



# Schlager & Jazz in the 1920-1930s: Case Studies of the Popular Music

JVLMA

Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti

Special issue in English

[scriptamusica.lv](http://scriptamusica.lv)

XXII



# Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti

Jāzeps Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija, 2024

Special issue in English  
**scriptamusica.lv**

XXII

Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti, XXII

Rīga: Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija, 2024, 215 lpp.

ISSN (Online) 2592-9895

Numura sastādītājs / Scientific editor • Jānis Kudiņš

Numura redaktore / Editor of the issue • Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča

Kopsavilkumu tulkojumi / Translation of the summaries • Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča

Angļu valodas redaktore / English proofreader • Ieva Mežulis

Māksliniece un maketētāja / Design and layout • Kristīna Bondare

**Redakcijas kolēģija • Editorial Board**

Galvenā redaktore Lauma Mellēna-Bartkeviča (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija / Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music)

Jānis Kudiņš (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija / Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music)

Anda Beitāne (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija / Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music; Vīnes Mūzikas un

Izpildītājmākslas Universitāte / University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna))

Valdis Bernhofs (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija / Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music)

Martiņš Boiko (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija / Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music)

Lolita Fūrmane (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija / Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music)

Baiba Jaunslaviete (Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmija / Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music)

Kevin K. Kārns (*Kevin C. Karnes*; Emorija Universitāte / Emory University, Atlanta)

Helmūts Loss (*Helmut Loos*, Leipciģas Universitāte)

Audrone Žuraitė (*Audronė Žiūraitytė*; Lietuvas mūzikas un teātra akadēmija / Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre)

Katru krājumā iekļauto rakstu anonīmi recenzējuši divi recenzenti / Each article has been subject to double-blind peer-review

Vāka dizains / Cover design: Kristīna Bondare

© Jānis Kudiņš, Kamilē Rupeikaitē, Marianne Betz, Marija Golubovič, Alberts Rokpelnis, Nikola Komatović,

Aare Tool, Indriķis Veitners, Dmitri Dragilew

For contact information of the authors please do not hesitate to ask: [lauma.mellena.bartkevica@jvlma.lv](mailto:lauma.mellena.bartkevica@jvlma.lv)

Autoru e-pastus var uzzināt, sazinoties ar žurnāla galveno redaktori: [lauma.mellena.bartkevica@jvlma.lv](mailto:lauma.mellena.bartkevica@jvlma.lv)

## CONTENTS / SATURS /

Preface	5
Priekšvārds	7
<b>Jānis Kudiņš</b>	
The tango songs (schlagers) by Oscar Strok in Riga during the interwar period. Stylistic synthesis of various musical traditions	9
<b>Kamilė Rupeikaitė</b>	
From the history of 20th century popular music in Lithuania: reconstructing biography of violinist Daniel Pomeranz (1904–1981)	49
<b>Marianne Betz</b>	
“Writing two kinds of music”: the two musical voices of Vladimir Dukelsky alias Vernon Duke	75
<b>Marija Golubović</b>	
The role of popular music in the modernisation of the society of interwar Yugoslavia	95
<b>Alberts Rokpelnis</b>	
Printing and publishing of schlager (hit) sheet music in Riga in the 1920s–1930s	111
<b>Nikola Komatović</b>	
The role of the national and shortwave Radio Belgrade in the spread of Serbian folklore and schlager music in the 1930s	141
<b>Aare Tool</b>	
Jazz and popular music in Estonian periodicals in the 1920s and 1930s	153
<b>Indriķis Veitners</b>	
The first Latvian jazz musicians and their role in the later development of jazz in Latvia	173
<b>Dmitri Dragilew</b>	
Oskar Strock (Oscar Strok) and Eddie (Ady) Rosner: Berlin in their lives and music	185
About the Authors	208
Ziņas par autoriem	212







## PREFACE

The issue XXII of the academic journal *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti* (scriptamusica.lv) is dedicated to the analysis of the popular music culture in the 1920s and 1930s. The schlager, a term rooted in German language (equivalent of “hit” in English), at the time meant vocal or instrumental compositions, mostly accompanying the dance or serving as background music in social entertainment settings (theatres, restaurants, dance clubs etc.) and the related industry (production of sheet music and vinyl discs, radio broadcasting etc.). For the broad audience both schlager and hit stood for active circulation of the popular music in the country and internationally. In some cases, it was a short-time fame, but sometimes the hits managed to establish in the collective reception and kept the status of the *testimony of their time* even up to beginning of the 21st century.

The stimulus for this collection of research publications with a special focus on the topic was the conference *Schlager and popular (entertainment) music culture in the 1920s and 30s* held in Riga, February 2–3, 2023. It was dedicated to the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Oscar Strok<sup>1</sup> (*Oskars Stroks* 1893, Daugavpils – 1975, Riga). Strok was a pianist and popular (schlager) music composer who, in present-day Latvia, has been given the informal title of Riga’s Tango King.

The 130th anniversary of Strok’s birth provided an excellent opportunity to focus research on the processes of schlager and, more broadly, popular (entertainment) music culture in the 1920s and 30s in North-Eastern Europe as well as other countries in Europe and around the world. It also provided a stimulus to discuss whether specific countries or regions nurtured a special national schlager (popular) music style, in other words, whether a process of interaction between the local and the global, the cosmopolitan, took place.

The collection consists of thematically focused articles by scholars representing Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Serbia and Germany.

The first article by **Jānis Kudiņš** analyses the sources of the music stylistics and comparative contexts of the most popular tango-songs of the 1930s by Oscar Strok. The following article by **Kamilē Rupeikaitē** uncovers the creative biography of the violinist Daniel Pomeranz (1904–1981), a bright personality in the popular music culture of Kaunas, the capital of Lithuania during the interwar period. The first thematic section unspecified in the table of contents closes with the analytic essay by **Marianne Betz**

---

1 Different sources offer at least four spelling versions of the musician’s name and surname in English – *Oskar Strok*, *Oscar Strok*, *Oskar Strock* and *Oscar Strook*. The editors of this volume have chosen basically to use *Oscar Strok*, however accepting the use of other spellings, too.

about the bi-musicality in academic and popular music in the USA by Vladimir Dukelsky (1903–1969) alias Vernon Duke.

The next thematic group starts with the study by **Marija Golubović** dedicated to the distribution and flourishing of the popular music industry of the Kingdom SCS/ Yugoslavia in the 1920s and 1930s and related socio-historical and political contexts. In the continuation, **Alberts Rokpelnis** analyzes the functions of the schlager sheet music printing houses and related processes in Riga during the interwar period. The article by **Nikola Komatović**, in its turn, focuses on Radio Belgrade in the context of increasing popularity of schlager and folk music in Serbia in the 1920s and 1930s.

Third unspecified section is composed of the articles by **Aare Tool** providing a detailed analysis of schlager and jazz representation in the Estonian interwar press, and **Indriķis Veitners** uncovering the history of first generation of jazz musicians in Latvia and its impact to the further development of jazz in the region.

And, last but not least, the collection is enriched by the analytic essay by **Dmitri Dragilew** dedicated to the life and work of Oscar Strok and Eddie Rosner (1910–1976) contextualized in the lights of the popular music scene of Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s. The comparison of the two musicians uncovers a series of interesting interactions and diverse perspectives of the popular music culture through the personal stories.

Note: All references in Cyrillic are translated to the Latin alphabet according to the international standard ISO/R9 in order to avoid the alphabetic incompatibility.

Jānis Kudiņš, scientific editor



## PRIEKŠVĀRDS

XXII Mūzikas akadēmijas rakstu ([scriptamusica.lv](http://scriptamusica.lv)) numuru veido pētījumu raksti, kas ir veltīti 20. gadsimta starpkaru perioda populārās mūzikas kultūras procesu analīzei. Šlāgeris (vāciski *schlager*, angļiski arī *hit*) tolaik bija apzīmējums populārai vokāli instrumentālai vai instrumentālai kompozīcijai, galvenokārt saistītai ar dejošanu, fona mūziku sabiedrības izklaides kultūrā (teātros, restorānos, deju klubos u. c.) un to veidojošo industriju (nošu un skaņuplašu izdevumi, atskaņojumi radio u. c.). Šlāgeris sabiedrības uztverē nozīmēja īpašu popularitāti guvuša mūzikas darba aktīvu apriti gan vienas valsts, gan arī starptautiskajā populārās mūzikas kultūras vidē. Daļā gadījumu šī popularitāte bija īslaicīga, daļā – nostabilizējās uz vairākiem gadiem un saglabāja *laikmeta liecības* nozīmi līdz pat 21. gadsimta sākumam.

Stimuls veidot šādu tematiski īpaši akcentētu pētījumu publikāciju krājumu bija 2023. gada 2.–3. februārī Rīgā, Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmijā notikuši starptautiskā zinātniskā konference *Šlāgeris un populārā (izklaides) mūzikas kultūra 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gados (Schlager and popular (entertainment) music culture in the 1920s and 30s)*. Konference bija veltīta Rīgas tango karaļa, pianista un populārās mūzikas komponista Oskara Stroka (1893, Daugavpils – 1975, Rīga) 130. dzimšanas gadskārtas atcerei.

Tas sniedza lielisku iespēju aktualizēt pētniecību par 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gadu šlageru un plašāk populārās (izklaides) mūzikas kultūras procesiem dažādās Eiropas valstīs. Arī stimulēja diskusijas par to, vai konkrētas valstis vai reģioni pagātnē bija izkropuši īpašu nacionālo šlageru (populāro) mūzikas stilu un kā šajā jomā notika mijiedarbības process starp lokālo un globālo, kosmopolitisko.

Krājumu veido Latvijas, Lietuvas, Igaunijas, Serbijas un Vācijas pētnieku ieguldījums iepriekš raksturotajā tematikā. Lai arī satura rādītājā tas nav īpaši iezīmēts, pētījumu publikācijas veido dažādu tematiku izklāstu.

Izdevumu atklāj **Jāņa Kudīna** piedāvātā analīze par Rīgas tango karaļa Oskara Stroka 20. gadsimta 30. gadu pazīstamāko tango dziesmu muzikālās stilistikas avotiem un salīdzinošajiem kontekstiem. Nākamais ir **Kamīles Rupeikaites** (*Kamilė Rupeikaitė*) pētījums par 20. gadsimta starpkaru laika Lietuvas galvaspilsētas Kauņas populārās mūzikas kultūras personības, vijolnieka Daniela Pomeranca (*Daniel Pomeranz*, 1904–1981) radošās darbības un biogrāfijas zināmajiem un mazāk zināmajiem faktiem un notikumiem. Rakstu nosacīto pirmo sadaļu noslēdz **Mariannes Becas** (*Marianne Betz*) analītiskā etīde par mūziķa un komponista Vladimira Dukeļska (*Vladimir Dukelsky*,

1903–1969) alias Vernona Djūka (*Vernon Duke*), muzikālo jaunradi un darbību ASV gan akadēmiskās, gan populārās mūzikas jomās, balansēšanu starp divām identitātēm mūzikā.

Nākamo tematisko ievirzi rakstu secībā sāk **Marija Goluboviča** (*Marija Golubović*), raksturojot industrijas lomu populārās mūzikas izplatībā un uzplaukumā 20. gadsimta starpkaru Dienvidslāvijas Karalistē, dažādiem sociokulturāliem un sociālpolitiskiem šī procesa kontekstiem. Turpinājumā **Alberts Rokpelnis** detalizēti analizē šļāgeru nošu izdevniecību darbību un faktus, kas raksturo galvenās tendences populārās mūzikas nošu izdevumos starpkaru laika Rīgā. Savukārt **Nikolas Komatoviča** (*Nikola Komatović*) rakstā uzmanība pievērsta Belgradas Radio darbības lomai Serbijas šļāgeru un tautas mūzikas popularizēšanā 20. gadsimta 30. gados.

Nosacīto trešo tematisko ievirzi krājumā pārstāv divi raksti. **Āre Tols** (*Aare Tool*) piedāvā 20. gadsimta starpkaru Igaunijas presē atspoguļoto šļāgeru un džeza mūzikas recepcijas detalizētu analīzi. Savukārt **Indriķis Veitners** raksturo Latvijas džeza mūziķu pirmo paaudžu darbību, likteņus un ietekmi uz džeza tālākās attīstības procesiem.

Izdevumu noslēdz **Dmitrija Dragiļeva** (*Dmitri Dragilew*) analītiska etīde par mūziķu un komponistu Oskara Stroka un Edija Roznera (*Eddie Rosner, 1910–1976*) radošās darbības faktiem, kontekstiem un dažādu ietekmju impulsiem uz 20. gadsimta 20. gadu un 30. gadu pirmās puses Berlīnes populārās mūzikas vidi. Abu spilgto personību radošā darbība, lai arī abiem tieši nesatiekoties, piedāvā iespēju konstatēt virkni interesantu faktu un mijiedarbību, kas arī no šāda rakursa izgaismo šļāgera žanra *sejas* dažādos vaibstus, vēlreiz atgādinot par šī mūzikas kultūras slāņa nozīmi vēsturē.

Piebilde. Visos numura rakstos krilicas un citu rakstu sistēmu burti tiek atveidoti atbilstoši latīņu alfabētam pēc starptautiskās standartizācijas sistēmas ISO/R9 pieraksta (lai tiktu ievērots vienotas alfabēta sistēmas lietojums izdevumā).

Sastādītājs Jānis Kudiņš



# THE TANGO SONGS (SCHLAGERS) BY OSCAR STROK IN RIGA DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD. STYLISTIC SYNTHESIS OF VARIOUS MUSICAL TRADITIONS

Jānis Kudiņš

Oscar Strok (1893–1975) was a vivid personality in Latvian and European popular musical culture before and after World War II. One of Strok's most popular tango songs of all time has been *Black Eyes* (1929). According to data compiled by the author of this article, a tentative total of forty-four tangos by Strok, in both solo song (28) and instrumental (16) form, can presently be located. These tangos are composed in the period from 1927 until the early 1970s. However, most tango compositions were created in the 1930s.

What are the peculiarities of the Strok tango-songs musical stylistics (the "face" of the genre)? The Argentinian *tango-canción*, Russian urban romance and Jewish klezmer musicking style can be considered basics of Strok's 20th century interwar period tango songs (schlagers) musical stylistics. A synthesis of these various musical traditions and influences forms the special stylistic uniqueness and recognizability of the interwar tango songs created by Oscar Strok nowadays.

**Keywords:** Oscar Strok; 20th century interwar period, Riga (Latvia), tango songs (schlagers), North-Eastern and South-Western Europe popular music contexts, sources of musical stylistics, Argentinian *tango-canción*, Russian urban romance, Jewish klezmer tradition.

## Introduction

**Oscar Strok** (1893, Daugavpils – 1975, Riga) was a legendary personality (pianist and composer) in Latvian and European popular musical culture before and after World War II. Strok was born into a Jewish family at the end of the 19th century in former Dinaburg (from German *Dünaburg*) / Dvinsk city, which from the end of 18th century up to the end of WWI was part of Tsarist Russia's Vitebsk Governorate. The two languages Strok primarily used in communication in his life were Yiddish (mainly in childhood and adolescence), and Russian (Gimmervert 2006, 17–26). After the establishment of the Republic of Latvia in 1918, the city became part of the new state. The city name officially was changed to Daugavpils in 1920 (Daugavpils History n. d.).

Oscar Strok's father, David Strok (1838/40–1919), played an important role in Oscar's development as a musician. David Strok, who was an accomplished flautist and also a proficient pianist and player of other woodwind and brass instruments, is presumed to have had a natural talent for music. David Strok was a musician in Jewish klezmer ensembles as well as worked in a professional orchestra in the former Dinaburg/Dvinsk first city theatre (Gimmervert 2006, 19–20; Kudiņš 2019, 16–17; 407–408).

From 1904 to 1922, Oscar Strok with his family (mother, father, brothers and sisters) resided in Saint Petersburg and studied piano at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory (studies were not finished). In 1922, Oscar Strok accepted Latvian citizenship and came to live in the capital of Latvia, Riga, where he, apart from a short break during the Second World War in Kazakhstan, lived to the end of his life. In the 20th century, specifically in the 1930s, Strok became one of the internationally best-known popular (schlager or hit) music composers (one of Strok's most popular tango-songs of all times has been the *Black Eyes*). After WWII, when Latvia was re-occupied by the former Soviet Union, Strok's music was officially banned as inconsistent with the guidelines of the totalitarian political ideology. The composer continued to work informally and only in the 20th century, in the early seventies, his music ban was partially lifted (Kudiņš 2019).

For the first time, almost at the same time in Riga and Moscow, Oscar Strok was titled the Tango King in public at the moment when the Soviet Union collapsed (Sokol'skij, *Sovetskaâ molodež'*, 08.03.1990; Mangušev, Kotlârčuk, *Muzykal'naâ žizn'*, 1990). In Latvia's cultural life, the active actualization of Strok's musical heritage<sup>1</sup> began in the early 21st century (Kudiņš 2019, 411–413). On January 6, 2013, a memorial plaque dedicated to Strok (with inscriptions in Latvian and English and the title Riga's Tango King<sup>2</sup>) was unveiled in Riga, at 50 Tērbatas street (its creator is the sculptor Jānis Strupulis).

One of the most intriguing questions is about the tango-songs, which Strok created in Riga in the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> The musical scores of Strok's tango-songs reflect a very simple notation. In turn, the arrangements and manner of performance of these songs, which is fixed in output of sound record companies at that time, highlights interesting creative interactions between musicians of different countries. Both musicians and traditions of musical performing can be perceived as tango stylistic adaptation actors and agents,

---

1 The heritage of his musical compositions in total consists of 355 works. The number of Strok's musical works is summarised by comparing the information contained in three sources – the register of the National Library of Latvia (*\*the materials of the composer's private archive, donated by Stroka's descendants in 2014, can also be found there*), the Russian Authors' Society (*\*in the early 2000s, Strok's descendants transferred the authorship management of his musical works to this organization in Moscow, Russia, as it was possible to get more royalty payments for performing Strok's music in Russia*) and the Saint Petersburg branch of the Russian State Library. Strok created the first composition – a romance for voice and piano – at 11, during his early life in former Dinaburg/Dvinsk city. The next 13 musical works (in the style of the Russian urban romance genre and some compositions for the piano) were composed during his life time in Saint Petersburg. The number of compositions created in the late 1920s and 1930s in Riga consists of 59 musical works for voice and piano, piano or an ensemble of different instruments (tangos, foxtrots, one-steps, waltzes, polkas and others). The number of compositions created in the 1940s and early 1950s consists of 87 compositions for voice and piano, piano or an ensemble of different instruments (some tangos, mainly wartime songs with patriotic themes, as well as Soviet-style marches). Even though after World War II Strok lost any opportunity to participate in official musical life and his music was banned on the radio and television, he continued to compose and distribute his music sheets privately to musicians and entertainment venue ensembles throughout the former Soviet Union. The number of compositions created in the late 1950s, 60s and early 70s consists of 195 compositions for voice and piano, piano or an ensemble of different instruments. Entertainment musical works, including tangos, waltzes and foxtrots, as well as echoes of the innovations in popular music culture (for example, blues, samba, shake or big-beat music) were created.

2 In Latvian: *Rīgas tango karalis*.

3 In the late 1920s and 30s 17 tangos (the solo songs or schlagers) were created. Overall, according to data compiled by the author of this article, a tentative total of forty-four tangos by Strok, in both solo song (28) and instrumental (16) form, can presently be located. These tangos were composed in the period from 1927 until the first half of the 1970s.

and together they represent a branched international network. How, in the context of this network, were the peculiarities of the Oscar Strok tango-song musical stylistics (“face” of genre) constructed?

The **purpose** of that research is to characterize the synthesizing of the various musical traditions – the Argentinian *tango-canción*, the Russian urban romance and Jewish klezmer musicking – in Strok’s 20th-century interwar tango songs’ musical stylistics.

The vibrant tango songs Strok composed in Riga in the late 1920s and 1930s became *schlagers* – hungrily awaited popular songs with sentimental lyrics and omnipresent “blows” and “beats” (from the German word *der Schlag*, a blow, strike, hit) resounding in the saturated stream of entertainment culture (Czerny & Hofmann 1968; Wicke 1998). It is no coincidence that the first title that the press in interwar Riga bestowed upon Strok before the Second World War was the “King of schlager”<sup>4</sup> (*Aizkulises*, Nr. 41, 09.10.1931; *Aizkulises*, Nr. 4, 22.01.1932; *Intīmā Rīga*, Nr.12, 09.03.1934; *Intīmā Rīga*, Nr. 20, 04.05.1934). Strok himself also actively offered his compositions under the title *schlager* on the sheet music market.

Of course, the term *schlager*, and its use in the analysis of popular music is broad and has undergone various changes in its definition until today. This article examines *schlager* in the context of various trends of European popular music culture in the 1920s and 1930s. Based on the findings expressed so far in the research about the representation of schlager in Riga (Latvia), it is defined as a genre created under the influence of various factors of the popular culture industry (musical theatre, cinema, radio, phonograph, etc.). It is formed by an orientation towards popular dance (the Charleston, tango, foxtrot, valse etc.) and the use of characteristic rhythms in the creation of vocal compositions mainly with sentimental text (Rokpelnis 2020; Rokpelnis 2021; Rokpelnis 2022).

It should be noted that for a long time, Strok’s analysis of tango music has been reflected mainly in texts written in Russian. The two books about Strok were published in Russia in the first decade of the 21st century (Gimmervert 2006; Dragilev 2008a). Both books in Russian are based on memoirs of Strok, relatives and information from different sources. However, these books do not exhaustively analyse the question of the stylistic sources in Strok’s tango songs. In turn, the author of this article wrote the first monographic study on Strok in Latvian that was published in 2019 (Kudiņš 2019). The analysis presented in the monograph has served as the basis for the solution of the topic in this article.

The first chapter of the article presents an analysis of Strok’s best-known tango song (*schlagers*) scores and performance practices during the 20th century interwar time. The second chapter provides a comparison of Strok’s tango songs with schlager music in the other countries of north-eastern and south-western Europe. The third chapter characterizes the influences of the Argentinian *tango-canción*, Russian urban romance, and Jewish klezmer musicking traditions in Strok’s tango songs.

---

4 In Latvian *šlāgeru karals*.

## 1. Oscar Strok's best-known interwar tango songs (schlagers)

The interwar period in the 20th century was a time when the popularity of Strok as a composer of a popular song or hit, especially in the tango genre, flourished particularly loudly. In the exuberant, creative and successful decade before the Second World War, Strok wrote his name into the European history of the tango by composing such works (vocal compositions) as *Black Eyes* (*Čěrnje glaza*), *Light-Blue Eyes* (*Golubje glaza*), *My Last Tango* (*Moë poslednee tango*), *Sleep, My Poor Heart* (*Spi, moë bednoe serdce*), *Don't Leave Me!* (*Ne pokidaj!*) and *Tell Me Why* (*Skažite, počemu?*). Poet Alexander Perfilyev (*Aleksandr Perfil'ev*, 1895–1973) wrote the lyrics originally (in Russian) for some of these Strok tango songs.<sup>5</sup> Of course, anyone interested in Strok's music may add other compositions to this list of compelling tangos at their own discretion.<sup>6</sup>

Strok indicated the year in which he composed *Black Eyes* (his second tango composition) on a later transcription of the score. In his rather calligraphic handwriting in Russian, the sentence reads:

"I composed these *Black Eyes* in 1929 in Riga."<sup>7</sup> (Gimmervert 2006, 101)

In turn, conductor Marek Weber (1888–1964) and his Dance Orchestra (Berlin) played an important role in the flourishing popularity of *Black Eyes*. According to a family memories recorded (albeit in slightly embellished form) by Anisim Gimervert in his biography of Strok and based on an account told by Strok's daughter<sup>8</sup> and son<sup>9</sup>, Strok met Weber in the summer of 1929, when he headed to Berlin in search of a better life, being well aware that a collaboration with the popular band leader could help him considerably in fulfilling his ambition of becoming better known (Gimmervert 206,

5 Born in Chita in Russia's Far East, Perfilyev came from a family of cavalrymen in the Tsar's army going back several generations. He arrived in Latvia in 1921, having fled from Soviet Russia as a "white émigré". In Riga, he published (sometimes under the pseudonym Alexander Li /*Aleksandr Li*) several collections of poems in the Russian language: "Snowy Mass" (*Snežnaâ messa*, 1925), "Leaf-Fall" (*Listopad*, 1929) and "North Wind" (*Veter s severa*, 1927). In 1944, at the end of the Second World War, he left Latvia and later settled in Munich, West Germany, where he lived for the rest of his life. In the 1950s and 60s, Perfilyev worked at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (Filej n. d.).

6 In the 1920s and 30s in Riga, the chronology of the origin of the tango compositions created by Oscar Strok is as follows: "A Night in Marseilles" (*Nacht-Marsel / La Nuit à Marseille*) for piano (1927); *Black Eyes* (*Čěrnje glaza*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Alexander Perfilyev (1929); *Light-Blue Eyes* (*Golubje glaza*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Alexander Perfilyev (1930); *My Last Tango* (*Moë poslednee tango*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Alexander Perfilyev (1932); *Don't Leave Me!* (*Ne pokidaj*) for voice and piano, text in Russian (1933); *Sleep, My Poor Heart* (*Spi, moë bednoe serdce*) for voice and piano, text in Russian (1934); *Tell Me Why* (*Skažite, počemu?*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Oscar Strok; "Oh, How Sweet It Is" (*O, kak mne sladko*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Oscar Strok (1935); "Forget Me Not" (*Farges mich nit*) for voice and piano, text in Yiddish of Isroel Sabeschinski (1936); "You Still Grieve for *Black Eyes*" (Response to *Black Eyes*) (*Ty vse grustiš' o "Čěrnih glazah"* (*Otvēt na "Čěrnje glaza"*)) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Oscar Strok (1936); "Natascha" (*Nataša*) for voice and piano, text in Russian (1937); "Sonya" (*Sonā*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Oscar Strok (1937); "When Spring Returns Again" (*Kogda vesna opāt' pridēt*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Oscar Strok (1937); "Neapolitan Tango" (*Neapolitanskoe tango*) for voice and piano, text in Russian (1938); "No Need to Remember" (*Ne nado vspominat'*, in Russian) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Oscar Strok (1938); "Waiting" (*Ožidanie*) for voice and piano, text in Russian of Leonid Avdeev (1938). – Based on the data of the registers of the National Library of Latvia, Russian Authors' Society (please see references to these sources at the end of the article).

7 "Èti "Čěrnje glaza" â napisal v 1929 godu v Rige."

8 Vera Shishkina (*Šiškina*, née Strok, born 1919 in Voronezh (*Voronež*, Russia), deceased 2012 in Moscow).

9 Yevgeniy Strok (*Evgenij Strok*, 1926–1989, Riga, Latvia).

100–105; Kudiņš 2019, 251–252). The fact that several recordings of *Black Eyes*, distributed in Berlin, appeared on German record labels already in 1929 provide indirect evidence of such a course of events. The vocal part on these recordings was sung by Mark Levin (under the pseudonym Marek Belorusov), a singer well known in Riga among the Russian so-called “white émigrés” (*Schwarze Augen, Electrola*, 1929; *Schwarze Augen, His Master’s Voice*, 1929).<sup>10</sup> In 1930, simultaneously in Riga and Berlin, Strok first published an arrangement of *Black Eyes* for voice and piano with texts in Latvian, Russian and German, presenting it as a *Kazanova (Casanova)* edition released by his own publishing house (*Melnās acis. Čērnyje glaza, Casanova*, 1930; *Zwei dunkle Augen schau’n mich an, Casanova*, 1930<sup>11</sup>).

Most likely, Weber appreciated Strok’s talent for composing easily marketable popular dance music with catchy melodies, as evidenced by the very rapid rise of *Black Eyes* in the shellac record industry of the day. At the same time, it was probably thanks to Weber that *Black Eyes* has, from the very first recording of it up until the present day, been accompanied by a musical “quotation” that, judging by all available evidence, was not originally present in Strok’s own score. This is the melodic line of the popular Russian urban romance titled *Black Eyes (Oči čērnyje)*<sup>12</sup>, which appears in the middle, or in some versions at the end, of Strok’s song the 1930s shellac records (for example, *Čērnyje glaza, Ūrij Morfessi, Odeon*, Berlin; *Čērnyje glaza, Olga Kamieńska, Columbia*, London).

The score of Strok’s famous tango song *Black Eyes* adheres to the assumption that musicians will invariably introduce various nuances of artistic interpretation during live performance that will enrich and complement the sound of the song. The basic outline of the song’s musical structure is very elementary: seven introductory bars in the piano part, followed by an exposition of two strophes (one strophe consisting of two verses followed by a refrain). The musical structure of the two strophes – verse and refrain (binary form) – is based on the so-called classical quadratic structure (a 16-bar period divided into two musical phrases: 8 + 8).

In terms of harmony, the *Black Eyes* score is also based on the simplest, most typical of structures: chords and their inversions in the basic key of the song (G minor), the inclusion of individual seventh chords at different pitches, the emphasis of structures in the cadences of the sentences and periods that underline the instability of the dominant. The only deviation from the basic key is the C minor chord at the end of the verse and

---

10 All of the phonograph records listed in the article are also available on youtube.com, where they have been posted for public access by various users.

11 From the 1920s, Strok owned a sheet music publishing house in Riga. From 1930, its name was *Kazanova* (in Latvian), and for a short time it also operated in Berlin under the name *Casanova*. Strok released mainly sheet music for schlagers. With the beginning of the occupation of Latvia by the USSR (the first year of the occupation, 1940 - 1941), the publishing house of Strok’s sheet music was closed.

12 The history of the Russian urban romance *Black Eyes*, or “Ochi Chorniy” (*Oči čērnyje*), is quite interesting. Ukrainian poet Yevgeny Grebinka’s (*Yevohen Hrebinka, Evgenij Grebinka*, 1812–1848) poem *Black Eyes* was published in 1843. Later, set to march-like music by the little-known amateur musician Florian Hermann (*Florian German*) of Lithuania, and arranged later yet in a waltz rhythm by Moscow musician Sergey Gerdel (*Sophus Gerdel/Gerdal, Sergej Gerdel’*), the romance gained phenomenal popularity worldwide in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century – thanks to a performance by the legendary Russian opera singer Fyodor Chalyapin (*Fëdor Šalâpin*, 1873–1938) – and has remained popular to the present day (Kravčinskij 2012).



the refrain, which, as the characteristic subdominant chord, helps to create a classically simple, quite (stereo)typical final cadence. The instrumental coda in the parallel key of G major introduces a decidedly peculiar accent in the first edition of the song's score – an echo of the typical Baroque-era technique of abruptly replacing the minor-key affect and evening it out with a closing cadence in a major key.

What in the melodic line and texture of *Black Eyes* suggests the tango genre? It is the metrical pattern. Its dotted rhythm and regular syncopations instantly allow us to recognise one of the basic forms of the Argentine tango, namely, the form based on the 2/4 time signature of the Cuban habanera and milonga.

The habanera's characteristic dotted rhythm is already present in the piano's opening bars:

Example No. 1. Oscar Strook, *Black Eyes*.

The classic pulse of the tango is also present with almost mechanical regularity in the song's well-known refrain with lyrics:

*O, èti čèrnyè glaza  
Menâ plenili,  
Ih pozabyt' ne v silah â,  
Oni gorât peredo mnoj.  
O, èti čèrnyè glaza  
Menâ lûbili.  
Kuda že skrylis' vy teper',  
Kto blizok vam drugoj?*

Oh, those black eyes  
That captivated me,  
I can't forget them anywhere,  
They burn in front of me.  
Oh, those black eyes  
That once loved me,  
Where have you fled to now?  
Who is close to you now?

О е-ти чёр ны-е гла - за ме - ня пле - ни - ли

их по-за-быть ни-где нель-зя. О - ни го - рят пе-ре-домной.

Example No. 2. Oscar Strok, *Black Eyes*.

If, in its original form (the score for voice and piano), *Black Eyes* is such a formally simple, restrained piece in terms of all means of musical expression, then one must wonder what was, and still is, the phenomenon behind the popularity of the song. When analysing the phenomenon of the popularity of Strok's tango song *Black Eyes*, the issues of notation, improvisational skills and the role of the performer naturally lead one to the song's various performance versions and the role of its performers in the 1930s and 1940s early. For instance, the interpreters of *Black Eyes* were internationally known singers Yuri Morfessi (*Ūrij Morfessi*, 1882–1949), Jerzy Siemionow (1898–1948, see *Czarne ochi*, *Syrena-Electro*, Warsaw), Olga Kamińska (1905–1981), Seva Foullon (1908–1982, see *Tvoji glaza* (*Your Eyes*), *Seva*, New York), and many others, all of whom sang in Russian, in addition to versions of the song in other languages by singers from different countries. These can be found in the numerous recordings made since the first recording of the song was released in Berlin in 1929 by *Electrola* and *His Master's Voice*.

It should be noted that it is virtually impossible to identify all of the interpretations of *Black Eyes* released on phonograph records. According to available information, it seems that dozens of interpretations of the song were released on many different record labels. Most of those recordings are now held mainly in the private collections of enthusiastic collectors of retro records. However, the variety of stylistically nuanced contexts heard in even just the publicly accessible recordings give a sense of how *Black Eyes* marched to victory in the international market for popular music recordings of the time. This victory depended in large part on the kind of singers who recorded the song. Moreover, one particular interpretation of the song on the shellac record remains to this day an almost unrivalled benchmark for those interested in popular retro music.

That interpretation is by the legendary singer of popular music of the 1930s and 1940s **Pyotr Leshchenko** (*Pëtr Lešenko*, 1898–1954). Leshchenko was born in the village of

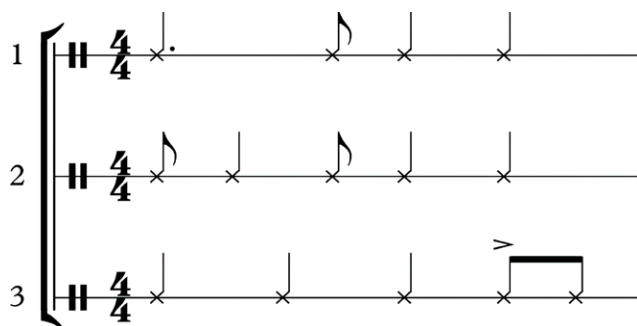
Isaev in Kherson Governorate (nowadays, this place belongs to Odesa district), Ukraine, and grew up in Bessarabia (Kishinev), after WWI, he became a citizen of Romania. He had initially worked as a revue dancer. Having met and married his first wife, the Latvian dancer Zinaīda Zaķīte in Paris, Leshchenko arrived in Riga in 1930. In the early 1930s, Leshchenko and his family left Riga and moved to Romania, where he owned a restaurant in Bucharest. Leshchenko performed ceaselessly throughout Europe up until the Second World War and released countless recordings of songs with record labels in many different countries. He mainly sang in the Russian language and is therefore today considered a “European Russian singer”, one of the most vivid symbols of a bygone era in the genre of popular song. After the divorce from the first marriage, during WWII, Leshchenko married for the second time with Vera Leshchenko (née Belousova, 1923–2009). The two met and married in 1942 in German-occupied Odesa (Ukraine). Pyotr and Vera Leshchenko lived in Romania after the Second World War, because the singer had become a citizen of that country before the war. In 1951, the security forces of Romania’s Communist government, in collaboration with Soviet KGB agents, arrested Pyotr Leshchenko. Later, Vera was also arrested. She was incriminated for “betrayal of the homeland” due to the fact that she had obtained Romanian citizenship during the Second World War in order to marry Pyotr Leshchenko and leave German-occupied Ukraine. Pyotr, in turn, was suspected of being a politically unreliable *German agent* due to his regular performances in German-controlled areas during the war. Under circumstances that remain unclear – most likely as a result of torture – he died in prison in Romania in 1954 and was buried in a mass grave, the exact location of which is not known today (Skabard 1992; Bosdriesz 2008; Lešenko 2013).

Sources describing the creative collaboration between Strok and Leshchenko indicate that it was Strok who, by a stroke of fate, was destined to shape the career of the future world-renowned singer of popular music. In short, the story went like this: in early 1931, Leshchenko was left alone on stage at Riga’s entertainment venues without his first wife and dance partner, who was unable to perform following the recent birth of their son, Igor. Leshchenko tried singing schlagers in Russian, and on one such occasion he was approached by Strok, who offered a musical collaboration. Leshchenko had not been professionally trained as a singer, and, based on surviving recordings, his natural voice was also quite modest, although he did possess a particularly velvety, honey-like timbre (Bosdriesz 2008; Gimmervert 2006; Lešenko 2013; Skabard 1992).

It is possible that precisely this vocal quality attracted Strok, hearing in it an interpreter of the popular songs he was composing – a voice that could at times perfectly reflect the peculiar grit and musical exaltation characteristic of the compositions by Riga’s Tango King. According to various sources, Strok and Leshchenko became friendly companions on the popular music scene and performed together quite frequently in Riga and other Latvian cities. Moreover, Leshchenko’s rapidly rising popularity among listeners of shellac records soon opened up frequent opportunities for him to perform in various places abroad (he did not hide the fact that the BBC in London paid him high fees for singing and taking part in radio broadcasts).

It was probably Leshchenko's unique, inimitable tenor voice with its distinctly tender and sweet timbre that proved to be so suited to the general musical character of Strok's tango songs. While not blessed with a particularly powerful voice capable of filling a large concert hall, Leshchenko proved invaluable in the recording studio, where even the microphones of that era were able to capture the varied subtleties of his nuanced performance, which was so well suited to the message encoded in the lyrics and score.

Leshchenko first recorded *Black Eyes* at the Columbia studio with Viennese dance orchestra and conductor Frank Fox (1902–1965) in Vienna, in 1933. All previous recordings of Strok's famous tango described above preserved the dotted rhythmic pattern of the Cuban habanera. Fox and Leshchenko, however, took the liberty of slightly altering it. In their version, the presence of the tango genre is more evident in its march-like 4/4 rhythm accenting the last quarter note, forming a discrete syncopation within the measure (the third pattern of example No. 3).



Example No. 3. Three typical tango rhythm patterns (Evans 1988, 10; Béhague 2001; Link & Wendland 2016, 28–31).

Such a solution gives Strok's tango a certain emotional harshness – the steady pulse of the quarter notes evokes a feeling of constant motion and fateful ticking, as if of a clock – as well as a new, unprecedented dimension of expressiveness. And, above the ensemble's musical framework and its new tempo-rhythmic pattern, the irresistible allure of the singer's voice (*Čěrnje glaza*, Petr' Lešenko, *Columbia*, Vienna).

This interpretation became an instant hit, as evidenced by regular repeated releases of the recording in various different countries. In fact, the widespread recognition of Leshchenko's interpretation of *Black Eyes* ensured him a healthy enough income that he did not need to bother with making many new recordings up until the Second World War, so successful were the re-releases and sales of his rendition of the song in Europe and the United States.

Next to *Black Eyes*, other musically vivid tango songs from the 1930s by Strok are, for instance, *Light-Blue Eyes*, *My Last Tango*, *Sleep*, *My Poor Heart*, *Don't Leave Me!*, *Tell Me Why* (*Russkij džass! Russian jazz!*, Kazanova, 1937) and *My Last Tango* (*Moë poslednee tango. Mon dernier tango*, K. Reinhold, *Casanova*, 1932).

It is interesting that the five tango songs that followed *Black Eyes* contain a greater variety in terms of musical expression. For example, while *Light-Blue Eyes* still adheres quite explicitly to the metrical pattern of the Cuban habanera (*Golubye glaza*, Petr' Lešenko, Columbia, Vienna), in *My Last Tango*, this pattern has already been woven into the texture of the composition in a much more discreet, less emphatic way (*Moë poslednee tango*, Petr' Lešenko, Columbia, Vienna). In *Sleep, My Poor Heart* (*Spi, moë bednoe serdce*, Tango (*Spi moe bednoe serdze*, P. Lescenko, Columbia, London), *Don't Leave Me!* (*Ne pokidaj!* Tango. (*Nye pokidai!*, Peter Lescenco, Columbia, Bucharest) and *Tell Me Why* (*Skažite, počemu?*, Peter Lescenco, Columbia, Bucharest), the habanera rhythm has been replaced by the march-like pulse of the tango dance (eighth notes in 2/4 time or quarter notes in 4/4 time).

In terms of musical structure, these four tangos by Strok retain the basic, classic strophic form consisting of an exposition (verse) and a refrain, albeit with some deviations. *Tell Me Why* features the most typical musical structure: both the exposition section (a) and the refrain section (b) are divided into two musical phrases of 8 bars + 8 bars. The compositional structure of *Light-Blue Eyes* consists of an exposition section (a) with two musical phrases of 8 bars + 16 (8+8) bars and a refrain (b) with two musical phrases of 8 bars + 8 bars. The exposition section (a) in *Sleep, My Poor Heart* consists of two musical phrases of 8 bars + 8 bars and a refrain (b) of two musical phrases of 16 (8+8) bars + 16 (8+8) bars. The exposition section (a) in *Don't Leave Me!* is formed by two musical phrases of 8 bars + 8 bars, while the refrain (b) is broken into four symmetrical musical phrases of 4 bars each.

The compositional plan (the structure of the musical strophe) of *My Last Tango*, on the other hand, obviously deviates from the "square" forms of the verse (exposition) and refrain. The exposition (a) of the musical strophe consists of two musical phrases, each constructed as a complete section – 10 (6 + 4) bars + 8 (4 developing the musical material + 4 repeating the main motive of the first phrase) bars – thus creating a so-called binary reprise form, which consists of two independent musical structures and a repetition of the original musical material at the end. The refrain (b), however, is composed in a symmetrical two-phrase construction of 8 bars + 8 bars, followed by an additional bar concluding the composition with an emphatic harmonic resolution in the main tonality of the song. It is quite clear that the musical structure of *My Last Tango*, which is so atypical for Strok, was determined by the flow of the text, which is in turn dominated by the free-form development of a brief story with a certain escalation of drama at the moment of parting that seems to ease slightly in the narrator's concluding statement ("I will never forget the meeting when you left me") at the end of the verse. This is followed by the refrain, both musical sentences of which conclude with words "I am sending to you my last tango".

Moreover, it is not only the structuring of the musical material in *My Last Tango* that is uncharacteristic of the "classic squareness" found in Strok's music. The development of the musical phrases in the exposition section (a) stands out with its descending chromatic melodic line in the vocal part, which discreetly accents the interval of the



diminished fifth, or tritone (for example, the D–G# in the development of the first phrase):

Example No. 4. Oscar Strok, *My Last Tango*.

