Gramophone Co. £338,008 (Martland 2013:246, 258, 277). Although ten times smaller than the two global concerns, EB also sought to expand into different markets and was guided by the principle of localization, as were Columbia and Gramophone Co. Therefore, the question arises concerning the independence of entities associated with the British headquarters, and, more specifically, the question of whether, to what extent and in what way the Zagreb EBP was independent in its business.

In the existing domestic, Croatian literature, EBP is unequivocally defined as the first Croatian and Yugoslav record company. The company advertised itself in the same way. At the same time, it has been regularly emphasized that it was created through the business contract between Edison Bell Ltd., London, and Penkala Works Ltd., Zagreb. According to the contract drafted on 12 June 1926,[5] the purpose of the company was to manufacture gramophone records and apparatuses, and to sell the products of their own manufacture, products of British Edison Bell and other similar factories (art. 1). Each of the founding companies paid half of the amount of the required capital (1,200,000 Din. in total), and allowed the new company to use their names and trademarks without payment (art. 2–3). The EBP board consisted of two members appointed by EB and two by

[5] This draft was expected to be ratified by 1 July 1926 (art. 15). It is deposited in the only preserved EBP funds – unsorted archival collection of Milan Dečak's law office in the State Archives in Zagreb (sign. HR-DAZG-93). Dečak was trustee in bankruptcy of EBP from October 1937 to March 1944. The signed contract is not preserved, but according to subsequent documentation, this draft, written both in English and Croatian, was indeed ratified. Later on, many documents refer to the »contract dated June 12th 1926«.

Penkala, including two managers representing each of the respective shareholders (art. 5). EB supplied the machinery and its installation, and material for the manufacture of records at the lowest price (art. 4, 6, 12), while Penkala secured the factory space and its maintenance, also at the lowest price (art. 7). In addition, EB obliged itself to »send a recording outfit with expert to any various place in Europe.« Two such »recording expeditions« were planned during the first year of operation, with »the total number of titles not exceeding fifty« (art. 8). It also guaranteed to supply EBP with all its matrices at a price of £10 for the 10'' record and a royalty of one half penny on each title sold by EBP (art. 9). The same royalty was prescribed for matrices »manufactured from recordings carried out on behalf of the new company« (art. 10).[6] Finally, EB gave the new company »the sole rights to sell the manufactures of Edison Bell London Works and also their own manufactures in (...) Jugoslavia (sic!), Austria, Polland (sic!), Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine« (art. 11).

It is considered that the absence of copyright protection was an important factor for the establishment of a record company in Yugoslavia. At the time of its founding, the law of 1895 was still in force, which prescribed that »the making and public use of instruments for the mechanical reproduction of musical works does not encroach on the musical authorial work« (Art. 36).[7] EBP, therefore, had absolutely no obligations (financial or moral) to the authors of the music it included in its catalog. That changed with a new law passed on 27 December 1929. The exclusive right to »transfer works to instruments used for mechanical performance of voices, in particular to records, cylinders, tapes and the like« was given to the authors, as well as »the right to allow transferred works to be performed publicly through those instruments« (Art. 22, para 6). However, »reproductions, completed and produced in a permitted manner before the entry into force of this Law« continued to be allowed »to be placed on the market,« provided that the prescribed procedure for inclusion in a special list was carried out within three months (Art. 73). The same applied to »reproductions« in progress (Art. 74).[8] It means that EBP continued to freely dispose of its previous production, without any obligation to the authors. The law did not specify whether »completed and produced reproductions,« when it came to music recordings, meant matrices or recordings available on the market. It could be that EBP used this imprecision to its advantage. Besides, as archival documentation shows, years later it avoided or at least delayed settling its obligations to copyright agencies (BIEM and UJMA, the Association of Yugoslav Music Authors). Technically, this fee was implemented in such a way that each copy of a record subjected to copy-

[6] This formulation is unclear. It could be understood that matrices were supposed to be manufactured in the UK.

[7] *List državnih zakona*, 1895, no. 197.

[8] *Službene novine Kraljevine SHS*, 1929, no. 304.

right protection had to be affixed with an additional stamp which was obtained from the respective agencies at the prescribed rate. On the records that have been preserved to this day, a very small number of them have such stamps.

From the establishment of the company until the opening of a bankruptcy procedure in 1937–1938, EBP issued c. 1200 records (cf. Lipovšćak 2019:764) in four series: 8'' Edison Bell Radio, 10'' Edison Bell Penkala Record, 10'' Edison Bell Electron and, the least represented, 6'' Edison Bell Baby. The templates for Radio and Electron records were the same as for the corresponding EB series (while EBP Record resembled EB Winner Record), but the language used, catalogue number prefix and data on manufacture were local. Records were offered in EBP own stores (showrooms) in Zagreb, Belgrade and Skopje and through retail shops of other owners in about thirty places throughout Yugoslavia. Apart from its own products, EBP sales included turntables and records of other companies and labels (His Master's Voice, Columbia, Parlophon, Odeon, Brunswick, Homocord, Polydor and Pathé, according to a stocktaking in December 1938). The projected annual production was one million copies at twelve presses, two of which were planned for the records of Columbia and His Master's Voice (Lipovšćak 2019:764). It is not known to what degree the plan was realized. Up to 1938, the main managing director and the guiding force of EBP was Abraham Bernard Goodman, who at the same time facilitated a close business relationship with EB and, since 1928, with its sister company, Edison Bell International (EBI).[9] Another important individual from the British headquarters was the engineer Paul Voigt, who is internationally known by his efficient electric recording system which he developed for EB in 1926 (Combe 2011:9). He spent part of 1927 in Zagreb, conducting the first recordings for EBP in line with the founding contract, and probably passing on his knowledge to local recordists.[10] Connecting information about a photograph from the EBP recording studio in September 1927 (Fig. 1) and data from the Voigt collection deposited in Ottawa, he must have also been there, but invisible in the control room behind the glass. This studio, 800 m3 in size, was used by EBP from 1927 to 1933 (Lipovšćak 2019:757).

[9] Goodman's last name was often spelled Goodmann in Croatian sources. I did not find any information about him in reference sources. But on Deceased online there is information that he was buried on 15 April 1959 in Lambeth, UK. Thanks to the archival material deposited in the State Archives in Zagreb, a lot more is known about his work in Zagreb for the period after the opening of the bankruptcy procedure, but there is no room to deal with this topic here.

[10] I have recently discovered his collection in the Music Archives at the National Library of Canada (fonds MUS 142), which includes diaries, notes, index cards and test recordings (all made with 80 rpm), including c. 30 records made in Zagreb from August to November 1927. He himself testified spending »most of the second half of 1927 in Zagreb, where I recorded over 600 titles« (Voigt in Wilson 1965:326). This is much more than stipulated in the founding contract. On his role in the »first remote recording of gramophone records in continental Europe«, realized in Zagreb in 1927 see Bencic et al. 2015. On other accomplishments of this »giant« of sound recording and »pioneer in audio« see Wilson 1965, Klipsch 1981.

After this basic information, the following episodes from the work of EBP will serve to refer to certain facets of the record industry in culture and at the same time to the problems of its research.

Fig. 1. »Voice photography«, left to right: Rikard Šimaček at the piano, Goodman, director of EBP who »manages the recording«, Juraj Dević, »assistant director (...) with a clock in his hand to determine the time when recording«, and Vladimir Majhenić and Mila Mosinger-Popović, »our beloved artists« (*Kulisa*, 1/2, 16 Sep 1927:23; 1/3, 1 Oct:[unpag.])

On Localization as a Guiding Business Principle: Decentralized Linking of the Particles of Data

There is a great disparity in the interpretation of EB from a domestic and foreign perspective. In foreign literature, it is as if EBP did not exist. From publications focused on EB, although scarce and written mostly by non-academic enthusiasts, to lexicographic literature, EBP is at best mentioned only incidentally, and Zagreb is listed only as one of the cities where EBI conducted their recordings (Hoffmann 2005:353, Andrews and Dean-Myatt 2017:30). The information is incorrect not only because EBP is not given any agency but also because activities

are regularly attributed to EBI, which was founded only two years after EBP, in October 1928 (Andrews and Dean-Myatt 2017:30). In the background is actually a complicated relationship between EB, EBI and EBP. A bit more about it can be learned from the »Minutes of the session of the Board of the Directors of the Edison Bell (International) Limited,« held on 14, 18 and 19 November 1929 in Zagreb.[11] The outcome is that with the establishment of EBI, the duties and rights of EB towards EBP were transferred to EBI; at the same time, EBP was one of the main shareholders (perhaps 50 percent shareholder) of EBI, while EBI was financially and otherwise dependent on EB. Therefore, as regards business decisions, plans, investments, profits and losses, it is very difficult to distinguish who was responsible and super-/subordinated to whom. The same is evident in the character of Abraham Goodman, who was in the board of directors of both companies, and the managing director of EBP. At the time of this meeting, he was strongly committed to expanding the business of EBI and EBP in Athens, where a few days earlier he made two contracts on purchasing a factory and starting the business. Whether these contracts were preliminary or definitive and whether Goodman signed them in the name of EBI or EBP was the subject of unresolved discussion at the meeting. Goodman also argued for establishing a factory in China, where »the respective projects and plans are already being drawn up,« and elsewhere »in the Far East«. The existing Edison Bell France, Edison Bell S.A. in Milan and Eternola in Budapest are also mentioned in the minutes, as well as the operation of EBI and/or EBP in Romania. Faced with the critique by two other members of the Board, Harry Hesford and Milivoj Crnadak (each of them clearly defending the interests of EBI and EBP, respectively) for his reckless and unauthorized signing of (preliminary) contracts in Greece, Goodman emphasized:

> If this program is not carried out, the Edison Bell Penkala has no raison d'être. (...) The plan of the London, Mr. Goodman states, is to cut short his work and to make the Jugoslav (sic!) business small and confined solely to Jugoslavia. (...) If there is no intention that we remain confined only to Jugoslavia, then the necessary means should be provided for Greece and Roumania (...) In case the London does not give the necessary means, I would have to agree to the shares of the Edison Bell Penkala Ltd. being separated from the sphere of the interests of the International, and to the seeking of a new financier.