Thus, a subtle allusion is made to other well-known prototypes in the history of various musical genres. For example, the lightly sketched Cuban habanera metrical formula and the short, abruptly ending motifs in the phrase structure of *My Last Tango* seem to allude to Carmen’s famous *Habanera* in Georges Bizet’s immortal romantic opera. The allusion to the figure of the femme fatale in the text of Strok’s tango also suggests a link with the legendary opera heroine’s passionate, tragic drama of love. In his essays on Strok, Dmitri Dragilew has stated that this tango also contains a musical reminiscence of Danish popular music composer Jacob Gade’s iconic tango *Jealousy* (*Jalousie*) (Dragilev 2008a, 141–142). As a result, whether consciously or not, Strok succeeded in creating, in terms of musical expression, a minor masterpiece in the contextual interpretation and reception of this popular dance.

It is noteworthy that, as in *Black Eyes*, the musical charm of these other five tango songs by Strok from the 1930s is most clearly expressed in the refrain. In fact, it is precisely the refrains that provide the “meat”, or core, of the musical expression in his best-known compositions; it is in them that the ache and resignation of the underlying musical mood is most directly concentrated. This is probably why, in the recordings made before the Second World War, Strok’s tangos were often recorded in a reduced form, often shortening the musical structure of a strophic verse or having only the instruments play it, in order that the singer’s performance could bring out the magical expression of the refrain.

The musical refrains in *My Last Tango*, *Light-Blue Eyes* and *Don't Leave Me!* are shaped as a sinuously flowing melodic line with gradual progress towards the climax and a certain slackening afterwards, as if rounding it off:

Про - щай, про - щай, про-щай мо-я ро-дн - ая, Те - бе я

шлю мо - ё послед не - е тан - го, Я так лю -

бил те - бя, я так стра - да - ю но

ты не - зна-ла серд-ца мо - е - го.

Example No. 5. Oscar Strook, *My Last Tango*.

Музыкальный фрагмент в нотной записи. Верхний стеллаж содержит вокальную мелодию с русскими текстами: "Го-лу-бы-е гла-за, вы пле-ни-ли ме-ня.". Средний стеллаж — это фортепиано-сопровождение в правой руке, а нижний — в левой руке. Ключевая подпись — один диэзис (F#), ритмический рисунок — 4/4.

Музыкальный фрагмент в нотной записи. Верхний стеллаж содержит вокальную мелодию с русскими текстами: "Средь ноч-ной ти-ши-ны яр-ким блес-ком ма-ня.". Средний стеллаж — это фортепиано-сопровождение в правой руке, а нижний — в левой руке. Ключевая подпись — один диэзис (F#), ритмический рисунок — 4/4.

Музыкальный фрагмент в нотной записи. Верхний стеллаж содержит вокальную мелодию с русскими текстами: "Го-лу-бы-е гла-за, в вас так мно-го есть ог-ня.". Средний стеллаж — это фортепиано-сопровождение в правой руке, а нижний — в левой руке. Ключевая подпись — один диэзис (F#), ритмический рисунок — 4/4.

Музыкальный фрагмент в нотной записи. Верхний стеллаж содержит вокальную мелодию с русскими текстами: "Вы вле-че-те ксе-бе, го-лу-бы-е гла-за, страсть и неж-ность та-я.". Средний стеллаж — это фортепиано-сопровождение в правой руке, а нижний — в левой руке. Ключевая подпись — один диэзис (F#), ритмический рисунок — 4/4.

Example No. 6. Oscar Strok, *Light-Blue Eyes*.

The image displays a musical score for a song in 2/4 time, featuring a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The score is divided into five systems, each with a vocal staff and a piano staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are in Russian and are written below the vocal staff. The piano accompaniment includes a dynamic marking 'p' (piano) in the first system. The melody in the vocal line is characterized by wide intervals, particularly in the refrain, which is described in the text as 'soaring sighs'.

Не по-ки- дай, я у мо- ля - ю, по- будь е-щё хоть час со мной,  
Я так люб- лю, я так стра- да - ю, и пре- дан всей те-бе ду- шой.  
Ах, как тя- жёл миг раз- ста - ва - ни-я, ска - жи, к че-му раз - лу - ка нам...  
Не по-ки- дай, я у- мол - я - ю, по- будь е-щё хоть час со мной.

Example No. 7. Oscar Strok, *Don't Leave Me!*.

The musical expression in the refrain of *Sleep, My Poor Heart* is slightly different. After the intensity of lost happiness in the verse (exposition), Strok conveyed a feeling of “soaring sighs” in the melodic line of the refrain, this effect being achieved via broad “leaps” and the light, seemingly halting presentation of the sung phrases.



Спи, мо-е бед-но-е серд - це, Счасть - е ведь бы-ло слу-  
 чай - но. Про - шло-е всё по - за - бы -  
 то, Мы си-рот-ли-во од - ни.

Example No. 8. Oscar Strook, *Sleep, My Poor Heart*.



In *Tell Me Why*, in its turn, the refrain and the interval of a sixth in its first phrase, which symbolises romantic longing, give an especially exalted expression to Strok's tango music of the 1930s:

Ска-жи-те, по-че-му нас с Ва-ми раз-лу-чи-ли? За-чем на-  
век у-шли\_вы от ме-ня? Ве-дь зна-ю я, что вы ме-ня лю-  
би-ли, но вы уш-ли, ска-жи-те, по-че-му?

Example No. 9. Oscar Strok, *Tell Me Why?*.

In the second half of the 1930s, the undisputed best-sellers among the recordings of *Light-Blue Eyes*, *My Last Tango*, *Sleep*, *My Poor Heart*, *Don't Leave Me!* and *Tell Me Why* were those performed by Pyotr Leshchenko. After his first successes in Riga, he soon found his way to the recording studios established by the internationally influential American company *Columbia* in various European capitals. His interpretations of Strok's well-known tangos perfectly illustrate the instrumental accompaniment techniques typical of the popular dance-song genre of the time.

## 2. Strok's Tango Songs from the Angles of the European Northeastern and Southwestern Cultural Areas

In order to outline the international context of Strok's tango songs, the work of a few contemporaries of Riga's King of Tango who made their mark in the history of European popular music will be considered here for purposes of comparison. Strok's contemporaries in the neighbouring countries will be described in more detail, aiming to identify an Eastern- and Northern European "axis" in tango music that differed in some respects from its counterpart in the western part of the continent.

By the first half of the 1930s, when Strok was gaining international recognition with the first recordings of his tango songs, the Danish musician **Jacob Gade** (1879–1963) had already resoundingly appeared on the scene about a decade earlier. At a cinema in Copenhagen in September 1925, he premiered his Gypsy Tango *Jealousy* (*Jalousie*) as an overture to the Hollywood silent film *Don Q Son of Zorro* starring the famous Douglas Fairbanks (1883–1939), and this composition instantly made Gade famous (Bjarnhof 1969). Gade’s tango quickly swept across Europe and the world, was recorded and was sold in countless shellac records, and became an iconic example of European tango (*Jalousie. Jealousy. Tango Tzigane, Victor, New York*). The composition soon also took the form of the tango song “Jealousy”, with lyrics by Vera Bloom. To this day, the song has been used, both as a concert piece and background music, in countless films, theatre performances and other cultural events (*Jalousie, Bloom-Gade, Musicrafts Records, New York*).

Gade was also active as a composer of popular dance and song music in Denmark before and after the Second World War. He wrote a few popular compositions (waltzes, tangos and foxtrots, such as *El Matador, Tango Charmeuse, Lille Mary Anne, Laila* and *Tango Glamour*) still known in Denmark today for their retro charm but became world famous for only one piece, the Gypsy Tango *Jealousy* (Bjarnhof 1969; Christensen 1996; Røllum-Larsen 2002).

This tango, in which Gade managed to capture the Argentine tango style of 1920s American film music with extraordinary finesse, continues to fascinate listeners today as one composer’s unsurpassed lifetime opus, with its brilliant sonic fantasia on the South American dance. An uncommonly southern ardour resounds in its melodic lines and the metro-rhythmic pulse of the accompanying voices, like a precisely captured echo of the dance’s native land across the Atlantic. Dramatic tension and stark contrasts – these elements in Gade’s “Jealousy” are very much akin to Strok’s tangos, and they stylistically link the two northern European musicians:



Example No. 10. Jacob Gade, *Jealousy* (Rīga, Kazanova).

As previously pointed out, it is quite possible that Strok was influenced in the creation of his tango songs by Gade's earlier and widely known masterpiece of a tango, which appeared in Riga soon after its appearance in Copenhagen in the form of sheet music, shellac records and cinema music. Another contemporary of Riga's emerging King of Tango, and also a comparatively influential figure for Strok, was **Jerzy Petersburski** (1895–1979), one of the most famous Polish composers of popular music in the 1930s.

Petersburski's life and creative work followed a somewhat similar path to that of Strok, occasionally meeting musicians who proved important to both composers at certain points in their lives. Petersburski was born in Warsaw into a Jewish family that included, on his mother's side, several well-known klezmer musicians with the surname Melodysta. Unlike Strok, he graduated from a conservatoire (in Warsaw) and continued his studies at the Vienna Music Academy. During and immediately after the First World War, Petersburski became acquainted in Vienna with Imre (Emmerich) Kálmán (1882–1953), the famous early-20<sup>th</sup>-century master of the operetta, and he dedicated his first songs to the famous Russian singer of popular music Alexander Vertinskiy. In the late 1920s, after Petersburski had returned to the newly independent state of Poland, he and his cousin Henryk Gold (1902–1977) formed the Petersburski & Gold dance music band in Warsaw, which by the Second World War had become one of the most internationally renowned musical ensembles. It was in this band that Petersburski's talent as a composer of popular schlager music blossomed (Jerzy Petersburski n. d.).

One of Petersburski's best-known tango songs was *Tango Milonga* (*Tango Milonga, Syrena-Electro*, Warsaw), composed in 1928 and known with texts in German and English by the name of *Oh, Donna Clara!* (*Oh, Donna Clara!, Odeon*, Berlin). With its fun cabaret-style musical atmosphere, the song quickly became popular all over the world. Another Petersburski tango became a kind of symbol of 20<sup>th</sup>-century interwar Polish entertainment culture and popular music and remains so to this day. Like Strok's tangos, this composition was also one of the most musically expressive adaptations of the Argentine *tango-canción* genre in eastern Europe at the time.<sup>13</sup> It is Petersburski's *The Last Sunday* (*To Ostatnia Niedziela*), first performed in 1936 and recorded by famous prewar schlager singer Mieczysław Fogg (1901–1990) (*To Ostatnia Niedziela, Syrena-Electro*, Warsaw). With its melancholic and slightly pessimistic lyrics by poet Ludwig Zenon Friedwald (1906–1976), the song was at the time informally called *The Suicide Tango*. This is because its protagonist, a young man, pleads to his beloved, who has left him, to meet one last time on a Sunday; after that, "let happen what may". The solace and accentuation of resigned sadness in the tango's metro-rhythmic pulse and the song's very infectious refrain brought instant global fame to *The Last Sunday*:

---

13 In general, the tango is nowadays often divided into three types: the *tango-milonga* as purely instrumental music, the *tango-romanza* as vocal-instrumental or instrumental music with a lyrical character, and the *tango-canción* as a vocal-instrumental composition with lyrics of a highly sentimental nature and corresponding musical expression. (Bethell 2004, 361). This classification, however, mostly corresponds to the characteristic forms of tango-like musical expression that emerged in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, which, of course, reflect endless interactions and the emergence of ever new intermediary artistic forms.

To os-tat-nia nie-dzie - la... Dżis-laj się roz-sta - nie - my...  
 — Dżis-taj się ro-zej-dzie - my — na wiec - zny czas...

Example No. 11. Jerzy Petersburski, *The Last Sunday* (*Pie radio aparāta*, Rīga, Kazanova).

This song quickly acquired not only a second name but also a second life and a second history in the cultural space of the former Soviet Union. In the late 1930s, the talented musician Alexander Tsfasman (*Aleksandr Cfasman*, 1906–1971) and his jazz orchestra created and recorded a Russian version of it called *The Parting* (*Rasstavanie*), with lyrics by Josef Alvek (*Iosif Al'vek*) (*Rasstavanie*, *Aprelevskij zavod pamāti 1905 goda*, Moscow). The song also circulated widely under the title *The Weary Sun* (*Utomlënnoe solnce*), after the first line of the song. It was this version of Petersburski's tango that won the hearts of millions across the Soviet empire, which was at the time trying to build a virtual reinforced-concrete wall to shield its totalitarian ideology from the harmful influence of the rest of the world. But Petersburski's tangos, like Strok's schlager music, felt like a breath of fresh air from the outside world for Soviet society at the time – expressive, sincerely direct songs about human feelings and experiences that everyone could relate to. It seems that this tango song is one of the most striking examples of retro Polish popular music, for which Petersburski deserves the title of Warsaw's King of Tango.

In terms of musical expression, Petersburski and Strok are linked by their sometimes very similar (and most likely mutually influenced) perception of the stylistic schlager characteristics of the tango song. The shellac recordings of Petersburski's *The Last Sunday* as well as Strok's best-known tangos from the 1930s clearly show a similar approach to the instrumental arrangement of the vocal melody, with their smooth, supple, wistful "sighs" in the violins and trumpets, piano and accordion passages, and the familiar metro-rhythmic pulse of the passionate South American dance. We shall return to this issue a little later, after a brief description of the international context of European tango music at the time, which also includes Strok.

In one of his publications, Dmitri Dragilev has pointed out the connection that, chronologically, a number of tango songs in Russia emerged as a direct echo of the triumphal march of Strok's compositions among the people of the Soviet empire before the Second World War (Dragilev 2008b). In this respect, it is indeed possible to highlight several tango songs that are still well known today and were written in the mid to late 1930s by various composers active in Moscow and Leningrad at the time.



One of the first composers of *Soviet tangos* seems to have been **Isaak Dunayevskiy** (*Isaak Dunaevskij*, 1900–1955), whose song *So Many Beautiful Girls* (*Kak mnogo devušek horoših*, also known by the title *Heart, Serdce*) first came to the attention of a wider audience in Grigoriy Aleksandrov’s (*Grigorij Aleksandrov*, 1903–1983) legendary film *Jolly Fellows* (*Vesëlye rebâta*), a Soviet version, or parody in fact, of the musical genre.<sup>14</sup> Sung by the equally legendary actor, singer and musician Leonid Utyosov (*Leonid Utěsov*, 1895–1982), the song is a musically striking counterpart to the best examples of the genre by Strok, Gade, Petersburski (*Serdce, Gramplasttrest Kolomenskij zavod, Moscow*). With its infectious refrain set to a “Western” orchestral arrangement of the day, it is one of the most enduring examples of the tango as schlager:

Example No. 12. Isaak Dunayevskiy, *So Many Beautiful Girls* (*Fokstroty i tango. Sdevery tanceval'noj muzyki, Moskva, 2006*).

<sup>14</sup> *Mosfilm*, 1934. Director Grigoriy Aleksandrov, with Lyubov Orlova (*Lūbov' Orlova*, 1902–1975) and Leonid Utyosov in the leading roles.

Other examples of tango songs also emerged in the Soviet Union and have survived to the present day as recordings – indelible, timeless, often one-hit expressions of the genre by entertainment or stage (*Estrada*) musicians of the day. Among these, the following examples can be highlighted.

Born in Ukraine into a Jewish family, **Yefim Rozenfelyd** (*Efim Rozenfel'd*, 1894–1964) worked as a musician in Moscow from the early 1920s onwards. In the late 1930s, he formed the Jazz Accordion Ensemble, for which he also composed his own songs. Among them was the tango schlager *I Love* (*Lûblû*), released on shellac record in 1939 and known by the famous line from its refrain: “I am returning your portrait to you” (*Vam vozvrashaâ vaš portret*). The version sung by tenor Georgiy Vinogradov (*Georgij Vinogradov*, 1908–1980) is particularly memorable for his exalted expression in the refrain (*Lûblû, Aprelevskij zavod pamâti 1905 goda, Moscow*):

Вды-ха-я ро-зы а-ро-мат, те-нис-тый вспо-ми-на-ю

сад и сло-во неж-но-е "люб - лю",

что вы ска-за-ли мне то - гда.

Example No. 13. Yefim Rozenfelyd, *I Love* (*Ot melodii k melodii*, Moskva, Muzyka, 1990).

Another enduring example of “Soviet tango” appeared in 1939 in Moscow and Leningrad, namely, **Vladimir Sidorov’s** (*Vladimir Sidorov*, exact life dates unknown) tango song *A Secret* (*Tajna*). There is little information about this composer available today, mainly hints that he worked as a pianist-accompanist in Moscow and composed songs in the 1930s. The emphatically sentimental, melancholy, resigned character of his best-known song, with music that perfectly spotlights the simple text, was best captured in Utyosov’s instrumental arrangement with a lush ensemble sound in which the violin part and the accordion’s pulsating South American dance rhythm particularly stand out (*Tajna, Aprelevskij zavod, Moscow*). Thus, it is likely the ache in the refrain – a tango dressed in the stylised sound of a rural country band – that in subsequent



decades brought *A Secret* to the fore in various films and plays when it was necessary to musically evoke this colourful bygone era of the Soviet empire:

У ме-ня есть серд - це, а у серд-ца пе - сня,  
а у пе-сни тай - на, хо-чешь от-га - дай.

Example No. 14. Vladimir Sidorov, *A Secret* (*Ot melodii k melodii*, Moskva, 1988).

And another timeless tango song and its composer can be singled out as a counterpart to Strok's creative output in the Soviet empire: *Tango of the Nightingale* by **Yuriy Bogoslovskiy** (*Ūrij Bogoslovskij*, exact life dates unknown). In the history of Russian popular music, however, Bogoslovskiy's surname is more closely associated with another composer, named Nikolay<sup>15</sup>. In the mid-1960s, the *Melodiya* label in Moscow even released a phonograph record that erroneously lists Nikolay Bogoslovsky rather than Yuriy Bogoslovskiy as the composer of the *Tango of the Nightingale* (*Tango solov'â*). This perhaps happened because Yuriy Bogoslovskiy was not a professional musician and, judging by some indirect present-day references in certain sources, had been a victim of Stalinist (communist) repressions in the late 1930s or early 1940s.

It impossible to know how exactly this masterpiece of the tango came to be. Contained in the characteristic metrical formula of the accompanying parts in a Cuban habanera, the melodic line in *Tango of the Nightingale* is to be whistled rather than sung. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "artistic whistling" (called *hudožestvennyj soist* in Russian) was a real artistic speciality in the Moscow Philharmonic and other national musical ensembles. Taisia Savva (*Taisiâ Savva*, real name *Taisa Savenko*, 1907–1973) was clearly a high-calibre professional in this intonationally precise technique of whistling, and her performance of *Tango of the Nightingale* with a dance orchestra conducted by Ferdinand Krish (*Ferdinand Krīš*, 1878–1948) was recorded and released on shellac record in 1941 (*Tango solov'â*, *Aprelevskij zavod*, Moscow).

15 Nikolay Bogoslovskiy (*Nikolaj Bogoslovskij*, 1904–1961), a composer of popular songs.



Example No. 15. Yuriy Bogoslovskiy, *Tango of the Nightingale* (Val's, tango, fokstrot dlâ akkordeona ili baâna, Moskva, 1981).

Another important figure in the genre of tango song linked to the Russian cultural space in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the famous singer and actor **Alexander Vertinskiy** (*Aleksandr Vertinskij*, 1889–1957). Born in Kiev, Vertinskiy made an early name for himself on the concert stage in cafés and revues in that city before the First World War. In 1913, he moved to Moscow, and it was there that he first performed tango music. It was also in those years that he developed his striking, self-invented stage persona in a black-and-white Pierrot outfit. Influenced by the trends and aesthetics of poet Alexander Blok (*Aleksandr Blok*, 1880–1921) and the Russian Silver Age (*Serebrânyj vek*), Pierrot expressed the slightly decadent aura of urban culture and served as a kind of ironic, poetically reflective metaphor for representatives of modern society.

Vertinskiy left Soviet Russia following the historic events of 1917. He first moved to Poland and Germany, and later to France. In 1933, he headed to Lebanon and Palestine and from there to the United States. He also lived for a longer time in Japanese-occupied Shanghai. In 1943, Vertinskiy appealed to the government of the Soviet Union (in the person of Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov) to return to his homeland with his family. He was granted permission to return and also permission to give concerts. However, until the end of his life, the Communist regime was ambivalent in its attitude towards Vertinskiy: information about the famous musician appeared very rarely in the press and radio, and he was allowed to perform mainly in the provinces. Vertinskiy died in 1957 in Leningrad (Makarov 2009).

A prolific actor and singer, Vertinskiy also worked as a songwriter throughout his career. Today, more than 150 compositions by him are known, including several tango songs. With a precise grasp of the genre's basic style and expression, he composed a few pieces that continue to fascinate and enthrall listeners to this day with their striking musical address. An example is *Magnolia* (*Magnoliâ*), a tango song he composed in Paris in 1930, and which was also released on phonograph record, featuring a performance by Vertinskiy himself (*Tango Magnoliâ*, Columbia, London). It was a very popular song in the informal entertainment culture of the Soviet Union and other European countries:

В ба - на-но-во ли-мон-ном Син-га - пу- ре, вбу ри, Ког-

да по-ёт и пла-чет о-ке - ан, И гон-ит вос ле-пи-тель-ной лаз-

у - ри, Птиц даль - ний ка-ра- ван.

Example No. 16. Alexander Vertinskiy, *Magnolia* (*Pesni i romansy A. Vertinskogo*, Leningrad, 1991).

Of course, it is probably interesting to ask whether the popular tango-song music by Oscar Strook and other northern and eastern European countries in the 1920s and 30s differs in any significant way from the cultural space of Europe's "old south and west". Did, for example, the composers of popular music in Berlin, London, Rome and Paris have different priorities and stylistic expressions in their work? It must be admitted at the outset that it is impossible to attempt a detailed description within the scope of this article of the dominant trends in general entertainment culture in the cultural capitals of western Europe and the place of the tango therein. This is also because this immensely vast layer of cultural tradition and heritage has not yet really been studied or developed from a comparative perspective. However, the available sources that shed even a bit of light on popular music in interwar Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century indicate that, of course, tango dance and song were also popular in the southern and western parts of the Old World. Moreover, various local conditions influenced the genre's representation.

For example, Latin American and especially Argentinian musicians had a strong presence in Paris from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century up until the Second World War. They gave the various new forms of the tango a halo of real or imagined stylistic

authenticity, which was complemented by the sounds of the music on the Parisian streets and in the cafés added by French, Italian and Spanish composers of entertainment music living and performing in the French capital at that time (such as **Vincent Scotto** (1874–1952), **Tiarko Richepin** (1884–1973), **Jean Lenoir** (1891–1976), **Jean Lumière** (1895–1979), **Cesare Andrea Bixio** (1896–1978), **Henry Himmel** (1900–1970), etc.) (Bible Tango, n. d.). Tango songwriters from Southern Italian culture also gave their music the slightly fiery rhythmic pulse and lyrical ache of Italian dance, as evidenced, for example, in the compositions by the famous musician **Dino Olivieri** (1905–1963) (Musiker and Musiker 2013). **Franz Grothe** (1908–1982), one of the Berlin-based greats of popular dance-song, successfully synthesised layers of German cabaret and folk music (German, Jewish, pseudo-Slavic and “Gypsy”) in his tangos, thus creating many enduring tango schlagers (Klee 2007).

Tango songs could be heard throughout Europe, and, in the absence of precise, dry statistics, the presence of this tenacious, intense genre is nevertheless a testament to the overall high demand for it in society. However, even just a slightly closer look at – or a simple aural comparison of the above-mentioned stratum of tango music in France, Italy and Germany can reveal some nuanced differences between it and the popular music of Strok and the northern and eastern European countries. There is no lack of sentimental expression in the music created by tango composers from western European countries. However, it seems that the tango songs from composers based in, for example, Paris and Berlin do not place so great an accent on minor tonalities in their expressive exaltation (in fact, the basic tonality of tango music by southern and western European composers is usually in a major key) or dramatic heightening and its particular musical “flavour” (with a striking climax in the dramatic curve of the composition’s, especially in the refrain). But this exalted moment of expression is almost like a stylistic trademark of Oscar Strok and other (Polish, Romanian, Danish, Finnish, Soviet) composers of the time. Latvian musicologist Ingrīda Zemzare once commented aptly on this nuance:

“[...] The melodies of I. Dunayevskiy were very popular at that time (*also in Riga, Latvia*), but Oscar Strok’s maddening tangos continued to reign next to them in the 1950s.”<sup>16</sup> (Zemzare, *Māksla*, 01.02.1986)

Why and from where did this tendency towards a particular dramatic heightening and “maddening” (in Latvian *tracinoši*) exaltation in musical expression develop in Strok’s tangos, their scores and instrumental arrangements in the 1930s? In his case and that of other composers geographically closer to him, was it related to a conscious or unconscious immersion in and cultivation of a particular cultural stratum?

---

16 “*Liela bija tolaik skanējušo I. Dunajevska melodiju popularitāte, bet tām blakus piecdesmitajos gados turpina valdīt Oskara Stroka tracinošie tango.*”

### 3. Sources of Musical Stylistics of Strok's Tango Songs: Argentinian *Tango-Canción*, Russian Urban Romance, Jewish Klezmer Musicking

One source of inspiration for Strok could have been the poetics and stylistics of the Argentine *tango-canción* genre and influences from the dominant trends in popular music on stage, radio and cinema<sup>17</sup>. Another source of influence was the 19th-century Russian urban traditional music (urban folklore), the so-called "urban romance" ("urban romance" / *gorodskoj romans*, "cruel-hearted romance" / *žestokij romans*), and the classical Russian romance genre in general (Gudošnikov 1990; Âgubov 2013). It should also be noted that Strok himself openly stated in his only major interview, published in the Moscow newspaper *Nedelya* (*Nedelâ*) in 1973:

"Yes, the tango – my favourite genre... But it's nothing more than a genre of romance, only in a different rhythm. Came to us in Russia, the exotic South American tango has embodied the best characteristics of the Russian romance: a certain nobleness in musical intonation, depth of feeling, all-embracing lyricism. The tango also attracts with its intimacy of the soul's experience and simplicity in its means of expression. Even the rather primitive lyrics that unfortunately accompany tango melodies do not diminish the interest of listeners in this genre."<sup>18</sup> (Marjanovkisj, *Nedelâ*, 1973, No. 38, 13)

34

It should be noted, that in Strok's speech attention can be drawn to the phrase: "Came to us in Russia". It should be briefly added, that Strok identified himself with Russian culture. His native Dinaburg/Dvinsk city had been strongly russified at the end of the 19th century, and 18 years of living in Saint Petersburg also contributed to ties with the Russian language and culture. Strok did not like the Soviet totalitarian regime, so he chose to leave Soviet Russia in 1922. The fact that he was born in the territory of the new country, until the end of the First World War this allowed him to become a citizen of Latvia, and he took the opportunity to get citizenship. However, the previously established connection with Russian culture remained. After World War II, when the Soviet totalitarian regime condemned Strok's music (during the 1948 political campaign – *the struggle with formalism in music*), it happened in Riga. For a while, this suggested the idea of trying to move to live in Moscow (after WWII, Strok regularly visited Moscow; he had a wide circle of acquaintances there - musicians of popular and classical music, representatives of the intelligentsia). Due to various circumstances, this could not happen. However, on the other hand, Strok also felt a connection with Riga, Latvia. That is evidenced by what he said in separate sound interviews recorded in private archives (*Govorit i igraet Oskar Strok, čast'-1* 2020). Therefore, Strok's cultural identity is a complex issue. This aspect is also characterized by the tendency that since

17 See the description of this type of genre above, footnote No.13.

18 "Da, tango - moj lûbimyj žanr... Èto ved' ne čto inoe, kak romans, tol'ko v opreделennom ritme. Popav k nam v Rossiû, èkzotičeskoe úžnoamerikanskoe tango vpitalo v sebe lučšie čerty russkogo romansa: blagorodstvo muzykal'nyh intonacij, glubinu čuvstvo, bol'suû liričnosť. Privlekaet k tango i vyražennaâ v nih intimnaâ duševnosť pereživanij, prostota vyrazitel'nyh sredstv. I daže dovol'no primitivnye teksty, kotorye, k sožaleniju, soprovozdaût melodii tango, ne snižauût interesa slušatelej k ètomu žanru."



the 1990s, Strok has been considered “our king of tango” both in Latvia and Russia. However, each country has different arguments for this.

Of course, the influence of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian urban traditional music (urban folklore) is nevertheless quite clear in the melodic lines of Strok’s tango and foxtrot songs and in their dramatically poignant expression and character. However, it is possible to identify one more source of stylistic influence in the tango songs composed by Strok in the 1930s (including their performance traditions in shellac sound recordings at that time). It is the potential influence of the Eastern European Jew’s klezmer instrumental musical tradition.

It is possible that the Ashkenazi communities of southern and eastern Europe at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century not only actively pursued the klezmer tradition themselves but also had a significant stylistic influence before the First World War as well as in the 1920s and 30s on the emergence and rise of modern European popular music based on recordings and radio. And perhaps it was from the klezmer tradition that the foxtrot and tango songs by several Jewish musicians and composers were infused with a particular spicy humour and an irresistible feeling of musical ache.

What evidence could there be for such a hypothesis? Let us try to find an answer by recalling what is known today about the klezmer tradition and whether the known manifestations of this tradition provide clues to the characteristics of popular music trends in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, especially in the eastern and northern countries.

The term *klezmer* is derived from the Hebrew word *klezmerim*, which means musical instruments (Feldman 2001; Slepovič 2003b). The Yiddish word *klezmer* is a compound word made up of *kli* (‘an instrument, tool’) and *zemer* (‘to make melody, song’) (Slepovič 2003a; Slobin 2008). Over the course of many centuries, klezmer tradition has developed into a form of music-making that accumulates the traditions of various different peoples, which also corresponds to the long experience of European Jews in establishing roots in and building relationships and friendships with the existing ethnic groups in various countries. It was precisely from southeastern Europe that klezmer tradition, having absorbed elements of both Jewish and various nations (Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, etc.) as well as Roma (formerly known as Gypsy) culture, reached eastern and northern Europe, namely, present-day Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and, to a relatively lesser extent, Scandinavia (Strom 2002; Slepovič 2003b; Feldman 2016a). An awareness of this process also allows us to better understand from where, for example, unexpected “Oriental” motifs suddenly appear in Latvian or Lithuanian folk music. They travelled along with the Jewish community and its klezmer traditions to various countries and were deposited in the musical traditions of other nations.

Oscar Strok was born in the border town of Dinaburg/Dvinsk in Vitebsk Governorate of the Russian Empire, a city that has naturally had a long cultural connection with the historical experience of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Jewish communities that (along with the lands of present-day Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus and

Poland) came under Tsarist Russian rule in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also became the main targets of the anti-Semitic policy of this imperial power and unwilling hostages of artificially created Jewish settlement zones (Stanislawski 1983; Klier 1995).<sup>19</sup> When attempting to specify the manifestations of the Jewish klezmer tradition, the research literature rightly points out that there are very few records of it in present-day Belarus, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. However, even these scanty records allow us to conclude at least the following facts.

Various studies of the klezmer tradition indicate that Jewish musicians (mostly amateurs, but also professionally trained musicians), especially from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, formed ensembles and earned a living by playing their own music as well as dances and songs of other ethnic groups at various social events (weddings, celebrations, funerals) mainly in rural areas and small towns. Such klezmer ensembles in southeastern (the present-day Balkan countries, Romania, southern Russia) and northeastern Europe (Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia) typically included violins (usually two: main and background), viola, cimbalom, clarinet, accordion, trombone, trumpet and double bass. Of course, the types and number of instruments varied greatly, depending on the number of musicians playing in the ensemble. Direct and indirect evidence in various sources also indicates the existence of musical ensembles consisting of only two or three musicians (Braun 2002; Slepovič 2003b; Rubin 2015). Studies also point to special semantics of two instruments in the Jewish culture of eastern and northern Europe.

The first instrument is the violin, or klezmer fiddle. Its specific connotation in eastern European Jewish, or Ashkenazi, culture points to the instrument's ancient origins in Palestine (present-day Israel) as early as the time of King David, with its archetype being the ancient harp and *kinnôr* (an ancient Hebrew instrument remotely similar to the modern violin) associated with the music of ancient Jewish rituals and customs. Preserving archaic notions of the sound of the harp and the *kinnôr*, the Ashkenazi bestowed upon the violin a meaning similar to that of the ancient instruments. One of the Jewish sacred texts in the Jerusalem Talmud states:

“Kinneret is Ginosar. Why is it named Kinneret? Because the fruits on its shores are as sweet as the sounds from a *kinnôr*!”<sup>20</sup> (Slepovič 2004)

As pointed out in various sources, the exceptional sensitivity perceived in the violin's silky timbre and the instrument's capability of expressing a range of emotional moods is a particular stylistic aspect of the Ashkenazi musical tradition. It is no coincidence that one of the best-known eastern European Jewish writers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Sholem Aleichem (pen name of Solomon Rabinovich; 1859, Poltava – 1916, New York), once wrote the following lines:

---

19 According to archival documents, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (until the First World War), in the former city of Dinaburg/Dvinsk, almost half of the population was Jewish (Kudiņš 2021, 152–153, 198).

20 “*Kinneret èto Genesar. Počemu imâ emu – Kineret? Potomu èto frukty, rastušie na beregah ego, sladki, kak zvuk kinora.*”

“The songs resound with the sounds made by the fiddler, and the heart melts like wax. All you hear is teh-teh-teh!... All you see is the hand sliding up and down, up and down... But it produces all-enchanting sounds, enthralling chants entwining, sad, sorrowful – they go directly to the heart, touching it and clenching the soul.”<sup>21</sup> (Šolom-Alejhem 1971, 266)

So, the violin – one of the instruments and timbres expressing the diverse range of emotions and moods that are so essential to the character of the Ashkenazi klezmer traditional tradition. And next to it, another instrument – the clarinet. Ancient Hebrew religious texts also contain references to a reed instrument called the halil, for example, “And therefore my heart wails like a halil.”<sup>22</sup> (Slepovič 2004)

As one of the ancient predecessors of the clarinet (one of its variants being pitched in C), the ancient halil, like the violin/kinnôr, forms the stylistic backbone of klezmer ensemble music. However, the clarinet’s widespread presence in the klezmer tradition has only been recorded mainly from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onward. It is possible that imaginative literary trends linked with the interpretation of folk traditions – such as those widely represented in various countries throughout Europe and characteristic of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romantic era – gave both the violin and the clarinet their special halo of antiquity. Yet this interpretation itself was at least partly rooted in the experience of older cultural layers and its adaptation to new conditions.

In some studies, the use of the clarinet in C (and also in B-flat) in klezmer ensembles in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was associated with demonstrating a particular sonic expression. The clarinet seemed even “sweeter” than the violin in expressing the ache of sorrow, but it was also perfect for expressing “piercing cries” and imitating moans and laments. An interesting aspect in the clarinet’s spectrum of musical expressiveness for klezmer traditions has been pointed out in a study:

“Clarinet players sometimes used a technique that transformed an ordinary sound into something like a high-pitched scream or allowed them to imitate a kiss-like sound.”<sup>23</sup> (Beregovskij 1987, 45)

These and other examples and evidence analysed in the literature on the klezmer tradition lead to the conclusion that the basic features of klezmer ensembles were free improvisatory interplay between players of a variety of instruments as well as a particular emphasis on the minor key and a rich gamut of sorrowful and aching moods achieved mainly with the timbres of the first (solo) violin and clarinet. These features were common in traditional Ashkenazi dance music (the *freilach* and *horah* wedding dances, the *sher* couples dance, etc.) and in stylistic adaptations of popular dances from other ethnic groups (*Ländler*, waltz, polka, mazurka, etc.) (Feldman 2016b).

---

21 “Stempenû zalivaetsâ na svoej skripke, i serdce taet, kak vosk. Tol’ko i slyšno: teh-teh-teh!.. Tol’ko i vidno: ruka letaet vverh i vniz, vverh i vniz... I razdaûtsâ čaruûšie zvuki, struâtsâ divnye napevy, pečal’nye, tosklivoye – prâmo za serdce berut, dušu vymatyvaût...”

22 “I potomu stonet serdce moe, kak halil’.”

23 “Klarnetisty neredko primenâli priem, prevrašavšij obyčnyj zvuk v vysokom registre v vykrik ili nečto pohožee na pričmokivanie pri pocelue.”

Strok's descendants have emphasised that David Strok, the father of Riga's King of Tango, was a talented and intelligent klezmer ensemble leader in former Dinaburg/Dvinsk city. He mainly played the woodwind instruments – the flute and clarinet (Gimmervert 2006: 18–20). It can thus be assumed that Oscar Strok, as the youngest child in the family, was, from an early age, very familiar with his father's klezmer ensembles and that they formed his first solid ideas about music. These ideas were indelibly imprinted in his memory and later actualised in his creative pursuits as an adult as he fitted into the broader culture of popular music in North-Eastern Europe between the two world wars.

## Conclusions

Today, studies of music culture in different European countries do not provide precise statistical data on what “set the tone” in the field of entertainment. However, a number of facts, including those presented earlier in this article, lead to the conclusion that musicians from Jewish backgrounds made up a significant proportion of the musicians in the popular-music genre. In many European capitals, Jewish musicians played an integral role in creating the music played in dance halls, restaurants and other entertainment venues. Jewish musicians were also common in the ensembles (bands) at radio studios and record companies that recorded and distributed the most popular schlagers of the day; in fact, talented Jewish musicians often also led these ensembles as conductors and arrangers of compositions. For example, Marek Weber, the conductor of the famous Berlin-based dance orchestra who played such an important role in Strok's rise to international fame as a composer of tangos; Sergey Aldyanov (pseudonym, real name Jasha Levenson, 1902–1941), a well-known Jewish musician and leader of several popular music ensembles who made many recordings of songs and dances in Riga for the shellac record company *Bellaccord-Electro* label; Jerzy Petersburski's cousin Henryk Gold (1902–1977) and the ensemble he led in Warsaw in collaboration with the Polish record company *Syrena-Electro*; etc. It should be noted that Jewish musicians also represented and developed the genre of tango song in the Yiddish language, as is evident today from recordings and other information (Czackis 2009; Esptein 2015). Seen from this perspective, the obvious conclusion is that, as they entered and became active in the popular music scene, many Jewish musicians in various countries, whether consciously or not, to some extent continued in this new environment the klezmer traditions they were already familiar with and which had been handed down to them from previous generations of musicians.

These traditions could hardly remain pure and “authentically untouched” while working with radio or record-label ensembles, not least because the klezmer style of music-making was by definition influenced by the interaction of various musical and stylistic layers, thus leading to the development of the main trends of the international, cosmopolitan popular music at that time. This music's influences ranged from elements of various local ethnic traditions to European (German, French) and American

(Hollywood) film music, which offered stylistic fusions of South American, North American and European music in a great variety of combinations. However, it was in the eastern European countries before the Second World War that the klezmer tradition seems to have been most deeply rooted. This may explain the special sense of exaltation mentioned above, which also permeates the musical expression in Strok's best-known tango recordings. In most of the recordings of his best-known tangos from the 1930s discussed above, the special emphasis on violin, sometimes clarinet, trumpet, accordion and Hawaiian guitar (as allusion of cimbalom) timbres and virtuoso improvisatory passages in creating a wistful-sorrowful mood is clearly discernible. It is precisely the interpretations of tangos developed and recorded at the time that provide the main evidence for us today of the stylistic originality and artistic vividness of this music.

Thus, a closer study of Strok's tangos and songs in other genres quite clearly shows that Russian urban and classical romance was only one inspiration source in his oeuvre. The possible echoes of the Jewish klezmer musicking traditions also can be hypothetically identified in his tango songs performance practice in the 1930s. As well as poetics and stylistics of the Argentine *tango-canción* genre and influences from the dominant trends in popular music on stage, radio and cinema. Assumedly, all these influencing factors have inspired Stroka's tango songs (schlagers) and the style (touch) of their performance in the sound recordings made immediately after creating the compositions.

Not only Strok but also composers of tango songs in Poland (Petersburski), Russia (Dunayevskiy, Rozenfelyd, Bogoslovskiy and others), Lithuania, Romania, the Czech Republic and potentially elsewhere were clearly similarly influenced, as can be heard in the wide range of recordings of their compositions released in 20th century interwar period. However, only a few composers managed to create songs that, in certain recorded versions, still resonate to this day and are perceived as indelibly expressive testimonies of the popular music of their time. Composed in the late 1920s and 1930s, Strok's tangos are still capable of evoking both musical empathy and admiration for how such simple musical language can conjure such a vivid musical wonder. Strok, in collaboration with the interpreters of his music, managed to find his own distinctive and therefore also inimitable form of musical-dramatic exaltation. This has been and remains imprinted in the history of European popular music as the mark of Strok's unique style, which can tell the attentive and interested contemporary listener the fascinating story of the many facets and manifestations in the creative interpretation of the tango song as schlager.



## SOURCES

### Catalogues (registers for Oscar Strok sheets of music).

National Library of Latvia:

Electronic Catalogue of the NLL

[www.lnb.lv](http://www.lnb.lv) – <https://kopkatalogs.lv> – Oscars Stroks, *Oscar Strok*.

Rosijskoe avtorske obšestvo (Russian Authors' Society):

<http://rao.ru/> – *Oscar Strok*.

### Sheet music

*Fokstroty i tango. Šedevry tanceval'noj muzyki*. Dlá ispolneniâ na fortepiano i gitare, a takže dlâ golosa s akkompanementom. M.: Izd-vo V. N. Zajceva, 2006.

Jacob Gade. *Jalousie. Zigeuner tango*. [Arrangement for piano]. Rīga: *Kazanova*, without year.

*Melnās acis. Čërnye glaza*. Tango. Oscars Stroks; A. Brieža latv. teksts. Slova i muzyka Oscara Strok. Rīga: Casanova, 1930.

*Moë poslednee tango. Mon dernier tango. Mein letzter tango*. Text und Musik von Oscar Strock. Rīga: K. Reinhold; Berlin: Musikverlag *Casanova*, 1932.

*Ot melodii k melodii*. Vypusk 1. Populârnye pesni prošlyh let dlâ golosa v soprovoždenii fortepiano (baâna, gitary) / sostavitel' G. Levkodimov. Moskva: Muzyka, 1988.

*Ot melodii k melodii*. Vypusk 3. Populârnye pesni prošlyh let dlâ golosa v soprovoždenii fortepiano (baâna, gitary) / sostavitel' G. Levkodimov. Moskva: Muzyka, 1990.

*Pesni i romansy A. Vertinskogo. Pesennik*. Sost. i obrabotka V. Modelâ. Leningrad: Sovetskij kompozitor, Leningradskoe otdelenie, 1991.

*Pie radio aparâta*. Populâras, iemiļotas melodijas. *Am Radio-Apparat*. Populâre und beliebte Melodien. Albums klavierēm un dziedāšanai. Rīga: *Kazanova*, without year.