None of these topics of discussion came true, but apparently the issue of the international presence of EB, EBI and EBP was high on the agenda. Looking again in the literature, it is surprising how little is known about it. It is not only the question of EBP, but concerns activities in a number of other countries. I was able to

[11] The minutes exist both in English and Croatian, and are deposited in the above mentioned archival collection of Milan Dečak in the State Archives in Zagreb.

find out more about them by searching online sources, relying mostly on the database Discogs, which is globally the most comprehensive and also quite reliable, and then consulting individual colleagues to check the information. It has turned out that EB was pronouncedly oriented towards localizing its business. Apart from the UK, according to the descending number of records available on Discogs, it was present in Switzerland, Yugoslavia, France, Dutch East Indies, Romania, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland and Greece. It is not known whether the activities in these countries pertained only to recording or also to pressing records, to what degree local musicians and genres were involved from one to another country, and what were the marketing approaches.[12] The same designs of EB Radio, Electron and Winner labels, combined with the use of local languages, were present everywhere, and the catalog number prefixes also, in some cases, refer to specific countries. This is certainly the case with the letter Z that stands for Zagreb/Yugoslavia, H for Hungary, and R for Romania. After all, based precisely on these elements, I began to recognize the locality of EB's work in the listed countries. In literature, however, the information on the presence of EB outside the UK is minimal. Gronow mentions that among the Scandinavian countries EB was active in Denmark 1922–1924 (2007:297-298), while Sweden and Finland are not mentioned. As regards Finland, he mentions an entrepreneur, Niilo E. Saarikko, who in the late 1920s contacted various independent labels, including EB, »and sent Finnish artists to make recordings in their studios. Some of the records were issued on Saarikko's own label, Columbus; others appeared on the labels of the contracting companies« (Gronow 1995:35). So that could be how a Finnish record that I found on Discogs came into being. Contracts for recording in the EB studio are mentioned also by Andrews and Dean-Myatt (2017:20), as well as making recordings for EB (*ibid*.:33) and the use of EB matrices by various labels (*ibid*.:27, 29, 31). In Czechoslovakia, EB made recordings in 1929, and collaborated with Kaliope Electro Record label of the Triumphone company from Berlin. It is possible that Kaliope served (or was planned to serve) as a subsidiary of EB (Gössel and Šír 2016:48–49).

[12] Of course, the number of records available on Discogs does not necessary testify to the actual scope of production in the listed countries. Discogs is built by its users, and thus it could easily be that the Swiss part of overall production is the best documented thanks to more numerous collectors, or more engaged collectors of Swiss records. Likewise, the very good representation of traditional genres in the case of Switzerland (various *Jodel*s and *Bauernkapelle*s, etc.) may result from the preferences of Discogs users instead of EB publishing policy in Switzerland. Another available source – the EB discography in Andrews and Dean-Myatt 2017 – proved to be less comprehensive and reliable concerning the activities of EB outside of the UK. As for the Dutch East Indies (today Indonesia), it was quite a lucrative market in between the two world wars (c.f. Gronow 1981:269, 275, 282–284). However, excluding a mere mentioning of EB recordings for the Dutch East Indies (Andrews and Dean-Myatt 2017:30), I did not find any specific study on it, nor a study on the presence of other companies in the Dutch East Indies.

There is no indication in the literature that EB's subsidiaries would make and own matrices, nor that they would manufacture records (cf. Adrian and Badrock 1989, Combe 2011, Andrews and Dean-Myatt 2017). However, apart from Zagreb, it could be that a pressing plant related to EB existed in Switzerland, judging from the fact that a significant part of Swiss EB records available on Discogs contain a sign »Schweizer Fabrikat«. Otherwise, they would be probably marked as »British manufacture« or »Edison Bell Ltd.« on the edge of the label, as it was common for EB. Likewise, I did not find an explanation in the literature as to why »AGA Baltic Stockholm« is imprinted on some Swedish EB records. It was allegedly a local company that made recordings for, or in cooperation with, EB, but nothing more is known about their business relationship.

In accordance with the founding agreement, the EBP's plan for business development at the international level occasionally appeared in the Croatian press, but indications on possible realization refer only to Romania and Hungary. As for Romania, thirteen Romanian records from the EB Electron 10'' series that I found on Discogs represent the key material evidence, since they all include »Penkala« imprinted on their labels. Presumably, these records were pressed in Zagreb, even though »Edison Bell, Limited, London & Huntington« is also imprinted (see Fig. 4g). In addition, the very good representation of Romanian recordings on the Yugoslav market (as evidenced by EBP sales catalogs) may have been related to close business ties and interests of EBP in Romania.[13] As for Hungary, the most important clue represents the 1929 catalog *Edison Bell Penkala Magyar Hanglemezek* [EBP Hungarian Records], written in Hungarian and intended for the Hungarian market. According to information in the catalog, the records were made by Hungarian artists and engineers in the EB studio in Budapest, and pressed in London. Therefore, it is actually not clear what the role of EBP was. In Croatian archive collections, up to now, we did not find any of the listed recordings, while according to Ferenc Szabó, a musicologist specialized in the history of the recording industry in Hungary who kindly provided me with a copy of the catalog, these recordings were actually released by Eternola Edison Bell, a Hungarian subsidiary of EB which existed from c. 1928 to c. 1930. Why then the EBP catalogue of Hungarian records has ever come into being remains unclear. It could have been a move of EBP, and its director as a committed advocate of international expansion, towards strengthening its position on the Hungarian market, which, however, obviously failed. Or, similarly, it could have been a move of EBP