*Russkij džass! Russian jazz!* Oscar Strock. Rīga: *Kazanova*, 1937.

*Val's, tango, fokstrot dlâ akkordeona ili baâna*. Sost. I. Savincev. Moskva: Muzyka, 1981.

*Zwei dunkle Augen schau'n mich an*. Tango. Text und Musik von Oscar Strock. Riga, Berlin: Casanova, 1930.

### Sound recordings

*Czarne ochi. Čërnye glaza*. (O. Strock). Wyk. Jerzy Siemionow z tow. orkiestry i choru. *Syrena-Electro* (Warsaw). *Mx/Ctr* No. 24037.

*Čërnye glaza*. Romans O. Stroka. Ūrij Morfessi isp. s saksof. orkestrom Dobri, u roâlâ knaz' Golicin. *Odeon* (Berlin). *Mx/Ctr* No. 1201.

*Čěrnje glaza*. Olga Kamieńska z tow. septetu pod. dyr. Henryka Golda. *Columbia* (London). Mx/Ctr No. DM 1864a.

*Čěrnje glaza*. Tango (*Schwarze Augen*). Slova i muzyka Oscara Stroka. Ispolnâet Petr' Lešenko s' gitaroj, bariton'. Orkestr Franka Foksa. *Columbia* (Vienna). Mx/Ctr No. WHR 290.

*Golubye glaza*. Tango. (*Blaue Augen*). Slova i muzyka Oscara Stroka. Isp. Petr' Lešenko s' gitaroj, bariton'. Orkestr Franka Foksa. *Columbia* (Vienna). Mx/Ctr No. WHR 288.

*Jalousie*. *Jealousy*. *Tango Tzigane*. Jacob Gade. Boston Pops Orchestra. Conductor Arthur Fiedler. *Victor* (New York). Mx/Ctr No. 12160-A.

*Jalousie*. Bloom-Gade. *Polka Dots*. *Musicrafts Records* (New York). Mx/Ctr No. 5917.

*Lûblû*. Tango, muz. E. Rozenfel'da, sl. N. Vengerskogo. Laureat Vsesoûzn. konkursa vokalistov G. P. Vinogradov. *Akkordeonnyj ansambl' p.u. E. M. Rozenfel'da. Aprelevskij zavod pamâti 1905 goda* (Moscow). Mx/Ctr No. 9271.

*Moë poslednee tango* (*Moe poslednee tango*, Oscar Strok). Petr' Lešenko, bariton'. Akkomp. orkestr'' Genigsberg''-Al'bahari. *Columbia* (Vienna). Mx/Ctr No. WHR 375.

*Ne pokidaj!* Tango. (*Nye pokidai!*) *Don't Leave Me!* Tango. (Oscar Strok) Sung by Peter Lescenco with Orchestra cond. by N. Ceresheana. *Columbia* (Bucharest). Mx/Ctr No. CHR 804.

*Oh, Donna Clara!* Tango (J. Petersburski). Text Beda. Tanz-Orchester Dajos Béla mit gesang. *Odeon* (Berlin). Mx/Ctr No. Be8827.

*Rasstavanje*. Sl. I. Al'vêka. Džaz-orkestr pod upr. A. N. Cfasmana. Solo: P. M. Mihajlov (penie). *Aprelevskij zavod pamâti 1905 goda* (Moscow). Mx/Ctr No. 5922.

*Schwarze Augen*. Tango. Oscar Strock. Marek Belorusov, Marek Weber und sein Orchester. *Electrola* (Berlin). Mx/Ctr No. BNR 817.

*Schwarze Augen*. Tango. Oscar Strock. Marek Belorusov, Marek Weber und sein Orchester. *His Master's Voice* (London). Mx/Ctr No. BNR 817.

*Serdce*. Iz ton-fil'ma *Vesëlye rebâta* (tango). Muz. *Dunaevskogo*. Isp. L. Utësov v soprov. Džaz-orkestra. *Gramplasttrest Kolomenskij zavod* (Moscow). Mx/Ctr No. 763.

*Skažite, počemu?* (*Scajitie patchemu?*) *Tell Me Why?* Tango. (Oscar Strock) Sung by Peter Lescenco with Orch. cond. by N. Ceresheana. *Columbia* (Bucharest). Mx/Ctr No. CHR 803.

*Spi, moë bednoe serdce*. Tango (*Spi moe bednoe serdze*). O. Strock & J. Altschuler – P. Lescenko. *Columbia* (London). Mx/Ctr No. CM 144.

*Tango Magnoliâ* (*Tango Magnolia*). M. Alexandre Wertinsky (Tenor) avec Orchestre Ionel Bageac. *Columbia* (London). Mx/Ctr No. WL2158.

*Tango Milonga* (J. Petersburski). Orkiestra Syrena Rekord pod dyr. H. Golda. *Syrena-Electro* (Warsaw). Mx/Ctr No. 6360.

*Tango solov'â*. Muz. Ū. Bogoslovskogo. Taisa Savva (hudož. svist). Koncertnyj ansambl', dirižer F. F. Kriš. *Aprelevskij zavod* (Moscow). *Mx/Ctr* No. 10758.

*Tajna*. Muz. V. Sidorova, sl. D'Aktilâ. Leonid Utësov, Gos. èstradnyj ork. RSFSR. *Aprelevskij zavod* (Moscow). *Mx/Ctr* No. 9135.

*To Ostatnia Niedziela*. Tango (Petersburski – Friedwald). Mieczyslaw Fogg z akomp. ork. *Syrena-Record*. *Syrena-Electro* (Warsaw). *Mx/Ctr* No. 26693.

*Tvoji glaza (Your Eyes)*. S. Foullon, Russian baritone and the A. Kirilloff Orchestra. *Seva* (New York). *Mx/Ctr* No. KS 304.

### Audiovisuals

Bosdriesz, Jan (2008). *Zwarte Ogen / Black Eyes*, documentary film, SNG Film with NPS Televisie.

*Govorit i igraet Oskar Strok, čast'-1* (Oscar Strok speaks and plays, part-1). Private sound recording in Strok's flat in Riga in 1972, made by Vladimir Volkov (1934–2020). Available on YouTube: Sergejs Belovs, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV4SMgOjFMQ&t=140s>. Accessed 10.02.2024.

Skabard, Tatâna (1992). *Moë poslednee tango..., dokumental'nyj fil'm* [My Last Tango. Documentary Movie], kinokompaniâ Illûzion, Tiraspol', pri učastii Filmex-Romania, Buharest.

### Periodicals (press)

Māksla. *Aizkulises*, No. 41, 09.10.1931.

Māksla. *Aizkulises*, No. 4, 22.01.1932.

Mihail Mangušev, Mihail and Kotlârčuk, Boris. Korol' tango. *Muzykal'naâ žizn'* (Moscow), No. 20, 1990, 30–31.

Mar'ânovskij, Viktor. Gost' 13-j stranicy Oscar Strok. Avtor znamenityh tango. *Nedelâ* (priloženie k gazete *Izvestiâ*, Moscow), No. 38, 1973.

Par visiem. *Intīmā Rīga*, No.12, 09.03.1934.

Intīmāis kokteilis. *Intīmā Rīga*, No. 20, 04.05.1934.

Sokol'skij, Konstantin. Korol' tango Oskar Strok. *Sovetskaâ molodež'* (Riga), 08.03.1990.

### Literature

Âgubov, Boris (2013). Žestokij romans i gorodskaâ balada: genezis i funkcionirovanie [Cruel Romance and Urban Ballad: Genesis and Functioning]. *Filologičeskie nauki. Voprosy teorii i praktiki*. Tambov: Izdatel'stvo Gramota: 215–219.

Béhague, Gerard (2001). Tango. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, London: Macmillan Publishers Limited. (Accessed August 28, 2023)

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027473?rskey=NobEdd&result=1>.

Beregovskij, Moisej (1987). *Evrejskaâ narodnaâ instrumental'naâ muzyka (Jewish Instrumental Folk Music)*. Vstup. i zakl. sta'â i primečaniâ M. Gol'dina. Moskva: Sovetskij kompozitor.

Bethell, Leslie (ed.) (2004). *The Cambridge History of Latin. Volume X. Latin America Since 1930: Ideas, Culture and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bible Tango (n. d.). Accessed August 1, 2023. <http://www.bibletango.com/accueil3.htm>.

Bjarnhof, Karl (1969). *Tango jalousie. Omkring Jacob Gade*. København: Gyldendal.

Braun, Joachim (2002). *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archeological, Written, and Comparative Sources*. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Christensen, Jørgen Gram (1996). *Jacob Gade – et eventyr i musik*. Vejle: Byhistorisk Forlag.

Czackis, Lloica (2009). "Yiddish Tango: A Musical Genre?" *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 42, no. 2, 107–121.

Czerny Peter; Hofmann, Heinz P. (1968). *Der Schlager. Ein Panorama der leichten Musik*. Bd. 1, Berlin: VEB Lied der Zeit.

Daugavpils History (n. d.). (Accessed August 10, 2023).

<https://www.daugavpils.lv/en/city/daugavpils/history> .

Dragilev, Dmitrij (2008a). *Labirinty russkogo tango (The Labyrinths of Russian Tango)*. Sankt-Peterburg: Aletejâ.

Dragilev, Dmitrij (2008b). Planeta Oscara Stroka ([The Planet of Oscar Strok]). Provincial'nyj al'manah *Hronos* (Daugavpils, ed. Faina Osina), No. 9, 26–36.

Epstein, Joan O. (2021). *The Yiddish Tango: From Argentina to Eastern Europe and Back*. (Accessed August 30, 2023).

<https://anyflip.com/jigu/nkei/basic>.

Evans, Bob (1988). *Authentic Conga Rhythms*. Van Nuys: Belwin Mills Publishing Group.

Feldman, Zev W. (2001). (ii) Klezmer. / Jewish music. IV Non liturgical music. 3. Instrumental music. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, London: Macmillan Publishers Limited. Accessed August 18, 2023.

<https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000041322#omo-9781561592630-e-0000041322-div1-0000041322.4>

Feldman, Zev W. (ed.) (2016a). *Klezmer: Music, History, and Memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Feldman, Zev W. (2016b). The Jewish Wedding and Its Musical Repertoire. East European Jewish Dance. *Klezmer: Music, History, and Memory*, 137–203. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Filej, Aleksandr (n. d.). Aleksandr Perfil'ev. (Accessed August 12, 2023). <http://www.russkije.lv/ru/lib/read/alexander-perfilyev.html>.

Gimmervert, Anisim (2006). *Oskar Strok. Korol' i poddannyyj. Biografičeskaâ povest' [Oscar Strok: King and Subject. A Biographical Story]*. Nižnij Novgorod: Dekom.

Gudošnikov, Âkov (1990). *Russkij gorodskoj romans (Russian Urban Romance)*. Tambov: Tambovskij gosudarstvennyj pedagogičeskij institut.

Jerzy Petersburski (n.d.). Composer, pianist, conductor, legend of Polish amusement music. (Accessed August 20, 2023). [http://www.jerzypetersburski.pl/uk\\_otacie.html](http://www.jerzypetersburski.pl/uk_otacie.html).

Klee, Ernst (2007). *Das Kulturlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlage.

Klier, John (1995). *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question. 1855-1881*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kravčinskij, Maksim (2012). *Istoriâ russkogo šansona (The history of Russian chanson)*. Moskva: Astrel'.

Kudiņš, Jānis (2019). *Oskars Stroks. Tango karaļa mantojums (Oscar Strok. The Heritage of the Tango King)*. Rīga: Zinātne.

Kudiņš, Jānis (2021). "Mūzikas dzīve Dinaburgā/Dvinskā 19. gadsimta otrajā pusē un 20. gadsimta sākumā: fakti un procesi [Musical Life in Dinaburg/Dvinsk in the Latter Half of the 19th Century and the Beginning of the 20th Century: Facts and Processes]." *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti*, No. 19, 149–186, Summary, 198–200. (Accessed August 20, 2023). <https://scriptamusica.lv/index.php/mar/issue/view/2>

Lešenko, Vera (2013). *Petr Lešenko. Vse, čto bylo... Poslednee tango [All that was... Last Tango]*. Moskva: AST.

Link, Kacey and Wendland, Kristin (2016). *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Instrumental Tango Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Makarov, Anatolij (2009). *Aleksandr Vertinskij. Portret na fone vremeni (Alexander Vertinskij. Portrait in the Background of the Era)*. Moskva: Astrel', Olimp.

Musiker, Naomi; Musiker, Reuben (2013). *Conductors and Composers of Popular Orchestral Music: A Biographical and Discographical Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.

Rokpelnis, Alberts (2020). Šlāgera jēdziens laikrakstā *Rigasche Rundschau* (1919–1939) [The Term Schlager in the *Rigasche Rundschau* Newspaper, 1919–1939]. *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti XVII*, 105–134.



Rokpelnis, Alberts (2021). Latvijas komponistu nošu izdevumi balsij un klavierēm 20. gs. 20.–30. gados: modes deju žanri, komponisti un šlāgeru izdevēji [Piano-vocal scores of schlagers composed in Latvia during the 1920s and 1930s: publishers, composers and dance music genres]. *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti XVIII*, 75–96, 161–163.

Rokpelnis, Alberts (2022). Vārda *šlāgeris* pārstāvība presē latviešu valodā: laikraksta *Pēdējā Brīdī* (1926–1936) un publicēto Rīgas Radiofona programmu piemēri [The presence of the term *schlager* in latvian press of the 1920s and 1930s: a focus on newspaper coverage in *Pēdējā Brīdī* (1926–1936) and published Riga Radiophone programmes (1926–1940)]. *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti XX*, 109–142.

Røllum-Larsen, Claus (2002). Jacob Thune Hansen Gade. *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Personenteil 7, 377–379. Kassel.

Rubin, Joel (2015). Klezmer music – a historical overview to the present. *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, edited by Walden, J. S., 119–140. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Slepovič, Dmitrij (2003a). Genezis klezmerskogo muzicirovaniâ v Vostočnoj Evrope (k postanovke problemy) [The genesis of Klezmer musicking in Eastern Europe. Defining the problem]. Tezisy doklada na Konferencii pamâti E. Gippiusa, 62–65.

Slepovič, Dmitrij (2003b). Klezmer kak fenomen evrejskoj muzykal'noj kul'tury v Vostočnoj Evrope [Klezmer as a phenomenon of Jewish Music Culture in Eastern Europe]. *Judaica Rossica*. Vyp. 3. Otv. red. L. Kacis. Moskva, N'û-Jork: Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj gumanitarnyj universitet, Evrejskaâ teologičeskaâ seminariâ, Institut iudaiki YIVO, 101–117.

Slepovič, Dmitrij (2004). Skripka i klarnet v sisteme organologičeskikh predpočtenij klezmerov v Vostočnoj Evrope [Violin and Clarinet in the System of Organological Preferences of Klezmers in Eastern Europe]. *Materialy Odinnadcatoj Meždunarodnoj meždisciplinarnoj konferencii po iudaike*. Vyp. 16. Moskva: Centr prepodavaniâ evrejskoj civilizacii v vuzah Sefer, Institut slavânovedeniâ RAN, 293–303.

Slobin, Mark S. (2008). Klezmer music. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Accessed August 22, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/art/klezmer-music>.

Šolom-Alejhem (1971). *Stempenuû*. Polnoe sobranie sočinenij: v 6 t. T. 1. Moskva: Hudožestvennaâ literature.

Stanislawski, Michael (1983). *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews. The Transformation of Jewish Society in Russia. 1825-1855*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America.

Strom, Yale (2002). *The Book of Klezmer: The History, the Music, the Folklore from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup>*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press.

Wicke, Peter (1998). Schlager. In *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Sachteil, Bd. 8., 1063–1070. Bärenreiter/Stuttgart: Metzler.

Zemzare, Ingrīda (1986). Par džezu un džesiņu [An article about jazz in Riga]. *Māksla*, 1986, February 1, 23–25.

# OSKARA STROKA TANGODZIESMAS (ŠLĀGERI) 20. GADSIMTA STARPKARU RĪGĀ. DAŽĀDU MŪZIKAS TRADĪCIJU STILISTISKĀ SINTĒZE

Jānis Kudiņš

## Kopsavilkums

Oskars Stroks (1893, Daugavpils – 1975, Rīga) ir pazīstama personība 20. gadsimta populārās mūzikas kultūras vēsturē gan Latvijā, gan starptautiski. Dzimis un bērnību pavadījis kādreizējā Dinaburgā / Dvinskā, pusaudža un agrīnās jaunības gadus pavadījis Sanktpēterburgā, Stroks 1922. gadā pieņēma Latvijas Republikas pilsonību un pārcēlās dzīvot uz Rīgu, kurā, izņemot Otrā pasaules kara gados pavadīto laiku Almati (Kazahstānā), nodzīvoja līdz sava mūža noslēgumam. 21. gadsimtā Oskars Stroks sabiedrības uztverē tiek dēvēts par Rīgas tango karali (Kudiņš 2019).

20. gadsimta 30. gados, pateicoties skaņuplašu izdevumiem, Stroka tango un fokstrotas dziesmas ieguva plašu popularitāti gan Latvijā, gan daudzās citās pasaules valstīs. Stroka dziesmas atbilda tā laika šlāgera – dziesmas, parasti ar sentimentālu tekstu, galvenokārt populāru deju (čarlstonu, fokstrotu, tango u. c.) raksturīgā metroritmiskā risinājumā – žanra veidolam (Czerny & Hofmann 1968; Wicke 1998; Rokpelnis 2020; Rokpelnis 2021; Rokpelnis 2022). Šajā rakstā galvenā uzmanība pievērsta jautājumam par dažādu mūzikas kultūras stilistisko tradīciju sintēzes atspoguļojumu Oskara Stroka starpkaru periodā Rīgā komponētājās tangodziesmās (šlāgeros).

Analizējot Stroka Rīgā komponēto pazīstamāko 20. gadsimta 30. gadu tango dziesmu<sup>1</sup> *Melnās acis* (*Čěrnnye glaza*), *Gaišzilās acis* (*Golubye glaza*), *Mans pēdējais tango* (*Moē poslednee tango*), *Saki, kādēļ?* (*Skažite, počemu?*), *Dusi, mana nabaga sirds* (*Spi, moē bednoe serdce*), *Nepamet mani!* (*Ne pokidaj!*) nošu izdevumus un skaņierakstus, var konstatēt, ka to muzikālās struktūras izklāsts (raksturīgs vokālajai mūzikai ar panta un piedziedājuma uzbūvi) akcentē īpašu eksaltācijas, liriska saasinājuma izteiksmi galvenokārt piedziedājumos. Tieši piedziedājumu melodijas laika gaitā ir kļuvušas par šo Stroka tangodziesmu atpazīstamības zīmēm līdz pat 21. gadsimtam. Turklāt nozīmīgu lomu šo tangodziesmu muzikālās izteiksmes raksturozīmju nostiprināšanā spēlēja Stroka sadarbība ar vairākiem tālaika mūziķiem gan Rīgā, gan citās valstīs.<sup>2</sup> To vidū īpaši izceļams ir Pjotrs Ļeščenko (*Pětr Lešchenko*, *Pyotr Leshchenko*, 1898–1954), kurš vienā no savas dzīves posmiem uzturēdamies Rīgā, pievērsa Stroka uzmanību ar savu savdabīgo tenora tembru. Rezultātā starp Stroku un Ļeščenko izveidojās draudzība un profesionāla sadarbība. Tādēļ 20. gadsimta 30. un 40. gados pasaulē Stroka tango

1 Komponētas ar oriģināltekstiem krievu valodā, daļai dziesmu tekstu autors bija Rīga dzīvojušais dzejnieks Aleksandrs Pefiljevs (*Aleksandr Perfil'ev*; 1895–1973), publicējās ar pseidonīmu Aleksandrs Li (*Aleksandr Li*) (Filej n. d.).

2 Piemēram, sadarbība ar Sergeju Aldjanovu un viņa džeza orķestri Rīgā, diriģentu Mareku Vēberu (*Marek Weber*) un viņa deju orķestri Berlīnē, diriģentu Franku Foksu (*Frank Fox*) un viņa deju orķestri Vīnē, diriģentu Nikolaju Čerešņu (*Nikolay Chereshnya*) un viņa deju orķestri Bukarestē.

šlāgerus pasaulē visvairāk pazina Ļeščenko izpildījumos dažādu kompāniju izdotajos skaņuplašu izdevumos.

Meklējot atbildi uz jautājumu, kādas tradīcijas atbalso Stroka tangodziesmu mūzikas stilistika un izteiksme, var atrast virkni pierādījumu, ka tā atspoguļo 20. gadsimta 30. gadiem raksturīgas populārās mūzikas kultūras tendences Ziemeļaustrumeiropas valstīs. Sasaukšanās ar radniecīgiem stilistiskajiem risinājumiem atrodama gan, piemēram, Dānijas komponista Jakoba Gādes (*Jacob Gade*, 1879–1963), gan Polijas (Varšavas) komponista Ježija Petersburska (*Jerzy Petersburski*, 1895–1979) komponētajā šlāgermūzikā. Savstarpēju mijiedarbību izpausmes rodamas, arī aplūkojot bijušajā Padomju Savienībā, Maskavā un Ļeņingradā tolaik darbojušos komponistu, piemēram, Īzaka Dunajevska (*Isaak Dunaevskij*, 1900–1955), Jefima Rozenfelda (*Efim Rozenfel'd*, 1894–1964), Vladimira Sidorova (*Vladimir Sidorov*), Juriija Bogoslovska (*Ūrij Bogoslovskij*) rietumniecisko šlāgeru kompozīcijas.

20. gadsimta starpkaru laikā, salīdzinot Ziemeļaustrumeiropas valstu komponistu populāro (šlāgeru) tangomūziku ar Eiropas rietumu un dienvidu valstu komponistu jaunradi<sup>3</sup>, *ziemeļaustrumnieku* kompozīcijās konstatējama biežāka balstīšanās minora tonalitātēs, dramatisks saasinājuma veidošana muzikālajā izteiksmē. Tas ir raksturīgi arī Stroka tangodziesmās, kurās iespējams identificēt trīs muzikāli stilistisko tradīciju sintēzi.

Viena no tām veido atsauci Argentīnas *tango-canción* žanram, ko raksturo vokāli instrumentāla kompozīcija ar akcentētu sentimentālu tematiku tekstā un tam atbilstošu muzikālo izteiksmi.<sup>4</sup> Otra tradīcija ir saistīta ar *pilsētas* (arī *cietsirdīgās, čigānu*) romances žanru, kas bija populārs 19. gadsimta otrajā pusē un 20. gadsimta sākumā Krievijas mūzikas kultūrā. Stroks vienā no nedaudzajām viņa dzīves laikā publicētajām intervijām bija norādījis, ka viņš tango saista ar romances žanru (Mar'ānovskij, *Nedelā*, 1973, No. 38, 13), un tam var rast pierādījumus viņa tango, arī citu vokāli instrumentālo kompozīciju muzikālās stilistikas risinājumos.

Savukārt kā trešā atbalss Stroka tangodziesmu muzikālajā stilistikā ir ebreju klezmeru muzicēšanas tradīcija. Kādreizējā Dinaburga / Dvinska, kas mūsdienā Latvijas teritorijā pagātnē (19. gadsimta beigās un 20. gadsimta sākumā) bija pilsēta ar lielāko ebreju iedzīvotāju skaitu (Kudiņš 2021, 152–153). Oskara Stroka tēvs Dāvids Stroks (1838/40–1919) bija mūziķis, kurš 19. gadsimta otrajā pusē strādāja gan vēsturiski

3 Piemēram, Parīzē tolaik dzīvojošu un strādājošu izklaides mūzikas komponistu Vensāna Skoto (*Vincent Scotto*, 1874–1954), Tjārko Rišepēna (*Tiarko Richepin*, 1884–1973), Žana Lenuāra (*Jean Lenoir*, 1891–1976), Žana Limjēra (*Jean Lumière*, 1895–1971), Čezāres Biksio (*Cesare Andrea Bixio*, 1896–1978), Anrī Imēla (*Henry Himmel*, 1900–1970), Itālijas komponista Dino Olivjēri (*Dino Olivieri*, 1905–1963), Berlīnē komponējošā Franca Grotes (*Franz Grothe*, 1909–1982) tangodziesmām un instrumentālajām kompozīcijām (Bible Tango, n. d.; Musiker and Musiker 2013; Klee 2007).

4 Tango mūsdienās bieži tiek iedalīts trīs veidos: *tango-milonga* kā instrumentālā mūzika, *tango-romanca* kā vokāli instrumentālā vai instrumentālā mūzika ar lirisku raksturu, un *tango-canción* kā vokāli instrumentāla kompozīcija ar izteikti sentimentāla rakstura dziesmu tekstiem un tam atbilstošu muzikālo izteiksmi. (Bethell 2004, 361). Tomēr šī klasifikācija pārsvarā atbilst 20. gadsimta vidū dominējušajam tango mūzikas formām, kas, protams, līdz pat 21. gadsimtam atspoguļo nebeidzamu mijiedarbību un arvien jaunu māksliniecisko starpformu rašanos.

pirmā Dinaburgas teātra orķestrī, gan arī vadīja klezmeru ansambļus (Gimmervert 2006, 18–20; Kudiņš 2019, 20–21). Ebreju kopienu, kuru dzīvesvietas aptvēra plašu ģeogrāfisko areālu kādreizējā Krievijas cariskajā impērijā (mūsdienu Latvijas, Lietuvas, Baltkrievijas, Ukrainas, Krievijas dienvidu teritorijas), klezmeru ansambļiem raksturīgais instrumentu sastāvs bija vijole, altvijole, cimbala, klarnete, akordeons, trombons, trompete, kontrabass. Klezmeru muzicēšanas praksē nereti vijoles un klarnetes tembru izcēlums, lai akcentētu *smeldzīgumu* un emocionālā saasinājuma momentus, bija raksturīgas iezīmes šīs tradīcijas muzikālajā stilistikā (Strom 2002; Beregovskij 1987; Braun 2002; Slepovič 2003b; Slepovič 2004; Rubin 2015; Feldman 2016b). Turklāt uzmanību pievērš fakti, kas liecina, ka 20. gadsimta starpkaru periodā daudzās Eiropas valstīs populārās mūzikas kultūrā darbojās daudzi ebreju mūziķi, kuri, iespējams, izpildījuma praksē apzināti vai neapzināti turpināja klezmeru muzicēšanas tradīcijas, ja ne tieši, tad kādās to jaunās stilistiskās transformācijās. Varbūt tādēļ ir likumsakarīgi, ka Stroka 20. gadsimta 30. gadu tangodziesmās, it īpaši to izpildījumu skaņierakstos var fiksēt, piemēram, klezmeru muzicēšanai stilistiski radniecīgu atsevišķu instrumentu (vijoles, klarnetes, trompetes) tembru izcēlumu, veidojot *nopūtu*, *skumju saasinājuma* risinājumus izteiksmē.

Prasme sintezēt, balansēt iepriekš norādīto trīs tradīciju lietojumā, iespējams, arī veido pamatu Stroka tangodziesmu muzikāli stilistiskajai savdabībai. Turklāt savu lomu šajā procesā ir spēlējuši arī mūziķi (deju orķestru diriģenti, ansambļi), ar kuriem Stroks 20. gadsimta 30. gados bija sadarbojies Latvijā un citās valstīs savu kompozīciju skaņierakstu izdevumu veidošanā. Šķiet, šajos Oskara Stroka tangodziesmu skaņierakstos dzirdamie izpildījumi daudz skaidrāk izceļ atsauci uz dažādažām stilistiskajām tradīcijām, kas ietvertas Rīgas tango karaļa mūzikas mantojumā.

# FROM THE HISTORY OF 20th CENTURY POPULAR MUSIC IN LITHUANIA: RECONSTRUCTING BIOGRAPHY OF VIOLINIST DANIEL POMERANZ (1904–1981)

Kamilė Rupeikaitė

The name of the violinist Daniel Pomeranz<sup>1</sup> (1904–1981) is inseparable from the musical life of Kaunas as temporary capital of independent Lithuania. Having studied in the State Academic University of Music<sup>2</sup> and Stern Conservatory of Music<sup>3</sup> in Berlin mastering classical violin repertoire, he combined romantic virtuoso pieces and entertainment music in his performances. The Pomeranz ensemble played fashionable dances and schlagers in the Konrad's cafe, a favorite of the Kaunas bohemians, and is associated with the beginnings of jazz in Lithuania. However, to this day his life and work, like that of most other Lithuanian Jewish musicians, has not yet been thoroughly explored.

The article presents for the first-time ongoing research into Pomeranz's biography, based on the documents found in different Lithuanian archives, the Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin, the Arolsen Archives, as well press reviews, memories of contemporaries of Pomeranz and of his daughter Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich.

Since Pomeranz lived in different political systems starting with the Russian empire, the independent Lithuania, the Germany of Weimar Republic then under Soviet, Nazi and again Soviet occupational regimes and eventually emigrated to Canada, details of his biography were lost, and conflicting information was found in the existing documents. All of it is included in the research as a significant testimony of the complex history of the 20th century, and as possible human efforts to protect their own story, since the discovered information differs depending on the context and time *where, when* and *for whom* it was provided.

49

**Keywords:** Daniel Pomeranz, Kaunas, violinist, independent Lithuania, popular music

The name of the violin virtuoso and performer of popular music Daniel Pomeranz (1904–1981) was remembered in Lithuania around the 1990s, during the period of regaining Independence. Music editor and journalist Algirdas Urbonavičius was the

---

1 In Lithuanian – *Danielius Pomerancas*. The spelling of the name varies in documents of different institutions: Daniel Pomeranc (in Russian; Vilnius Jewish Rabbinate), Daniel Pomeranz / Pomeranc (the State Academic University of Music in Berlin), Pomeranc (Stern Conservatory in Berlin), Pomeranz/Pomerantz (Stuffhof concentration camp). The article uses the English version of the surname according to documents issued in Canada after the emigration of the violinist in 1974 – Pomeranz.

2 In German – *Staatliche akademische Hochschule für Musik in Berlin*. Founded in 1869 by the violinist Joseph Joachim, it was known as the Royal Academic University of Music. Since the November Revolution of 1918, it was called the State Academic University of Music.

3 In German – *Stern'sches Konservatorium der Musik*. The oldest conservatory in Berlin, it was founded in 1850 as a private music school by composer Adolf Bernhard Marx, pianist and composer Theodor Kullak and music pedagogue and composer Julius Stern. From 1856 it came under Stern family and acquired its name.



first to write about the popular music artists of independent Lithuania, including Pomeranz, in his series of articles in 1989.<sup>4</sup> Musicologists Leonidas Melnikas and Rūta Skudienė, historian and publicist Juozas Brazauskas wrote briefly about the career of Pomeranz in Kaunas within the scope of their publications on broader topics (Melnikas 2008; Skudienė 2019, Brazauskas 2022).<sup>5</sup> However, to this day biography and activities of Pomeranz, like that of most other Lithuanian Jewish musicians, has not yet been explored, and information on Pomeranz is copied from one publication to another with uncorrected inaccuracies and with lack of references to primary sources.

The article presents for the first-time ongoing research into Pomeranz's complex biography, based on the documents found in different Lithuanian archives<sup>6</sup>, the Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin, the Arolsen Archives, as well as press reviews, memories of the contemporaries and of his daughter Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich.<sup>7</sup> Since Pomeranz lived in different political systems starting with the Russian Empire, the independent Lithuania, the Germany of Weimar Republic then under Soviet, Nazi and again Soviet occupational regimes and eventually emigrated to Canada, details of his biography were lost, and conflicting information was found in the existing documents. All of it is included in the research as a significant testimony of the complex history of the 20th century, and as a testimony of confrontation with one's present and one's memory, which can vary, and is, according to the German sociologist Gabriele Rosenthal, constantly connected with the present: "Narrations of past events are bound to the present of the narration. The way people look back at the past, or their specific memories of the past, are determined by their present situation" (Rosenthal 2018, 161). Biographical research must consider the interrelationship between the individual and the society within the changing contexts: "The individual history of a person and the collective history, or subjective and collective realities, interact with each other. Both in its development and in the way it is interpreted in the present by the biographer, a life story is always an individual and a social product at the same time (Rosenthal 2018, 166).

50

---

4 The series of ten articles was published in Lithuanian radio and television weekly *Kalba Vilnius* (1989).

5 The record company *Semplice* headed by Skudienė, released a two-CD set *Legendiniai mažosios scenas artistai XX a. 3-4 deš. Kaunas* ("Legendary musicians of the little stage 1920s-1930s Kaunas") in 2009 from the collection of 1924-1938 recordings held by Algirdas Motieka; the CDs also include the music performed by the orchestra of Pomeranz.

6 *Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas* (Lithuanian State History Archives), *Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas* (Lithuanian Central State Archives), *Lietuvos literatūros ir meno archyvas* (Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art).

7 Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich (b. 1941) was born in the Kaunas ghetto and was rescued by the famous Kaunas opera singer Kipras Petrauskas and his wife, actress Elena Žalinkevičiaitė-Petrauskienė. She graduated from a ten-year music school in Vilnius (now the National M.K. Čiurlionis School of Arts) and from David Oistrach's violin class at the Moscow Conservatory, from 1975 taught at the music faculty at Western University of London, Ontario, from 1985 to 2023 has been a violin professor at Boston University. With her husband violinist Jurij Mazurkevich (the couple used to play as Mazurkevich Duo) she has given numerous concerts in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, South America, and the Far East.



**Picture 1.** Daniel Pomeranz around 1930. From the personal archive of Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich

### **Origin, family, and early education**

Daniel Pomeranz was born into a family of a merchant Abraham Moishe Pomeranc<sup>8</sup> and his wife Beile Golomb Pomeranc<sup>9</sup> as their sixth child. The date and place of his birth varies in different sources. According the register of Vilnius Jewish Rabbinate, Daniel was born on March 2, 1904 in Vilnius (LVIA 728-4-118, 72). In the prisoner registration form of the Stutthof concentration camp (1944), the birth date and place of Daniel Pomeranz – prisoner number 91881 – was indicated as Wilna 1910 (Pomerantz, Daniel 1.1.41 /4601453/, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives).<sup>10</sup> On the page of his sister Sara’s appeal to the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Munich in search of her brother (1946), it is indicated that Daniel was born in Kaunas in 1908 (Tracing request concerning Pomeranc Daniel, 6.3.3. /106653342/, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives). In his two short autobiographies<sup>11</sup> written for employment purposes – in 1945 (in Lithuanian), when after surviving the Holocaust in the concentration camps, he had returned to the Soviet-occupied Lithuania (to Kaunas), and in 1949 (in Russian), when he and his family shifted to Vilnius – Pomeranz indicates that he was born in Kaunas

8 In the documents of independent Lithuania – Abramavicius Pomerancas.

9 In the documents of independent Lithuania – Beilė (Beila) Pomerancienė.

10 Dates of birth vary especially in the information provided by inmates for the concentration camps, because claiming that one was younger or older than they actually were could increase their chances of survival.

11 Both autobiographies were written during the Stalinist period, when antisemitism was growing in the Soviet Union, so the data presented in them must be evaluated in the appropriate context.

on July 17, 1904 (LLMA 284-6-282, 6) and that he was born in Kaunas on April 17, 1904 (LLMA 264-4-696, 3). His registered birthday, March 2, does not appear anywhere in different biography datas of the war and post-war years.

According to Pomerants-Mazurkevich, her father used to tell her that he was born in 1904 in Šiauliai (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich, 21.11.2022). It is not clear when exactly the Pomeranz family left Vilnius, but according to archival records, the family already lived in Šiauliai in the 1920s, so the town was important in the family history. Daniel's father owned a butcher shop in Šiauliai; his brother Itzik had a felt shoe workshop in Šiauliai, and the oldest brother Shneyer was also a shopkeeper in Kaunas before WWII. However, in the above-mentioned autobiographies and personnel registration sheets in the same files, filled in during the Stalinist period, Pomeranz indicated that he comes from the family of workers. Such reference was probably intended to protect his family against possible repressions. Having suffered from the Nazis, he also understood the dangers of the Soviet regime, especially since he never belonged to the Communist Party. The desire to protect himself and his family may have been one of the reasons why Pomeranz gave different information in his autobiographies and other documents. Another reason, especially for the discrepancies in dates, could have been his difficult physical and psychological state after the traumatic experiences he went through in the Kaunas ghetto and in the concentration camps.

52

The Pomeranz family was musical. Father Abraham played the violin so the children probably got their first music lessons from him. It is not clear how Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai interconnect in family's history and memories and where exactly Daniel started his early education. According to Melnikas, Pomeranz started studying music in Vilnius with violinist Itzhak Vildman-Zaidman<sup>12</sup> (Melnikas 2008, 126); according to Skudienė, he studied with Vildman-Zaidman in Kaunas Juozas Naujalis' music school (Skudienė 2019, 36).<sup>13</sup> However, Vildman-Zaidman started teaching at the Kaunas state music school only in 1922 (LLMA 84-4-75, 9)<sup>14</sup>, when Daniel already had left for Berlin<sup>15</sup>, and his name is not in the lists of the students at Kaunas state music school.

The statements of Pomeranz himself regarding his early education differ. As per his autobiography from 1945, Pomeranz attended secondary school in Kaunas, later studied in the eight-grade in a Jewish gymnasium (graduated in 1920<sup>16</sup>) and also studied

---

12 Itzhak Vildman-Zaidman, in Lithuanian Izaokas Vildmanas-Zaidmanas (1885–1941) – Lithuanian violinist, conductor, and pedagogue. Graduated from Odessa music school in 1902, and from Petrapilis (now St. Petersburg) conservatory in 1908 as violinist and orchestra conductor. Vildman-Zaidman taught violin in music school in Vilnius from 1914 to 1918.

13 It was opened as a private music school in 1919, turned into the Kaunas state music school a year later and was reorganized into a conservatory in 1933.

14 From 1919 Vildman-Zaidman lived in Kaunas and privately taught violin, music theory and solfeggio.

15 As per his autobiography from 1945, Pomeranz left for Berlin in 1922. As per his autobiography from 1949, he left for Berlin in 1924. In the Personnel registration sheets in both the files of 1945 and 1949, the year of leaving for Berlin is 1921.

16 According to the Personnel registration sheet in the same file, he graduated from Kaunas Jewish gymnasium in 1920 or 1922.

music; however, no name of a music school or teacher is mentioned. As per his autobiography from 1949, he received his secondary education in Šiauliai and studied in Šiauliai music school in 1915–1918; no name of violin teacher is mentioned either.<sup>17</sup> In the course of this research, no documents proving one or another of the facts mentioned by Pomeranz regarding his early education have yet been found.

If in Kaunas, Pomeranz could have possibly studied with Vildman-Zaidman privately or with another violinist at the private music school of Ippo-Gechtman which was opened in Kaunas before the WWI and whose teachers were mostly graduates from St. Petersburg Conservatory (Vainauskienė 2009, 268), or at one of the two private music schools which both were opened in Kaunas in 1920. A five-course (level) music school was opened in the Hebrew Realgymnasium building by composer Gabriel Grad<sup>18</sup>, who had graduated from the Royal Academic University of Musik and Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory in Berlin<sup>19</sup>, and another one was opened by music teacher Karolis Giliandas who had graduated from the Warsaw Conservatory. Considering that Daniel and his elder brother Yudel<sup>20</sup> went to Berlin, it is likely that it was Grad, who had connections in Berlin, who could encourage the brothers to seek musical education there.<sup>21</sup>

## In Berlin

Berlin and Kaunas were the most important cities in the career of Daniel Pomeranz. Berlin was an attractive metropolis for young people from Eastern Europe in terms of its diverse culture and quality studies. As Adam Sachs has pointed out, “While Jews usually made up around 30 per cent of music students at the conservatory<sup>22</sup>, the dramatic influx of students from eastern Europe between the years 1918 and 1933 increased this proportion even more [...] music served as a handmaiden to migration, as a means to

17 According to the Personnel registration sheet in the same file, Pomeranz attended secondary school in Šiauliai in 1915–1918 and did not graduate; in the Questionnaire filled out by Pomeranz in 1951, again he indicated that he studied in 6 class gymnasium in Kaunas from 1916 to 1922.

18 Gabriel Grad (1887– 1950) was born in Rietavas, Telšiai county, studied in Berlin and Petrapilis (now St. Petersburg), from 1920 to 1922 ran his private music school in Kaunas (more detailed documentary materials about this school have not survived), from 1922 to 1924 was active in Berlin and in 1924 settled in Palestine, where established Benhatov conservatory in Tel Aviv.

19 In German – Conservatorium der Musik Klindworth-Scharwenka was formed in 1893 from existing schools of music of pianist and composer Xaver Scharwenka and composer, pianist, conductor Karl Klindworth. Grad mentions his education in Berlin music institutions in his request to the Ministry of Education in 1921 (LCVA 391-4-1053: 2).

20 Yudel (Yehuda, Julian, Giuliano) Pomeranz (1900–1996) became a known Italian pianist, organist, and composer of film music. The spelling of his name varies in documents of different institutions: Yudel Pomeranc (in Russian; Vilnius Jewish Rabbinate), Yehuda Pomeranc (the State Academic University of Music in Berlin), Julian Pomeranc (Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory in Berlin), Giuliano Pomeranz (the Arolsen Archives on the victims and survivors of National Socialism). While living in Berlin, Yehuda changed his name form into Julian. He left Germany in 1934 and settled in Italy (from 1936 in Rome), where he changed his name into its Italian form, Giuliano. The article uses the last version of his surname by which he was known in Italy – Giuliano Pomeranz.

21 The name of Julian Pomeranc is mentioned in the list of piano teachers at Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory in Berlin of upper, middle, lower and elementary classes during the school year 1927–1928.

22 For the German term *Hochschule*, Sachs uses the more familiar English-language term, conservatory.

traverse physical space towards the wider world and mental space towards new forms of subjectivity beyond the confines of traditional religion or new nationalisms“ (Sachs 2020, 321–322).