[13] There is no confirmation of that assumption in Dečak's archival material. Apart from the above quoted minutes, the only additional information is from the minutes of the Board meeting held on 25 April 1928 about a contract that Goodman concluded in Bucharest on 21 April 1928 with the »Reprezentanta Romaneasca« as a general representative and exclusive seller of the EBP and EB products in Romania. It obliged itself to purchase 120,000 records and 400 apparatuses in the first year, 150,000 and 500 in the second, and 200,000 and 600 in the third year.

to put into practice the provision from the founding contract concerning its sole rights in Hungary, which, however, seems to have been avoided by the parent company. Several labels of the Eternola Edison Bell 10'' records that I found on specialized websites do not contain any data on manufacture (nor EBP or EB, neither Eternola), in contrast to one 8'' Hungarian record from the Edison Bell Radio series, which is designated as »British manufacture«. Taking together articles 9 and 11 of the EBP founding contract, it could be that the »sole rights« given to EBP in various countries related only to 10'' records.[14] Also, »sole« probably should not be equated with »exclusive«; it may meant that EB was obliged not to license any other company, but it was allowed to act on its own at the same market.

Despite numerous unknowns, it seems indisputable that EB used different modes of localization, obviously depending on specific national contexts. As for the methodological procedure that led to such a conclusion, it speaks in favour of a more minute approach (effectuated here through comparison between scarce available literature, a bit of archival material, and information imprinted on the preserved EB records intended for various national markets, which was made possible thanks to a comprehensive non-academic Internet resource), a sort of decentralized if not decolonial reading of the particles of data. Thus, in a way, it urges ethnomusicologists to take a part in such ventures.

On Musical Flow Detached from Cultural-political Canonization: Browsing Sales Catalogs and Recordings

The record industry in various cultures contributed to the standardization of music practices in terms of promoting and codifying some while marginalizing other genres and styles, to the lasting change due to adaptation to the studio recording conditions and technological possibilities, along with the market logic of constant supply expansion, to the reification of performance (transient, ephemeral and variable in nature) into a fixed aural product and tangible object, and to the professionalization through the selection of artists as representatives of one or another genre and as models to follow (cf. Baily 2010:111). All of this had a lasting impact on traditional musics in particular, and has been extensively discussed in the above mentioned group of ethnomusicological publications. The effects of EBP and other companies on musics in the former Yugoslavia were no exception in this regard (e.g., for an elaborated study on *gusle* epics in the recording industry see Lajić Mihajlović and Đorđević Belić 2016).

[14] An additional detective detail along the same reasoning pertains to Romanian EB records available on Discogs. Aside from above mentioned 10'' records, there is one 8'' record from the Radio series, the only one without a reference to Penkala.

But there is the other side of the coin. Due to specific cultural and political circumstances, it could be argued that EBP was a significant social actor in favour of musical diversity. This pertains in particular to Croatia, in which a cultural-political programme of protecting the original culture of Croatian peasantry dominated the public sphere in the second half of the 1930s. It was led by *Seljačka sloga* [Peasant Concord], a cultural organization closely associated with the Croatian Peasant Party, the leading political force in Croatia between the two world wars, and it was effectuated primarily thanks to an elaborated system of festivals from local to the national level. In that, of great importance was the role of gatekeepers, including several prominent ethnologists and music specialists, who systematically and tirelessly separated the desirable from the undesirable music and dance repertoires and styles brought to the national attention by tens of thousands peasants organized in *Sloga's* branches across Croatia. The impact of the system introduced in the 1930s extends to the present day. On the opposite side were commercial recordings. They most directly testify to the existence of a parallel, unsupervised music practice, which is additionally corroborated by a range of writings, produced usually by the cultural gatekeepers themselves and composed as critiques of undesirable tendencies in the culture of common people. The list of phenomena criticized included mixing and mixtures of songs »from Srijem [region in eastern Croatia and northern part of Serbia], Bosnia, Macedonia, and often also Gypsy« songs; frivolous [*bećarske*] songs from Srijem and Macedonian songs brought by the soldiers; brass music, accordion, *schlagers*, foreign dances (such as *csárdás*) and urban dances (such as tango and foxtrot among the recently introduced, and waltz, polka and Scottish among the older layer), which the author described as »completely unnecessary and ridiculous things« that arrive in villages; urban »empty idealess 'shimmy' and 'jazz-band' of the West;« and, in general, »musical distaste from the city« (quoted from writings published in 1926–1928 and 1941, presented in Ceribašić 2003:45–46). According to an additional newspaper article, Croatian folk preferred at the time to play and sing Oriental *sevdalinka*, Hungarian-Gypsy songs, international *schlagers*, and foreign foxtrots on mandolins and accordions (Stojanović 1940:3). Vladko Maček, the president of the Croatian Peasant Party, in his speech at the General Assembly of *Seljačka sloga* in 1937 added a class-economic dimension: »When you take a gramophone, it costs you like a cow, and why, when you can sing by yourself. (...) The songs of our [village] boys and girls are more beautiful than the songs on the gramophone« (Maček 1937:32). Indeed, all mentioned categories were not only included but also emphasized in the EBP production. As stated in the April 1928 catalogue (unpag.]), EBP sought to present

> all that is best and most famous from the world music literature, [but] always giving preference to our domestic folk music. That is why, in addition to opera, drama and

Fig. 2. ***Dance music in your own home*****, advertisement in** ***Kulisa*** **(1/2, 16 September 1927: [unpag.])**

operetta leading singers and beloved comedians of all our main theaters, we recorded church and concert choirs, artistic and vernacular [*pučke]* folk singers, tamburitza and gypsy bands [*kapele*], accordion players, bagpipers, etc. as true characteristic representatives of our folk music.

EBP's advertisement for »dance music in your own home«, showing a modern urban young lady in a dance movement (Fig. 2), combined with a drawing of a *gusle*-player, which was utilized as the main visual representation of the company (Fig. 3),[15] nicely illustrates the effort to attract different social classes and milieus. But it was not only the issue of a wide range of genres and performing

[15] It was used as a front page of EBP sales catalogues, as a logo within catalogues, and in advertisements, so that it actually functioned as a trademark of EBP.

Fig. 3. Advertisement in *Svijet* (3, 5/3, 14 January 1928: [unpag.])

ensembles placed seamlessly alongside each other (while otherwise, in cultural programmes and scholarly understandings they would be strictly separated), but also the issue of a flow between them. For instance, *sevdalinka*, a Bosnian folk song, was often performed by opera and operetta singers accompanied by Gypsy ensembles, which otherwise belonged to incompatible musical worlds. In a local context, this represented a challenging transgression, even though such encounters were customary in the operation of many record companies at the time. Looking at the overall production of EBP, the question is to what extent it dictated the trends, and how much it reflected living practice. While the answer probably varied from genre to genre, EBP certainly had no interest in engaging in local cultural-political debates. It was guided by market interests, targeting musics that would sell well and therefore solicited material from a variety of sources. In doing so, although it was not about a cultural mission but about market interests and

financial independence from state institutions, EBP certainly helped to document and preserve the diversity of local musics of the time. In that regard it is probably not unimportant that the main manager was a foreigner unencumbered by local debates on cultural authenticity.

An additional argument along the same logic of maximizing economic effect pertains to the habit of replicating, generally present in the work of record companies. The repertoire of Croatian Christmas songs can serve as an example. Based on a search of this repertoire in various databases and portals, three features came forth. It turned out that Croatian Christmas songs are by far the most represented in the production of domestic companies, EBP and Elektroton, which is of course quite expected, and confirms, as with the previously described activities of EB in different countries, the importance of localization. Secondly, it comes to a very small number of songs in total. They all belonged then (judging by the fact that they were released), and also today belong to the group of the most popular Croatian Christmas songs, but represent just a tiny section of the repertoire documented by ethnographers. This may be taken as a confirmation that the recording industry indeed played a role in limiting and standardizing the repertoire. But the main point relates to the next element – it seems that companies carefully observed and listened to what others were doing, and replicated the established models. I don't know how else to interpret the fact that several companies decided to put *Narodil se kralj nebeski* on one side and *Radujte se narodi* on the other side of the record – EBP, Elektroton, Columbia (twice), Parlophon and Victor, all released the record with precisely these two songs.[16] In addition, on this same example, it could be concluded that the performance of a male singing group with a harmonium or organ and with bells was established as the performing standard for both songs.

On Audiences, Consumption, Musicians and Radio: Chasing the Scattered Notes

> In the hills and forests of the Balkans, in the most remote and distant areas, a gramophone greets us. How many times have I fled in vain with a paper in my hand for the sounds, which I was deceived into thinking, was singing! The deception was all the easier because there are often domestic songs played in the records: Serbian, Bulgarian, Turkish. Once, on a beautiful moonlit night, a train stopped at a small station in the Macedonian mountains where a song of unusual beauty and domestic character sounded. I decided to get off the train, even if I had to be in Skopje that evening. I grab my luggage and I want to get out. But when he found out the reason for my sudden

[16] EBP Z-1230 (Z.357, Z.358), 1927?; Electroton E-1002 (358, 359), 1944?; Columbia 1068-F (108330, 180331) and D-30720 (108330, 108331), after 1923; Parlophon B-68067 / B-68068; Victor 77109-A / 77109-B (77109A, 77109B), between 1923 and 1927.

decision, the train driver tells me with a smile on his face: »Just stay, it's the gramophone of mister manager of the station.« (Kuba 1929:213)

This quotation of Ludvík Kuba, one of pioneers of ethnomusicology on the territory of Yugoslavia, nicely illustrates (although, I would say, with some exaggeration for the stylistic purposes) how even an experienced music ethnographer can be deceived by a recording, which speaks in favour of acknowledging music as recording. Equally, testifying to how the records reached the most remote areas, the paradigmatic locations of ethnomusicological ventures, as if Kuba invites us to deal more systematically with the effect of recordings in the social environment.