The major university-level music schools in Berlin – the State Academic University of Music, and the private ones Stern Conservatory and the Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatory, were of a very high standard. Surviving lists of students testify that from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1930s there were students from different Lithuanian cities in all three institutions.. Many of them, both male and female, were of Lithuanian Jewish origin, and mostly studied piano, violin, singing or cello. Standard studies at the State Academic University of Music, which was considered to be “[..] the best of its kind in the German-speaking world [..]” (Schenk 2004, 14, quotes John L. Stewart), lasted 3 or 4 years, but quite a usual practice was to study for a few semesters. The recommendation of the professor of the main subject (Hauptfach) was much more important than the diploma for the career of a young performer or composer. The financial aspect was also important because the tuition fees were quite high (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dietmar Schenk, 25.10.2023).<sup>23</sup>

Admission to the State Academic University of Music usually took place twice a year – in March and October. It is not known exactly what Pomeranz did for two years in Berlin upon his arrival<sup>24</sup>, but in his letter, written to the State Academic University of Music on December 8, 1924, Pomeranz confirms that he is staying in Berlin to prepare for the entrance exam in spring semester so that he can get a residence permit in Berlin. His letter reveals that he personally contacted Professor Willy Hess<sup>25</sup>, who was one of the most known violin teachers in the whole Weimar Republic, in order to receive his evaluation regarding possible admission to the institution: “I played for Professor Hess, who spoke favourably about my talent and gave me hope that he would accept me for the next exam. Now I’m learning the Professor’s methods from his student” (UdK-Archiv Berlin 1-583-6, 292b). Professor Hess, as per request of the administration of State Academic University of Music to provide his comment to Pomeranz’s letter, confirmed on December 9, 1924, that Pomeranz is a talented violinist who will apply for admission for the summer semester and is being prepared for this goal by Alfred Hofmann, student of Hess. The professor also supported the request of Pomeranz for residence permit in Berlin (UdK-Archiv Berlin 1-583-6, 293). In March next year, at the age of 20, Pomeranz

---

23 The author of this article thanks the former Head of the Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin, archivist and historian Dr. Dietmar Schenk for his advice and assistance.

24 In his first autobiography (1945), Pomeranz wrote that in Berlin he was studying and working at the same time. It can be assumed that he was working as a freelance violinist in different cafes to earn money for his future studies.

25 German-born violinist and pedagogue Willy Hess (1859–1939) was a student of notable violinist Joseph Joachim. Having worked as a concertmaster of various European orchestras, taught at the conservatories of Rotterdam, Cologne, and the Royal Academy of Music in London, Hess became the concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1904. In 1910 he was invited to return to Germany and take up the post of head of the Violin Department of the State Academic University of Music in Berlin. Among the most notable students of Hess were Adolf Busch (1891–1952), Georg Kulenkampff (1898–1948), Paul Godwin (1902–1982), Philip Newman (1904–1966), Henri Temianka (1906–1992), Tossy Spivakovsky (1907–1998).



gave the entrance exam, for which he played *Folies d'Espagne*<sup>26</sup>. The performance was evaluated as good, theoretical knowledge corresponded to the first level, and Daniel was accepted into the class of professor Rudolf Deman (1880–1960) (UdK-Archiv Berlin 1-678, 4) – Austrian-German violinist, who had studied with Joachim, and at that time was also concertmaster of the orchestra of the Berlin State Opera and first violinist of the Deman String Quartet. It is not clear why Pomeranz was not accepted into Hess's class; one of the reasons could be the professor's extremely busy schedule. It was in March 1925 that he wrote to his former student Henry Temianka in the United States: "At the university I am as always overcrowded, also during the summer semester I am in strong demand" (Hess, Willy (1925), *Henri Temianka Correspondence* 2602).

Daniel studied at the State Academic University of Music for 3 semesters until July 1926, and his brother Yehuda<sup>27</sup>, about whose entrance exam or appointed professor of the specialty no information survives, studied only one semester from October 1925 till March 1926 in kapellmeister class.<sup>28</sup> In addition to the main subject, students of the violin class studied music theory, music history, piano, knowledge of musical instruments, playing in an orchestra and in ensemble. Students of the kapellmeister major studied music theory, music history, piano, instrumentation, knowledge of musical instruments, reading scores. Neither name of Daniel nor Yehuda are in the programs of student concerts and special events, therefore, it is not possible to know what pieces they had played for their main subject during their above-mentioned study periods.

After leaving the State Academic University of Music in July 1926, in September the same year Daniel entered violin class of Latvian-born professor Maxim Jacobsen (1887–1973) at Stern Conservatory, where, according to surviving data, he studied 2 years (UdK-Archiv Berlin 4-32, 32; UdK-Archiv Berlin 4-333, 26). Although Jacobsen was not so prominent as a soloist, he was one of the most important violin teachers of his time.<sup>29</sup> According to the story told in the Pomeranz family, Daniel also attended private violin classes in Vienna with Bronisław Huberman (1882–1947)<sup>30</sup>, who was so impressed by the young violinist's talent, that he refused to accept payment for his lessons and even wanted to patronize him<sup>31</sup> (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomeranz-Mazurkevich, 21.11.2022). It is not clear how and when Pomeranz met

---

26 The author of the work is not indicated in the exam report.

27 In the documents of the State Academic University of Music in Berlin, his name is Yehuda Pomeranc.

28 In the IRO questionnaire filled on December 22, 1948, Giuliano (at that time) Pomeranz indicated that he "attended a musical Institute in Berlin and finished with a diploma as composer and pianist" (Personal life of Pomeranz, Giuliano 3.2.1 /80460195/, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives).

29 After the discrimination of Jews started in the 1930s, Jacobsen was forced to leave Germany and settled in Italy, where he opened a music school in Milan. Due to the persecution of the Jews he later moved to Brussels, where he became the violin teacher of Queen Elizabeth of Belgium and the young princes. Due to difficult political circumstances his further life was not sedentary either.

30 Polish violinist Bronislaw Huberman studied violin with Isidor Lotto at the Warsaw Conservatory, with Joseph Joachim in Berlin, and took lessons briefly with Hugo Heermann in Frankfurt and Martin Marsick in Paris, toured intensively in Europe and United States. With Hitler's rise to power, Huberman took the initiative of creating the Palestine Symphony Orchestra in Tel Aviv (1936) with refugees from Europe. He left for America in 1940.

31 Huberman is known to have helped young talented violinists, for example, Ivry Gitlis (1922–2020).

Huberman, and whether he took his lessons at a time when he was not studying at any music training institution in Berlin. As per information in German press, Huberman gave many concerts in Berlin and other German cities in the 1920s and early 1930s, so Pomeranz could hear him and contact him personally.

Absorbing Berlin's vibrant and versatile culture, atmosphere of modernity and freedom, Pomeranz brothers often attended various music concerts and jazz clubs. "The term "jazz" in the 1920s and 1930s normally identified "animated, bouncy, syncopated, improvisatory dance music performed by ensembles of various sizes." Quickly labeled "primitive" and "wild" by the German-speaking press, jazz nonetheless symbolized a form of modernity brought about by technological innovation, the birth of the music record, transatlanticism, and a growing popularity among Europeans to dabble in American culture" (Thurman 2013, 88<sup>32</sup>). Jazz and popular music became closer to Daniel than academic classical music because of his flexible character and inclination towards improvisation. "It seems to me that my father lacked the strict discipline to become a performing soloist. He was very talented, sound of his violin was warm and expressive, but my father had a spontaneous nature. [...] jazz involves improvisation, and you don't have to play every passage very precisely. It seems that both of these factors worked in his case – the attraction to spontaneity and the desire for greater freedom" (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomeranz-Mazurkevich, 21.11.2022).

56

Although the academic institutions, especially the State Academic University of Music, looked unfavourably on students playing in popular and entertainment music orchestras, many students, in order to be able to pay study fees, used to work as freelance musicians at catering and entertainment venues of different levels. Advertisements in Berlin's dailies in the 1920s–1930s speak of an abundance of live entertainment, of musical performances and bands of all kinds. Various restaurants and cafes had their own instrumental ensembles or capellas; bigger and popular venues had even advertised five kapellas (*Der Montag* 1929, 4). Emigrant cafes had musical ensembles of their own. Pomeranz had formed a trio together with his peers – pianist Alexander Zakin<sup>33</sup>, who also had studied at the State Academic University of Music, and cellist Gregory Piatigorsky<sup>34</sup>; the trio used to play in cafés (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomeranz-Mazurkevich, 25.07.2023). However, it has not been possible to find any supporting evidence or advertisements on this ensemble and its repertoire in German press of the period.

In Berlin, Pomeranz had organized other popular music ensembles (one of them was named *Scherry Band*; see Picture 2). However, their compositions, exact dates of their

---

32 Thurman quotes Alan Lareau (2002) and Rainer Lotz (1997).

33 Russian born pianist Alexander Zakin (1903–1990) graduated from the State Academic University of Music, toured in Europe in the 1930s, moved to New York in 1940, and became best known for his collaboration with violinist Isaac Stern, performing with him till 1977.

34 Ukraine-born Gregory Piatigorsky (1903-1976) was one of the most distinguished cellists of the 20th century. He played with all the greatest conductors, violinists, and pianists of the time; formed trios with Carl Flesch and Artur Schnabel, with Nathan Milstein and Vladimir Horowitz and with Jascha Heifetz and Artur Schnabel.



**Picture 2.** “Scherry Band”, led by Daniel Pomeranz. From the personal archive of Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich.

existence and concert venues are not known. According to Brazauskas, Pomeranz led the orchestra of the famous Adlon Hotel in Berlin (Brazauskas 2022, 24), but various German newspapers mention Marek Weber kapella and dance orchestra that performed at the Adlon Hotel in the period of 1925–1933. According to Urbonavičius, Pomeranz worked as a soloist in the symphonic jazz orchestra of popular violinist and bandleader Dajos Béla<sup>35</sup> (1897–1978), and in the evenings he played in a classical café (Urbonavičius 1989 (3), 5). His brother Julian played in Erstes Klavier-quartett (The first Piano Quartet) in 1928–1929 together with pianists Zakin, Adam Gelbtrunk and Leopold Mittmann.<sup>36</sup> The quartet combined arrangements of classical music for eight hands and original jazz compositions in their programs and performed in various German cities. The press noted that all four pianists are excellent virtuosos, and that the adaptations and original jazz pieces were met with great acclaim especially by the young audience. However, jazz compositions appeared “too modern” and “wild” for academic music critics.

One of the most memorable periods of Daniel Pomeranz’s career in Berlin was his playing in the famous dance orchestra of violinist Marek Weber (1888–1964). Due to abundant records, Weber and his collectives were known across Europe, and they had given shows in various European cities. “My father used to remember successful concerts and tours with Marek Weber orchestra in London and Paris; he used to mention concerts in [...] artistic district of Montmartre, full of cafes, nightclubs and cabarets” (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich, 21.11.2022).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> During one of the shows with Bela orchestra Pomeranz met popular music singer from Vilnius Daniel Dolski, who had previously performed in Riga with the Oscar Strok Band. It is said that it was Pomeranz who encouraged Dolski to move to Kaunas. Dolski did so around 1929.

<sup>36</sup> The piano quartet ERKLA (Erstes Klavier-quartett (The first Piano Quartet), also known as Jazz auf vier Flügeln (Jazz on Four Grand Pianos) debuted in 1926 with the following composition: Zakin, Gelbtrunk, Sula Lewitsch and Mittmann.

<sup>37</sup> Documentary data about Pomeranz’s playing in Bela’s and Weber’s orchestras is lacking.

According to British and French press of the period, the first live concerts of Weber orchestra in London and Paris, where it was very popular and highly regarded due to masterful records, were held in January 1933. On the occasion of Weber's orchestra tour in England, local press presented his collectives in more detail:

"In Germany M. Weber has three orchestras: the largest comprising of forty players drawn from eight nations, each a virtuoso at his own instrument, gives concerts to packed houses in the largest halls in all parts of the country. In England an orchestra of this kind is unknown; we have either the small restaurant bands or the large symphony orchestras, but Germans are the greatest lovers of light music, and people go in their millions to hear the waltzes of Strauss, fantasias from light operas and the potpourries of popular melodies played by these artists". [...] In addition to his combination of forty he also has an orchestra of fifteen players, who perform alternately at the Eden and Bristol hotels in Berlin. [...] A third orchestra, conducted by Marek Weber is a dance combination which plays only at large balls given by the German Government and personalities in Berlin's highest societies. Marek Weber's appearance with his small orchestra in London this week is his first visit to these shores and at the same time the first performance by a German orchestra in an English theatre since the war. On Sunday afternoon, January 8<sup>th</sup>, millions of English people who had previously known him through his H.M.V. gramophone records, will be able to hear him when he gives a special broadcast performance from Broadcasting House." (*The Cornish Post and Mining News and Redruth Advertiser*, 07.01.1933, 6)

58

After the concert tour in England, Weber orchestra gave their show in Paris, at Gaumont Palace<sup>38</sup> in Montmartre district. The daily entertainment news show *Comoedia* wrote:

"The management of the Gaumont-Palace has just launched a remarkable artistic effort by bringing to Paris, for the first time, the famous violinist Marek Weber – and the musicians of his orchestra, who occupy a leading place among musical ensembles contemporaries. [...] A musician like Marek Weber could only give us a limited idea of his talent, if he did not have at hand the collective instrument that is his own: the regular performers [...]. A simple gesture, and agreement is made between the will of the conductor and the brain, the virtuosos who follow him attentively. This mutual understanding, this discipline, offers us interpretations that we rarely could appreciate. [...] Each of Marek Weber's musicians has a veritable arsenal of instruments which he uses in turn to highlight the elegance of a phrase or highlight the sweetness of a melody. [...] In the program he performs on the Gaumont-Palace stage, we can judge this ensemble in all its aspects. Firstly, the Viennese waltz, which Marek Weber's musicians literally carry in their blood; tango, jazz, which are inseparable from very formula of this orchestra. But also, classical music, which he performs with perfect mastery" (*Comoedia*, 15.01.1933, 6).

---

38 Built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at that time Gaumont Palace was the largest movie theatre in Europe; after the reconstruction in 1930 it had 6,420 seats.

## Career in independent Lithuania

After the Nazi party rose to power on January 30, 1933, musical life in Germany came under the control of Reich propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Jews started to be removed from German musical life by the spring of the same year. A number of Jewish musicians left Germany, among them Béla and Weber. Julian Pomeranz escaped to Italy, and Daniel Pomeranz returned to Kaunas, bringing along the academic music education of a concertmaster violinist and experience of playing fashionable dances and schlagers. His experience was useful for Kaunas of that time which, being the temporary capital of independent Lithuania since 1919 when Poland occupied Vilnius, grew from a provincial town to a metropolis with modern architecture, modernized infrastructure and establishment of different cultural, educational as well as entertainment institutions. Popular music was first introduced by travelling artists from Saint Petersburg, Kiev, Berlin, Paris and even from the USA (Skudienė 2019, 29). Families of Jewish musicians Hofmekler, Stupel and Bank left the occupied Vilnius and settled in Kaunas, where they contributed to classical as well as popular music development (Urbonavičius 1989 (7), 6). In 1926, Kaunas Radio started broadcasting dances and the latest foreign tunes from musicals and movies, and on weekends it would broadcast concerts of the so called “small stage” artists from Kaunas’ restaurants and cafes. Apart from classical music, most of it is broadcast the music was of an entertainment nature, still scarce works by Lithuanian authors were also played (Skudienė 2019, 30). By the end of the 3rd decade entertainment music was performed mostly by local professional musicians in a high number of Kaunas’ restaurants and cafes and was very popular with the audience. However, academic music makers were intolerant of modern dance music, especially jazz, and cultural figures bureaucrats contemned popular music genre<sup>39</sup>, considering it an inappropriate expression of the nation’s spirituality and aspirations (Urbonavičius 1989 (5), 5).

To protect national identity in entertainment music, the Chief of Kaunas County and City Police, poet Juozas Mikuckis released a decree (around 1930) that part of the music playing on the “small stage” must be created by Lithuanian authors and sung in Lithuanian language, moreover, it must be of a “national character”. This part of the repertoire was called “police shows” (Urbonavičius 1989 (7), 6; Skudienė 2019, 30). The lyrics of popular foreign hits were translated into Lithuanian; it became fashionable to call the new dances by Lithuanian women names (e.g. tango named *Regina* or *Alytė*, foxtrot named *Onytė* (Skudienė 2019, 30). In the beginning of the 1940s, most of the schlagers were created using popular melodies from movies or dances with adapted Lithuanian lyrics on topics such as love, Lithuanian landscapes and current affairs of Lithuanian townfolk. Eventually Lithuanian composers, engaged in the transformation of foreign melodies, began to create their own compositions (Baublinskaitė 2016, 40).

---

39 In this aspect, the situation in Germany in the 1920s–early 1930s was similar: academic music critics did not look favorably on popular and jazz music, though public, especially of younger generation, was very enthusiastic about such repertoire.



Popular music ensembles – called bands, capellas, jazz-capellas or orchestras – were led by professional musicians, mainly Jews<sup>40</sup>, although Lithuanian musicians (especially soloists singers) also participated in the entertainment music scene. According to Melnikas, “Jewish musicians due to their artistic abilities secured key positions in the interwar “small stage”. Playing music on the “small” stage was perceived as a kind of continuation of klezmer music, and in this musical environment Jewish musicians felt relaxed and creatively free” (Melnikas 2008, 119). The composition of Lithuanian popular music ensembles corresponded to the composition of the so-called European salon or dance orchestras of those times. It consisted of strings, small groups of woodwind and brass instruments, accordion, piano, and percussion. Some instruments – saxophone, accordion, banjo, vibraphone, percussion – were completely new to the performers in Lithuania (Skudienė 2019, 30). Musicians in these ensembles played several instruments. As pianist and conductor Chaimas Potašinskas (1924–2009) who grew up in Kaunas recalled, “these restaurant orchestras were highly valued and respected by the public” (*Miniportretas* 1989).

Characteristics of popular music ensembles are reflected in the Kaunas press of the time. According to the data from 1938, 45 professional musicians played in restaurants and cafes<sup>41</sup>; for comparison, 35 musicians worked at the Kaunas Conservatory, 18 were singers soloists, 40 sang in the State Theatre choir, 56 played in the State Theatre orchestra (*Mūsų menas*, No. 1, 1938, 23). The same musicians used to play in different orchestras; many of them were employees of the State Theatre Orchestra, and performing popular music was a good opportunity to improve their material situation, although the theatre did not look favourably on such activities of its employees. During summers the ensembles used to leave Kaunas and play in the resorts, and in September they would come back to the city (*Lietuvos žinios*, 03.09.1937, 7). The most popular music ensembles in Kaunas were led by violinists Moishe Hofmekler, Daniel Pomeranz, Max Borshtein, Abraham Stupel, Chaim Ceitel, Jasha Levinson

Upon his return to Kaunas from Berlin in 1933, Pomeranz was first invited to open the new season in September with his jazz-capella in the most luxurious restaurant Metropolis (*Botagas*, 03.09.1933, 1), which was called “a place where high society spends time”, as well as “the best restaurant in all of Lithuania” (*Naujas žodis*, 30.04.1932, 18), and where music ensemble Hofmeklerband<sup>42</sup>, led by Moishe Hofmekler, violinist of the State Theatre, used to play before. However, not long after Hofmeklerband returned to Metropolis and was associated mostly with this venue, whereas jazz-capella of Pomeranz established itself in the Konrad’s cafe from late 1934 – early 1935 (after he returned from mandatory military one year service in Šiauliai as a violinist in Lithuanian army)

---

40 According to census data (1937), Kaunas citizens were approximately: 61% Lithuanians, 26% Jews, 4% Poles, over 3% Germans and over 3% Russians.

41 Multiinstrumentalists who played in restaurants and cafes often migrated from one venue to another, depending on salary offered.

42 At certain periods Hofmeklerband also used to play in another supreme restaurant, Versailles, and in Monika, Lituanica and Konrad cafes.

till 1941.<sup>43</sup> Musical bands of Hofmekler and Pomeranz used to compete for audience's attention. According to Urbonavičius, "Pomeranz was [...] performer of elegant romances and melodies, as well as sensual, heart-rending music filled with passionate feelings of love. Hofmekler was an elegant, smiling interpreter of serious classical and Lithuanian music" (Urbonavičius 1989 (7), 6).

The Konrad's cafe, one of the oldest cafes in Kaunas, was opened by German Richard Konrad in the mid 19th century in Laisvės avenue.<sup>44</sup> Konrad's cafe was a unique spiritual space, a sign of social status (Brazauskas 2022, 40 -41), favored by bohemians and intellectuals, especially writers. The Kaunas press of the time paid enough attention to the affairs of this cafe. Journalist and editor Juozas Kazys Beleckas wrote in independent weekly *Diena*: "If you want to be considered a writer, poet, painter, journalist, go to Konrad's cafe every day and sit for a few hours among the owners of this designation" (J. K. Beleckas, *Diena*, 14.01.1934, 3). In the article of the weekly *Sekmadienis* (the author signed "K"), a dynamic and colorful picture of the cafe's visitors is revealed: "Visiting Konrad is a daily duty of a Kaunian. It is mostly called the artists' cafe. However, this is not entirely accurate. Parnassus<sup>45</sup> has occupied it during the day. International audience in the evening. You go in, order a cup of coffee with a lemon slice and sit all evening amidst the smoke, the colorful crowd and the sounds of music. [...] Groups come, cheerful and happy circles. [...] They sing along to the music, they loudly demand their favorite musical numbers, they accompany a potpourri of Lithuanian songs with passionate applause" (K, *Sekmadienis*, 07.10.1934, 9).

61

The orchestra of Pomeranz consisted of five to seven musicians and, as Potašinskas recalled, "was very lyrical, of a chamber type, as if not to disturb the intellectual audience that gathered in that cafe, writers and artists, as many works of literature and art were born there..." (*Miniportretas* 1989). Eventually it had become one of the most popular entertainment music ensembles in the city, and was called "the well-known capella led by Mr. Pomeranz" (*Lietuvos žinios*, 25. 04.1936, 10). To keep the audience's attention, the musical programs of Pomeranz orchestra were regularly renewed.

*Diena* wrote:

"...In the afternoon, the whole of Kaunas gathers at the same Konrad cafe. The orchestra of the famous and beloved violinist Pomeranz, now reinforced by violinist Kravetz, has already managed to win the sympathy of all Kaunas. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the evenings it is more difficult to find a free chair at Konrad's than a lady from Kaunas who would agree to wear last year's fashion hat... Konrad's cafe's success is not a secret. First and foremost,

---

43 In 1934, Hofmeklerband had played in Konrad's café and due to the accessibility of the place became even more famous than playing in Metropolis (see J.K. Beleckas, *Diena*, 14.01.1934, 3). Most probably it was during the time when Pomeranz served in the musical team of Lithuanian army (LLMA 284-6-282, 4; LLMA 264-4-696, 3).

44 The owners of the building had changed several times, yet the cafe maintained its name and popularity. After the WWII, a cafe with a new name *Tulpė* was located here.

45 According to Greek mythology, Parnassus Mountain in central Greece is known as the mythological home of music and poetry.

the best products are available here. Let's remember the new cozy furniture, let's add the music of the temperamental violinist Pomeranz, and that secret will be revealed." (*Diena*, 20.09.1936, 4)

Pomeranz's temperament and memorable playing was known throughout the city. Famous tenor and the most prominent soloist of the State Theatre Kipras Petrauskas and his wife, actress Elena Žalinkevičaitė-Petrauskienė, actress Nelė Vosyliūtė-Dauguvietienė, as well as other musicians, actors and writers used to listen to his violin. "The whole cultural society came to his concerts – painters, artists... He said that even President Antanas Smetona used to listen to him" (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich, 25.09.2017). Pomeranz combined the repertoire of classical-romantic and popular music. Having accumulated experience of playing in different ensembles and orchestras in Berlin, he was fond of playing solo, mostly virtuosic romantic pieces of Pablo Sarasate, Nicolo Paganini, Fritz Kreisler, Henryk Wieniawski, as well as Spanish and Romani songs and dances. Freedom, flexibility and academic skills were balanced in his performances. The sound of his violin was deeply emotional and resembled the human voice. According to Urbonavičius, Pomeranz [...] was very agile and original. He [...] walked around the cafe, electrifying the listeners and surprising them with effective, virtuosic passages, soft glissandos and unexpected improvisations... It made a huge, stunning impression" (Urbonavičius 1989 (7), 6). Sometimes Pomeranz used to arrange solo concerts at the request of the listeners not only in Kaunas. For example, daily *Lietuvos žinios* reported on a concert in a Palanga resort near the Baltic sea in 1939:

"On Thursday, July 27, a concert by the famous violinist D. Pomeranz took place in the "Pajūris" restaurant, the program of which was varied and interesting. The hall was full with audience. The success was great and D. Pomeranz had to repeat many things. D. Pomeranz is not playing in Palanga this year, but is only on vacation, and he prepared this concert only at the request of Palanga's summer residents." (*Lietuvos žinios*, 29.07.1939, 9)

Despite the fact that the composition of the Pomeranz orchestra was changing, it always featured well-known professionals. Among its performers were Isaak Bank (piano and accordion), brothers Artūras Jakavičius (saxophone and cello) and Liudas Jakavičius (piano and accordion), Valerijonas Dzevočka (trumpet and bassoon), Maizin (Moisej) Fink (percussion), Chanon (Chaim) Ceitel (violin and saxophone), Grigorij (Gord) Stupel. The drawing by graphic artist and cartoonist Juozas Penčyla<sup>46</sup> (year unknown; see Picture 3) reflects the free and creative atmosphere that prevailed among the musicians. According to Liudas Jakavičius, "that postcard was distributed free of charge to all visitors to the *Konrad's cafe* [...]. Daniel Pomeranz, in whose orchestra I played, was a violinist, even better than Hofmekler, a recognized virtuoso. A very characteristic violinist for the small stage. Gordas Stupelis was an excellent pianist, Garčiauskas was

---

46 A well-known Lithuanian cartoonist Juozas Olinardas Penčyla (1908–1979) actively collaborated both in the satirical-humorous press and in the main daily and weekly newspapers; he especially liked to draw cartoons in *Konrad's cafe*.



**Picture 3.** Ensemble of Daniel Pomeranz in Konrad's cafe. Cartoon by Juozas Penčyla. From the personal collection of Algirdas Motieka.

an experienced xylophone player, and my brother Artūras is a saxophonist and cellist. We had great success there" (Peleckis-Kaktavičius 2016, 135–136).

The Pomeranz orchestra used to perform with various guest musicians on special occasions, such as celebrating the 1000th concert of Pomeranz in the *Konrad's cafe* in 1938, in which, apart from the orchestra, Lithuanian singer (baritone) Romanas Marijošius, xylophone player Garčiauskas, accordion players Liudas Jakavičius, Fidler and Novogrodski

and other musicians participated (*Sekmadienis*, 30. 01. 1938, 7). Among the soloists, who sang with the Pomeranz orchestra, was lyrical tenor and multiinstrumentalist Antanas Dvarionas.<sup>47</sup>

Famous record companies *Odeon* and *Columbia* used to invite Lithuanian artists to recording sessions in Copenhagen, Berlin, London. In 1936, Dvarionas and Pomeranz orchestra, joined by recording studio orchestra members, recorded for London's label *Columbia* 11 plates of shellac, featuring tangos, waltzes and foxtrots by well-known authors such as Wilhelm Grosz, Edvard Farley, Jerzy Petersburski, Rudolf Frimli and others (translated into Lithuanian by poet Vladas Misiūnas and Leonardas Lechavičius), also schlagers by Lithuanian authors Kajetonas Leipus, Lechavičius, Stasys Gailevičius, N. Naikauskas. Dvarionas became famous especially for the performance and record of the popular tango *The Last Sunday* (*To ostatnia niedziela*) by Polish pianist and composer Petersburski. In the memories of the old generation of Kaunas, "The Last Sunday" was also closely associated with Pomeranz. According to violinist and founder of the girls' rock group *Bitės* Jūratė Dineikaitė (b. 1936), "I have heard tango played by Pomeranz since childhood. It was thanks to the tango that I appreciated Pomeranz's emotions. [...] He wasn't that reckless virtuoso with "flying" fingers, he didn't need it. He would play one note and it would make you want to cry [...] All those people from Kaunas, and the parents of my classmates, whom I heard talking about Pomeranz, all emphasized tango. [...] Even later, as much as I heard tango on the radio during the Soviet era, as much as it was allowed to be broadcast and listened to, performed by other musicians in the Soviet Union, I never heard anything like Pomeranz's tango. These were masterpieces." (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Jūratė Dineikaitė, 07.02.2023)

<sup>47</sup> Antanas Dvarionas (1899–1950) was born in Liepāja, studied singing in the conservatories of St. Petersburg and Leipzig. He also played piano, accordion, cornet, saxophone, and drums. From around 1929 until 1933, worked at the State Opera Theatre in Kaunas and later became one of the most prominent artists of popular music, sang in *Metropolis* and *Versalis* restaurants, *Konrad's cafe*, participated in the first live Lithuanian radio broadcasts. Dvarionas also played saxophone in the Pomeranz orchestra.

## The fate of Pomeranz during the Nazi and Soviet occupation

In 1940, Pomeranz got married to Riva (Lucy) Zolk<sup>48</sup> from Kretinga, who had graduated from a lyceum of early children education in Germany before the war, and also played the piano. The couple met in the Konrad's cafe. After the Nazis occupied Lithuania in June 1941, the persecutions and massacres of Jews began immediately. Jewish musicians were fired en masse from their jobs in music groups and educational institutions. Soon a ghetto was established in Vilijampolė, where about 30 000 Jews were imprisoned, including Daniel and his pregnant wife. After the "action of intellectuals" carried out in Fort IV of Kaunas in August 1941, during which 534 prominent figures of Jewish culture, writers, artists, doctors and other intellectuals were killed, the Jewish musicians imprisoned in the Kaunas ghetto were afraid to reveal their profession and hid musical instruments. In October the same year, daughter of Daniel and Riva daughter was born. When the girl was nearly 2 years old, the couple, to protect her, gave her away – the family of tenor Petrauskas agreed to raise the little Dana.<sup>49</sup> Pomeranz's daughter was adopted and grew up in the Petrauskas family until she was reunited with her biological parents in the early fall of 1948.

"The ghetto had very many talented musicians. In fact, most of the café bands were Jewish and all of them were in the ghetto" (Mishell 1998, 131). In summer 1942, when the Nazis stopped the killings for a while, Hofmekler and Pomeranz founded the so-called Ghetto police orchestra (musicians were registered as policemen and dressed in uniforms to protect them from annihilation during actions against intelligentsia), which consisted of more than 35 professional musicians, as well as of students of music schools (Petrauskaitė 2006, 108–109). Concerts would take place once or twice per week in the Ghetto police house – the former famous yeshiva of Slobodka. Works of Joseph Achron, Frédéric Chopin, Edvard Grieg, Fromental Halevy, Fritz Kreisler, Franz Liszt, Arthur Rubinstein and other composers (except German and Austrian, which were prohibited (Petrauskaitė 2006, 110; Melnikas 2006, 96<sup>50</sup>) were in the program. Pomeranz used to play solo as well.

The liquidation of the Kaunas ghetto began in mid-July 1944. Pomeranz, together with other surviving members of the ghetto orchestra was taken to Stutthof and later Dachau concentration camps, where he remained till the end of the war. "The musicians of the ghetto orchestra had even managed to bring along their instruments, which were taken away from them at first but later returned; they used to play for the inmates of the concentration camp [...] Their repertoire was generally the same as in the ghetto" (Mishell 1998, 328, 331, 335).

---

48 In Lithuanian – Riva Liusė Zolkaitė (1910 – 2002).

49 Rescuers of Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich – Balys Simanavičius (2015), Kipras Petrauskas (1999) and Elena Žalinkevičaitė-Petrauskienė (1999) were recognized as the Righteous Among the Nations by the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. This story of rescue is told by the documentary film "Sisters" (2016, authors Lilija Kopač and Danutė Selčinskaja, released by Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History).

50 According to Melnikas, the prohibition in the Kaunas ghetto to perform the works of composers belonging to the "Aryan" culture could have been a decision of the local Nazi authorities. There was no such ban on the Vilnius ghetto orchestra (See Melnikas 2006, 96, 103 (footnote 158)).



“I think that my father survived because he believed that he would see me again, and he had an extraordinary love for music. When it seemed that he couldn’t take it anymore, music and the violin saved him. [...] One Nazi in the Dachau concentration camp found out that my father was a violinist [...] and he asked him to play Bach. Because of that sometimes he would bring him a piece of bread. Once my father didn’t have the strength to play, and that man beat him so hard, broke his hands, so that he lost consciousness. However, the belief that he would see me again and maybe teach me music, kept my father going. [...] When he returned to Kaunas, my mother could barely recognize him. He was exhausted both physically and psychologically. [...] His hands were swollen and there was no flexibility in his fingers anymore, but the virtuosity was still felt, although not at that level.” (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich, 08.12.2022)

Having survived Stutthof and Dachau concentration camps, Pomerantz returned to the Soviet-occupied Lithuania in August 1945 and reunited with his wife Riva who had survived the Holocaust in Kaunas.<sup>51</sup> He got a job of the first category artist-concertmaster at the Kaunas Musical Comedy Theatre orchestra, which mostly played operettas by Imre Kalman, Franz Lehár, Johann Strauss, and Soviet composers (LLMA 284-6-282, 5). Theatre musicians and artists, divided into brigades, also had to perform low-value ideological works in various collective farms around the country. Also, Pomerantz formed his popular music band in “Tulpė” (former Konrad’s) café. Continuing different professional activities, he tried to overcome the psychological and physical traumas caused by the Holocaust and by loss of many members of his family<sup>52</sup>.

In 1949, the Pomerantz family moved to Vilnius where the violinist joined the Vilnius’ Radio Symphony orchestra led by Abelis Klenickis, which from 1958 was called Lithuanian State Philharmonic Orchestra and was led by Balys Dvarionas – the younger brother of tenor Antanas Dvarionas, with whom Pomerantz had collaborated in Kaunas. Pomerantz also played in the Jewish instrumental ensemble which operated at the Trade Union Palace of Culture since 1956. It was established along with other collectives – choirs, dance and theatre groups during the warming period of Nikita Khrushchev’s rule; these were the first collectives in the Soviet Union, dedicated to the cultivation of Yiddish culture. The repertoire of the instrumental ensemble was very diverse, but a significant part of it consisted of Yiddish and Jewish folk songs. As composer Anatolijus Šenderovas (1945–2019), who played piano in that ensemble when he was a student, recalled, improvisational, theatrical manner of performing prevailed, the musicians almost never used to play from sheet music (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Anatolijus Šenderovas, 15.12.2017).

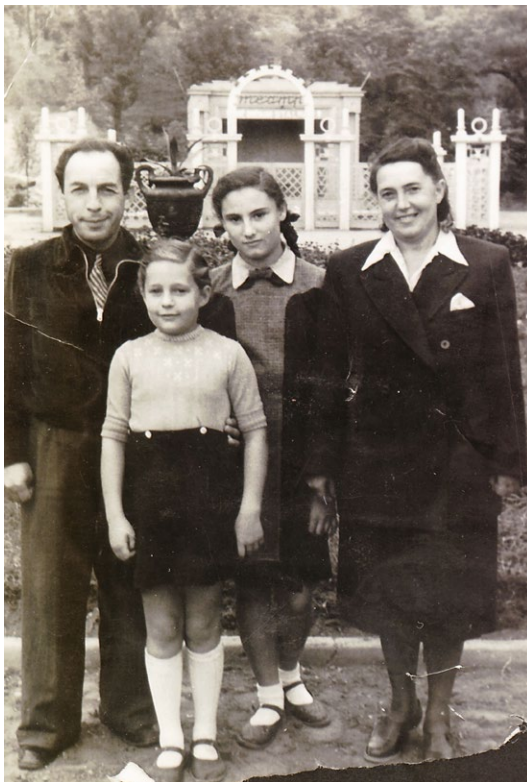
---

51 Daniel and Riva reunited with their daughter Dana in early autumn 1948, when she returned with Žalinkevičiūtė-Petrauskienė and her daughter Aušra from the Displaced Persons Camp near Stuttgart. The family had also adopted Rūta Lopianskaitė (later Gorinienė), the daughter of Riva’s sister Rocha who was killed during the Holocaust.

52 Out of his eight siblings, only brother Giuliano and sisters Fania and Sara had survived.

“He also formed a small jazz band – with a violin, accordion, clarinet – which played in one Vilnius café. Apparently, this kind of work helped him maintain his memories of past activities. He must have felt the pull of having his own ensemble again. [...] At home [...] sometimes he started to play those popular melodies from the repertoire of the former Kaunas cafes, and his eyes started to shine. And then he would sink back into his thoughts. [...] He didn’t like to talk about his past.” (K. Rupeikaitė, interview with Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich, 21.10.2022)

Pomeranz retired in September 1965. Around 1970, the struggle of the Jews of the Soviet Union for the right to repatriate to Israel intensified; repatriation was officially allowed in 1971, so the Pomeranz family (see Picture 4) asked for permission to leave. However, they had no intention of going to Israel – Pomeranz wanted to reunite with his siblings who, after surviving the Holocaust, lived in Rome and New York. In 1974 Daniel, Riva, their daughter Dana and her family went to Rome where Daniel’s brother Giuliano lived, and later settled in Canada. The violin remained the driving force of Daniel Pomeranz – until the end of his life in 1981, he, together with his wife Riva who played piano, used to give chamber music concerts in the senior club in Toronto where they lived.



**Picture 4.** Family of Daniel Pomeranz, 1953. From left to right: Daniel Pomeranz, his daughter Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich, sister of Dana Rūta Lopianskaitė (Gorinienė) who was adopted by Pomeranz family after the war, Riva Pomerancienė (Pomeranz).

**To conclude,** the research process of the biography of violinist Daniel Pomeranz within the context of changes of different epochs reveals the complexity of the era and results in finding conflicting archival information in some respects. The discrepancies in data provided by the violinist himself illustrate not only the particularity of changing political regimes but is a significant testimony of possible human efforts to protect their own story, as the discovered information differs depending on the context and time *where, when* and *for whom* it was provided. Due to the lack of surviving sources, it is not yet possible to fully reconstruct the details of his education and career; however, despite the fragmentary nature of the surviving documents, the conducted research clarified previously unknown facts of Pomeranz studies in Berlin.

The most significant period of the career of Pomeranz reflects the general situation of entertainment music in the then independent Lithuania: it gave professional musicians the opportunity to reveal the best qualities of their talent – virtuosity, flexibility, the need and ability to improvise. Such “small stage” ensembles had their own audience and were appreciated by the public. The music they performed reflected aspirations not only to bring the latest foreign dances and schlagers to Lithuania, but also to foster local popular music, in cooperation with Lithuanian composers and soloists. In the Lithuanian press of the 1930s and in the memoirs of contemporaries, Pomeranz is named as one of the brightest musicians of Kaunas who had mastered both classical and popular music repertoire. Tunes of virtuosic romantic pieces and fashionable dance music, especially tango, expressed his temperamental personality and were the hallmark of the *Konrad's cafe* in Laisvės avenue.

The successful career of Pomeranz was ruined by the Nazi occupation, which left indelible spiritual and physical imprints on his subsequent life. After returning from the concentration camps, he spent the next 30 years under the Soviet regime, relying on the most important source of his survival – music and combining different professional musical activities available to artists at that time, till his family received the permission to leave the Soviet Union.

Further efforts are needed to reconstruct the missing fragments of biography and work of Daniel Pomeranz, which would reveal a more detailed portrait of the artist, whose name is inseparable from the musical identity of the temporary capital of independent Lithuania.

67

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **SOURCES**

#### **Unpublished sources**

Sub-collection 1.1.41: Stutthof Concentration Camp, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

Sub-collection 3.2.1: IRO “Care and Maintenance” Program, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

Sub-collection 6.3.3: ITS case files as of 1947, ITS Digital Archive, Arolsen Archives.

Chapman University Digital Commons. Henri Temianka Correspondence. 2602. Letter of Willy Hess to Henri Temianka, 13.03.1925. Access online: [https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/temianka\\_correspondence/2602](https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/temianka_correspondence/2602) [Viewed on November 21, 2022].

LCVA F. 391. Ap. 4. B. 1053. Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas (Lithuanian Central State Archives), file of music schools, 1920.

LLMA F. 84. Ap. 4. B. 75. Lietuvos literatūros ir meno archyvas (Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art), file of Isaak Vildman-Zaidman, teacher of Kaunas Conservatory.

LLMA F. 264. Ap. 4. B. 696. Lietuvos literatūros ir meno archyvas (Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art), file of Daniel Pomeranz, violinist of the State Philharmonic of Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania, 1949–1965.

LLMA F. 284. Ap. 6. B. 282. Lietuvos literatūros ir meno archyvas (Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art), file of Daniel Pomeranz, orchestra artist at united Kaunas' musical comedy and youth theatre, 1945–1948.

LVIA F. 728. Ap. 4. B. 118. Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas (Lithuanian State Historical Archives), file of Vilnius Jewish Rabbinate, 1904.

UdK-Archiv Berlin Bestand 1. No. 583. Teil 6. Universitätsarchiv der Universität der Künste Berlin (Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin), letter by Daniel Pomeranz to the State Academic University of Music. 08 12 1924.

UdK-Archiv Berlin Bestand 1. No. 583. Teil 6. Universitätsarchiv der Universität der Künste Berlin (Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin), comment of Willy Hess on Daniel Pomeranz's letter. 09 12 1924.

UdK-Archiv Berlin Bestand 1. No. 678. Universitätsarchiv der Universität der Künste Berlin (Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin), violin exam protocol, summer semester 1925.

UdK-Archiv Berlin Bestand 4. No. 32. Universitätsarchiv der Universität der Künste Berlin (Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin), Sternsches Konservatorium der Musik Jahresbericht 1926/27.

UdK-Archiv Berlin Bestand 4. No. 33. Universitätsarchiv der Universität der Künste Berlin (Archive of the University of the Arts Berlin), Sternsches Konservatorium der Musik Jahresbericht 1927/28.

## **Interviews**

Rupeikaitė, Kamilė. Interview with Jūratė Dineikaitė, recorded on 07.02.2023, Vilnius. The record is kept in the personal archive of the author.

Rupeikaitė, Kamilė. Interviews with Dana Pomerants-Mazurkevich, recorded on 25.09.2017, London; 21.10.2022, Boston–Vilnius; 21.11.2022, Boston–Vilnius; 08.12.2022, Boston–Vilnius; 25.07.2023, Boston–Vilnius. The records are kept in the personal archive of the author.

Rupeikaitė, Kamilė. Interview with Dietmar Schenk, recorded on 25.10.2023, Berlin. The record is kept in the personal archive of the author.

Rupeikaitė, Kamilė. Interview with Anatolijus Šenderovas recorded on 15.12.2017, Nemenčinė. The record is kept in the personal archive of the author.

Miniportretas. Broliai L. ir M. Hofmekleriai [Mini portrait. Brothers L. and M. Hofmekler.] TV show. *Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT)*. 01.01.1989. Access through internet: <https://www.lrt.lt/mediateka/irasas/18206/miniportretas-broliai-l-ir-m-hofmekleriai>

## PERIODICALS

Advertisement on the 1000th concert of Daniel Pomeranz at Konrad's café. *Sekmadienis*, No. 5, 30.01.1938, 7.

Advertisements. *Der Montag*. Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger, No. 17, 06.05.1929, 4.

Beleckas, J. K. Kaip Kaunas juokiasi ir verkia [How Kaunas laughs and cries]. *Diena*, No. 2, 14.01.1934, 3.