Exploring audiences, consumption and listening habits is by no means an easy task. Since there are no interlocutors to testify about the period of almost a century ago, while record companies, including EBP, did not issue (reliable) reports on the efficiency of their production (neither as a whole nor concerning particular categories or individual records), the assessment has to rely primarily on notes scattered in various written sources, most often newspapers; in that, more detailed statements like Kuba's are a rarity. The second type of analysis concerns objective possibilities: who could or could not afford a gramophone and gramophone records. The third could rely on institutional and private collections of records preserved to this day, taking them as representative, but can easily lead to incorrect conclusions because all known collections originate from a small number of collectors, more often than not characterized by elite and nationally focused listening preferences. Furthermore, one can examine the efficiency of the production on the basis of further use of the recorded material in live practice, subsequently documented once again. Also, one can examine it on the basis of radio programmes, which are quite well documented. In assessing the popularity of this or that recording on the radio, however, one has to take into account state intervention in the broadcasting system, that is, the above mentioned cultural-political gatekeeping. Finally, new releases of the same pieces, as well as additional pressings, which can sometimes be determined, certainly testify to the market demand.

As for this last aspect, the song *Cara piccina* can serve as an example.[17] Vlaho Paljetak, one of the most prolific EBP artists, recorded it in two versions. Both are included in the catalogue from November 1927, one is in Croatian and is somewhat slower (Z-1056), and the other is in Italian (Z-1114). This Italian version was also released for the Romanian market (R-1097, matrix Z.159). The song was obviously a success since both versions were included in two series – Electron and Record, and the Croatian version was apparently pressed at least once again, as

[17] According to entry in the Library of Congress (https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-43237/), the authors of this Neapolitan song are Gaetano Lama (music) and Libero Bovio (lyrics). Singer Eugenio Cibelli, accompanied by an orchestra, recorded it in December 1921 for Victor (cat. no 68581, matrix no. C-25867).

Fig. 4a-d: Different versions, releases and pressings of *Cara piccina* performed by Vlaho Paljetak

the labels of the preserved copies differ in design details (see Fig. 4). Both recordings are available on Ivan Mirnik's channel on YouTube.

Combining different types of sources and analyses, it turns out that many could not afford the slogan from EBP advertisement – music in their own home. EBP records cost 26–35 Dinars, which was a considerable expense in relation to the minimum monthly budget needed for a family of four in Croatia, which at the end of 1930 amounted to 2,250 Din. (Benko Grado 1931). Not to mention gramophone players (namely, mechanical gramophones which did not require mains

Fig. 4e-g: Different versions, releases and pressings of *Cara piccina* performed by Vlaho Paljetak

electricity), which cost at least 1,500–2,000 Din. But the records were listened to in groups, especially in inns and at parties organized by various organizations. For instance, in a small town of Brinje in mountainous Croatia, the carnival in 1939 concluded with dance parties in three inns, provided by »tambura, accordion, harmonica, gramophone and radio« (*Lička sloga*, 18 March 1939:3). In Dubrovnik, on the other hand, »all innkeepers ha[d] turntables and radios.« Only »luxurious bars« provided live music, hiring »famous tamburitza bands and accordionists«

(*Lupar*, 25 Feb 1936:2). Related notes exist for many other places. Summarizing the tendencies, Zlatko Špoljar, one of the gatekeepers of *Seljačka sloga*, stated that

> today even in villages you can find turntables which have replaced tamburas, violins and bagpipes, and which play the latest schlagers that are even danced to (...) To this came the sound cinema, which is the strongest propaganda for, usually silly, schlagers, followed by [not at all] »cheap editions« of schlagers, where you have to pay 10 and more Dinars for two pages of notes. (...) [Adapting to the situation,] uneducated musically illiterate musicians (gypsies and tamburitza players), as well as educated musicians (...) for bread have to play what the audience is looking for, and these are usually the latest schlagers. (Špoljar 1933:166)

Indeed, professional musicians had to compete with recordings, and they did so in two basic ways. On the one hand they demanded a change of legal regulations for fairer market competition, mostly through their associations and magazines (such as *Jugoslavenski autor* and *Muzičar*), and on the other hand adopted a new repertoire from recordings and radio. Most of them could not afford direct attentive listening »in their own homes«. As for the radio, there are testimonies from later times that the band members would agree in advance who would remember which part or section of the melody and text of the pieces they were waiting for on the radio. Presumably, the same strategy was used in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the period between the two world wars, radio and the record industry were the main, intertwined, and often mutually competitive mediators of music to the public. More often than not, radio proved to be more successful in reaching the broader audience thanks to its »affordability, durability, portability and resilience in hot and humid climates«, and for allowing musicians »to stretch out more on live broadcasts than on commercial recordings« (Western 2018:6). But the situation in Croatia and Yugoslavia was somewhat different. In contrast to many other countries, radio devices were in the period concerned more expensive than gramophone players, ranging from 2,800 to 5,600 Din., while the cheapest »pocket gramophone« (Swiss Mikiphone) I have found in newspaper advertisements cost only 670 Din. The reason could be in EBP's own manufacture of turntables, while radio-appliances were imported from abroad. As well, in contrast to other countries, EBP and Radio Zagreb, which was established in 1926, the same year as EBP, did not try to diminish the market share of the other but collaborated. Already at a meeting of the EBP board of directors on 30 October 1926, Goodman reported on his negotiations concerning the radio broadcasting of EBP records, accompanied by »an indication about the manufacturer, which would be especially advantageous for advertising reasons.«[18] This was achieved – apart from reliance on recordings in the overall daily broadcasting of Radio Zagreb, there were also

[18] The document is deposited in Dečak's collection in the State Archives in Zagreb.

broadcasts dedicated specifically to EBP records (e.g., see *Radio Zagreb* magazine, May-June 1928; on Radio Belgrade such broadcasts were introduced in July 1929). The power of the Zagreb radio transmitter, however, was only 700 W up until 1940, reaching the listeners within a radius of only about 10 kilometres. The number of subscribers reached not more than 11,000 in 1936 and 35,491 in August 1940 (in relation to c. 250,000 inhabitants of Zagreb at the time), including 184 appliances in inns (Mučalo 2010:81, 83, 87). These were also the reasons why Radio Zagreb did not pose a threat to EBP. There is no specific additional information concerning the remaining two radio stations in Yugoslavia (Radio Ljubljana since 1928 with the power of 2.7 KW, and Radio Belgrade since 1929 with 2.8 kW). As for the threat from foreign radio stations, EBP in any case could not do anything except keep the price of turntables low in comparison to prices of radio appliances.

On Do-it-yourself Curation of Historical Recordings

Almost certainly, EBP matrices ended up as raw material for the needs of industry during World War II. On 16 January 1942, the Zagreb City Government ordered the confiscation of 6,661 kg of copper matrices found in the EBP factory. They were obviously moved to a new location since Milan Dečak in his complaint to the City Government, dated 19 December 1942, requested »suspension of the transfer of confiscated movables to a collective assembly point,« arguing that »matrices are essential for regular operation of the factory,« a »cultural heritage of the Croatian people«, and »works of art worth about 46,400,000 Kn.«[19] In any case, the matrices were lost, and the same happened to the records in stock. There was no institution that would keep a mandatory copy of issued records, and therefore their survival was up to individuals. Decades afterwards, the collection of shellac records from Radio Zagreb, the only institution in Croatia that could include a substantial number of EBP records (since other radio stations were established only after WWII), was deposited in the Croatian State Archives. It means that the preservation of EBP records up until today – and moreover, their presence in the public – is almost exclusively due to a group of collectors and curators, do-it-yourself archivists, not-for-profit re-recordists of analog records to digital files, researchers and, last but not least, aficionados of music pressed on historical records. Typically, these people are in their advanced age, academically educated males, who have been collecting shellac records since their youth. I was amazed to discover more and more such individuals in Croatia, the UK, Switzerland, Denmark and elsewhere. Of course, their collections are selective, in line with their musical preferences. On the

[19] Dečak came to that amount by calculating that the production of one recording, together with the making of a matrix, costed 5,000 Kn at the time. If so, then EBP had 9,280 matrices in its archive. The quoted documents are deposited in Dečak's collection in the State Archives in Zagreb.

basis of inventorying in progress within the project that a group of us started in 2020, the best represented are recordings of classical music, famed Croatian performers and canonical pieces of Croatian music regardless of the genres concerned, in contrast to, for instance, Gypsy bands. Even with the famed artists, such as the above mentioned Vlaho Paljetak, c. 30 percent of the recordings he made for EBP were not found in several of the largest collections inventoried up to now. It can easily turn out that a significant part of the memory of this part of the world, to refer to UNESCO's well-known programme, has been definitely lost.

Similar to the care for commercial recordings as physical objects, institutional efforts to make shellac recordings available for listening are also very scarce, both in Croatia and elsewhere.[20] In Croatia, the only project of this kind, »Sounds of the past« at the Croatian National Library, made accessible c. 150 records, including c. 90 EBP records, while the remaining c. 6,000 records – which Eduard Čapka, one of the biggest Zagreb collectors, donated to the Library in 2011 – are waiting for happier and richer times when it will be possible to digitize a more substantial part of his collection.[21] As with the case of literature, some internationally known sound libraries (e.g. British Library Sounds, National Jukebox at the Library of Congress) and community projects (e.g. »The great 78 project« at Archive.org) do not include EBP releases. It could be that precisely due to such circumstances, another big Zagreb collector, Ivan Mirnik, in April 2018 started uploading recordings from his collections to YouTube. As of September 2021, c. 2,100 recordings were included on his channel, accompanied by item labels and additional metadata. The conclusion about the capacities of individuals and institutions becomes self-evident, it is not even necessary to pronounce it.[22]

Scholarly studies in such do-it-yourself communities – or here individuals – have taken a swing (e.g., see Baker and Huber 2013, Bennett 2018), reflecting the growth and vitality of DIY cultures in between heritage, memory, technology, virtual public space, knowledge production and music studies. Ethnomusicologists have yet to conceptualize their place in these new settings detached from live musics, physical spaces, and familiar faces. But due to their methodologies, including collaborative approaches, and overall philosophy of the discipline, they are surely in a position to associate with DIY communities in the preservation and promotion of historical recordings.

[20] Cf., for instance, the Europeana Sounds, http://www.eusounds.eu/

[21] A comparable project, »Virtual groove« at the National Library of Serbia, also includes c. 150 records of various companies, including c. 30 EBP records, available for listening.

[22] For an interesting example of the purchase of a private collection of *fado* recordings and further institutional care for it, including the issue of digitization and public availability of the sound material itself, see Sardo 2017. The author specifically analyzes the processes of institutionalization and heritagization of a collection turned into a national archive. The experiences of collectors and institutions in Croatia are fundamentally different.