D. Pomeranco koncertas [Concert of D. Pomeranc]. *Lietuvos žinios*, No. 170, 29.07.1939, 9.

Grįžo iš kurortų Kauno kavinių ir restoranų griežikai [The musicians of Kaunas cafes and restaurants have returned from the resorts]. *Lietuvos žinios*, No. 200, 03.09.1937, 7.

K. Kava su citrina, muzika su dūmais [Coffee with lemon, music with smoke]. *Sekmadienis*, No. 40, 07.10.1934, 9.

Kronika [Chronicle]. *Mūsų menas*, No. 1, 1938, 23.

Light Orchestra King's Romance. *The Cornish Post and Mining News and Redruth Advertiser*, 07.01.1933, 6.

Marek Weber et son orchestra au Gaumont-Palace. *Comoedia*, No. 2.(141), 15.01.1933, 6.

Metropolio restoranas ir kafė [Metropolis Restaurant and Cafe]. Reklama [Advertisement]. *Botagas*, No. 4, 03.09.1933, 1.

“Metropolis“. Vieta, kur aukštoji visuomenė praleidžia laiką [“Metropolis“. A place where high society hangs out]. *Naujas žodis*, No. 7, 30.04.1932, 18.

Nepaprastas Konrado cukrainės pasisekimas [The extraordinary success of Konrad's confectionery]. *Diena*, No. 38, 20.09.1936, 4.

Pertvarkyta Konrado kavinė [Konrad's cafe has been remodeled]. *Lietuvos žinios*, No. 94, 25.04.1936, 10.



## LITERATURE

Baublinskaitė, Bernadeta (2016). Mažosios scenos kultūra prieškario Kaune [Small stage culture in pre-war Kaunas]. *Naujasis židinys-aidai*, Nr. 6, 39–43.

Brazauskas, Juozas (2022). *Legendinė “Konrado” kavinė* [The legendary “Konrad’s” cafe]. Hambrueckenas: leidykla “Vokietijos lietuvis”.

Melnikas, Leonidas (2006). Lietuvos žydų muzikinis paveldas (XIX a. pabaiga – XX a. I pusė) [The musical heritage of Lithuanian Jews (end of the 19th century – first half of the 20th century)]. *Lietuvos muzikologija*, vol 7. Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija, 79–105.

Melnikas, Leonidas (2008). *Lietuvos žydų muzikinio paveldo pėdsakais* [In the footsteps of the musical heritage of Lithuanian Jews]. Vilnius: Charibdė.

Mishell, William W. (1998). *Kaddish for Kovno. Life and Death in a Lithuanian Ghetto 1941–1945*. Chicago: Review Press.

Peleckis-Kaktavičius, Leonas (2016). *Ir dar kartą žodis: esė, pokalbiai, atklastai* [And one more word: essays, conversations, revelations]. Šiauliai: Literatūros almanacho “Varpai” redakcija.

Petrauskaitė, Danutė (2006). Muzika Kauno žydų gete [Music in the Kaunas Jewish Ghetto]. *Lietuvos muzikologija*, vol 7. Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija, 106–117.

Rosenthal, Gabriele (2018). *Interpretive Social Research*. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag.

Sacks, Adam (2020). Ostbahnhof Berlin. Jewish Music Students of East European Origin at the Berlin Conservatory, 1918–1933. *POLIN: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 32: Jews and Music-Making in the Polish Lands*. <https://adamjsacks.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Polin-ArticleSacks.pdf> [Accessed on September 24, 2023]

Schenk, Dietmar (2004). Die Hochschule für Musik zu Berlin. Preußens Konservatorium zwischen romantischem Klassizismus und Neuer Musik, 1869–1932/33. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Skudienė, Rūta (2019). Lietuvių populiariosios muzikos ištakos. Kauno mažosios scenos artistai, XX a. 3-4 deš. *Lietuvos muzikos paveldo tyrimai*. Kaišiadorys: Printėja, 28–39.

Thurman, Kira (2013). *A History of Black Musicians in Germany and Austria, 1870–1961: Race, Performance, and Reception*. Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy. New York: University of Rochester. <https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemId=27722> [Accessed on September 24, 2023]

Urbonavičius, Algirdas (1989). Odė estradinei muzikai [Ode to popular music]. (3). *Kalba Vilnius*. No. 21, 5.

Urbonavičius, Algirdas (1989). Odė estradinei muzikai [Ode to popular music] (5). *Kalba Vilnius*. No. 26, 5.

Urbonavičius, Algirdas (1989). Odė estradinei muzikai [Ode to popular music] (7). *Kalba Vilnius*. No. 33, 6.

Urbonavičius, Algirdas (1989). Odė estradinei muzikai [Ode to popular music] (8). *Kalba Vilnius*. No. 39, 5.

Vainauskienė, Tamara (2009). Privačios muzikos mokyklos ir Liaudies konservatorija p[Private music schools and Folk Conservatory]. *Lietuvos muzikos istorija, II knyga. Nepriklausomybės metai 1918-1940*. Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija, Kultūros, filosofijos ir meno institutas. 268–271.

## 20. GADSIMTA POPULĀRĀ MŪZIKA LIETUVĀ: REKONKSTURĒJOT VIJOLNIEKA DANIELA POMERANCA (1904–1981) BIOGRĀFIJU

Kamile Rupekaite

### Kopsavilkums

Vijoles virtuozs un populārās mūzikas atskaņotājs Daniels Pomerancs (*Daniel Pomeranz*, 1904–1981) vārds Lietuvā kā atgādinājums izskanēja 20. gs. 90. gados, valsts neatkarības atjaunošanas laikā. Tomēr viņa dzīve un daiļrade joprojām nav izpētīta. Raksts piedāvā pirmreizēju pētījumu par Pomeranca sarežģīto biogrāfiju, pamatojoties uz Lietuvas un citu valstu arhīvos atrastajiem dokumentiem, recenzijām presē, Pomeranca laikabiedru un viņa meitas Danas Pomerancas-Mazurkevičas (1941) atmiņām.

Tā kā Pomerancs dzīvoja sešās dažādās politiskajās sistēmās, viņa biogrāfijas daļas ir zudušas, savukārt atrastajos dokumentos informācija ir pretrunīga. Piemēram, dažādos arhīvos atrodamas piecas versijas par viņa dzimšanas laiku un vietu, savukārt viņa meitas liecība sniedz vēl sesto versiju. Tāpat nav viennozīmīgu datu par vietu, kur Pomerancs ieguvis pirmo izglītību. Pētījumā iekļautas visas versijas, jo tās sniedz svarīgu liecību par 20. gadsimta sarežģīto vēsturi un konfrontē dzīvo atmiņu.

Pomeranca karjerā svarīgākās pilsētas bija Berlīne un Kauņa. 1925.–1926. gadā viņš studēja profesora Rūdolfa Dēmana vijoles klasē Valsts Akadēmiskajā Mūzikas Universitātē. 1926. gada septembrī viņš iestājās profesora Maksima Jakobsena vijoles klasē Šterna konservatorijā, kur, saskaņā ar atrastajiem datiem, viņš studēja divus gadus. Savukārt Pomeranca ģimene apgalvo, ka viņš apmeklējis arī Bronislava Hubermana privātskolas Vīnē.

Berlīnē Pomerancs dibinājis arī vairākus populārās mūzikas ansambļus. Tomēr viņa kompozīcijas, precīzi to sarakstīšanas gadi un koncertvietas nav zināmas. Zināms, ka Pomerancs bijis vijolnieka Dajosa Belas (*Dajos Béla*) simfoniskā džezas orķestra solists, kā arī muzicējis vijolnieka Mareka Vēbera (*Marek Weber*) slavenajā deju orķestrī. Viņa brālis Džulians Džuliano (*Julian Giuliano*), kas neilgu laiku studēja Valsts Akadēmiskajā Mūzikas Universitātē un bija Klindvorta – Šarvenkas (*Klindworth-Scharwenka*) konservatorijas Berlīnē mācībspēks, 1928. un 1929. gadā spēlēja ansablī *Erstes Klavierquartett* (*Pirmais klavieru kvartets*), kas bija pazīstams arī kā *Jazz auf vier Flügeln* (*Džezs četriem koncertflīģeļiem*) kopā ar pianistiem Aleksandru Zakinu (*Alexander Zakin*), Ādamu Gelbtrunku (*Adam Gelbtrunk*) un Leopoldu Mitmanu (*Leopold Mittmann*).

1933. gadā, kad pie varas nāca Nacionālsociālistiskā partija, Pomerancs atgriezās Kauņā, kas tolaik bija neatkarīgās Lietuvas galvaspilsēta. Līdz pat 30. gadu beigām populāro mūziku daudzajos Kauņas restorānos un kafējnīcās galvenokārt atskaņoja profesionāli mūziķi. Pomerancu ar viņa džezas kapelu pirmoreiz uzaicināja atklāt jauno

sezonu restorānā *Metropole*. No 1934. līdz 1941. gadam vijolnieka galvenā darbavieta bija *Konrad's cafe*, bohēmistu un intelektuāļu iecienīta kafejnīca. Pomeranca orķestri, kura sastāvā muzicēja pieci līdz septiņi multiinstrumentālisti parasi dēvēja par “labi pazīstamo kapellu Daniela Pomeranca vadībā”. Lietuvas presē cildināta Pomeranca temperamentīgā un smalkā spēle, ko pazina visā pilsētā. Viņš bieži spēlēja arī solo, galvenokārt virtuosos Pablo Sarasates, Nikolo Paganīni, Friča Kreislera un Henrika Veņavska darbus, kā arī spāņu un čigāņu dziesmas un dejas.

1940. gadā Pomerancs apprecējās ar Rivu (Lūciju) Zolku no Kretingas, kura bija beigusi liceju Vācijā un arī prata spēlēt klavieres. Sākoties vācu okupācijai Lietuvā 1941. gadā ģimene tika ieslodzīta Kauņas geto. Kopā ar vijolnieku Moiši Hofmekleru Pomerancs dibināja tā saukto Geto policijas orķestri. Koncerti notika vienu vai divas reizes nedēļā Geto policijas namā. Kad 1944. gada jūlija vidū sākās Kauņas geto likvidācija, Pomerancu aizveda uz Štuthofas, bet vēlāk uz Dahavas koncentrācijas nometni, kur viņš atradās līdz pat kara beigām. Pēc atgriešanās Padomju Savienības okupētajā Lietuvā 1945. gada augustā, Pomerancs strādāja par Kauņas Muzikālā Komēdijas teātra orķestra koncertmeistaru, un arī nodibināja nelielu grupu kafejnīcā *Tulpe*. No 1949. gada, kad Pomerancu ģimene pārvācās uz Viļņu, viņš pievienojās Viļņas Radio simfoniskajam orķestrim (no 1958. gada Lietuvas Valsts filharmonijas orķestris), kopš 1956. gada muzicēja arī Arodbiedrību Kultūras pils Ebreju instrumentālajā ansambli. 1974. gadā Daniels, Riva un viņu meita Dana ar ģimeni emigrēja uz Kanādu. Līdz pat mūža nogalei Pomerancs ar sievu organizēja kamermūzikas koncertus Toronto senioru klubā.

Daniela Pomeranca biogrāfijas pētniecības process dažādu vēsturisko pārmaiņu kontekstā atklāj laikmeta sarežģītību. Paša vijolnieka sniegto datu neprecizitāte ilustrē ne tikai politisko režīmu maiņas ietekmi, bet būtiski liecina par vēlmi pasargāt savu ģimenes vēsturi, jo konstatētie fakti atšķiras atkarībā no konteksta un laika, *kur, kad un kam* informācija sniegta. Avotu trūkuma dēļ joprojām nav iespējams pilnībā rekonstruēt Pomeranca izglītības un karjeras ceļu. Tomēr par spīti dokumentu fragmentārajam raksturam, veiktais pētījums precizē līdz šim nezināmas detaļas par Pomeranca studijām Berlīnē.





# “WRITING TWO KINDS OF MUSIC”: THE TWO MUSICAL VOICES OF VLADIMIR DUKELSKY ALIAS VERNON DUKE

Marianne Betz

There is no doubt for me -  
*he, who doesn't sing, is not a poet*  
(Vladimir Dukelsky, 1962)<sup>1</sup>

Vladimir Dukelsky (1903–1969) grew up in Kiev until his family emigrated to the United States in 1921. Trained at the Kiev conservatory with the idea of becoming a classical pianist and composer, his talent for popular music soon unfolded. He followed the advice of his mentor George Gershwin and adopted the name “Vernon Duke,” from 1926 on signing his classical compositions as Dukelsky and his popular music as Duke.

In his autobiography from 1955, written as Duke, his official name since 1939, he explains his “dual musical existence”: the “serious” Dukelsky, trying to find his way in the world of twentieth-century concert music, and the “unserious” Vernon Duke, nurturing his aptitude for popular tunes and show music, yet ultimately becoming the wage earner of the two.

The exploration of the composer’s career in the twenties and thirties provides insight into the emergence of what could be called, in analogy to his bilingual command of Russian and English, bi-musicality, and into the growth of his two musical voices. While his classical music was influenced by his affiliation to the style of composers such as Prokofiev, his popular music, from early jazzy interpolations for London-produced operettas around 1926, over music for shows and movies up until to iconic songs such as *April in Paris* and *Autumn in New York*, displays a growing autonomy. The occasional fusion of the two musical idioms made listeners doubt Duke’s pronounced self-conception: “Dukelsky in no way resembles Duke.”

**Keywords:** Vladimir Dukelsky; Vernon Duke; George Gershwin; Sergey Prokofiev; operetta; popular music; Broadway songs; bi-musicality

<sup>1</sup> “No dlâ menâ somnen’â net – KTO NE POËT – TOT NE POËT,” in: Vladimir Dukelsky, *Poslanija*. Munich 1962, 16; translation Marianne Betz/Dmitri Dragilew.

## Introduction

The composer Vladimir Dukelsky (1903-1969) was born in Parafianovo, in the Minsk governorate. He grew up in various places throughout Russia, as his father, who was



**Figure 1:** Vernon Duke, New York 1945.  
Reproduced with permission from Kay Duke Ingalls.

in the railroad business, had to move frequently. From 1912 on the family lived in Kiev until they fled from the Russian Civil War in December 1919, first by train to Odessa, then by ship to Constantinople. In the fall of 1921, the family emigrated to the United States on the SS King Alexander, finally settling in New York (Duke 1955, 80). Dukelsky, who had grown up with Russian as his native language, learned languages easily. English, his fourth language, after French and German, became second nature to him (Holden 2010, 301). Remarkably, and in spite of numerous writings in English, he maintained his passion for Russian poetry throughout his life, and even published four volumes of poems in the sixties. In 1969, he passed away from lung cancer.

Dukelsky's musical language developed a "bilingualism" comparable to his command of Russian and English. He was musically trained at the Kiev conservatory by Reinhold Glière (1875–1956), among others, which prepared him as a pianist and a classical composer. Dukelsky's immersive conservatory education led him throughout his life to compose concert music, including symphonies, concertos, chamber music, and an oratorio. However, the other side of his "dual musical existence," as he himself called it (Duke 1955, 88), was his foible and talent for popular music. Encouraged by George Gershwin (1898–1937), whom he met as early as 1922 and who became a highly influential person for him, he adopted the *nom de plume* "Vernon Duke," signing his music from 1926 on as either Dukelsky or Duke: Two signatures for two ways of musical expression. Dukelsky was the "serious" composer of concert music, Vernon Duke the other, the "unserious," nurturing his talent for popular song and show music: "The two idioms in which I write are as different as work and play. Serious music is hard work; jazz is easy for me – that is just recreation for which I happen to get paid" (Duke 1955, 303).

## Dukelsky and Duke

A more detailed view on Dukelsky-Duke's unusual biography and the exploration of his early career help provide valuable insight into the emergence of his musical voice and the development of its two idioms. The investigation of Dukelsky-Duke's career inevitably leads back to his autobiography *Passport to Paris*, published in Boston 1955 under the name "Vernon Duke." As this was the name he carried officially after becoming an American citizen in 1939, the composer will be called "Vernon Duke" in the following.

The autobiography begins with retrospective notes about his childhood and adolescence, in part relying on a copybook of his mother's especially for his early years (Duke 1955, 6). In this context he recalls a holiday trip from Kiev to "Riga Strand" in 1914, right before the outbreak of the Great War (WW1), remembering this family vacation in the international ambience of Bulduri (then: *Bilderlingshof*) as a summer without a care in the world, full of playing, of music, of poetry and of delights such as smoked fish (ibid. 20f.). Another of his childhood recollections is that his mother, a "von Koestel" and in part Viennese, Spanish and Russian, who was quite apt as a piano player, began "studying the tango" around 1915. Both Duke and his brother Alexis, then 12 and 10 years old, imitated her by practicing the "Argentine *pas de deux*."<sup>2</sup>

Tangos, polkas, and "the increasingly popular American two-steps" were part of the repertoire with which Duke entertained his co-Russian refugees as a young adolescent in 1919 in Odessa, while waiting for a ship to get across the Black Sea (ibid. 62). He had fled from Kiev with his mother and brother, his father having passed in 1912. When finally arriving in Constantinople, the next leg of the journey, in January 1920, he was confronted with a dense mixture of influences. By then, he was 16, had just escaped the brutality of the October Revolution and the Civil War, but was also rid of school, and full of curiosity for music – and for life. Duke, who had the chance to access a grand piano, started organizing concerts using the enormous amount of "refugee talent" available. He continued practicing serious music - and at the same time tried to make money by playing popular music, "schlager" such as *O sole mio* and *Otchi tchornya*. One of these "gigs" introduced him as part of a trio to a restaurant, another to the barracks of British soldiers, a third to a cinema as a pianist for silent films. In hindsight, he noted that "he began to function as Dukelsky and Duke" during that winter (Duke 1955, 7 -77). The sojourn in Constantinople was also the time when he became acquainted with jazz, and, while he disliked other popular music, he became "an early-jazz fiend." At his various gigs he was asked to play the newest music, and thus bought himself sheet music to learn the new tunes, among them several songs by Irving Berlin and *Swanee*, "by a man improbably styled Geo. Gershwin." Gershwin's music sent Duke "into ecstasies," especially because of the "bold sweep of the tune, its rhythmic freshness,

---

2 The tango was not only "the latest dance craze" at that time, but "also the tag of flaming orange color" (Duke 1955, 23). The color orange is mentioned again, when Duke, recalling the same period, showed his new teacher Glière his piano sonata, clad in an orange book cover due to "the tango influence" (ibid. 31).

and, especially, it's syncopated gait" (ibid.). He also began studying New Orleans jazz, but Gershwin's "inventiveness" and "musicality" remained the strongest influence for him.<sup>3</sup>

Duke started composing tunes himself, which stylistically were a bit of everything, and which he signed with fantasy author names like "Ivan Ivin" or "Alan Lane" (ibid. 78). However, by the time the family finally settled in New York in 1921, Duke, or rather: Dukelsky, had already completed several compositions, among them a four-movement string sextet (1918), a one-movement piano sonata in G minor begun in November 1920 and finished in April 1921, and several songs, some classical, but a number of them also popular songs (ibid. 54 and 75).

Given the precarious financial situation of the family, he continued to play the piano at restaurants in New York. He also played for a magician's show, conducted an ensemble called *Jazz Babies*, and accompanied the students of singing teachers. By and by he got in touch with other musicians, among them many who were refugees from the Old World just like himself. He tried to find a job with a *Tin Pan Alley* publisher, but his songs were rejected. However, a few of his classical songs received a concert performance. A review of two of these songs, performed by the soprano Éva Gauthier (1885–958) on 19 March 1922 at the International Composers' Guild (and also translated by her), called the music of the "young Russian composer practically unknown here, quite melodious, while Stravinskyesque" (*New York Tribune*, 20.03.1922, 8). One of the audience members at this concert was George Gershwin, who was impressed by the composer's young age and by his talent, but encouraged him: "There's no money in that kind of stuff, [...] no heart in it either. Try to write some real popular tunes - and don't be scared about going lowbrow. They will open you up!" (Duke 1955, 90) To quote Duke again: "The first clash between the embryo Duke, the wage earner, and Dukelsky, would-be composer, occurred there and then" (ibid. 92).

With his advice in mind, and admiringly watching the growing appreciation of Gershwin's music, Duke nonetheless accepted an invitation, which reached him as a follow-up of the Guild's concert, to write something for orchestra. He composed an overture on *Gondla*, a dramatic poem by Nikolai Gumilev (1886–1921), a Russian Acmeist poet. On 31 January 1923 this overture was performed at Carnegie Hall by the City Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Dirk Foch (1886–1973), as part of a program which also included works by Mussorgsky, Schubert, Borodin, and Glazunov. The reception was cold, and Henry Krehbiel (1854–1923), a legend among New York's critics, but not necessarily a supporter of contemporary music, called the work "an incongruous thing" and a "farrago of atrocious noises" (*New York Tribune*, 03. 02.1923, 7).

However, another important contact evolved around 1922 from his encounter with the pianist Artur Rubinstein (1887-1982), who, having heard Duke play some of

---

3 Duke used the term "jazz" in a very individual way. In his autobiography he stated that "the 'real' New Orleans jazz and the true-blue blues" (ibid.) did not impress him very much, yet Gershwin's and Berlin's songs became models for "jazz" as part of his own musical voice. In his writings and interviews "jazz" is often used as a counterpart to what he called "serious music."

his piano pieces at a party of Zosia Kochanski's, and being receptive to new music, commissioned him to write a one-movement piano concerto.<sup>4</sup> "By Christmas 1923" Duke had completed a *Concerto in C for Piano and Orchestra* in a version for two pianos. Both Rubinstein and Gershwin liked the piece very much. Rubinstein, who complimented the young composer for his well-crafted composition and called it "full of tunes" (Duke 1955, 102), encouraged him to orchestrate it, travel to Paris and present it over there. George Gershwin, who was particularly fond of the lyrical second theme (Dunn/Duke Ingalls 2007, 3), helped to find the financial support needed for this trip to Europe. When Duke finally arrived in Paris in 1924, the piano concerto became a door opener. The famous impresario Sergei Diaghilev (1872–1929) invited Duke, after a performance of the concerto with George Auric (1899–1983) as second pianist, to score a ballet for *Les Ballets Russes*. The result was *Zéphire et Flore*, which, with Leonide Massine as choreographer, and Georges Braque as set and costume designer with Coco Chanel supervising the costumes, was premiered on 28 April 1925 at the *Théâtre de Monte Carlo*, where it was well received.<sup>5</sup> Through Diaghilev Duke met other Paris-based musicians, such as Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971), and Sergey Prokofiev (1891–1953), who became a close friend, but also Serge Koussevitzky (1874–1951), who at that time was the conductor of a concert series in Paris. In 1909, Koussevitzky had founded the *Éditions Russes de Musique*, in which he published new music by Russian composers. Thus he approached Duke as both editor and conductor, offering a publishing contract for the ballet and a check about 6,000 francs, and asked him to compose a symphony for him (Duke 1955, 153).<sup>6</sup> The piano concerto, which for some had "too much Prokofiev in this music" (ibid. 111),<sup>7</sup> remained a success. The publisher Heugel paid Duke 5,000 francs for it, yet the orchestration was never written and the concerto for a long time remained unperformed. A version for two pianos, edited by Georges Auric, was published in 1926.

---

4 The exact date for this party is not known. Duke met Rubinstein at the house of the violinist Paul Kochanski (1887–1934), to whom Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937) had introduced him (Duke 1955, 86 and 101). The Kochanskis and Szymanowski were good friends of Rubinstein, who had arrived in New York in the fall of 1921, after concerts with Kochanski in England. Rubinstein left New York after the 1922–23 season for Paris (Sachs 1997, 212).

5 On 15 June 1925 *Zéphire et Flore* was first performed in Paris; from 2nd November 1925 on it was shown at the London Coliseum. Its final performance was on 12 May 1927 at the *Teatro Linceo* in Barcelona (<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1404043/zephire-et-flore-photograph-detaillle-georges/>; accessed 30 July 2023).

6 Koussevitzky was one of Duke's most important supporters. He introduced the younger composer's music to the Boston audience on 29 April 1927, by putting an orchestral version of *Zéphire et Flore* on the program of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He also conducted the premieres of the symphonies no. 1 (1929) and 2 (1930), *Epitaph. On the Death of Diaghilev* (1932) and *Dédicaces* (1938), and the violin (1943) and the violoncello concerto (1946). It came to a falling-out of the two over Dukelsky's symphony no. 3, a setback for Duke's chances in the world of concert music. The symphony, premiered in Bruxelles in 1947, had its first American performance no sooner than 1955.

7 In 1916, Duke heard Prokofiev for the first time, when he performed his piano concerto no. 1 in Kiev in a concert conducted by Reinhold Glière, Prokofiev's former and Duke's current teacher. While Duke recalled his lack of enthusiasm for Prokofiev's style ("there wasn't a tune in it"), he also remembered his mother's advice: "melody first and last." However, years later, in the context of his own piano concerto, Prokofiev became a paragon: "I was most anxious to meet Prokofiev, whose third concerto was a model for my first – and so far only – one." (Duke 1955, 24–25, 120)



à Monsieur Arthur RUBINSTEIN

1

# CONCERTO

en Ut majeur  
(C-dur)

POUR PIANO ET ORCHESTRE  
(réduction pour 2 Pianos)  
Edition revue par GEORGES AURIC

VLADIMIR DUKELSKY

**Allegro non troppo**

ORCHESTRE

*ff*

*cresc.*

*mp calmato*

Corni

*p*

*mf*

*mf marcato*

*mp marcato*

Fag.

Clar.

*mp*

80

AU MÉNESTREL, 2bis, rue Vivienne.

Copyright by Heugel 1926.  
H. 29, 148.

HEUGEL, Editeur, Paris.

Figure 2: First page of the Piano Concerto.

Copyright © 1926 by Heugel, Paris. Reproduced with permission from Agnès Klingenberg for Wise Music Classical Paris.

The one-movement concerto resembles a sonata movement incorporating the characteristics of a four-movement form. The piece begins *Allegro non troppo* with a very square, rhythmically pronounced first theme in C major. The second section *Andante con moto* in F minor starts with a beautiful melodious theme that is treated like a theme and variations, a reminiscence of Prokofiev's choice of a variation form for the second movement of his Piano concerto no. 3. The third section, a *Quasi marcia* in A minor, plays with buoyant rhythmic figuration, enhanced by the grotesque shifting of accents. Its lively virtuosity ends in a mini-cadenza, preceding the recapitulation of the first and second part (*Tempo di comincio*), the latter now in F sharp minor. The music finally transitions to a full-fledged solo cadenza and closes after a voluminous coda followed by a short *stretta* in the tonic.

The fame of "Dukelsky – A New Russian Musician," as Francis Poulenc (1899–1963) called him in a Paris journal (Duke 1955, 142) spread. In London, to which Duke had accompanied Diaghilev and *Les Ballets Russes* in 1925, he was seen as a promising young composer, not too modern sounding and with a talent for tunes and for "lowbrow" music. After composing several numbers for cabaret shows and some songs, for which he now started using the name "Vernon Duke," he was invited to "pep up" some so-called Viennese operettas shown in London. This started with Jean Gilbert's successful *Katja the Dancer*, premiered in 1922 in Vienna and in 1926 in its second season at the Daly's Theatre in London.<sup>8</sup> Daly's was a theatre with a successful history of long-running musical comedies, which could reach up to 1,400 performances like the stage hit *The Maid of the Mountains* in 1917. As Duke noted, James "Jimmy" White (1877–1927), the owner-impresario of Daly's since 1922, whom he described as "a self-made croesus [...] czaring at Daly's," wanted him to bring up "young ideas for the old girl [operetta]" by using "bloody Yankee monkey music" (Duke 1955, 177). Consequently, Duke tried to, as he called it, doctor and jazz' up the music "to suit the changing tastes of the Daly's audience," and wrote two songs, "Try a little kiss" and "Back to my heart", which were interpolated into the piece (ibid. 177f.).

The production of a new Gilbert piece, *Yvonne*, was then to become Duke's first experience working on a musical comedy. *Yvonne* was a transformation of Gilbert's earlier operetta *Uschi*, first shown in Hamburg in 1925 with the German book and lyrics by Leo Kastner (1866–c1942) and Alfred Moeller (1876–1952). Now it was being produced by Daly's Theatre Company with English lyrics by Percy Greenbank. As a "try-out" it had first been shown at Prince's Theatre in Manchester on Christmas Eve 1925 (Forbes-Winslow 1944, 168), then it was premiered at Daly's Theatre in London on 22 May 1926. According to the (unknown) author of the only accessible review of the Manchester production, published in *The Guardian* on 28 December 1925, the performance had flaws, mostly due to the singers and the orchestra. Gilbert's music, however, is described as light and easeful, "captivating the humour of our European dances" and "free from the forced rhythmical zest of jazz," something the reviewer

---

8 Jean Gilbert (1879–1942) was the pseudonym used by the Hamburg-born composer Max Winterfeld, an exceptionally successful composer of the Berlin operetta style.

appreciated (*The Guardian*, 28.12.1925, 9). In how far the reviewer represented public opinion can only be guessed. Yet for the London production of *Yvonne*, Duke was engaged to write new music, mostly foxtrots and songs, which were to replace some of Gilbert's marches and waltzes.

The three-act story of the operetta is simple, in part set at a music-hall and therefore offering plausible reasons for numerous dance numbers. Yvonne, the daughter of a professor, is fond of gaiety and music-halls. Although engaged to Viktor, she starts falling in love with Max, alias Maurice de Fremond, who is working in disguise as a servant in the professor's house. She makes him take her to the music-hall, where she all of a sudden impersonates Lolotte, the star. After some further turbulences – Yvonne discovers that both Victor and her father are more than flirting with Lolotte – , Yvonne and Max finally come together.

The reviews published in *The Daily Telegraph* (*The Daily Telegraph*, 24.05.1926, 13), (*The Observer*, 23.05.1926, 17), and *The Evening Standard* (*The Evening Standard*, 24.05.1926, 3) after the London premiere were consistent in openly criticizing the weakness of the plot; however, they also highlighted the dancing and the costumes. Yet according to a review titled "'Yvonne' and Jazz" in *The Daily Telegraph* the production apparently underwent a further "process of overhauling" after the first performance in May. The article mentions "several new songs and duets" and comments on the addition of "the element of jazz." It further emphasizes that the orchestra was supplemented by the *Midnight Follies Band*, a decision which helped improve the performance of the "'Charleston' and some of the other dances" of the show, although "any musically sensitive ear" might find "relief in the deft and tasteful scoring [...] of Mr. Jean Gilbert's music." Finally, in the last sentence of the text, Vernon Duke is explicitly named and lauded for the "the dainty instrumental colours" used in "Daydreams," a slow-fox and one of the last numbers of the show, sung by Yvonne and the girls (*The Daily Telegraph*, 03.12.1926, 12).

This song, like others penned by Duke, shows the basic structure of Tin-Pan-Alley-songs, with a short prelude, an introductory verse, and an AABA refrain with a truncated B-section (8 + 8 + 4 +8). The frequent alternation of triplets and duplets in the melody creates the impression of a jazzy floating rhythm. Remarkable are the ukulele and banjo notation inserted into in the piano-vocal score. They refer to the so-called "ukulele craze" of the 1920s in the United States. The enormous enthusiasm for these instruments made publishers of sheet music include an adapted version in the vocal scores of new songs, probably especially of those that were expected to become popular. Of the, in total, 22 numbers of *Yvonne*, nine are marked for a performance on the ukulele or banjo, all of them songs or duets that seemingly had hit potential.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> The following songs have an indication for ukulele or banjo: *It's nicer to be naughty* (Duke), *We always disagree* (Duke), *The magic of the moon* (Duke), *Couleur de rose* (Gilbert), *Lucky* (Duke), *Teach me to dance* (Marc Anthony), *Billing and cooing* (Gilbert), and *Daydreams* (Duke); with the repetition of Duke's *We always disagree* in Act 3 that makes nine of 22.

*Daly's*

## DALY'S THEATRE

COVENTRY STREET, W.

Proprietors and Managers - GEORGE EDWARDES (DALY'S THEATRE) LTD.  
General Manager - - - - - CECIL PAGET

EVERY EVENING at 8.15  
Matinees : Wednesday & Saturday at 2.15

THE GEORGE EDWARDES PRODUCTION  
A New and Original Musical Comedy  
in Three Acts entitled

### "YVONNE"

English Book and Lyrics by PERCY GREENBANK  
Music by JEAN GILBERT and VERNON DUKE  
Additional Numbers by ARTHUR WOOD

*Cast :*

Professor Savigny .. ..	MARK LESTER
Emile Bonnefois .. ..	HENRY HALLATT
Yvonne ( <i>his daughter</i> ) .. ..	IVY TRESMAND
Denise ( <i>her friend</i> ) .. ..	NETA UNDERWOOD
Victor Dulac ( <i>her fiancé</i> ) .. ..	GENE GERRARD
Maurice de Fremont (Max) .. ..	ARTHUR PUSEY
Lolotte ( <i>a Music-hall Star</i> ) .. ..	MARIA MINETTI
Minnepoulos ( <i>her partner</i> ) .. ..	DENNIS HOEY
Manager of Scala Music Hall	WENSLEY RUSSELL
Waiter .. ..	HAL SHERMAN
Music Hall Officials .. ..	ALLAN DALE
	EDMUND LA TOUCHE
Commissionaire .. ..	JOHN KELSETT
Flower Girl .. ..	NAN WILD

Guests, Servants, Waiters, Attendants, etc.

June 23 26 Page Eleven

Figure 3: Program for a performance of *Yvonne* on June 23, 1926, at the Daly's Theatre London, page 11.

Reproduced with permission from [www.arthurlloyd.co.uk](http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk)

*Daly's*

Ask the ATTENDANTS for THE MUSIC OF THE PLAY

## "YVONNE"

Music by JEAN GILBERT and VERNON DUKE

2/- each copy	BILLING AND COOING .. ..	VOCAL FOX TROT
	IT'S NICER TO BE NAUGHTY .. ..	VOCAL ONE STEP
	DAY DREAMS .. ..	VOCAL FOX TROT
	THE MAGIC OF THE MOON .. ..	VOCAL FOX TROT
	LUCKY .. ..	VOCAL ONE STEP
	COULEUR DE ROSE .. ..	VOCAL WALTZ
	SELECTION (2/6)	

Obtainable also of all Music Dealers, or of the Publishers,  
ASCHERBERG, HOPWOOD & CREW, LIMITED  
16 MORTIMER STREET, LONDON, W.1.

MUSICAL NUMBERS.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lyrics by PERCY GREENBANK      Music by JEAN GILBERT and VERNON DUKE  
Additional Numbers by ARTHUR WOOD.  
Orchestra under the Direction of ARTHUR WOOD.

Music of "YVONNE" published by  
Messrs. ASCHERBERG, HOPWOOD & CREW, LTD.

ACT I.

- 1 Opening Chorus "Charming Weather" .. ..  
(Music by VERNON DUKE)
- 2 Song "One of the Things I don't  
Profess to Know" .. .. PROFESSOR & Chorus  
(Music by ARTHUR WOOD)
- 3 Song "It's Nicer to be Naughty" .. .. YVONNE & Chorus  
(Music by VERNON DUKE)
- 4 Song "All Men are the Same" .. .. DENISE  
(Music by VERNON DUKE)
- 5 Duet "We always Disagree" .. .. YVONNE & VICTOR  
(Music by VERNON DUKE)
- 6 Quartet "Temperament" .. .. MINNEPOPULOS,  
LOLOTTE, PROFESSOR & VICTOR  
(Music by JEAN GILBERT)
- 7 Duet "How d'ye do?" .. .. YVONNE & MAX  
(Music by JEAN GILBERT)
- 8 Song "The Magic of the Moon" .. .. DENISE & Chorus  
(Music by VERNON DUKE)
- 9 Finale .. .. YVONNE & MAX  
(Music by JEAN GILBERT)

Page Seventeen

Figure 4: Program for a performance of *Yvonne* on June 23, 1926, at the Daly's Theatre London, page 17.

Reproduced with permission from [www.arthurlloyd.co.uk](http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk)

*Uschi* and *Yvonne* confront us with a lot of riddles; the documentation is more than complicated. A theatre program from Daly's, dated 13 June 1926, announces the "musical comedy" with music by Jean Gilbert and Vernon Duke, with "additional numbers by Arthur Wood."<sup>10</sup> A piano-vocal score held by the Bodleian Library, signed "19 Oct 1926,"<sup>11</sup> documents a different version of *Yvonne*, in which nine of the 22 numbers are still attributed to Gilbert, a tenth to both him and Duke. One of the other songs is by Arthur Wood (1875–953), at that time, the orchestra conductor at the Daly's, and a composer who, having served in the Great War, signed some of his music as Captain Arthur Wood. Another is by Gene Gerrard (1892–1971), an English actor participating in the operetta as Victor, and a third by R. Marc Anthony (1891–1970), a composer of popular songs, called the *Night Club King*.<sup>12</sup> Given the explicit

10 <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/DalysTheatre.htm#history>; accessed 30 July 2023.

11 Jean Gilbert/Vernon Duke, *Yvonne: a musical play in three acts*. English book and lyrics by Percy Greenbank. Vocal score, London: Ascherberg, Hopwood, and Crew, c1926 (GB-Ob: Bodleian Library Mus. 24 c.89).

12 <https://robertmarcaranthony.com/marc-anthony-musician-by-colin-l-goddard/appendix/sheet-music-for-if-you-could-come-to-me/>; accessed 2 Jan 2023.



reference to Vernon Duke in the review from December 1926, this score presumably documents the version of the operetta described in the article.<sup>13</sup>

Duke himself had no illusions about the “lukewarm” quality of the production, but called it “a moderate success” (Duke 1955, 184). He also remarked that the “only hit” of the piece was made by the dancer-comedian Hal Sherman (1897–1985), the “eccentric’ little American dancer,” who “did a Chaplinesque routine” to his song “Don’t forget the waiter” (ibid.), which in fact “had nothing whatever to do with the play” (Forbes-Winslow 1944, 168). Of his own songs Duke found “Magic of the moon” and “Daydreams” the most remarkable, the latter the tune that had caught the attention of the reviewer from *The Daily Telegraph*.

*Yvonne* reached 281 performances, the last on 29 January 1927 (Wearing 1984,786). That makes the “musical play” number 20 on Derek B. Scott’s ranking list of German operettas in West End between 1900 and 1940 in his recent book. As a comparison: *The Merry Widow* had 778 performances, when shown at Daly’s in 1907, Gilbert’s *Katja, the Dancer* 514 in 1925 (Scott 2019, 317f.). Although *Yvonne* had only achieved “moderate success” Duke had earned a considerable amount of money, which he would not have gained as Dukelsky, in spite of the success of both the Piano Concerto and the ballet. However, his dual identity as a composer was now noticed and commented on. One of the not so favorable voices was that of Prokofiev. When mentioning Duke in his diary entry from 22 March 1926, he remarked on his “composing operettas and revues and earning tidy sums of money” and then reflected: “It defeats my understanding how he can combine composing foxtrots with real music, and good music at that.” (Prokofiev 2013, 278) While appreciating Dukelsky’s talent, Prokofiev openly criticized his alter ego Duke for wasting his time on popular “tra-la-la,” instead of focusing on “real music” (Prokofiev 1998, 146, and 158).

However, Duke and Dukelsky were now officially established, both fostering their special talents: Dukelsky was working on his first symphony and Duke on a new “musical play” on Edgar Wallace’s *The Yellow Mask*, which was premiered on 15 November 1927 at the Birmingham Theatre Royale, opening in London on 8 February 1928. The reviewers judged the piece a success, although the opinions on the composer varied: *The Daily Telegraph* labelled the music “indifferent” (*The Daily Telegraph*, 27.02.1928, 6), while *The Stage* remarked on the “rather jazzish pen of a young composer” (*The Stage*, 16.02.1928; quoted from Phillips 2019, 69), and *Diss Express* lauded the young composer for “writing such entrancing melodies” in (*The Stage*, 24.02.1928; ibid.).

---

13 An earlier selection of “vocal numbers” published in 1925 includes three songs by Gilbert, one by Marc Anthony, and two by Arthur Woods (*Yvonne: A New Musical Play*. Lyrics by Percy Greenbank. Vocal Numbers. London: Ascherberg, Hopwood, and Crew, c1925; GB-Ob: Bodleian Library (W) Harding Mus. B 244).

Of the Gilbert songs, *Couleur de rose* and *From nine o’clock till two* were maintained in the 1926 version, as documented in the piano-vocal score. Arthur Wood’s “Tantalising Toto” was probably sung in the place of what is no. 14 in the piano-vocal score from 1926, then written by Duke. In both songs the professor reminisces about his amorous experiences recalling girls with “Come hither” eyes (a phrase used in both versions of the text), concluding that he still feels like a “fresh old egg.”



There were several reasons that made Duke consider returning to the United States. One was meeting again his mother and his brother Alexis, who were now in Massachusetts. Another reason were the positive reviews of the premiere of his first symphony, which had taken place in the absence of the composer on 15 March 1929, with Koussevitzky conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra. A third reason was that he felt in-between the worlds: “neither American, nor British, nor Russian” (Duke 1955, 215). This had in part to do with his immigrant status, but also with his suddenly increased financial struggling in England. Especially the Duke part of the composer felt drawn to the United States, where he hoped to succeed, because “America ruled the musical theater” (ibid.). Thus he boarded the ocean liner *Laconia* on 22 June 1929 and travelled back to New York, a few months before the Wall Street Crash in October 1929 (ibid. 218).

George Gershwin remained the most important influence and friend. In his biography of Vernon Duke, George H. Phillips documents that Duke, who after his return soon struggled to afford living in the city, had to ask Gershwin several times for a loan, that he also begged for contacts and recommendations, and that Gershwin as a very generous person helped, not caring whether he got the money back (Phillips 2019, 79ff.). A job at the film studios in Astoria, Long Island, of the Paramount Publix Corporation in 1930 deescalated the precarious situation. Duke was hired to produce songs and background music. While Dukelsky prepared the performance materials of his second symphony and other “serious” works, from which he could not make a living, Duke “was now much in demand” (Duke 1955, 241), and began to extend his activities to working on shows. It was Aaron Copland (1900–1990), whom he had met through Koussevitzky in Paris in 1928,<sup>14</sup> who recommended Duke to the playwright Theresa Helburn (1887–1959), one of the founders of the Theatre Guild (ibid. 242). They met “at a Gershwin party” in 1930, where Duke played “I am only human after all” on lyrics by Ira Gershwin (1896–1983) and Edgar “Yip” Harburg (1896–1981). Through Helburn, Duke was invited to join the “assorted songwriters” hired by the Guild for the third edition of *Garrick Gaieties*, a revue produced at the Guild Theatre in New York in October 1930. The song, included into the show and soon recorded by the RCA Victor Company, became Duke’s “passport to Broadway” (ibid.).

While “I am only human after all” was at first a song and then integrated into a show, the reverse happened to “April in Paris.” The tune, composed by Duke with Harburg as lyricist, was presented in 1932 as part of the revue *Walk a Little Faster*. The show premiered at the Boston Majestic Theatre on 18 November 1932<sup>15</sup>, and had its first Broadway performance at the St. James Theatre on 7 December 1932. However, *April in*

14 Copland mentioned Dukelsky’s second symphony in his article *Contemporaries at Oxford, 1931*, highlighting the “making of a real style” and the lyrical qualities of the younger composer (*Modern Music* 1931, 18f.). Copland’s remarks show that he was also familiar with piano music and songs by Dukelsky, however, he does not refer to the name Duke.

15 Following Duke, the “Boston opening [...] coincided with the Chicago première of [the] Second Symphony” (Duke 1955, 272), which took place on 17 November 1932 (see: Epstein, 1992, 39). However, he “couldn’t break away from the revue’s rehearsal” in Boston, where *Walk a Little Faster* was premiered one day later.

*Paris* soon gained a life of its own and advanced to become one of Duke's most popular tunes. The Boston reviewer H. T. Parker (1867–1934) wrote about it:

“Being a modernist, Mr. Duke makes bold use of rhythms. They cut; they pound; they break; they cross. [...] Being a modernist again, Mr. Duke spares not with tingling or tangful dissonances. [...] Nor does Mr. Duke hesitate at dissonances that might grate on the innocent Berlin or Kern. Yet when need is, he can write a nostalgic quasi-sentimental melody that touches most that hear. ‘April in Paris,’ is worthy, in place and kind, of that city in spring. [...] Distinctly, Mr. Duke has gone several steps forward with our music for review [sic].” (*Boston Evening Transcript*, 25.11.1932, 13)

The song follows the 32-bar-model, with the alternation of triplets and duplets again as a characteristic, creating a floating effect and rhythmic tension simultaneously. In his entry on Duke, Alec Wilder emphasizes the trio-like chord progression underlying the triplets, “the suspension of F minor over the pedal C and G, followed by another suspension of B major, resolving on the last quarter to C major,” labelling this as a “hair curler” for the audiences (Wilder 1990, 346). *April in Paris* became well-known through sheet music, but, more importantly, through recordings, an increasingly significant means to advance the dissemination of music. The interpretation of very different musicians over decades made the tune a standard. The list of performers, starting with Freddy Martin in 1933, includes many well-known names such as Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday, and Charlie Parker. The most famous recording, though, became that by Count Basie and his Orchestra in 1955, which was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1985.<sup>16</sup> Yet the song's success was also enhanced by broadcasts, one of them as early as 1934, with Duke's own transformation of the tune into the “*April in Paris Fantasy / a concert piece for clarinet & orchestra*” that was performed on CBS radio as part of the program *Music in the Modern Manner* (Duke/Dunn 2018, 1).<sup>17</sup> According to George H. Phillips, the radio announcer introduced the music commenting on the Dukelsky-Duke duality, calling the song a “wedding of the two talents and personalities” (Phillips 2019, 132).

Although *Walk a Little Faster* itself did not make the emerging Broadway tunesmith Duke rich, future compositions, sheet music, and recordings made him a well-to-do musician (Holden 2010, 319, ann. 43). When Isaac Goldberg (1887–1938), by then author of several books, among them a study on Gershwin, referred to Duke's music for *Walk a Little Faster*, which had received several negative reviews in the New York press, he deliberately made a point of Duke's talent for the “lighter musical stage,” emphasizing the “individual gift” that made him “stand out”: “I do not hesitate to say that he is the most important new personality to come to our stage since Kern and Gershwin and Porter were followed by Rodgers, Youmans, and their fellows” (*New York Evening Post*, 21.01.1933, 4).

---

16 In 1952, Doris Day sang “April in Paris” in a musical film with the same title produced by Warner Brothers, with music by Ray Heindorf (1908–1980) and Howard Jackson (1900–1966), as well as some songs by Duke with lyrics by Sammy Cahn (1913–1993). However, the film attained only moderate success.

17 <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/58935/April-in-Paris-Fantasy--Vernon-Duke/>

The twenties and thirties were the key period for the establishment of the two parts of Duke's musical self. While some of Dukelsky's music, like the first and second symphony, remained unpublished and therefore rarely performed and unrecorded, the popular works displayed the development of Duke's voice more openly. That the latter's voice continuously carried further than that of Dukelsky, was due to the different modes of reception of concert and popular music, as the reception history of *April in Paris* documents. Other favorably received songs and shows followed, among them *Autumn in New York*, for which Duke for the first time in his career composed the English lyrics. The song, written in Westport (CT) in 1934, became the closing number of the musical revue *Thumbs Up!* and another signature song of Duke's. The tune, described by Duke as "a crazy song; moves from key to key and that makes it hard on the singer" (Duke 1955, 302), was performed with pictures of Manhattan displayed on moving screens in the background. In contrast to the moderate outcome of the show, the touching, though complex melancholy ode to Manhattan advanced to an often-performed classic. With his breakthrough as a stage composer with the musical *Cabin in the Sky* in 1940, Duke was at the height, but also at the turning point of his career. The musical, or rather: musical fantasy, with a libretto by Lynn Root (1905–1997), lyrics by John Latouche (1914–1956), and with Ethel Waters (1896–1977) as female star of the all-black cast, plays in the black south of the United States.<sup>18</sup> Duke's tunes, especially the famous title song and his "Taking a chance on love," were soon to become hits; however, according to Bordman, they were "his last Broadway melodies to have popular appeal" (Bordman 2011, 581).

87

With Prokofiev returning to the USSR in 1936 and Gershwin passing away in 1937, Duke lost his "two best friends in music: [Gershwin], Duke's creator and [Prokofiev], Dukelsky's protector" within one year (Duke 1955, 367). In 1939, he became an American citizen and from then officially "Vernon Duke." Yet, he remained a composer with two voices, defining himself through the distinction between them. In his autobiography, an entertaining narrative and a key document, he promotes and sometimes even flirts with his "dual musical existence," declaring: "Dukelsky in no way resembles Duke" (Duke 1955, 3).<sup>19</sup> An important reason for the emergence of this dichotomy can be found in the strict system of aesthetic values that he had absorbed during his conservatory training and which Prokofiev's recurring critic aimed at: a composer could and should not focus on lowbrow and highbrow music, or: "tra-la-la" and "real" music, at the same time. Prokofiev was not the only one to advise Duke, but the most important, when recommending that he had better focus on the Dukelsky part of his talent instead of wasting it as a tunesmith. Yet, while lauded in his early years as a new rising talent,

18 The musical received 156 performances at the Martin Beck Theatre on Broadway. In 1943, it was produced as a film musical, featuring Vincente Minnelli (1903–86) as a first-time film director, and Louis Armstrong (1901–71), and Duke Ellington (1899–1874) and his Orchestra as participants.

19 In two works from the thirties, Duke broke with the Dukelsky-Duke distinction. The music for Vincente Minnelli's revue *The Show is On* (1936) is signed by "Vladimir Dukelsky." The music for the Romeo and Juliet ballet sequence worked out by Balanchine for the film *Goldwyn Follies* (1937) had, according to Duke, "Duke music for Romeo, Dukelsky music for Juliet" in order to distinguish the two families, with the "longhaired" Capulets intended to dance classically, and the Montagues as "jazz addicts" tap dancing (Duke 1955, 358).

a modernist from Russia, the Duke part, which had been born out of practical reasons, gradually began to outrun Dukelsky; consequently, both names became as trademarks in their respective musical fields. A fusion of the two, with Duke all of a sudden used as the name of the author of symphonies and chamber music, or the name of Dukelsky as label for songs, dances, and show music, became unthinkable.

Reviewers, of course, discussed Duke's "Dual Personality in Music," as critic Daniel I. MacNamara titled his article in 1939 (*Edinburgh Daily Courier*, 15.03.1939, 2), in which he underscored the economic aspects of this duality. The commercial side of the Dukelsky-Duke dichotomy had already been addressed by the afore mentioned Isaac Goldberg. He consequently counterbalanced this by adding an astonishing quote of Duke's: "In a truly creative sense, and not merely a commercial way, without my symphonic writing I could not do the songs and dances for revues; and without the songs and dances, I could not do the symphonies" (*New York Evening Post*, 21.01.1933, 4). This appears to be inconsistent with other declarations by Duke, in which he declared that Duke does not resemble Dukelsky. When H. T. Parker (see above) labelled Duke "a modernist," a term more often applied to American composers of concert music, he tacitly connected Duke with Dukelsky when describing *April in Paris*. Other reviewers openly questioned the coexistence of two musically separate voices, as for example, Samuel Stratton, who, when writing about *April in Paris*, even emphasized the interchangeability of the two voices as a particular quality of musical inventiveness: "It is the ability of Duke to 'revert' to Dukelsky" (*Dallas Morning News*, 03.02.1935, 10). In a similar way Alec Wilder, in his description of "Autumn in New York," opined: "It begins simply enough, but halfway through it's almost as if the other musical half of the man couldn't be silent and the rest of the verse was finished by Dukelsky" (Wilder 1990, 350).

At the very end of his voluminous book, Duke finally declared himself "Duke, American, and Westerner," and proclaimed to drop the name of Dukelsky in the future: "henceforth [I] will sign all music [...] as Vernon Duke" (ibid. 484). By then, in the fifties, his musical output was petering out. The lack of support through influential musicians, especially Koussevitzky, who had fostered him as a conductor and as a publisher, made it more difficult to receive performances and publishing contracts for classical music (Holden 2010, 311ff.). But Duke was also stagnating in the world of popular music. However, his String Quartet, published in 1957, and his Sonata for violin and piano, published in 1960, both among his last compositions, bear the name "Vernon Duke." The only publications that were still attributed to "Dukelsky" were his Russian poems printed in 1962, 1965, and 1968, among them a selection of English poems translated into Russian.

## Conclusion

When in 1960 Ki Mantle Hood introduced the idea of “bi-musicality,” ethnomusicologists coined this term for “the learning of musical performance practices from traditions other than the scholar’s native music,” focusing on Westerners learning to perform Oriental music, in order to reach a deeper understanding of the other culture through its music (Feintuch 1995, 265). Since then, this concept has been widely discussed and broadened. More recently, the definition of bi-musicality has been expanded to “musical competence in disparate styles” (Cottrell 2007, 101), thus extending its applicability to local or urban contexts, but also to the “diversity of compositional styles” within a cultural frame. In this sense, Dukelsky-Duke as a composer of classical and popular music within the frame of Western musical tradition, can be discussed as bi-musical. However, his self-conception, obvious through the choice of his verbal analogies of music to language, such as having two voices, using two musical idioms or two musical languages, indicates the notion of a composer shifting gears between two different sets of musical codes that are closer to dialects than to languages. Therefore, another approach to his dichotomy could be to denominate these codes, in terms of sociolinguistics, as sociolects or ethnolects. Duke, often playing with the fancy of a split personality (“Can I help it if two people happen to be inside my body?” (Duke 1955, 303), was musically deeply imbedded into the Euro-American traditions of classical and popular music. Inspired by the American Gershwin and the Russian Prokofiev, he generated musical styles based on these traditions. He was bilingual in his command of Russian and English as languages, in which he could even compose poetical texts. He was equally gifted in music, developing distinctive and at the same time interrelated musical idioms.

89

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Betz, Marianne (2022). Vernon Duke. *MGG Online* (Digital version of *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*). Ed. Laurenz Lütteken. Kassel etc.. <https://www.mgg-online.com/article?id=mgg03917&v=2.0&rs=mgg03917&q=vernon%20duke>.
- Bordman, Gerald (2011). *American Musical Theatre. A Chronicle*. Fourth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Copland, Aaron (1931). Contemporaries at Oxford, 1931. *Modern Music*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Fall 1931), 17–23.
- Cottrell, Stephen (2007). Local Bimusicality among London’s Freelance Musicians. *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 51, No.1 (Winter 2007), 85– 105.
- Duke, Vernon (1955). *Passport to Paris*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Duke, Vernon (2003). *April in Paris Fantasy*. Transcribed and orchestrated by Scott Dunn/Ron Goldstein in 2018. New York: Associated Music Publishers.



Dukelsky, Vladimir. *Poslanija*. [Bd. 1.] Munich: Duke, 1962; *Stradanija nemolodogo Vertera: Kniga stichov*. [Bd. 2] Munich: Duke, 1962; *Kartinnaja galereja: Kniga stichov*. [Bd. 3] Munich: Duke 1965; *Poezdka kuda-to: četvertaja kniga stichov*. [Bd. 4] Munich: Duke 1968.

Dunn, Scott /Duke Ingalls, Kay. Vernon Duke (Vladimir Dukelsky) (1903–1969). Booklet notes in *Piano Concerto. Cello Concerto. Homage to Boston*. CD 8.559.286. Hong Kong: Naxos, 2007.

Epstein, Dena (1992). Frederick Stock and American Music. *American Music*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring 1992), 20–52.

Forbes-Winslow, D. (1944). *Daly's. The Biography of a Theatre*, London: Allen.

Forum: A Conversation between Two Disciplines: What Do We Learn When We Learn Music from Our “Informants”?” *Journal of American Folklore*, (ed. Burt Feintuch) Vol. 108, No. 429 (Summer 1995), 265–319.

Holden, Scott (2010). The “Adventures and Battles” of Vladimir Dukelsky (a.k.a. Vernon Duke). *American Music*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Fall 2010): 297–319.

Phillips, George Harwood (2019). *Taking a Chance on Love: The Life and Music of Vernon Duke*. Norman: Oklahoma University Press.

Prokofiev, Sergey (2013). *Diaries. Vol. 3: 1924–1933. Prodigal Son*. Translated and annotated by Anthony Phillips. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 278.

Sachs, Harvey (1995). *Rubinstein: a Life*. New York: Grove Press.

Scott, Derek B. (2019). *German Operetta on Broadway and in the West End, 1900–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Selected Letters of Sergei [sic] Prokofiev* (1998). Edited and translated by Harwood Robinson, Boston: Northeastern Press.

Wearing, J. P. [John Peter] (1984). *The London Stage 1920–1929: A Calendar of Plays and Players. Vol. II: 1925–1929*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.

Wilder, Alec (1990). *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900–1950*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ziegel, Aaron (2010). One Person, One Music: Reconsidering the Duke-Dukelsky Musical Style. *American Music*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Fall 2010), 32 – 345.

# “RAKSTOT DIVU VEIDU MŪZIKU”: VERNONS DJŪKS ALIAS VLADIMIRS DUKEĻSKIS

Marianne Beca (*Marianne Betz*)

## Kopsavilkums

Vladimirs Dukeļskis (*Vladimir Dukelsky*, 1903–1969), kurš auga Kijivā līdz brīdim, kad viņa ģimene emigrēja uz ASV 1921. gadā, ir “bilingvāls” vairākās nozīmēs. Viņa dzimtā valoda bija krievu, taču viņš nevainojami runāja arī angļu valodā, kas bija ceturta no pārvaldītajām valodām līdzās franču un vācu mēlēm. Izglītību Dukeļskis ieguva Kijivas konservatorijā, absolvējot klavieru un kompozīcijas klases. Taču viņam piemita ne mazāks talants populārajā mūzikā. Sava mentora Džordža Gēršvina (*George Gershwin*) iedvesmots, Dukeļskis pieņēma amerikāņu pseidonīmu “Vernons Djūks” (*Vernon Duke*), kopš 1926. gada savas kompozīcijas parakstot gan kā Dukeļskis, gan Djūks.

Dukeļska-Djūka neparastās biogrāfijas pētniecība, īpaši 20. gs. 20. un 30. gadu kontekstā, sniedz vērtīgu ieskatu viņa komponista rokraksta attīstībā, vienlaikus izmantojot “divas muzikālās idiomās”. 1955. gadā ar Vernona Djūka vārdu publicētajā autobiogrāfijā viņš apraksta savu neparasto “duālo muzikālo eksistenci” kā savdabīgu personības dalīšanos – no vienas puses “nopietnais” Dukeļskis”, kurš mēģina atrast savu vietu 20. gadsimta klasiskajā mūzikā, no otras – “nenopietnais” Vernons Djūks, kurš prieka pēc raksta populāras dziesmiņas un mūziku šoviem, kas tomēr beigās kļūst par viņa ienākumu avotu.

Dukeļska viendabīgais Klavierkoncerts Domažorā, sarakstīts Artūram Rubiņšteinam (*Artur Rubinštejn*), ir tipisks viņa agrīnās klasiskās mūzikas paraugs, kas aplūkojams kontekstā ar iegūto pamatīgo konservatorijas izglītību un viņa saikni ar, piemēram, Sergeja Prokofjeva (*Sergej Prokof'ev*) kompozīcijas stilu.

Caur Rubiņšteinu Dukeļskis iepazīna 20. gadu Parīzes un Londonas mākslinieku vidi. Viņš tikās ar Sergeju Djaģiļevu (*Sergej Dâgilev*), kurš uzaicināja Dukeļskis sacerēt mūziku baletam *Zefīrs un Flora* (*Zéphire et Flore*, 1925), un Seržu Kusevicki (*Serge Koussevitzky*), kurš ne tikai piedāvāja izdot viņa mūziku, bet arī pasūtīnāja simfoniju, kuras pirmatskaņojumu 1929. gadā Bostonā pats arī diriģēja.

Pirmie skaņdarbi ar Djūka vārdu bija dziesmas un dejas Vīnes stila operešu Londonas iestudējumiem ap 1926. gadu. Vairākas Žana Gilberta *Ivonnas* no operas *Uši* (*Uschi*) versijas uzskatāmi parāda, kā šie numuri tika izmantoti oriģināldarbu “uzlabošanai”. Pēc pārceļšanās uz dzīvi ASV 1929. gadā Djūks savu karjeru sāka kā dziesmu, filmu un izrāžu mūzikas komponists, tādējādi finansējot Dukeļska darbu. Kad Djūka dziesma *I am only human after all* ar Airas Gēršvina (*Ira Gershwinn*) un Edgara “Jipa” Harburga (*Edgar “Yip” Harburg*) vārdiem 1930. gadā tika iekļauta rēvijā *Garrick Gaieties*, tā kļuva par viņa “biļeti uz Brodveju”.

*I am only human after all* vispirms bija dziesma, pēc tam izrādes hits, savukārt dziesmu *April in Paris* Djūks ar Harburga vārdiem komponēja 1932. gadā rēvijai *Walk a Little Faster*, un tā kļuva par vienu no Djūka populārākajām melodijām. Bostonas kritiķis H. T. Pārkers savā recenzijā ne vien slavēja aizkustinošo, gandrīz sentimentālo melodiju, bet arī dēvēja Djūku par modernistu drosmīgu ritmu un griezīgu disonansu izmantojuma dēļ. Vairākas desmitgades vēlāk Aleks Vailders (*Alec Wilder*) līdzīgi aprakstījis Djūka harmoniju efektus kā tādus, kas liek publikas matiem celties stāvus. *April in Paris* guva popularitāti pateicoties gan nošizdevumiem, gan, jo īpaši, ierakstiem, kas ļāva mūziku izplatīt plašās masās. Dažādu mūziķu interpretācijas šo melodiju pārvērtā par standartu, kas slavenajā Kaunta Beizija orķestra (*Count Basie Orchestra*) 1955. gada ierakstā 1985. gadā tika uzņemts *Grammy* Slavav zālē. Dziesmas popularitāti veicināja radiopārraides, sākot jau ar 1934. gadu, kad Djūks pārveidoja to par Fantāziju klarnetei un orķestrim *April in Paris Fantasy*. To atskaņoja CBS radio, programmas pieteicējam komentējot komponista duālo dabu un dēvējot dziesmu par “divu talantu un personību laulību”.

Vēlākās kompozīcijas topošo Brodvejas komponistu Djūku padarīja par atzītu mūziķi. Dukeļska mūzika – Pirmā un Otrā simfonija – palika neizdota, tādēļ reti atskaņota un neierakstīta, bet populārajā mūzikā Djūka rokraksts redzami attīstījās. 1934. gadā tapušajai dziesmai *Autumn in New York*, Djūks pirmoreiz sacerēja arī vārdus angļu valodā. Viņš pats to aprakstīja kā “traku dziesmu; tā lēkā no vienas tonalitātes uz citu, sarežģījot dziedātāja darbu.” *Autumn in New York* kā noslēdzošais muzikālās rēvijas *Thumbs Up!* numurs tika papildināts ar Manhetenas attēliem uz kustīgiem ekrāniem fonā. Šova panākumi bija mēreni, toties melanholiskā un sarežģītā oda Manhetenai kļuva par bieži atskaņotu hitu. Ar 1940. gada mūziklu *Cabin in the Sky* Djūks sasniedza kārtējo virsotni un pavērsienu savā karjerā. Mūzika dziesmas, īpaši tituldziesma *Taking a chance on love*, drīz vien kļuva par hitiem, 1943. gadā mūzikls tika iemūžināts filmā. Tomēr, kā raksta Džeralds Bordmens (*Gerald Bordman*), šie skaņdarbi bija “[Djūka] pēdējās Brodvejas melodijas, kas kļuva populāras.”

Ar Prokofjeva atgriešanos PSRS 1936. gadā un Gēršvina nāvi 1937. gadā, Djūks gada laikā zaudēja “divus labākos draugus mūzikā.” 1939. gadā viņš kļuva par ASV pilsoni, un kopš tā laika arī oficiāli par Vernonu Djūku, vienlaikus paliekot komponists, kas sevi definē divos atšķirīgos mākslinieciskajos rokrakstos. Svarīgs šīs dihotomijas iemesls slēpjas tajā estētikā, kādu Djūks bija apguvis konservatorijā un uz kuru attiecās Prokofjeva kritika – komponistam nevajadzētu vienlaikus sacerēt “tra-la-la” un “īstu” mūziku. Prokofjevs nebija vienīgais Djūka padomdevējs, taču svarīgākais gan, ja runa ir par ieteikumiem drīzāk koncentrēties uz sava talanta Dukeļska daļu, nevis izšķiest enerģiju populārajā mūzikā. Savulaik Krievijā par jauno un daudzsoļošu talantu dēvētais komponists Dukeļskis pamazām sāka atpalikt no praktisku iemeslu dēļ tapušā Djūka, taču abi vārdi kļuva par zīmoliem katrs savā mūzikas jomā.

Autobiogrāfijas noslēgumā Djūks beidzot paziņo par atteikšanos no Dukeļska uzvārda. 20. gs. 50. gados viņa muzikālais mantojums pamazām zaudēja aktualitāti.

Viņš vairs nesaņēma pasūtījumus izrādēm un piedāvājumus klasiskās mūzikas nošizdevumu iespiešanai. Taču arī populārās mūzikas jomā bija iestājusies stagnācija. Tomēr divi no komponista pēdējiem darbiem – *Stīgu kvartets* (1957) un *Sonāte vijole un klavierēm* (1960) parakstīti ar Vernona Djūka vārdu. Tikai 1962., 1965. un 1968. gadā tapušie dzejoļi krievu valodā publicēti kā Dukeļska darbi.

Kopš 20. gs. 60. gadiem etnomuzikologi kaldinājuši terminu “bimuzikalitāte”, kas apzīmē “mācīšanos no dažādām muzikālu priekšnesumu praksēm, kas pieder no pētnieka “dzimtās” mūzikas atšķirīgai tradīcijai”, par to plaši diskutējot. Nesenākā pagātnē minētā definīcijas paplašināta līdz “muzikālai kompetencei atšķirīgos stilos”, tādējādi ļaujot to piemērot gan dažādiem lokāliem kontekstiem, gan “kompozīcijas stilu daudzveidībai” vienas kultūras ietvarā. Šajā ziņā Dukeļskis-Djūks bija bimuzikāls. Viņa pašuztvere, izmantojot divas muzikālās idiomas vai divas muzikālās valodas, norāda uz to, ka komponists savā daiļradē “pārslēdzies” no viena muzikāla koda uz citu. Vēl viena pieeja minētās dihotomijas raksturošanai varētu būt šo kodu sociolingvistiska definēšana, nosaucot tos par sociolektiem vai etnolektiem. Djūka daiļrade sakņojās Eiropas un Amerikas klasiskās un populārās mūzikas tradīcijās. Iedvesmojoties no tādiem komponistiem kā Gēršvins un Prokofjevs, viņš attīstīja savu stilu. Viņš bija bilingvāls krievu un angļu valodās, un tieši tāpat viņš bija bilingvāls mūzikā, vienlaikus attīstot atšķirīgas, bet savstarpēji saistītas muzikālās idiomas.





# THE ROLE OF POPULAR MUSIC IN THE MODERNISATION OF THE SOCIETY OF INTERWAR YUGOSLAVIA<sup>1</sup>

Marija Golubović

This paper studies the role of popular music in shaping and contributing to the modernisation of interwar Yugoslav society. At the constant crossroads between the East and West, tradition and modernity, the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia was trying to establish intensive contact with modern Western culture and to become a part of Europe. During that period, the entertainment industry was constantly growing. The entry and development of popular music in Yugoslavia can be traced through music publishing, gramophone records, radio, and the formation of popular music ensembles and bands. Therefore, archival sources, periodicals, record catalogues, printed sheet music, and other relevant literature were used to write the paper. By exploring musical genres, cultural influences, and socio-political contexts, this paper aims to highlight how popular music acted as a dynamic catalyst for change during an important period in Yugoslavia's history.

**Keywords:** popular music, modernisation, Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia, Radio Belgrade, *Edison Bell Penkala*

95

The interwar period in Yugoslavia has attracted significant attention from researchers, including musicologists and cultural historians. Given that this is a complex and eventful period in the history of Balkan nations, that found themselves united in one state for the first time, the text will provide a brief historical overview to elucidate this. It is also important to clarify why the phenomena of modernisation and Europeanisation/Westernisation are emphasized to such an extent in the history of interwar Yugoslavia. The significant role of popular music in this context is supported by numerous studies published in the last two decades, which explore diverse aspects of its appearance and influence (Golubović 2021; Hrvoj 2009; Križić 2018; Lučić 2003; Lučić 2007; Srećković 2007; Vesić 2015; Vesić 2017; Vukobratović 2022, etc.). Evidence of the growing interest in the popular music of the interwar period is also reflected in the sheet music collections published in the past decade (Medić 2014a; Medić 2014b; Medić 2015; Medić 2017). Additionally, of significant importance for studying Yugoslav interwar music is the project DISKOGRAF of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, which created a database encompassing all the discographic releases of the companies *Edison Bell Penkala*, *Elektroton*, and *Jugoton* from 1927 to 1950.<sup>2</sup> Archival material from the Historical Archives of Belgrade was a valuable source in tracing foreign musicians

1 This article is the result of research conducted within the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, funded by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia (RS-200176).

2 The project leader is Dr. Naila Ceribašić.

and artists who toured the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia. Periodicals were utilized to enrich the comprehensive understanding and offer supplementary information as necessary. The aim of my article is to deepen the understanding of the modernizing role of popular music in interwar Yugoslav society through the analysis of sources and relevant secondary literature.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (renamed Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929) was formed after the end of World War I on December 1, 1918. Most of the territories it included had previously been part of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, which vanished from the European map after having existed for centuries. The nation's heterogeneity was brought about by the centuries-long authority of Austria-Hungary in the western regions, which introduced the influence of Central Europe and the nearly four-century domination of the Ottoman Empire in the east from 1459 to 1878. Therefore, at the crossroads of Europe, interwar Yugoslavia was a tapestry of diverse ethnicities, languages, and cultural traditions. During that period, Yugoslav society was at a crossroads between the traditional and the modern world. The path to modernisation was slow but constant, and culture played an exceptionally significant role. Nevertheless, the newly established Kingdom was marked by significant social disparities among the societies that had found themselves within its borders after the formation of the new state. Historian Ljubodrag Dimić described interwar Yugoslavia in one sentence: "A land of small peasant farms, limited accumulations, irrational production, national heterogeneity, biologically exhausted by wars, religiously enclosed and confessionally divided, burdened by the past, economically disintegrated, politically polarised, culturally neglected, it simply cried out for a well-conceived development strategy that would accelerate the process of social integration" (Dimić 199, 194). The titles of notable books by Serbian historian Andrej Mitrović and British historian Eric Hobsbawm aptly describe the interwar period in Yugoslavia: it was a time of intolerance<sup>3</sup> and an age of extremes<sup>4</sup>.

The Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia was marked by profound societal transformation when the young nation attempted to overcome differences and establish a unified identity amidst its rich diversity. In this intricate setting, popular music emerged as a dynamic influence, reflecting and actively contributing to the modernisation of society. While not immediately apparent, popular music went beyond a passive soundtrack of the era, assuming an active and influential role. The introduction of popular music, a thriving nightlife, the emergence of *varietés*, and the growth of clubs led to a profound transformation in how people spent their leisure time, a phenomenon that echoed worldwide. This shift was closely tied to the progress of industrialisation, which elevated leisure venues to the status of "great third places" in people's lives, ranking just after family and work (Oldenburg 1999). Belgrade, as the capital of the newly formed state, found itself in a unique position. Ruled by the Ottoman Empire

---

3 Andrej Mitrović, *Vreme netrpeljivih: politička istorija velikih država Evrope 1919–1939* [Times Intolerant: A Political History of the Great Powers 1919–1939]. Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1974.

4 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century (1914–1991)*. London: Abacus, 1994.

for almost three and a half centuries (1521–1867), it retained the influence of the Orient despite its aspirations to become part of Europe. As a multi-century periphery of the Ottoman Empire, Belgrade struggled not to be on the periphery of Europe due to its geographical position.

However, it is essential to note that this cultural transformation was not evenly distributed across the entire Yugoslav population. The state was formed in a socio-economic environment characteristic of a semi-feudal pre-industrial society. The economic underdevelopment, poverty, and antiquated economic and social structures made Yugoslavia one of the poorest and least advanced European countries in the 1920s (Trkulja 1993, 20). Nevertheless, the burgeoning urban centres pulsed with the energy of modernity, providing a contrasting soundscape of Western-influenced jazz, cabaret, and dance music. If we take the data from the Artistic Department of the Privileged Theatre and Concert Agency of the Association of Actors of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia *Jugokonzert* (Golubović 2021, 131–151), which had a monopoly on organising foreign music and popular tours in the country in the 1930s, among the cities where foreign artists performed were Belgrade, Novi Sad, Sombor, Niš, Vršac, Kragujevac, and Kikinda in Serbia; Zagreb, Osijek, and Split in Croatia; Ljubljana and Maribor in Slovenia; Skopje in Macedonia, and Sarajevo in Bosnia. Popular music performers most commonly came from Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria, and Romania. However, there were also artists from other countries such as Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Netherlands, Italy, Luxembourg, Greece, Poland, Sweden, Spain, and even the United States and China (Historical Archives of Belgrade, Fonds 1103 [Udruženje glumaca Kraljevine Jugoslavije], Inv. No. 112–113).

Popular music was also performed at various venues and on different occasions. It was used for entertainment at different types of celebrations and gatherings, dances, hotels and restaurants, taverns and cinemas, and other places that offered leisure and enjoyment. Therefore, urban areas were the primary beneficiaries of these Western cultural influences, but they accounted for only a fifth of the population. Consequently, many rural parts of the country remained untouched by the Western way of life, which remained an abstract concept for much of the population (Calic 2019, 99). Establishing international connections with European countries was a vital endeavour for the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia, as it opened doors for cultural, scientific, and technological exchange. France, Germany, and England played a significant role in influencing urban areas, enabling them to embrace and adapt to the evolving trends in European society through the transmission of culture (Gašić 2005 and Dimić 1997/III).

Modernisation is one of the most impactful processes that have historically transformed society and human consciousness. When social scientists discuss social change, their focus invariably encompasses shifts in a culture and society's institutions. This involves shifts in values, concepts, social interaction dynamics, material culture, and economic processes. Such changes can range from subtle, barely detectable shifts to truly revolutionary transformations, and their full significance may not become immediately apparent when they occur (Callanan Martin 2015, 11). Numerous researchers have

delved into the modernisation processes in Serbian and Yugoslav society in the 20<sup>th</sup> century influenced by foreign factors. So, how did they define modernisation? Modernisation is commonly used as a synonym for *Europeanisation*, given that European influences significantly impacted societal transformation. In mass culture, American influences were also noticeable alongside European ones. Thus, we can refer to this as a sort of *Westernisation* even though American influences were absorbed through European ones (Marković 1992, 15). The emergence of the first jazz ensembles in interwar Yugoslavia is directly linked to American influences and the records that young people were listening to. During the 1930s, Louis Armstrong, Paul Whiteman, and Benny Goodman were revered as idols among jazz enthusiasts (Baronijan 1970: 105). According to the renowned Serbian jazz musician Vojislav Simić (1924), this era witnessed the initial instances of local entertainment music. Yugoslav composers were primarily shaped by the influences of Italian, French, and Spanish music on the one hand and American jazz on the other. The earliest compositions included romances, chansons, waltzes, tangos, and an occasional foxtrot (Simić 1999, 109).

One of the primary aspects of modernisation is examining the relationship between *traditionalism* and *modernism* (Marković 1993, 16–17), therefore this process can be defined as “a global transformation of the traditional, that is, the transforming of stagnant societies into dynamic systems” (Gredelj 1996, 241). In the first half of the 1920s, the Belgrade<sup>5</sup>, Zagreb, and Ljubljana radio stations had not been established, nor had the *Edison Bell Penkala* gramophone record factory. Consequently, popular music initially gained favour within Yugoslav society due to imported sheet music and gramophone records. Publishing activities played a crucial role in the commercialisation and extensive production of popular music. However, it is essential to remember that using music scores required a certain level of musical education, while the overall literacy rate in the country was low. In Zagreb, the publishing of popular songs became a speciality of the Albini publishing house, which commenced its activities in the early 1930s (Lučić 2007, 129). Meanwhile, in Belgrade, a notable impact on the advancement of popular music was attributed to the publishing houses led by Jovan Frajt<sup>6</sup> and Sergei Strahov. According to Ivana Vesić, music publishing, domestic radio, and gramophone production formed the core of the Yugoslav “entertainment industry” (Vesić 2017, 67). She also suggests that an examination of the preserved collections and printed catalogues of publishing houses reveals the existence of musical compositions from that era categorised as “light” or “entertaining” music<sup>7</sup>, in contrast to the category of “serious” or artistic music (Vesić 2017, 70). For example, among Frajt’s publications, one could find arias and numbers from operettas composed by Emmerich Kálmán, Franz Lehár, Ralph Benatzky, and Edmund Eysler. Additionally, there were piano compositions in the form of stylised

---

5 For Radio Belgrade’s role in modernising Serbian society in the interwar period, see Srećković 2007.

6 Frajt established his publishing house in 1921. He was the only one until the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, when other similarly profiled publishing houses (*Akord*, *Albini*, *Strahov*, etc.) appeared in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana.

7 Terms such as *jazz*, *light music*, *dance music*, *entertainment music*, and *popular music* were sometimes considered synonyms.

dances (marches, waltzes, Boston waltzes, tangos, etc.) created by Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, French, German, and Russian composers known for their contributions to salon music and operettas. Frajt's collection also encompassed schlagers that originated from operettas or the rich production of German, American, Austrian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian popular music during that period (Vesić 2017, 72). Radios and gramophones were expensive, and only the wealthier classes of the population could afford them. Also, gramophone records were not cheap, so buyers could make instalment payments (Tomašević 2009, 127). This suggests that popular music was mainly accessible in urban settings and among the more affluent population. That is supported by the fact that in 1931, only 5.39% of Zagreb's total population had a subscription to Radio Zagreb, indicating the number of radio receivers since a subscription was obligatory when purchasing one. During that year, the average number of gramophone records sold per person was 0.46 (Lučić 2007, 130).

Popular music should be considered a sociocultural phenomenon (Manuel 1988). The emergence of popular music as a new phenomenon started to become more distinct in the early 1920s. Already in 1920, an article appeared in the Belgrade newspaper *Politika*, asserting that following the war, devastation, and loss of life, a period characterised by frenetic dancing, the dominance of foxtrot, and one-step had begun (*Politika*, 01.02.1920, 3). Baronijan noted that "folk and popular music served the same purpose and audience. When it came to dances, the most beloved was still the *kolo*, which was gradually displaced by the waltz and then the modern tango" (Baronijan 1970, 104). It is important to note that Russian émigrés who arrived in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the October Revolution and Civil War played a significant role in forming popular music (Vesić 2015; Golubović 2021, 152–187). They played a significant role in producing cabaret performances that blended musical elements, dancing acts, and comedy sketches. They also contributed to the production and distribution of popular songs (schlagers) and performed Gypsy and Russian folk music and dances, which were well-known in urban centers before the Russian Revolution (Vesić 2015; Golubović 2021, 152–187). Based on all of the above, we can conclude that popular music in the early 1920s had two starting points: traditional and modern. The first was concentrated on folk music and forms close to traditional Central European popular music, like Straussian melodies and operettas. In contrast, the second was associated with modern popular music imported from the West, collectively called "dance music" or "jazz" in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Modern dances brought greater freedom of movement and embodied contemporary fashion, which is why they were initially banned in prestigious clubs (*Politika*, 01.02.1920, 3). Each season brought new dances, so in the second half of the 1920s, popular dances included the Black-Bottom, the Andalouse, and the Heebie-Jeebies. These dances had originated in America but received stylisation in Paris (*Politika*, 13.11.1927, 8). Naturally, the conservatives were appalled by the excesses of the youth and other consumers of this new trend. Attitudes remained unchanged until the end of the 1920s, as evidenced by Josephine Baker's controversial performances in Belgrade and Zagreb in 1929.



Conservative circles expressed significant concern about her provocative dances and negative influence on the youth. However, this did not diminish her success, as urban Yugoslav society constantly rushed toward the new and sensational. Boško Tokin, a pioneer of Yugoslav film criticism, succinctly described the chaos of that time:

“They copied and transferred novelties to keep pace with Europe, regardless of actual needs. Constructive forces of the country could not come into play. They could not voice their opinion and provide their measure. In the general vertigo of Belgrade, devoid of ideals, societal morals, a Belgrade of new houses, a river of automobiles, with the wild music of jazz, the gaze of elegant and heavily made-up women, a variety of the most refined external appearances, Belgrade was playing a dangerous game. Reckless. Gambling. It put the fundamental features of the nation at stake. The foundations. The future. Belgrade was semi-urban, semi-cosmopolitan, primitive, decorative, dynamic, Byzantine, refined, immoral, secretive, brutal, temperamental, merciful, drunken, attractive, unscrupulous, familiar, hyper-modern, and anachronistic.” (Tokin 2015, 51)

During the interwar period, Yugoslav society witnessed a profound revolution in the way music was created, distributed, and consumed, thanks to the advent of modern technologies. Among these transformative innovations, from the early 1920s, radio and the gramophone emerged as powerful tools that democratised access to music. During that period, radio transformed into a specific form – “broadcasting” (centralised transmission and private reception), becoming a mass medium (Middleton 1990, 84). It flooded city streets, public spaces, and the cosy confines of households, ensuring that occasional respites vied with the almost ceaseless intrusion of the broadcast sound. As “one of the most remarkable cultural achievements of mankind” (*Radio Beograd*, 5/1931, 10), radio had multiple roles – contributing to economic, political, and social modernisation.

The expansion of new media had an important role in accelerating the process of modernising society (Marković 1992, 77). Radio broadcasting was established in the second half of the 1920s in the three largest cities – Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana. In Europe, music was transmitted via radio for the first time on June 15, 1920, with the renowned lyric soprano Nellie Melba pioneering radio broadcasting as she performed for the English radio station “Marconi”. Interwar Yugoslavia appears not to have lagged significantly behind Europe; however, radio broadcasting began when the country had limited electrification, and the economic conditions for widespread reception were unfavourable. Furthermore, Yugoslavia did not have a radio industry in the interwar period, and records were imported from abroad (Marković, 1979, 16–17).<sup>8</sup> As a result, the number of radio subscribers in interwar Yugoslavia was the lowest in Europe, coming in at just 0.3% (Gašić 2005, 107). The number of Radio Belgrade subscribers

---

<sup>8</sup> The company *Edison Bell Penkala* from Zagreb produced gramophones and gramophone records, so Marković’s statement is not entirely accurate – records were imported, but also produced in interwar Yugoslavia.

during the interwar period started with 7.071 in 1928, when broadcasting began, and reached 86,060 in 1938 (Radio Beograd 1979, 293). Their numbers consistently increased year by year, although there was a slight slowdown in the early 1930s when the global economic crisis hit the country. The situation with Radio Zagreb was quite similar. During the Great Depression of 1929, Radio Zagreb subscribers began to rise sharply, doubling by the mid-1930s. In 1936, the number reached 11 000 and 35 491 in August 1940. Considering that Zagreb had approximately 250 000 inhabitants at that time, it turns out that every seventh resident was a radio subscriber (Ceribašić 2021, 345). During this period, the sales and production of records by the Edison Bell Penkala company were also at their peak. Interestingly, during a time of severe economic turmoil and political upheaval worldwide, including in Yugoslavia, the consumption of music products was steadily increasing (Lučić 2007, 134). Radio Ljubljana also sparked significant interest. In the first year of broadcasting, subscribers doubled, rising from 2030 in 1928 to 5862 in April 1929. On the eve of the Second World War, it reached 25 000 subscribers, with even more substantial growth anticipated (Stefanija 2016, 126).

As an example, Radio Belgrade's program, like other European radio stations, was formulaically designed to cater to a broad listening audience, encompassing music genres categorised into classical and light music. Right from the outset, Radio Belgrade's musical concept was clearly defined: the morning hours were allocated for classical music, coinciding with peak listenership, and the afternoon featured traditional or folk music. The evening slot was reserved for the Radio Jazz Orchestra's performances and popular music (Karan 2019, 31). In 1935, the data revealed that music constituted 63.5% of the overall program, with 40.6% dedicated to light music and 22.9% to classical music. The broadcast included a wide range of music genres, from opera, operettas, symphonic and chamber works to solo performances, dance music, jazz, and more (*Radio Beograd*, 44/1935, 6–7).

Dance music encompassed sung and played schlager songs—subsequently, entertainment and jazz music developed from these roots (Marković 1979, 109). Although jazz was mentioned in the Yugoslav press as early as the 1920s, the name of the new genre was not standardised and varied between *žaz*, *jas*, *džaz* and *džez*. A significant moment was the emergence of sound films in the early 1930s when modern music singers and dancers began to captivate the audience. In the spreading of popular music and schlagers from sound films, a significant role was played by Edison Bell Penkala, the only discography company established in interwar Yugoslavia.