IRASM 52 (2021) 2: 323-354

In Conclusion

I hope that this take on EBP is convincing in exemplifying the importance and complexity of the record industry in culture. In the period in question it was pronouncedly global in its framework, and local in its operation, and therefore needs to be examined accordingly, from multiple perspectives. As experts for local and multiple perspectives, ethnomusicologists are surely invited to take an active part. Furthermore, it has turned out that apart from understanding the record industry as an economically-driven agency linked to social and political power, the other side of the coin should not be neglected, namely its reliance on – and its promotion of – the diversity of musics »in the field«. This is the same field that ethnomusicologists, at least today's ethnomusicologists if not our predecessors, are accustomed to examine and advocate. Likewise, to rely on one of the well-known definitions of ethnomusicology, if it is »the study of the music either past or present, of all who participate in music as creators, performers, or hearers of sound patterns; taking into account all factors which lead to a better understanding of this particular type of creative, human display« (Herndon and McLeod 1982:17), then the recording industry ought to be its customary subject, a field that ethnomusicologists regularly visit and often examine. This pertains to the entirety of the recording industry chain – from production within a given socio-political, economic and legal system, to circulation in public and interlinking with other backbones of musical life such as radio and performance venues, to consumption patterns and end-users, including musicians.

This is not to say that the recording industry should be a subject reserved for ethnomusicologists, nor that separation between different disciplines of music studies is welcome. It goes without saying that the recording industry is in multiple ways at the very centre of popular music studies, and the performative turn in musicology is intrinsically related to the record industry. Other disciplines of humanities and social sciences – history, cultural anthropology, sociology, cultural studies – also do contribute, and new fields have emerged, from the already well-established sound studies, to specific proposed sub-fields such as phonomusicology (Cottrell 2009) and musicology of record production (Zagorski-Thomas 2014). Despite that, a level of separation between disciplines is simply a state of affairs, which is unlikely to change. I do not regret this. There are specific merits of one in relation to related disciplines, while *homo universalis* is too big of a request for an average scholar. It seems therefore more productive to contribute to the comprehensive, inter- and multidisciplinary understandings through disciplinary-specific inputs. This is why this paper addresses only ethnomusicology. I argue that music as recording – usually although not exclusively underpinned by the recording industry and intended for the market – is not only a subject that an ethnomusicologist may but should not forget to take into account. For instance, gender aspects of

ethnomusicological research used to be neglected while nowadays are hardly avoidable in any music ethnography. A similar trajectory is desirable as regards recordings in culture. A first step would be to acknowledge that making and listening to recordings can be as musical as *in situ* and in person interactions.

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Sažetak

Glazba kao snimka, glazba u kulturi i istraživanje rane diskografske industrije u etnomuzikologiji: primjer tvrtke Edison Bell Penkala

Članak započinje razmatranjem mjesta koje glazbene snimke namijenjene tržištu zauzimaju u etnomuzikološkim istraživanjima. Autorica identificira nekoliko tematskih skupina radova (od kritičkih propitivanja *world music* do etnografija studijskog snimanja te istraživanja rane diskografske industrije na globalnoj i lokalnim razinama), ali uočava i izrazito etnomuzikološko privilegiranje žive, sudioničke izvedbe, (naizgled) neprispodobive snimci. Takav pristup smatra neproduktivnim s obzirom na sveprisutnost glazbe kao snimke, od njezina stvaranja do recepcije od strane različitih publika i glazbenika, što je vodi do središnjeg dijela članka posvećenog diskografskoj tvrtki Edison Bell Penkala (EBP), utemeljenoj u Zagrebu 1926. godine. Odabranim aspektima iz rada ove tvrtke oprimjeruje mjesto glazbe kao snimke u kulturi, predočujući istodobno i zašto upravo etnomuzikološki istraživački angažman može značajno pridonijeti ukupnom inter- i multidisciplinarnom studiju diskografske industrije u povijesnoj perspektivi.

Prvi se aspekt tiče izrazitog lokalizacijskog načela u poslovanju onodobnih međunarodno razgranatih tvrtki, kakva je bila i britanska tvrtka Edison Bell, što postaje razvidno tek decentraliziranim povezivanjem podataka iz raznorodnih izvora i iz različitih perspektiva. Drugi se odnosi na protočnost među različitim glazbenim područjima, žanrovima, tipovima ansambala i glazbenika u tržišno orijentiranoj ponudi EBP. U kontekstu onodobne dominacije programa Seljačke sloge u kulturnoj i političkoj sferi, ishodi da je EBP bio svojevrsni društveni korektiv, dokumentirajući raznolike lokalne glazbe onoga doba, napose postojeće a iz perspektive Sloge nepoželjne glazbene i kulturne mješavine. Naredni se aspekt odnosi na svjedočanstva o dostupnosti, slušanju i utjecaju gramofonskih ploča na različite društvene skupine i sredine, uključujući i glazbenike, te na odnos EBP i Radio Zagreba. Na posljetku, autorica se osvrće na današnji život gramofonskih ploča na 78 ok. u min., njihovu očuvanost kao materijalnih objekata i njihovu dostupnost kao zvučnih zapisa, što u najvećoj mjeri treba zahvaliti izvaninstitucionalnim *do-it-yourself* zajednicama kolekcionara, ujedno i kustosa, arhivista, presnimavatelja, istraživača i zaljubljenika u glazbu utisnutu na stare gramofonske ploče.