The expansion of such music followed because major gramophone record companies started releasing the latest hits performed by big jazz orchestras. Because of these records, music enthusiasts could hear jazz giants like Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, and Paul Whiteman, which also led to the formation of the first jazz orchestras in interwar Yugoslavia (Marković 1979, 109). Since they were the most significant urban centres in the country, it is not surprising that the first jazz orchestras emerged in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. Additionally, it could be argued that the geographic factor, in proximity to jazz hubs in Europe such as Paris and Berlin played a role, as it

is likely that the first jazz orchestra was formed in Ljubljana in 1922. Among the most popular ones, we can mention *Mickey Jazz*, *Academic Jolly Boys*, *Melody Boys*, *Cion Jazz*, and the *Student Academic Jazz Orchestra* in Belgrade. In Zagreb, there were the *Bingo Boys*, *Jazz Sinchopatens*, *The Devils*, and *Quick-Swingers*. Ljubljana boasted groups like *Original Jazz Negode*, *The Merkur*, and *Sonny Boy*. Notably, all these bands had English names, reflecting their aspiration to get closer to the new musical genre and stand out in the Yugoslav music scene. A similar phenomenon could also be observed in other instances during that era. For example, the names of Belgrade's cafes and other hospitality establishments in the 1920s and 1930s also embodied the city's cosmopolitan lifestyle. Thus, following European trends, Belgrade acquired venues with names such as *Excelsior*, *Union*, *Luxor*, *Palas*, *Claridge*, *Splendid*, and others (Golubović 2021, 173).

The program also consisted of gramophone record concerts during the 1930s, including dance music and popular hits. For instance, if we take the *His Master's Voice* concerts on Radio Belgrade in 1930 as an example, the audience could hear popular genres like tango, foxtrot, and slowfox, as well as music from famous sound films. However, classical music remained more prevalent (Maglov 2022). When we analyse the statistics of subscribers from 1938 according to their professions, we observe that the majority were craftsmen (19.90%), followed by private officials (15.49%), merchants (14.17%), government officials (13%), and private individuals (9.87%). Farmers (5.74%), officers (4.87%), and students (0.70%) constituted only a small percentage of radio listeners (Marković 1979: 19). As with the other two radio stations, Radio Ljubljana's programming content started to flourish, aligning with the preferences of the primary subscribers. In 1929, these subscribers were comprised of 30.7% officials and 31.7% merchants and craftsmen. The objective was to make radio accessible to every household nationwide, even though radio receivers remained too costly for rural inhabitants and labourers in the early 1940s (Stefanija 2016, 127). This suggests that radio, given the cost of the radios, subscription fees, and gramophone records, was a privilege enjoyed by the bourgeois class and wealthier individuals in general (Marković 1979, 20).

A significant moment in the musical life of interwar Yugoslavia was the opening of the gramophone record factory *Edison Bell Penkala* (1927–1936) in Zagreb. This was a local branch of the *Edison Bell Corporation*, one of the mid-sized European record companies that had operated successfully for about thirty years alongside other major international record companies (See: Gronow and Pennanen 2002, 228–230). The company was established by a business contract between *Edison Bell Ltd.* from London and *Penkala Works Ltd.* from Zagreb. In addition to producing gramophone records, the factory also manufactured gramophones, radio sets, and other audio and electro-technical devices with similar purposes. However, considering the country's weak infrastructure and overall economic situation, the question arises as to why the decision was made to open the factory in the Kingdom of SCS? There were two main reasons for this. The first reason was the country's geographical location convenient for establishing a central office covering Yugoslavia, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Albania, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine. The intention was to

produce one million records annually for the Balkan region alone (Bulić 1980, 19–20). But, the main reason for establishing the company in Yugoslavia was the absence of copyright protection laws, making the production of records completely unrestricted (Bulić 1980, 21; Ceribašić 2021, 330). *Edison Bell Penkala* owned record stores in Zagreb, Belgrade, and Skopje, but their records could also be found in retail stores owned by others throughout Yugoslavia. These stores sold records from other companies as well as their own, including the London-based parent company *Edison Bell*, *His Master's Voice*, *Columbia*, *Brunswick*, *Odeon*, *Homocord*, *Polydor*, *Electrola*, and other influential record labels in the European music industry at the time.

The role of the *Edison Bell Penkala* publishing house's in distributing and commercialising popular music in interwar Yugoslavia is best illustrated by comparing its catalogues to other publishers, such as *His Master's Voice* and *Odeon*, which were also prominent in the market. The catalogue of *His Master's Voice* from 1928 reveals that they did not offer popular music; instead, they focused on serious music, primarily solo, chamber, and various arias from operas (*His Master's Voice*, 1928). On the other hand, *Odeon* had a broader range of genres in its catalogue, with new recordings from 1927–1928. In addition to offering new labels of Serbian records, encompassing orchestral music (performed by military and tamburitza orchestras), accordion and tamburitza music, folk songs and dances, opera excerpts, Croatian music recordings, and various foreign songs and dances, their selection also included records of foreign modern dances in a wide variety: one-step, two-step, foxtrot, shimmy, Boston waltz, waltz, Ländler, Java, mazurka, polka, tango, and others. This demonstrates that modern dances included more conventional ones from Central Europe and modern dances with syncopated ragtime rhythm that had arrived in Europe from America. However, of the 454 records in the catalogue, only 12 featured modern dances (*Odeon*, 1927).

In *Edison Bell Penkala's* Main Catalogue from 1927, records were categorised as “domestic and foreign”. They were further classified into sections, including operas and operettas, a diverse selection of folk music from the Yugoslav nations, tamburitza orchestras, and music from other countries (*Edison Bell Penkala*, 1927). However, the most extensive section was modern dances, which reflected the musical preferences of the 1920s and 1930s, making it the most prominent category of recorded music during that period. In her analysis of eleven collected sale catalogues, Jelka Vukobratović observed that approximately half of *Edison Bell Penkala's* production was comprised of foreign music that was primarily categorised as popular music and spread across various sections, including “dance music”, “foreign music”, “cabaret”, “latest hits”, “songs from sound films”, and others (Vukobratović 2022, 238). *Edison Bell Penkala's* music production can be divided into three main categories: (1) reissues of records originally released by *Edison Bell* in London, which included recordings of jazz and salon orchestras; (2) records of Romanian and Hungarian music created for their respective markets, and (3) foreign songs performed by local musicians. These songs mainly belonged to the popular music category as vocal-instrumental songs accompanied by jazz ensembles. The domestic popular music ensembles recording for *Edison Bell*

*Penkala* varied in their number of performers, ranging from trios to salon orchestras. Among them, we can highlight the *Edison Bell Jazz* (Zagreb) ensemble, which was the most active during the company's existence. Other notable ensembles included Jazz Band Šimaček, Jazz (Band) Vlahović-Šimaček, Salon (Jazz) Orchestra (Jazz Band) Vimer (Vimmer), and Jazz Schild-Vlahović. Trios did not have specific names and were named after the surnames of the performers: Trio Schild-Vlahović-Košćica, Trio Tijardović-Vlahović-Košćica, and Trio Šimaček-Vlahović-Košćica (See Database of the Diskograf project (hereinafter DDP)). Singers were linked to Zagreb and Belgrade National Theatres and cabarets, while bands were part of the growing interwar Zagreb jazz and dance scene (Vukobratović 2022, 238).

By examining the DDP and analysing seven sales catalogues of the Edison Bell Penkala company (see the list of catalogues in the bibliography), we observe a presence of popular music performed by jazz ensembles from Germany, England, and America since the company's establishment in 1927. Since introducing the first sound films in interwar Yugoslavia in 1929 (Kosanović 2011, 35), the presence of schlagers and other musical hits also from German, English, and American films has steadily increased. Comparing popular music sections that included jazz bands, film schlager, dance music, operettas, etc., in the extensive catalogues from 1927, 1929, and 1931 (EBP 1927, EBP 1929 and EBP 1931) excellently illustrates the direction in which the commercialization of both domestic and foreign popular music was heading, indicating significant interest from listeners.

Ultimately, we are led to consider to what extent popular music served as a herald of modern Yugoslav society. First and foremost, we must consider the population to which it was accessible. Although less than 25% of the inhabitants of interwar Yugoslavia lived in urban areas, it is essential to note that not everyone could afford modern innovations such as radios and gramophones. In the beginning, owning one of these devices was a matter of social prestige. Besides that, each season brought new dances that required people to learn new movements. This resulted in the popularity of dance schools during those years and the adoption of new outfits that reflected current trends.

Based on the analysis of various sources, it is evident that popular music played a significant role in interwar Yugoslavia. The influence of popular music, both domestic and foreign, was multifaceted, shaping various aspects of Yugoslav society and culture. This influence became apparent through introducing new musical genres to the Yugoslav scene, which were perceived as innovative due to their importation from abroad. The production of gramophone records and the proliferation of music venues such as cafes, cabarets, and clubs further contributed to the diversification and enrichment of the Yugoslav music scene. The dissemination of popular music through radio broadcasts and sound films contributed to its widespread popularity and cultural impact. This is particularly evident in the case of the *Edison Bell Penkala* record company's production. Further examination reveals the deep-seated influence of European trends, particularly from Germany and England, on popular music in interwar Yugoslavia. Notably prominent in jazz, this influence underscored European musical styles' permeation



into Yugoslav culture. Publishing houses played a pivotal role in shaping the musical landscape by distributing modern dances and schlagers.

Therefore, while popular music undoubtedly played a significant role in reflecting and influencing modernisation in interwar Yugoslavia, its impact was limited by accessibility and social status. The emergence of new dances and the cultural shifts they represented highlight how music intertwined with broader societal changes, shaping auditory experiences and fashion and lifestyle trends.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### ARCHIVES

Historical Archives of Belgrade, Fonds 1103 [Udruženje glumaca Kraljevine Jugoslavije / Association of Actors of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia]

### RECORD CATALOGUES

Edison Bell Penkala. *Glavni katalog domaćih i stranih ploča*. Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala Ltd., 1927.

Edison Bell Penkala. *Nastavak glavnog kataloga*. Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala Ltd., 1928.

Edison Bell Penkala. II. *Nastavak glavnog kataloga domaćih i stranih ploča*. Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala Ltd., 1929.

Edison Bell Penkala. *Katalog Juni? – Novembar*. Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala Ltd., 1930.

Edison Bell Penkala. *Nastavak glavnog kataloga domaćih i stranih ploča*. Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala Ltd., 1931.

Edison Bell Penkala. III. *Nastavak glavnog kataloga*. Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala Ltd., 1933.

Edison Bell Penkala. *Nastavak glavnog kataloga domaćih i stranih ploča*. Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala Ltd., 1935.

His Master's Voice. *Katalog dvostranih umetničkih ploča His Master's Voice 1928*. Prague: The Gramophone Co. (Czechoslov.) Ltd., 1928.

Odeon. *Novi snimci gramofonskih ploča "Odeon" 1927–1928. god. sa ostalim modernim snimcima*. [Beograd]: [Odeon], 1927. (Cyrillic)

## PERIODICALS

*Politika* (Cyrillic)

*Radio Beograd: ilustrovani nedeljni časopis za radiofoniju* (Cyrillic)

- Radio u službi opštih interesa. *Radio Beograd: ilustrovani nedeljni časopis za radiofoniju*, 5/1931, 10.
- Beogradska radio stanica upoređena sa drugim radio stanicama. *Radio Beograd: ilustrovani nedeljni časopis za radiofoniju*, 44/1935, 6–7.

## PUBLISHED SOURCES (MUSICAL SCORES)

*Muzika beogradskih kafana, salona i klubova. Vol. 1. Starogradske pesme iz albuma Jovana Frajta* [Music of Belgrade taverns, salons, and clubs. Vol. 1. Folk songs from the album by Jovan Frajt], ur. ar ed. ar ed. Hristina Medić. Beograd: Clio, 2014a. (Cyrillic)

*Muzika beogradskih kafana, salona i klubova. Vol. 2. Moderne igre iz zbirki Jovana Frajta* [Music of Belgrade taverns, salons, and clubs. Vol. 2. Modern dances from the collections of Jovan Frajt], ur. ar ed. Hristina Medić. Beograd: Clio, 2014b. (Cyrillic)

*Muzika beogradskih kafana, salona i klubova. Vol. 3. Večernji zvon: Ruske popularne pesme i igre iz zbirki Jovana Frajta i Sergeja Strahova* [Music of Belgrade taverns, salons, and clubs. Vol. 3. Evening Bells: Russian popular songs and dances from the collections of Jovan Frajt and Sergey Strahov], ur. ar ed. Hristina Medić. Beograd: Clio, 2015. (Cyrillic)

*Muzika beogradskih kafana, salona i klubova. Vol. 4. Kad džez bend svira: moderne igre iz zaostavštine Jovana Frajta* [Music of Belgrade taverns, salons, and clubs. Vol. 4. When the Jazz Band Plays: Modern Dances from the Legacy of Jovan Frajt], ur. ar ed. Hristina Medić. Beograd: Clio, 2017. (Cyrillic)

Database of the Diskograf project

<https://repositorij.dief.eu/a/?pr=l&mrx%5B-%5D%5B150723%5D=a>

## LITERATURE

Baronijan, Vartkes (1970), Pola veka beogradskog zabavno-muzičkog života. *Zvuk*, 102/103, 104–106.

Bulić, Dario (1980). *Diskografija u Jugoslaviji od 1918. do 1941*. Master's thesis. Music Academy, University of Zagreb.

Calic, Marie-Janine (2019). *A History of Yugoslavia*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Callanan Martin, Kathleen (2015). Modernization and Social Change. *The Modernization of the Western World: A Society Transformed*, ed. John McGrath and Kathleen Callanan Martin. London, New York: Routledge, 11–18.

Ceribašić, Naila (2021). Music as Recording, Music in Culture, and the Study of Early Recording Industry in Ethnomusicology: A Take on Edison Bell Penkala. *IRASM* 52 (2), 323–354.

Dimić, Ljubodrag (1994). Kulturna politika i modernizacija jugoslovenskog društva 1918–1941. *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XX veka*, eds. Latinka Perović, Marija Obradović, Dubravka Stojanović. Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 193–209.

Dimić, Ljubodrag (1997). *Kulturna politika u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji: 1918–1941*. III. Beograd: Stubovi culture. (Cyrillic)

Gašić, Ranka (2005). *Beograd u hodu ka Evropi. Kulturni uticaji Britanije i Nemačke na beogradsku elitu 1918–1941*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju.

Golubović, Marija (2021). *Uloga ruske emigracije u muzičkom životu Beograda (1918–1941)*. Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade.

Gredelj, Stjepan (1996). Modernizacija i modernost. *Filozofija i društvo*, 9/10, 239–248.

Gronow Pekka and Risto Pekka Pennanen (2022). Zagreb, London, Berlin, New York: The origins of the record industry in Croatia (1902–1939). *Arti musices*, Vol. 53 No. 2, 219–236.

Hrvoj, Davor. Jazz u Hrvatskoj (skica za povijest) (2009). *Hrvatska glazba u XX. stoljeću*. Jelena Hekman, ed. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 185–194.

Karan, Marija (2019). *Muzička koncepcija radijskog diskursa versus auditorijum – vidovi transformacija međusobnih relacija sagledanih u interdisciplinarnom polju teorije medija*. Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Music, University of Arts in Belgrade.

Kocić, Ljubomir i Ljubinko Miljković (1979). Tragovima sazvučja muzike. *Ovde Radio-Beograd: zbornik povodom pedesetogodišnjice*, eds. Milan Bulatović et al. Beograd: Radio-Beograd, 103–128.

Kosanović, Dejan (2011). *Kinematografija i film u Kraljevini SHS/Kraljevini Jugoslaviji 1918–1941*. Beograd: Filmski centar Srbije.

Križić, Miro (2008). Jazz glazba u Hrvatskoj. *Svijet jazza – od Adorna do Johna Zorna*, Saša Drach, ur. ar ed. Zagreb: Sandorf, 451–474.

Lučić, Kristina (2003). *Vokalno-instrumentalna popularna glazba u Zagrebu između dva svjetska rata*. Master's thesis, Music Academy of the University of Zagreb.

Lučić, Krunoslav (2007). Glazba kao oblik popularne fikcije: aspekti vokalno-instrumentalne popularne glazbe u Zagrebu između dvaju svjetskih ratova. *Arti musices*, Vol. 38 No. 1, 119–142.

Maglov, Marija (2022). Aspekti interakcije između radija i diskografske industrije: primer *His Master's Voice* koncerata na programu Radio Beograda. *Muzikologija*, No. 32, 83–108. (Cyrillic)

Manuel, Peter (1998). *Popular Musics of the Non-Western World*. NewYork–Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marković, Peđa J. (1992). *Beograd i Evropa: 1918-1941: evropski uticaji na proces modernizacije Beograda*. Beograd: Savremena administracija.

Marković, Radivoje (1979). Prve godine. *Ovde Radio-Beograd: zbornik povodom pedesetogodišnjice*, eds. Milan Bulatović et al. Beograd: Radio-Beograd, 11–27. (Cyrillic)

Middleton, Richard (1990). *Studying popular culture*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Oldenburg, Ray (1999). *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

Simić, Vojislav (1999). Razvoj džeza i zabavne muzike kod nas. *Novi zvuk, Novy Zvuk* (13), 109–116. (Cyrillic)

Srećković, Biljana (2007). Radio Beograd u kontekstu modernizacije srpskog društva između dva rata. *Novi zvuk*, No. 29, 109–129.

Stefanija, Leon (2016). Radio Ljubljana and its music policies: 1928–1941. *Muzikologija*, No. 21, 123–139.

Tokin, Boško (2015). *Terazije*. Beograd: Ultimatum.rs.

Tomašević, Katarina (2009). *Na raskršću Istoka i Zapada: o dijalogu tradicionalnog i modernog u srpskoj muzici (1918–1941)*. Beograd: Muzikološki institut SANU, Novi Sad: Matica srpska.

Trkulja, Jovica (1993). Aporije neuspele modernizacije u prvoj i drugoj Jugoslaviji. *Tokovi istorije*, 1–2, 17–29.

Vesić, Ivana (2017). The expansion of popular music in interwar Yugoslavia: the examples of publishing houses of Jovan Frajt and Sergije Strahov. *Synaxa: Matica Srpska International Journal for Social Sciences, Arts and Culture*, No. 1, 91–107.

Vesić, Ivana (2015). The role of Russian emigrants in the rise of popular culture and music in Belgrade between two world wars. *Beyond the East-West divide: Balkan music and its poles of attraction*, eds. Ivana Medić, Katarina Tomašević. Belgrade: Institute of Musicology, 103–117.

Vukobratović, Jelka (2022). Panties, hearts and foxtrots: translation of popular songs within the Croatian record industry in the interwar period. *Arti musices*, Vol. 53 No. 2, 237–249.

# POPULĀRĀS MŪZIKAS LOMA SABIEDRĪBAS MODERNIZĒŠANĀ STARPKARU PERIODA DIENVIDSLĀVIJĀ<sup>1</sup>

Marija Goluboviča

## Kopsavilkums

Rakstā aplūkota populārās mūzikas ietekme starpkaru perioda Dienvidslāvijas sabiedrībā. Atrodoties krustcelēs starp Austrumiem un Rietumiem, tradīciju un modernitāti, Serbu, horvātu un slovēņu Karaliste / Dienvidslāvija vēlējās stiprināt saiknes ar moderno Rietumu kultūru un integrēties Eiropā. Tolaik strauji attīstījās izklaides industrija. Populārās mūzikas tapšanai un izplatībai Dienvidslāvijā iespējams izsekot, pētīt izdotos nošizdevumus, skaņuplašu ierakstus, radio un populārās mūzikas ansambļu un grupu veidošanās procesus. Šī pētījuma pamatā ir arhīva materiāli, periodika, ierakstu katalogi, iespiestie nošizdevumi un attiecināmā literatūra. Analizējot mūzikas žanus, kultūras ietekmes un sociālpolitiskos kontekstus, raksta mērķis ir parādīt, ka populārā mūzika kalpoja par spēcīgu ieroci pārmaiņām Dienvidslāvijas vēsturē svarīgā laika periodā.

1918. gadā pēc Pirmā pasaules kara beigām izveidotajā Dienvidslāvijā, atbildot uz kolektīvo vēlmi tikt pāri pēckara traumām un materiālajiem zaudējumiem, pilsētās notika strauja izklaides jomas konsolidēšanās. Šīs pārmaiņas veicināja populārās mūzikas, aktīvas naktsdzīves, varietē un klubu uzplaukumu. Tas atspoguļoja plašāku tendenci, izklaides vietām ieņemot sevišķi svarīgu vietu cilvēku dzīvēs pēc ģimenes un darba. Tomēr šīs kultūras pārmaiņas nenotika visur vienādi, daudzus lauku reģionus rietumnieciskās vēsmas neskāra. Starptautisko sakaru nodibināšana ar Eiropas valstīm bija izšķiroša Dienvidslāvijas kultūras, zinātnes un tehnoloģiju attīstībā. Būtiska loma Eiropas tendenču ieviešanai pilsētās bija Francijai, Vācijai un Anglijai. Tomēr par spīti minētajai Rietumu ietekmei, Dienvidslāvijas etniski daudzveidīgā sabiedrība joprojām glabāja bagātas, vēsturē dziļi sakņotas kultūras tradīcijas.

Dienvidslāvu komponistu iedvesmas avoti bija itāliešu, franču un spāņu šansoni, vācu filmu šlāgeri un amerikāņu džezs. Populārā mūzika galvenokārt bija pieejama pilsētās un labāk situētajai sabiedrības daļai, jo radioaparāti un gramofoni bija dārgi. Populārās mūzikas pieejamības veicināšanā būtiska loma bija nošizdevumiem, lai arī tas nozīmēja zināmu muzikālās izglītības nepieciešamību, bet šāda izglītība nebija plaši izplatīta kopumā diezgan zemā lasīt un rakstītprasmes līmeņa dēļ. Kamēr konservatīvā sabiedrības daļa pauda bažas par moderno tendenču ietekmi, Dienvidslāvijas pilsētu iedzīvotāji tās alkaini uzsūca, mēģinot iet roku rokā ar Eiropu, tomēr to nevar teikt par visu valsti kopumā. Revolūciju mūzikas radīšanā, izplatīšanā un patērēšanā radīja modernās tehnoloģijas. Svarīgākā loma piekļuves mūzikai veicināšanā un demokratizācijā bija

1 Šis raksts atspoguļo Serbijas Zinātņu un Mākslas akadēmijas Institutā veikta pētījuma rezultātus. Pētījumu finansē Serbijas Republikas Zinātnes, tehnoloģiju attīstības un inovāciju ministrija (RS-200176).



diviem izgudrojumiem – radio un gramofonam. Radio lielākajās pilsētās – Belgradā, Zagrebā un Ļubļanā – sāka raidīt 20. gadu beigās. Par spīti ierobežotajai elektrības pieejamībai un nelabvēlīgiem ekonomiskajiem apstākļiem, radiopārraides kļuva populāras. Tomēr, tā kā vietējās radio industrijas vēl īsti nebija, ierakstus vajadzēja importēt no ārzemēm, un tas neveicināja radio abonentu pieaugumu starpkaru perioda Dienvidslāvijā salīdzinājumā ar pārējo Eiropu. Radio programmas bija paredzētas plašai auditorijai. Pārraidēs iekļāva dažādus mūzikas žanrus, sākot ar operu un simfonisko mūziku un beidzot ar soloprogrammām, deju mūziku un džeza. Deju mūzika, tostarp arī šlageri, lika pamatus Dienvidslāvijas izklaides un džeza mūzikai. Skaņu filmu parādīšanās 30. gadu sākumā publiku iepazīstināja ar populāriem dziedātājiem un dejotājiem, veicinot mūzikas tālāku izplatību. Lielākās gramofona ierakstu kompānijas sāka izdot lielu džeza orķestru atskaņotus hitus, atklājot dienvidslāvu klausītājiem tādas džeza leģendas kā Beniju Gudmenu (*Benny Goodman*), Djūku Elingtonu (*Duke Ellington*) un Polu Vaitmenu (*Paul Whiteman*). Pirmie džeza orķestri starpkaru perioda Dienvidslāvijā izveidojās lielākajās pilsētās – Belgradā, Zagrebā un Ļubļanā, jo tās atradās tuvāk Eiropas džeza centriem. Svarīgs šī laika sasniegums bija gramofona ierakstu ražošanas fabrikas *Edison Bell Penkala* nodibināšana Zagrebā (1927–1936). Šai kompānijai bija izšķiroša loma populārās mūzikas, īpaši modes deju izplatīšanā un komercializēšanā.

110

Populārā mūzika bija būtisks faktors Dienvidslāvijas sabiedrības un kultūras modernizēšanā. Tomēr tā nebija brīvi pieejama ikvienam, jo pilsētās dzīvoja mazāk nekā 25% iedzīvotāju, turklāt daudzi nevarēja atļauties iegādāties radioaparātus vai gramofonus, kas tolaik tika uzskatīti par statusa simboliem. Pārmaiņas atspoguļo jaunu deju, kā arī deju skolu rašanās un dažādas modes tendences. Gramofona ieraksti, radio pārraides un skaņu filmas ienesa Eiropas un Amerikas vēsmas, sevišķi džeza. Neraugoties uz populārās mūzikas svarīgo vietu kultūrā, tās ietekmi noteica arī patērējošās sabiedrības locekļu sociālais statuss un ierobežotā pieejamība.

# PRINTING AND PUBLISHING OF SCHLAGER (HIT) SHEET MUSIC IN RIGA IN THE 1920s–1930s

Alberts Rokpelnis

Publishing sheet music in Riga in the 1920s–1930s was a complicated process involving the interaction of various actors – music publishers, printers, and traders that formed a network based on mutual economic interests and technical capabilities. Also, schlager publishing in interwar Riga was a brand-new branch of polygraphy. This article aims to analyse the schlager printing and publishing in Riga, emphasizing the role of key personalities. The topic discussed in the article is related to music history, but it includes various disciplines such as music printing and publishing, music sales and economics, legal issues, and biographic studies.

After the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia in 1918, the new democratic order created a new legal framework, and several new companies entered the business, including printing houses and publishing houses. Within the period, the music publishing industry was growing. At the beginning of the period only a few sporadic attempts to publish foreign schlager editions can be identified. Activity reached its peak at the turn of the 1930s (1928–1931) when at least 17 names of schlager publishers in Riga were active. Whereas in the 1930s, the first local popular dance music composers started publishing regularly in Riga. Starting from 1934, the pressure of censorship increased rapidly in culture as well in the music business because of the authoritarian rule of Kārlis Ulmanis (1934–1940). As a result, the number of publishers decreased in the mid-1930s. Until 1940, only *Harmonija* remained. The period of the 1920s–1930s can be considered a relatively closed period in the political, cultural, and economic history of Latvia because in the summer of 1940, the Republic of Latvia was occupied by Soviet forces, and the authorities put an end to private business activities in Latvia.

**Keywords:** music industry, popular music, 1920s-1930s, Riga, music publishing, schlager

Music publishing and distribution is an essential topic in popular music studies, sometimes overshadowed by the music research itself and its producers and performers. In previous studies, the personalities of popular music publishers in Riga have been considered somewhat marginal. This raises the question of whether and how it can be explored. As a product of the music industry, schlager editions were released primarily for sale. Secondly, in some cases, it may be because at that time key figures in the field were representatives of German and other minorities whose activities in Riga were

interrupted and ended by the Second World War. Many emigrated and their companies' documentation may have been destroyed. Consequently, their activity has disappeared from Latvian cultural memory as not actual. In the eyes of the elite, it was always just a piece of cheap music printed on cheap paper.

Nowadays, hoping that any ideological or aesthetic prejudice that limits research has been overcome, the last obstacle would be only a question of historical sources available. Therefore, the names of the publishers whose names are printed on the covers of the editions, mentioned in the bibliography, and kept in the library catalogues have survived and help further investigation.

Publishing sheet music in Riga in the 1920s–1930s was a complicated process involving the interaction of various actors. The topic discussed in the article is related to music history, but it includes various disciplines such as music printing and publishing, music sales and economics, legal issues, and biographic studies. This article aims to analyse schlager printing and publishing in Riga, emphasizing the role of key personalities.

In this article, the German term *Schlager* is defined as a genre label in the music industry. It was attributed to the stylistics of popular dance songs such as one-step, two-step, shimmy, tango, or foxtrot), composed in early jazz rhythms and characterised by its melodicism. Its lyrical content focused on contemporary social themes, often in a sentimental, as well as cheerful manner (Gronow, Saunio, and Moseley 1998, 40; Kornberger 2018, 28, 86). Composed for operettas, motion pictures or as popular dance hits, schlager music was broadcasted, published in sheet music, and distributed on records. The most popular *schlager edition* in the 1920s and 1930s context was a popular piano-vocal scores, printed in bifolio format.<sup>1</sup>

After the First World War, sales of sheet music declined on a global scale, but until the Second World War, alongside the growth in consumption of recordings, film and radio broadcasts, sheet music publishing maintained a significant market share in the music industry (Garofalo 1999, 319; Boorman, Selfridge-Field, and Krummel 2001, 370; Tawa 2014). After the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia in 1918, the new democratic order created a new legal framework, and several new companies entered the business, including printing houses and publishing houses. Starting from 1934, the pressure of censorship increased rapidly in culture as well in the music business because of the authoritarian rule of Kārlis Ulmanis (1934–1940). But in the summer of 1940, the Republic of Latvia was occupied by Soviet forces, and the authorities put an end to private business activities in Latvia. Therefore, the period of the 1920s–1930s can be considered a relatively closed period in the political, cultural and economic history of Latvia.

---

1 One sheet of paper folded in half to create two folios (pages) or four pages.

## Research sources and challenges

In the 1920s–1930s, the statistics of printing companies or press commentaries did not always make a clear distinction between them, so the term *publisher* was sometimes generically applied also to the printer. Only in a few cases in Riga, the publisher was also the printer, and this will be discussed in more detail. Published and unpublished statistical data provide an overall picture of the sector. For example, the industrial statistics published by the Latvian State Statistical Office cover the total volume of all products (books, booklets etc.) of the printing industry, without distinguishing printed music. In the first general trade census of Latvia (1935), the musical instruments trade was listed in one group with sheet music, music publishers, sales, and repairs of musical instruments, including gramophones, radios and other sound reproducing equipment (Salnais and Jurēvics 1938, 11).

The documentation of private printing companies has survived only in fragments. The documents of the Press and Societies Department at the Ministry of the Interior are available in the Latvian State History Archive of the National Archives of Latvia (LNA LVVA 3724). They contain submissions, statements and other fragmentary information about the operation, issued operating permits or liquidation of companies in the printing industry. Contextual evidence can therefore only be found in press publications (advertisements). The lack of detailed documentation of private printing companies does not allow a full picture of the operating conditions of many companies. According to the Press and Societies Division at the Ministry of the Interior in the 1920s–1930s, there was no specific term for *schlager publishing house*.

Therefore, the interwar schlager editions that have survived to the present day have been used as an important historical source that helps to identify printers and publishers who issued schlager editions and, in many cases, indicate publication dates. Schlager sheet music was printed in single editions or compiled in albums, printed or lithographed. Publications in arrangements for one voice with piano accompaniment were the most common (piano-vocal scores). This article draws its conclusions by analysing 1288 foreign and 238 local authors' schlager editions published in Riga. They are stored in the National Library of Latvia and the Academic Library of the University of Latvia. It should also be noted that most of the foreign schlager editions published in Riga lack several elements characteristic of professional editions, such as the edition identification number, which should normally be located in the middle of the lower part of each page. Guided by the schlager editions, I have identified the names of at least 25 local publishing houses in Riga in the 1920s–1930s that dealt with the foreign and local schlager repertoire. The number of publishing houses was probably higher because sheet music was also published in provincial towns.

In some cases, any identification of the publisher or the printer as such is missing in printed music. In other cases, only the publisher's rights as an author are indicated on foreign schlager editions. It was particularly difficult to trace copyright if a foreign tune was purposely adapted for a Latvian audience without any indication of origin

or composer's name.<sup>2</sup> In response to current trends of the time, the schlager songs were usually published simultaneously by several publishing houses. For example, the popular slow foxtrot *Blutrote Rosen* (Dark-red Roses), composed by Hans Hünemeyer (1898–1987) in 1929, after its release was immediately published by four local Riga publishers (*Edition Herold*<sup>3</sup>, *Accord*, *Edition Pärle* and also *Rekord*). This resulted in a quantitative increase in the number of schlager sheet music editions but not in variety.

### Sheet publishing in the context of popular music and the music trade

When studying sheet music publishing in the interwar period, one should be aware that the music market was created by the interaction between the dealer, the publisher and printing works. It is important to distinguish between the two concepts of publishing and printing. In the inter-war period, a publishing house (the publisher) was defined as a company that published authors' works based on a publishing contract. For the most part, the publisher (the client) and the printer (the contractor) were two different companies. The publisher, as an entrepreneur, took care of the publication and in many cases distributed books, periodicals, or other printed works. Each publishing house had a trademark, which was placed on the title page or a special page in the publication (Auziņš 1942, 19–20). Most often publications bore the name of the printer and the dealers' stamp too.

As the economic life of the newly proclaimed country recovered after the war, the demand for sheet music increased. In interwar Riga, sheet music was distributed in a corporation with three members – a printing house, a publisher and a music dealer. Operettas and revues were produced in Riga theatres, dance music on the dancing floors and the spread of the repertoire of silent films based on operetta librettos in Riga theatres stimulated the growing interest in schlager music. Short-wave radio broadcasts from all around Europe offered the latest hits and in 1925 national station *Rīgas radiofons* was opened.

Various dealers imported printed music according to customer demand and followed the fashion trends. In Riga, the widest range was to be found in the music (musical accessories) stores or so-called *Musikalien* shops. The music trade in Latvia was subject to temporary regulations from 16 July 1919, and in 1924, the Law on Trade in Products of Polygraph Institutions, Libraries and Reading Rooms was issued. Accordingly, a trade permit was issued by the county governor or town prefect<sup>4</sup> only to permanent residents of Latvia who were not criminally convicted and were at least 21 years of age (*Likumu un valdības rīkojumu krājums*, Nr. 4, 1921, 65; *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* Nr. 21, 250).

---

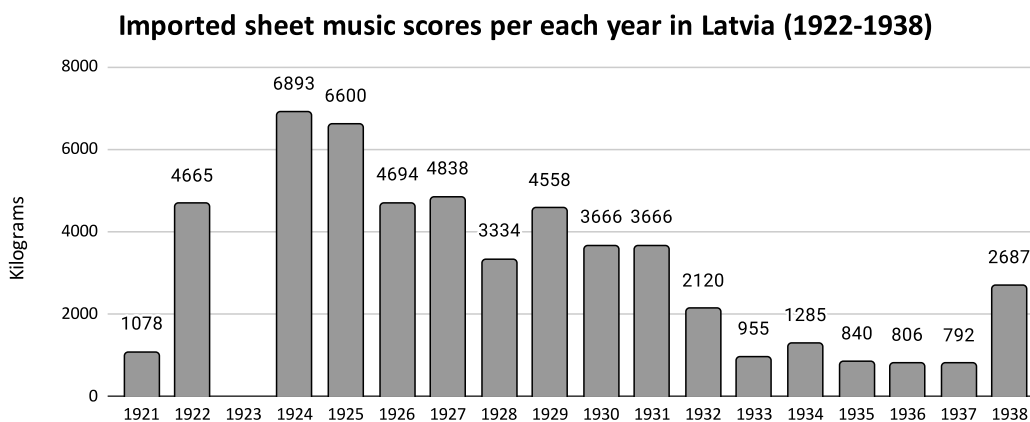
2 In the entertainment sphere, couplet performers constantly used popular melodies, but only a few published them, changing the text and not even mentioning the original authors. For example, the popular entertainer Jānis Āre (1882–1955) translated or adapted hit songs into Latvian in the late 1920s and early 1930s. He was active both in the field of records and in the translation of the lyrics of German schlager, as well as he participated in the compilation of various schlager songbooks and albums.

3 Hünemeyer, Hans (1929). *Blutrote Rosen*. [Sheet-music]. Slow-fox. Riga: Edition Harold, etc.

4 Prefect - Chief of the city police.



The quantity of imported sheet music in Latvia is statistically measurable, but its content can't be defined precisely. Official statistics show a sharp increase in sheet music imports in the first half of the 1920s. But it was followed by a gradual decline of imports in the mid-1920s (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Imported sheet music (kg) according to official statistics in Latvia (1922–1938)

It might reflect the increased activity of local printing companies because foreign sheet music could be imported into Latvia without customs duty. Only later starting from 1930, the decrease in imports was also influenced by the amendments to the law. To reduce the number of traders (importers), a permit from the Ministry of the Interior was also required to obtain a trade license (*Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* Nr. 19, 1930, 381).

Not only was printed music imported, but also local printed sheet music, including the schlager editions, started to appear in Riga music shops. During the period between the World Wars, music merchants established themselves as the main contributors to the local music industry. In cooperation with both foreign publishers and local sheet music printers, some music dealers organized the publishing of sheet music, including foreign schlager editions. The technical side of sheet music publishing was provided by private printing works (also a printing house or printing press; German *Druckerei*).<sup>5</sup> High-quality printed works had to be ordered abroad. For example, in Estonia, the publishing house *Eesto-Muusika*, which printed sheet music by Estonian composers in Leipzig, Germany, started to support its composers, based on the possibilities of higher quality materials and printing works (Kalniņš 1924, 6; Preses apskats 1924, 155; Bondare 2011, 22). To promote cultural processes in Latvia, the Cultural Fund (Kultūras fonds) was established on 18 November 1920. It also helped finance the publication of Latvian academic music, while the publication of popular music in Riga was not institutionally supported (Švītiņa 2023, 20). Like the neighbouring countries, in the first half of the 1920s there were no polygraphy printing machines to print qualitative sheet music

5 A printing-house or in the broader sense a typography (Greek *typos* – stroke; *graphien* – to write) was a company (typography, lithography, zincography, etc.), which in the context of the 1920s and 1930s was engaged in a wide spectrum of typesetting and printing works (Auziņš 1942, 359, 388).

in Latvia, because during the First World War factory inventory, including printing equipment, was evacuated from Riga and taken to Russia. Therefore, after the war, the printing works in Riga were in a bad state, there was a lack of raw materials and no employees (Bērziņš 2003, 765). The publishing process, as in book publishing, takes place in several stages: first, the intellectual work or the material to be published; second, the preparation of the manuscript (typesetting, drafts); third, the technical printing and binding. Only large casts justified the typographic method of printing sheet music.<sup>6</sup> Book publishers (including music publishers) more often worked only with the second or the second and third stages, i.e., only in preparing the material for publication. Only the largest printing companies (among which Riga's Schlager publishers were not) were able to carry out all three stages (Ledaunieks 1940, 19, 52, 53).

Usually, one printing house was working for several publishers. Most often, one printing works issued periodicals, magazines, forms and other products, but some specialized in printing music. Journalist and newspaper editor Oļģerts Liepiņš (1906–1983) writes in his memoirs about the close connection between press publishers and printing houses. According to him, at the time, it was necessary to create and strengthen a basic newspaper first to ensure a stable profit. Only then could we afford to develop other publications (Liepiņš 1982, 593). Already in 1920, the Department of Press and Associations at the Ministry of the Interior began to identify and list the printing presses still able to function. To open or to resume operations based on a permit previously issued during the Russian Empire, the identities of persons were checked by the police. Thus, while monitoring the printed works, the authorities simultaneously controlled the activity of the owners, avoiding the circulation of anti-state printed works (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1493 1920, 60–62, 67). But generally, in the 1920s, private publishing houses and printing works operated relatively unhindered (Zelmenis 2007, 31).

In 1924, the Parliament of Latvia adopted a new Law on Printing Institutions (*Likums par poligrāfiskām iestādēm*). Defining printing works as “industrial” and operating based on a permit with special equipment, their establishment was authorized by the Ministry of Finance. The law provided for the name and address of the printing house to be indicated on all printed works intended for sale (the exception was forms, price indicators, business cards, etc.) (*Likums Par Poligrafiskām Iestādēm*. 1924, 54–55). This norm was also included in the Press Law of 1924. In addition, copies of non-periodical editions, thus also sheet music, had to be delivered to the Ministry of the Interior (since 1937, the Ministry of Public Affairs). Publishers, on the other hand, were obliged to deliver six copies of publications to the State Library and one to the police. To control compliance with this rule, the operation of an illegal printing press was punishable by a fine or up to three months in prison (*Preses likums* 1938, 120).

---

<sup>6</sup> In order to obtain high-quality sheet music printing, this is done by a special sheet music letterpress. Then, in the sheet music printing technique, musical staves were used, which consisted of approximately 370 signs in a set of hand sheet music (note heads, lines, stems, bows, etc. (Auziņš 1942, 258) The graphic commission of the Bookmakers' Trade Union (*Grāmatrūpnieku arodu savienības grafiskā komisija*) took care of the training of letterpress in the interwar period. However, there is no statistical information or a study of how many and what kind of sheet music letterers worked in Riga between the wars. Only the fact that they worked in some printing houses, as well as the fact that even in 1930, the sheet music engraving method was still used (Kronika 1930, 3)

Foreign schlager editions produced in Riga were not strictly controlled. The weak level of copyright protection and the lack of awareness in society led to perceptions of the distribution of foreign schlager scores as an area of easy profit in which dishonest speculators operate. Despite that, there was a rise in the numbers of schlager publishers in the mid to late 1920s. The lack of order in the copyright market for imported music (published foreign music) in Latvia between the wars “contributed to a flood of inferior music in Latvian sheet music publications” (Bondare 2011, 15). In other words, the inability or unwillingness of the law enforcement authorities to control the publishers of schlager music has in a way stimulated the spread of uncontrolled business. Although already on December 5 1919 the Provisional Government of Latvia reviewed and decided to keep the Copyright Law of 1911 in force, it was inadequate to the new market conditions. The increase in the speed of information and the technology of music distribution developed more and more rapidly. The law protected only musical compositions by local authors. It was also widely debated in music circles. For example, Jāzeps Vītols (1863–1948), composer and rector of the Latvian Conservatoire, stressed the vulnerability of foreign composers in Latvia, while also acknowledging the vulnerability of Latvian composers in other countries (Vītols 1932, 455). The professional musicians’ societies (for instance *Latvijas Skaņražu kopa*) were primarily concerned with protection of the rights of their members – local academic composers, for example, in the radiophone since its foundation, in the distribution of sound recordings, as well as in the publication of sheet music. However, leading organizations distanced themselves from popular music, so amateurs or composers of popular music were not accepted in them (Švītiņa 2023, 44, 54). This thinking also made the largest printing and publishing companies avoid schlager issuing, probably fearing for their reputation.

117

The remuneration for concerts or royalties for appearances on the radio, including the publication of records or sheet music, was negotiated by each popular music composer with the publisher. Thus, the works of local dance schlager authors were protected by them in cooperation with the publishers and music dealers. Local authors’ publications usually bore the author’s imprint or a note indicating which publishing house represented the author. The rights of foreign composers, on the other hand, were usually represented by a local music publisher or dealer. Large foreign music publishers protected their interests in Latvia by cooperating with certain local publishers or by maintaining their own representative offices in Riga. Between the wars, music shops became distributors of record labels, as well as copyright agents for local and foreign composers and sometimes even managers of recording sessions. The shop owners also maintained their concert agencies and sold concert tickets (*Paziņojumi. Koncerts Latvijas konservatorijas zālē* 1936, 18). It was not until May 1937 that a new Copyright Act came into force in Latvia, based on the 1886 Bern Convention.<sup>7</sup> By that, the distribution of the local and foreign schlager was directly covered by the fourth part of the law on the protection of foreigners’ works and personal rights (*Preses likums* 1938, 122–123; Maļinovskis 2009, 7, 21).

---

<sup>7</sup> Bern Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.

To describe the main unifying features of the Riga schlager publishing houses, it should be concluded that in the 1920s they were short-lived – one to three years – and usually did not have their own printing house. The names of publishers such as *Edition Latschlager*, *Edition Fox Riga*, *Edition Herold Riga* or *Edition Pärle*<sup>8</sup> can be found only on the sheet music because such companies operated in a narrow field and without a wider resonance in the publishing industry. Such labels are characterized by low quality publications and a lot of confusion about their activities in general. For example, there is no research on how foreign publishers of schlager in Riga obtained sheet music for publication. This was most likely done by importing large amounts of sheet music or by importing individual copies that were copied and distributed for sale. This re-publication is evidenced by copied images of the covers of the original foreign publications, as well as by the different sizes of the re-publications (Figure 2.)



Figure 2. Publication of Edition O. D. Strock, Riga (1924) vs. Wiener Bohème-Verlag (1924)

Music publishers and record companies were already forming a symbiosis since the beginning of the 20th century in which the two channels of music distribution were not only competing but cooperating and promoting each other (Wicke 1999, 1350). The shellac sound-records indicate the increasing translated foreign schlager recording numbers reaching their peak at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>9</sup> Between 1928 and 1931, more and more translated world-hits appeared simultaneously in Latvian recordings made in Berlin as well as in local sheet music. The activity of local record labels went hand in hand with the release of records by popular performers. Lyrics were translated or adopted by entertainers such as Jānis Āre or operetta singer Artūrs

8 Until 1935, the names of most schlager publishing houses were in English, containing the word Edition instead of Publishing House. But in the late 1930s, after amendments to the state language law, it was using only names in Latvian was permitted.

9 The peculiarity of shellac recordings was that in the 1930s, previously published recordings of translated foreign schlager songs appeared on the market several times. This created the impression that Latvian hit performers continued active cooperation with foreign record companies. However, most often they were not new, but tunings copied from old matrices. For example, the records published by *Record-Electro* in 1935 were made from matrices of other brands made at the turn of the 20s and 30s (Bērtiņš 2015, 165).

Briedis (1901–1990). These kinds of artists would appear with this repertoire on Rīga silent-film stages, such as performing *Latvian schlagers*<sup>10</sup> at Kino Metropol on 7 May 1928 (Kino Metropol 1928, 7).

During the global economic crisis or the Great Depression, the number of schlager publishing houses in Riga declined. Economists in the late 1930s were already of the opinion that the entrepreneurial experiments in various fields that had been created by the economic crisis at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s were speculative and that the resulting increase in the number and volume of enterprises was not sustainable (Celmiņš 1937, 19). As the crisis eased, a slight revival of publishing was observed from 1932 onwards. For example, a short-lived publishing licence under the name *Mascotte* was withdrawn by musician Maksis Joselovičs (1903–?), who published a series of foreign film and operetta schlager editions called *Tonmusik* (1933) and a few others.

Later, in the second half of the 1930s, it became more and more difficult to obtain a publishing house's permission or printing permit for foreign schlager issuing. The power of censorship increased in the 1930s during the authoritarian rule of Kārlis Ulmanis (1934–1940) (Zelmenis 2012, 190). Limiting the activity of unwanted printing companies at the national level was simple – not granting permission for the release of foreign music. By 1935, new publishing houses were issuing permits to individuals mainly for publishing their compositions. This rule was supported by the Press Law (*Preses likums*), which defined the types of publishers of non-periodical printed works: professional publishers, author-own publishers; one-off publishers of individual works (*Preses likums* 1938, 122). Non-citizens no longer received operating permits, so it narrowed the number of publishers. The leading Latvian book publishers publicly postulated a desire to fight for copyright and against low-quality publications in the market, but it was only a fight against the competition (Ledaunieks 1940, 53). For example, Georgs Jansons-Jansens (1896–?) and his wife Emma Jansons-Jansene were involved in copying and distributing foreign schlager sheet music in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Their publishing house *Edition Pērle* was already self-liquidating in 1932. But in 1936, their other publishing house *Pressa* (formerly called *Union*) was closed down based on the publishers' bad reputation caused by previous activities (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1475 1936, 97). In another example, the *Edition Mondaine* was suspended because it was owned by a Swedish national Tage Sundel (1890–?). Between 1932 and 1934, the publisher issued popular operetta and film schlager scores (about 10 editions have been identified), including popular German composer Robert Stolz's (1880–1975) film-schlager form sound-film *Das Lied ist aus* (*The Song is Over*, 1930). It is important to note that *Edition Mondaine's* schlager sheet music publications do not indicate any copyrights, nor the name of the printer, and the texts were not translated into Latvian. Therefore, reproductions of such foreign publications were not supported. On 13 August 1934, Sundel's license was suspended (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1473 1935, 52).

---

10 *latyšskie šlāgeri - latyšskie shlagera*



With the establishment of the Ministry of Public Affairs in 1937, censorship grew even wider and various restrictions began in all cultural fields, also in the film-screening industry, records, and book publishing (Bondare 2011, 14; Pērkone 2008, 197). In 1938, with the adoption of a new Press Law, the publication or distribution of all foreign translated literature (including sheet music) was subject to rigorous control by the Ministry of Public Affairs. First, it authorized the confiscation of any polygraphic publication printed abroad that the censors deemed harmful to society or if it was considered to be of a poor aesthetic value. Secondly, the authoritarian regime legislated Regulations on the State of War (*Noteikumi par karastāvokli*), so it became easier for the authorities to influence or even stop the work of certain printing companies. If publications were not properly specified or copies of editions had not been sent to the responsible ministry, then it was considered to be a violation. Fines (applied up to 300 LVL) were received both in the cases of publishing houses and printing works if the publisher was also a printer (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1474 1935, 833). For example, lithographers Alfreds Šprote and Rūdolfs Pols received a fine of 10 lats for incorrect book-keeping. It means that either they conducted unofficial printing work or did not send the correct reports. Unfortunately, this type of company documentation in none of the cases has survived (*Valdības rīkojumi un pavēles* 1935, 1).

### Schlager printing technology and editions

For printing and reproducing sheet music in Latvia in the interwar period, a lithography method was the most common type of printing in general in the interwar period, as the method was relatively cheap, although being of lower quality. The noticeable characteristics of the method are the lack of shading, the colour imprint that goes over the edges of the image elements, “blurred” edges, as well as the fact that no imprint is visible on the other side of the printing sheet (Grīnbergs 1925, 90; Auziņš 1942, 124, 343; Bondare 2011, 23). The samples of sheet music available today allow us to assume that the sheet music editions of some foreign schlager songs were not only lithographically copied from the original, but also had the addition of translated lyrics. Therefore, a more accurate designation of a method would be typo-lithography. Statistics show that in 1922, a total of 67 type-lithographs were registered in Latvia, then in 1936, out of 147 printing companies, 124 were type-lithography. Moreover, in 1938 out of 123 total type-lithography companies registered in Latvia, 75, or more than half, operated in Riga (*Rūpniecības Statistika* 1938, 44–45; *Rūpniecības Statistika* 1939, 37–38; *Rūpniecības Statistika* 1940, 46). This printing technique is characterized by autographic drawing<sup>11</sup> with spaces left free for the text, pressed on a sheet, transferred to a stone or metal plate, prepared for printing colours, and printed from the stones. So the typographically composed lyric-text is mounted in the free places during transfer (Auziņš 1942, 390).

---

11 The autographic method is also used to reproduce orchestral scores.

Foreign schlager publications as well as schlager music itself or the names of schlager publishing houses, are characterised by a typical or standardized design. There were two types of cover design; copied or redrawn from a foreign original, or the second type, originally drawn. But this was mainly for original schlager editions by local authors. Smudges and colour stains are characteristic of such drawings. Visually interesting are those editions of schlager which feature cartoon elements related to the subject matter of the titles or lyrics, used to attract attention. The same or similar images depicting contemporary fashion elements, dancers, slightly erotic images of women in sumptuous ballroom costumes have been used repeatedly in several publications. Sometimes, for the sake of variety, the same print has been made in a different ink, such as red or purple, in the monochrome lithographic printing technique. Similar cover designs, e.g. cover sketches, can be found not only in different publications but even in the works of different publishing houses if the printing works worked for both (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Similar cover designs of schlager editions, published by *Edition Accord*, printed at *A. Šprotes litografija*

The parameters of the schlager editions of foreign and local composers published in Riga are similar to one another. They corresponded to the sheet sizes that printers were working with when they also published other genres of music, such as piano pieces and solos. But they vary slightly depending on the printing press used by the publishing house and also some differences can be identified based on the time of issue. It is indicated in the studies that the size of the printed music sheets in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had a tendency to decrease and some countries, for example the USA, even tried to standardize them (Goldmark 2007, 214). Up until about 1920, sheet music was usually 10.5 inches wide (34.5x26.7 cm), but later 12 inches high by 9 inches wide (30x22 cm) might be considered the standard format (Elliker 1996, 11).

In the 1920s, standard bifolio or two-page schlager editions were on thin and low-quality paper, more often approx. 25x20cm in size. But there is no strict pattern because one can find also slightly smaller ones (24x17 or 22.5x18 cm), which roughly correspond to today's B5 ISO format. But there are also larger ones, about B4 in ISO format (30x24, 32x25, 34x26, 32.5x24, 34x25cm). Publications on larger sheets in the 33x27 cm format

are also sometimes present. Someone could say that such editions visually continue the dimensions of the 19th century sheet music publishing in the widely used formats of academic music editions. Also, schlager albums in the 1920s were in a considerably larger format. For example, the internationally recognised albums *Zu Tee und Tanz* (Band 7, 8, 9), printed in *Alfrēda Šprote litogrāfija*, were published in 35x25 cm size.

Most foreign schlager editions just after WWI in Riga were published in their original languages, mainly German and sometimes English, French, Italian etc. But at the end of the 1920s, a new trend began – translations of song lyrics (Figure 4). A single-sheet music publication contained both typographically printed and handwritten letters. This may have occurred in cases where a pre-prepared sample was used, or when copying previously published sheet music material, re-lithographically printing it and adding a translation of the text. For example, the lyrics of a foreign schlager edition were prepared in advance only in German, but the Latvian translation was written down by hand. This does not always mean that the publication was issued illegal copy with no copyrights. This practice has also been found for local author-editions that were initially published abroad, but later copied for publication in Latvia. Such examples can be found, for example, in the publications of Marks Marjanovskis, Oskars Stroks and Saša Vlady. According to the laws, all companies should be Latvian, all documentation must be held in an official language, and it was recommended to translate all the texts (*Noteikumi par valsts valodu* 1932, 23; *Likums par valsts valodu* 1935, 2) (Figure 4).

122

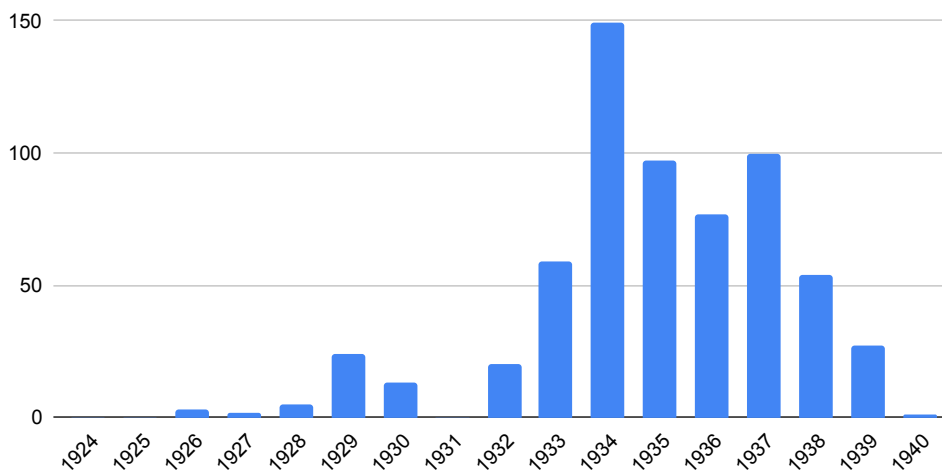


Figure 4. Translated foreign schlager titles issued in Riga.

In 1930s schlager publishing faced new challenges. First, the 1930s are typically the time of schlager (*Film-schlager*) pieces for film and schlager albums. The schlager albums for films were released by labels such as *Harmonija*, *Casanova*, *Akords* were relatively smaller in size, following the stylistic samples of the popular franchise album title *Musik für alle* (*Music for Everyone*). Secondly, the increasing popularity of motion pictures led to the growing adoration of movie stars. This was also reflected in the design of sheet

music editions. Colourful drawings on the covers were replaced by scenes from motion pictures, actors and also popular singers. Print quality had improved, so pictures of popular actors served as souvenirs. Schlager editions for film were released in albums or small series (3–5 pieces). Thirdly, schlager singles and records should be seen as connected within the film industry, since their release most often happened sequentially and simultaneously in various forms of sound distribution media.

In the mid-1930s, the publishing house *Melodija*, which held the copyrights to FOX film schlager titles, printed their scores in *Nošu spiestuve N. Lēmanis*, while the coloured covers and photos of the actors were put together in lithography by *Grafika*. It was more profitable for customers to purchase albums, as they were generally relatively cheaper than individual publications. For instance, a schlager film album, published by *Melodija* in 1934, costed 85 santims in 1934 and 1 lats in 1935. By contrast, the tango and slow foxtrot by German composer Robert Stolz's operetta *Venus in Seide* (1932) costed only 40 cents each.

Moreover, in the 1930s, sheet music albums had become similar to entertainment magazines, as they included various thematic articles, news about the lives and biographies of Hollywood actors, photographs of film stars, etc. In this way, the sheet music editions, as well as the records, served not only for playback but also as a representation of the films (Pērkone 2008, 101–102, 111). All the translated and published UFA, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, FOX, Paramount and ARS film schlager scores and lyrics copyrights were protected by *Melodija*. On four albums of movie hits published in 1934 and 1935, printed in multi-colour printing, the advertisement indicates the publishing house's desire to give its publication an elegance appropriate to the era. The advertising text stated that the albums would be printed on "[...] art-printed (chalk) paper, in regular format with a two-colour artistic cover drawing and will contain the most popular schlager(s) and songs from sound films, operettas, the latest dances, etc., as well as works by Latvian schlager composers." (*Populāras Melodijas*, Nr. 1 1934, 16).

In both foreign and local schlager editions (since the late 1920s), no editors or music arrangers are mentioned. Arrangers are only rarely named, for example, in the publications of Oskars Stroks publishing house (*O. D. Strock*), the publisher himself is listed as the arranger. Nor is there any information about transcribers, even though they were employed by the publishing houses. In the context of publishing, their role was essential. A music transcriber must be educated in music, because he must understand what the composer has written from the handwriting, which is written on strips of paper of all qualities and sizes. Any mistakes they made are forever visible in the publications. An informative catalogue compiled by Oskars Stroks in the mid-1930s, *Mūziķa kalendārs: rokasgrāmata* (The Musician's Handbook), lists only a few music transcribers in Riga, including Arvēds Andersons, R. Goldmanis, A[ibert] Jedlička and the aforementioned A[ugusts] Stūrītis (*Mūziķa kalendārs: Rokasgrāmata 1934*, 177). The one of the most notable sheet music transcribers in Riga was Augusts Stūrītis who worked from the beginning of the 1920s, at first for the music printer and publisher Carl Blossfeld. During the Second World War, mentioned as the only truly professional

transcriber in 1942, he was transcribing sheet music for both academic composers and local schlager composers, such as Alfrēds Vinters (1908–1976) (Z. B. 1944, 8).

An interesting, rarely documented aspect of sheet music publishing in Riga is a number of copies of schlager publications. Usually, it was 300–500 pieces in total in one run. The problem is that there is almost no way to trace the re-issuing that would hypothetically answer the question of the popularity of one piece. Important evidence of the issued copies of schlager editions (foreign and local music) in the mid-1930s is provided by the report of Rūdolfs Pols publishing and printing works in 1936. It is a list of 21 piano-vocal schlager editions by foreign and local composers that was reported to the Press and Societies Department at the Ministry of the Interior. The number of issued units varies in amplitude from 200 to 750 units, with average of 300 copies. Among those listed, are two foreign film schlager albums *15 sezonas grāvēji* and *14 jaunākie grāvēji*, each in 750 copies. These two albums do not clearly state the copyrights of foreign labels, also there are no edition numbers, and what is more suspicious are fact that all lyrics are printed only in German. Only few music pieces have handwritten Latvian translations. All of the above raises concerns about copyright infringement in the compilation of these albums. Perhaps this explains the department's request for a detailed report on publications. Among some of the works of local authors, four dance-hits composed by the musician Augusts Dainis<sup>12</sup> (1901–1995) are included in the list mentioned: *Bērnības stāsts* (*A Story of Childhood*, waltz-song), *Ja dziļi acīs man ieskaties* (*If You Look Deep into My Eyes*, tango-song), *Anita* (tango-song), *Latvju meitene* (*Latvian Girl*, march-foxtrot-song). These were issued in 500 copies each (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1475 1936, 665). It can be assumed that the publisher/printer defined the prints of the editions according to the popularity of the content and the possibilities to sell the sheet music. But in cases where the number or quantity of edition copies was not agreed upon between the publisher and the printing press, Article 78 of the third part of the Copyright Law (1937) allowed sheet music publishers to print a single work (manuscript) in no more than 300 copies (*Autora tiesību likums* 1937, 629). Anyhow, it should be noted that this law had not yet been adopted at the time of these publications.

124

### Schlager printing key figures

The documents of the National Archives of Latvia show that out of 84 printing presses registered in Riga in 1923, only two were defined as sheet music printing works. One was a brand-new sheet music printing house located at Bruņinieku Street 73–2, operated by two musicians Artūrs Vēmans (also Vēmens, 1893–1953) and Jānis Upenieks (1888–1974)<sup>13</sup>. The owner of the other sheet music printing house at Suvorova Street 42 (later Kr. Barons Street) was Carl Blossfeld, a long-time book and sheet music publisher (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1496 1923, unnumbered).

---

12 Augusts Dainis was the clarinetist of Alfrēds Vinters band *Jautrā kapele*, also a composer and music arranger.

13 Arturs Vēmans was a viola violinist, also publisher of sheet music in 1920s and shellac records in 1930s. Jānis Upenieks was a double bassist of the Latvian National Opera Orchestra.



**Artūrs Vēmans** and **Jānis Upenieks** were among the first in the printing industry to start printing so-called modern dances or schlager editions in Riga using lithographic techniques. However, initially they had obtained an operating permit for Latvian composer publications. On September 15, 1921, even the directorate of the Latvian National Opera sent a letter to the Press and Societies Department at the Ministry of the Interior in support of Vēmans and Upenieks. Attached to it is Vēmans' explanatory letter with a description of the situation. For example, the lack of special sheet music printing presses in Latvia is emphasized, which prevents the provision of schools, conservatories and choir directors. The demand for sheet music was stressed by putting the inability of local book presses to meet the demand at the proper volume and pace in the centre. The lack of funds prevents Latvian composers' sheet music from being published abroad and if so, *the product* becomes expensive for the local customer. In his reasoning, Vēmans referred to the fact that two of the new Latvian operas *Baņuta* and *Uguns un nakts* had not even been published at that time. He also expressed the hope of printing sheet music for the needs of the upcoming Latvian Song festivals (*Dziesmusvētki*) (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1490 1921, 774). Initially, the operation of the printing house was successful, because a year after receiving the permit, the two musicians wanted to set up a new workshop at Avotu Street 34 and expand the printing works for typo-lithography (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1492 1922, 212). From September 1923 to September 1924, Vēmans and Upenieks also published *Mūzikas Nedēļa*, a magazine of the Society of Latvian Composers.

125

Taking advantage of the free market niche, Vēmans and Upenieks also started releasing popular music. Between 1922 and 1925, they printed both dance music and Russian romances. Some testimonies in the press, as well as one undated dance composition composed by Wladimir Afanasjew from the operetta *Maharadscha*, indicate that around 1925 the printing house of Artūrs Vēmans was located at Stabu Street 49a. But in the second half of the 1920s, after A. Vēmans tried to operate alone, he suffered bankruptcy. At the end of the decade, Nikolajs Limans lithograph *Imanta* was already operating at the address of former Vēmans printing works. The importance of A. Vēmans and J. Upenieks type-lithography was that in cooperation with Kārlis Reinholds' music shop, they were one of the first that started the local author's schlager industry, for instance by releasing Oskars Stroks' one-step-song *Mama! Mama!* in 1923. Following the typical visual stylistics of the sheet music design of schlager songs, this publication the colorfully designed cover depicts a couple of dancers, with the inscription in German *Letzte Neuheit!* (latest novelty). The musical piece is composed with an extended instrumental part, but the sheet music contains only a 16-bar chorus with Russian and German lyrics. After the bankruptcy of Artūrs Vēmans printing house (49a Stabu Street) in 1927, in 1928 the premises and inventory were taken over by Nikolajs Limans (also (Lēmanis, 1891-?). Until 1933, his printing house was called *Imanta*, and then until 1940 *Nošu spiestuve N. Lēmanis*. For ten years until 1938, Limans cooperated with various foreign schlager publishers in Riga. In the first half of the 1930s, it was *Edition Mascotte* and *Melodija* for instance. In the mid-1930s he was cooperating with publishing houses *Casanova* and *Daiņa*. Fēlikss Leopolds Starpiņš (1895-?) was one of the last long-term lithographers who printed various books, booklets, and other printed works. The printing house *F. L. Starpiņa spiestuve* was located

at Kuģu Street 13 and was operating since the beginning of the 1920s. (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1496 1923, unnumbered). Starpiņš became active in schlager publishing only in the second half of the 1930s. His main companion in the release of sheet music was *Harmonija*. Unfortunately, in the summer of 1940, the company was nationalized, but its former owner was arrested and on June 14, 1941 deported from Latvia to a labour-camp in remote areas of the Soviet Union (Figure 5).<sup>14</sup>

Nosaukums, adrese, īpašnieks	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
<i>Imanta</i> (Stabu 49a)/ <i>N. Lēmanis</i> (Stabu 49a). Nikolajs Lēmanis																			
<i>Rūdolfs Pols</i> (Bruņinieku 18-1)/ <i>Kaufmanis un Pols</i> (Brīvības 129/133) R. Pols																			
<i>E. Pīpiņa un J. Upmaņa spiestuve</i> (Marijas 10-62). Ērmanis Pīpiņš. Jākabs Upmanis																			
<i>Lit. W. Witting</i> (Ģertrudes 101). Vilhelms Vītiņš																			
<i>A. Sprottes litografija</i> (Strēlnieku iela 1a). Alfrēds Šprite																			
<i>T. Sundell</i> (m. Smilšu 7/9). Tage Sundells																			
<i>E. Strautnieks / Latvija</i> . (Merķeļa iela 15). Eduards Strautnieks																			
<i>E. Blumentāla tipo-litogrāfija un nošu spiestuve</i> (L. Peldu 34). Eliezers Blūmentāls																			
<i>F. L. Starpiņš</i> (Kuģu 13). Fēlikss L. Starpiņš																			
<i>A/S "Ernst Plates" litografija</i> (Monētu 18-2)																			
<i>A. Vēmans un J. Ūpenieks</i> (Bruņinieku 73-2)																			

Figure 5. Printing houses, dated according to schlager editions kept in The National Library of Latvia collection.

The lithographer **Alfrēds Šprite** (Alfred Sprotte, 1881–?) should be acknowledged as one of the most important figures in Schlager printing in the 1920s. With the permission of the governor of Vidzeme, he opened his shop in 1913. During the First World War, the activity stopped, but in February 1918 it was restored (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1495 1922, unnumbered). *Litografija A. Sprotte* was located at Strēlnieku street 1a and has been cooperating with schlager publishers around the mid-1920s. Such as *Edition J. Altschuler* (1924), *Edition Latschlager* (1926). For *Oskars Stroks* publishing house, from 1923 to 1926, Šprite printed piano-vocal schlager sheets, as well as popular repertoire for mandolin tablature. However, the cooperation with Stroks was interrupted because the publisher could not pay for the printing services on several occasions (Zirģels 1926, 5). After that, from 1926 to 1930, Šprite printed schlager music for the *Edition Accord*. Later in the 1930s, his activity in music publishing was no longer noticeable. On December 2, 1939, the company was closed and his family left Latvia (*Tiesu sludinājumi* 1940, 5).

14 LNA LVA 1987-1-17038 Felikss Starpiņš. Izsūtīšanas lieta. Fonds: 1941. gada 14. jūnijā no Latvijas izsūtīto iedzīvotāju personas lietas (Deportation case. File: personal files of residents deported from Latvia on June 14, 1941)



Picture 1. Alfrēds Šprote in 1927,  
Source: LNA LVVA 2996-17-38649, 5.

### Key publishers

The two longest-running schlager publishers in Riga, who were able to overcome economic crises and operate under the pressure of authoritarianism at least for several years, were *Edition Accord*, (also *Akords* from 1935), its owner Rūdolfs Pols and publishing house *Edition Oskar Strock* (also *O. D Strock*, *Casanova* et. al). Together, they have published the largest number of identified schlager publications by foreign (932 out of 1288) and local authors (144 out of 238) piano-vocal scores (proportionally in total 70.5%) (Figure 6).

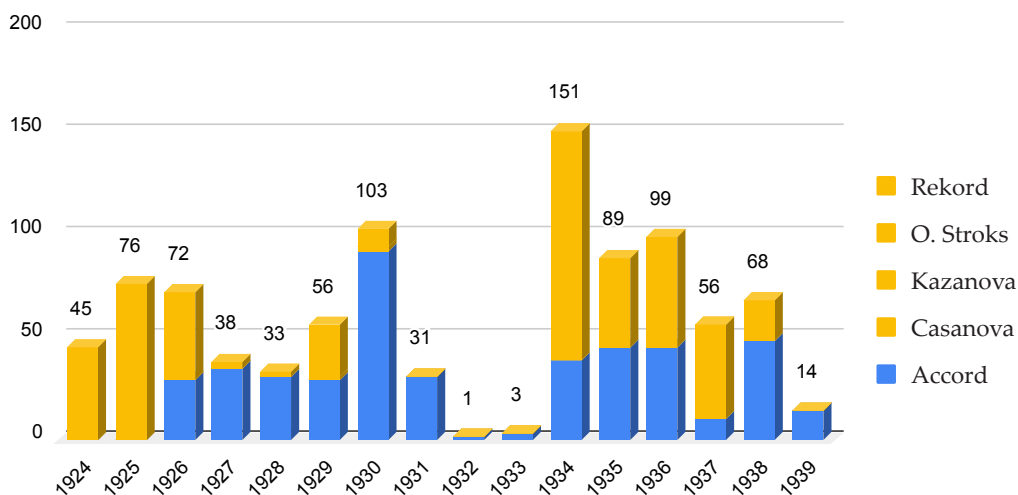


Figure 6. Comparison of published foreign schlagers by Oskars Stroks publishing houses compared to Edition Accord



Picture 2. Rūdolfis Pols in 1928.  
Source: LNA LVVA 2996-15-21135, 5.

The owner of *Edition Accord* (*Akords* since 1935) was the lithographer Rūdolfis Ludvigs Pols (Rudolph Ludwig Pohl, 1896–?). He started publishing popular foreign operetta and dance-schlager editions in 1926. In 1931, he obtained also a printing permit and opened his sheet music printing works. In the 1930s, Pols expanded his activity, by printing popular schlager sheets not only for his company, but also for others, such as *Harmonija*. During its operation, *Accord* has released a significant number of foreign schlager editions: about 20 foreign albums, opuses from more than 30 sound-films, about 50 individual schlager editions in the *Edition Accord* series, also sheet music for mandolin and more.<sup>15</sup> Like many other Baltic Germans, on October 20, 1939, in compliance with the Latvian-German interstate agreement on the relocation of residents of German nationality to Germany, R. Pols family left Latvia. (*Izčeļojušo vācu tautības pilsoņu saraksts* 1940, 1138).

Pols importance in the industry is demonstrated by several facts. First, he worked for considerably long period. Second, he was one of the few publishers who was also a printer. Moreover, he also printed music for other publishers. Thirdly, what makes him a key figure, he worked with the first Latvian schlager composers such as Alfrēds Vinters (1908–1976) issuing several of his dance schlager albums in late 1930s.

Oskars Stroks (1893–1975) was the almost non-stop publishing longest-running schlager publisher in Riga between the World Wars. He was a publicly known figure, a concert musician, pianist, composer and arranger, also translator of songs. Unlike many other representatives of popular music in Latvia, he was making comments in the press about schlager music. His activity and recognition sometimes also attracted the attention of the press. For example, in the late 1930s, the publicist Juris Zilnieks made a critical, but vivid comment about Stroks companies *Casanova* work as a publisher:

<sup>15</sup> *Edition Accord* released at least 70 music pieces in the series *Populārnye Russkie Romansy* (*Popular Russian Romances*) and music for several foreign revues.

“[...] a foreign film with its catchy musical hits (schlager) does not manage to go around all Riga cinemas when some sheet music companies (especially agile “Casanova”) have already released the sheet music of these hits to the public. [...] A text translator, sheet music copier and lithography are put to work as soon as possible. [...] Immaculate translation, the cheapest paper, a tangle of mistakes in the scores, smudges and spots of printing ink [...]”.  
(Zilnieks 1938, 2)

O. Stroks was one of the first to start using the word *SCHLAGER* not as a label for modern dance-songs in the Rīga music publishing scene and market, indicating it not only in the advertisements of his sheet music store, but also by printing it on music edition covers. The press advertising allows us to conclude that Stroks promoted his dance Schlagers, which were probably little known at the time, alongside foreign popular ones. From 1923 to 1929, the publishing house was named after him, so he quickly gained recognition as a popular schlager publisher in Riga (Kudiņš 2019, 89). On the editions published by Stroks, his name as the publisher is indicated both in Russian (*O. D. Strok*), sometimes in Latvian (*Oskara Stroks izdevniecība*), as well as in German and even in English (*Edition O. D. Strock*). For example, in 1925, schlagers by eight foreign authors were published under the name *8 Welt-Schlager vom Verlag O. D. Strock*. At the same time another edition series (14 shimmies and foxtrots included) were published with bilingual Latvian/German title *Die neuesten und beliebtesten Schlager für Klavier und Gesang* (The latest and most popular hits for piano and singing).

129

In March 1924, the newspaper *Večernee vremâ*<sup>16</sup> published an advertisement of *O. D. Strock* with the text “everyone dances, plays and sings popular and beloved hits and romances”. Along with foreign schlagers such as *Bananas* (1923)<sup>17</sup>, *Die Mädels von Java* (1923)<sup>18</sup> and the popular *Liliput* (1922)<sup>19</sup>, it also includes Stroks’ one-step-song *Mama! Mama!* (*Vse tancuât, igraût i poût populârnye šlâgera i romansy* 1924, 3)

Based on the numbering used by the publisher by 1927, Stroks had already published at least 220 foreign dance hits in serialized editions, labelled it *schlager* and possibly issuing unidentified amount more. Therefore, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Stroks’ name in press publications in Riga was often attributed to both publishing and distributing schlagers. Perhaps it was his activity that contributed to the general associative link between the word *schlager* and popular contemporary dance music genres in general.

For a short time, around 1929–1930, Stroks used two labels on his published schlager editions. One was *Rekord* (also *Reccord*), according to the name of music store and sheet music library (at Brīvības street 10) and another *Musik-Verlag Casanova* (Music Publishing House Casanova) that was located at Tirgoņu Street 5, where Stroks had

16 In Russian *Večernee vremâ: dejstvennââ russkââ gazeta*.

17 Foxtrott *Yes! We Have No Bananas* - Irving Cohn (1898–1961) / Frank Silver (1896–1960) / German text of Fritz Löhner-Beda (1883–1942)

18 Henry Richards (?–?)/German text of Fritz Grünbaum (1881–1941).

19 Text and music of Friedrich Hollaender (1896–1976).



a shop for musical instruments and household goods (Grunte 2007, 77; Kudiņš 2019, 88). Stroks' publishing suffered a brief hiatus due to his business failures and affected by Great Depression in general. In the fall of 1931, his restaurant *Barberina* also went bankrupt. Then, after serving a short prison sentence for debt, Stroks emigrated to Berlin, where he was recording his music before (Kudiņš 2019, 259). While trying to published music in 1930–1931 he registered *Casanova* publishing house in well-known German musicians' copyright society AMMRE. However, perhaps due to the growing anti-Semitism in Germany, or perhaps not achieving the goals set, in the fall of 1932 Stroks returned to Rīga (Kudiņš 2019, 87).

In the second half of the 1930s, Oskars Stroks continued to release both film-schlager albums and his compositions. Documents of the Press and Associations Department at Ministry of Interior states that the permit for publishing house *Casanova* was issued (again) in Riga only on January 13, 1933. In 1934, however, the company was re-registered using Latvian as *Kazanova* and operated by that name until 1938 (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1473 1935, 54).

It is possible that Stroks managed to keep his publishing permit, because he was issuing lots of his music. For instance, in 1937 the piano-vocal sheet music album *Russian Jazz! (Russkij džaz!)* was released. Supposedly it was compendium of the Stroks best-selling schlager-dances of the previous decade, most of which had already been released in shellac records and sheet music. The album design hints at Stroks' desire to spread his music internationally. For instance, title produced both in English and Russian. On the other hand, the 14 songs composed in the genres of dance music included in the album describe not only Stroks stylistics, but also the prevailing trends in dance music in local Rīga schlager music stylistics of the 1930s (5 foxtrots, 1 waltz, 1 slow foxtrot and 7 tangos).

It must be emphasized that Stroks publishing house in Rīga did not do the printing work, but for almost 20 years of his business, the orders were executed by various local printing houses. His music publishing business turned out to be generally unprofitable, however, he largely promoted his music through it.

One of the most respected music dealers and another important figure in schlager publishing to mention is Kārlis Reinholds (1881–?). In 1910 he bought the shop and publishing house of the music publisher Carl Blosfeld (1859–1938), located at Aleksander Boulevard No.1.<sup>20</sup> As a merchant and publisher, Reinholds' interest in promoting latest party dance-songs had been evident since the early 1920s. In press advertisements, the music publishers and companies *Kārlis Reinholds* and *Julius Heinr. Zimmermann* in Riga offered foreign dances and Schlager, such as the 1922 German collection *Zu Tee und Tanz. Band 5 (Rigasche Rundschau 1923, 2)*.

---

<sup>20</sup> In 1923, it was renamed Brīvības Boulevard.



Picture 3. Kārlis Reinholds in 1928; Source: LNA LVVA 2996-16-7546, 4.

When Reinholds began to organise the series of editions of Latvian compositions called *Tautas mūzikas bibliotēka* in 1920, he was the first to publish works for voice and piano by Latvian composers of academic music.<sup>21</sup> But he had no printing press. Initially, the printing took place in Hamburg at the *Musikaliendruckerei Moritz Dreissig*. Soon, however, lighter repertoire began to appear. Reinholds' store catalogue *Latvian original-compositions and foreign translations*<sup>22</sup> in 1926 includes party dances that were arranged by dance teacher Mārtiņš Kauliņš (1864–1928). But the catalogue does not include any foreign schlager music titles or, for example, any of local dance-hits by composer Oskars Stroks.

Around 1928, Reinholds published three popular German and English schlager songs with no translated lyrics.<sup>23</sup> One of this editions bears the stamp 14.01.1928 of the Press and Societies Department of the Ministry of the Interior that indicates that the publication was authorised by the relevant authority. Copyrights were represented in Latvia by Reinholds (*Eigentum für Lettland K. Reinhold*), though printed by *Lit. W. Witting*. Wilhelm Witting (Vilhelms Vītiņš) (1895–?) cooperated with several publishers issuing foreign schlagers between 1927 and 1930.<sup>24</sup> For instance, *Edition Fox Riga* also published several foreign English and German schlagers in the late 1920s through Witting's lithography<sup>25</sup>. During the economic crisis in 1932, Vītiņš went bankrupt, sold off his printing equipment and a few years later his printing company licence was canceled (*Jaunākās Ziņas*, 20.01.1932.; Rīgas pref. ārējā nodaļa 1935, 8).

21 The first publications were two songs by Emīls Dārziņš *Vēl tu rozēs plūc* and *Mātes gars*. *Latvju Mūzika*, Nr. 1, January 1, p. 28, 1921.

22 The edition is stored in the Small Prints Reading Room of the Latvian National Library

23 Fred Raymond/Charles Amberg *Wenn das Liebesbarometer auf schön wetter steht* for revue *Die Weilt um Mitternacht* (1927); James Huntley foxtrot *Wau-Wau-Stomp*; Anton Profes (1896–1976) foxtrot *Ursula*.

24 Lithograph W. Witting collaborated with *Edition Oscar Strock* and *Edition Fox*.

25 Cioja, Bernard [1927?]. *Why not (Pourquoi pas)*. Fox-Trot [sheet-music]. Rīga: Edition Fox.

Latvian composer Jāzeps Vītols, criticizing the then-current sheet music publishing trends in Riga, used particularly Reinholds' work as an example: "The matter of musical supply is most poorly settled. The second Riga publishing firm, Blossfeld (now Reinholds), is always engaged in reprinting cheap "merchantable sheets" in a faulty, careless edition, thereby doing more harm than real good" (Vītols 1932, 454).

Reinholds continued both importing and publishing sheet music. In 1934, *K. Reinholds* was listed in the Register of Trading Companies as the sale of musical instruments. In the 1930s he owned copyrights and distributed lots of untranslated German film-schlager piano-vocal scores. However, they were printed either by *Oscar Brandstetter* in Leipzig or by *Lith. & Druck Leopold Kraatz* in Berlin. Just to mention, that these issues bears all the copyrights and have original publication imprint numbers. Reinholds also kept the licence for sheet music publishing because he worked with adapted schlager-songs for the Latvian audience (Kļaviņš 1934, 6; LNA LVVA 3724-1-1473 1935, 102). In 1932 he released Fred Markush's tango-song with Latvian title *Mīla nebij tā*, translated by Jānis Āre. Publishing license was given to the German publisher *ALBERTI G.m.b.H.*, printing works were done in Riga in sheet music printing *Imanta*, at Stabu Street 49a.

Reinholds publishing was also very important for local authors. For example, between 1932 and 1936 he published the foxtrots and tango songs of Marks Marjanovskis (*Mark Marjanowsky*, also *Mark Marānovskij*, 1890–1944 or 1945). An author of Jewish origin, he was born in Kyiv province, but since the 1920s engaged in the trade business in Riga. It is not known whether he had studied composition, but his musical language expresses the most common genres of dance music (tango and foxtrot, also English waltz, slow foxtrot, and rumba, which was very popular in the early 1930s). At least 14 dance hits with piano accompaniments released in Riga are precisely dated. The more preserved recordings confirm his activity in the hit genre from the beginning of the 1930s until 1940 (Bērtiņš 2015, 316). Another Reinholds' client was Aleksandrs Okolo-Kulaks (1906–1989) who resided in Liepāja. Having PhD in economics, he nevertheless developed a deep interest in music. Until 1936, his schlager recordings and sheet music were mostly published abroad under the pseudonym Saša Vladi (also Sasha Vlady or Vladijs) (Grāvītis 2001, 15, 27). This is probably why not all of his known compositions or those mentioned in the literature can currently be found in Latvian libraries. However, in 1936, three editions with a total of 17 piano-vocal dance schlager pieces for from Okolo-Kulaks composed operetta *S.O.S.* were published by *K. Reinholds*. It should be noted that it was the only such original revue operetta in the 1930s in Latvia, however, it was never displayed on stage. The author of the operetta's lyrics is his wife Anna Okolo-Kulaks. The first edition took place in 1936 in Warsaw at the *Bemol* publishing house, so lyrics was Polish but hand written Latvian and German translations are included.

After 1934, the authoritarian regime of Kārlis Ulmanis consolidated its power and intensified censorship. The number of publishers of popular music sheet music dwindled. During the authoritarian period (1934–1940), businessmen of Latvian origin had advantages over minorities. Under these conditions in 1936, *Harmonija*, its owner Arvēds Andersons (1904–1989), became one of the leading schlager publishers in Rīga.

When Andersons wanted to open his sheet music publishing house in December 1936, reputation and obedience to the political regime was the most important. The Latvian National Archive documents reveal that information about him was also obtained from the Rīga radio program-director Kārlis Saulītis, to clarify Andersons activities so far. It was confirmed that Andersons' name appeared on some *Bellaccord-electro* records, which, as it was described in reference "contained a few pieces of light dance music" (LNA LVVA 3724-1-1475 1936, 685–687). *Harmonija* published included not only dance schlager pieces composed by Andersons himself, but foreign operettas and film Schlager albums as well. He issued also editions of the then increasingly popular Latvian party dance music by Alfrēds Vinters. During the German occupation of Latvia (1941–1944), the publishing house *Arwed Anderson Verlag* (1942–1944) issued many German schlager dance-songs for Latvian audience. It is surprising how little is known about Andersen's biography. Only certain facts are known about his personality and work, mostly based on his published schlager editions. His name appeared in the music industry in the mid-1930s, when in 1934 he translated the texts of foreign hits for the publishing houses *Accord* and *Casanova*. This made him, as if a seemingly marginal personality, the most popular schlager translator in Riga, whose name is mentioned in the most publications (240 in total).

Most of the above-mentioned lithographers and publishing house owners were important in existence of schlager music industry in Rīga. But another common feature was marked by the subsequent end of the interwar period. When Second World War broke out in 1939, part of the private printing works, including sheet music printers, stopped working. Some of them were German origin Riga inhabitants who were forced to emigrate from Latvia. Among them are the aforementioned Rūdolfs Pols, Alfrēds Šprote, Vilhelms Vītiņš, as well as the publisher Kārlis Reinholds, and many others. The remaining operating polygraphic enterprises, including Nikolajs Lēmanis, were nationalized shortly after the Soviet occupation in the summer of 1940 (Lācis 1940, 2).

133

## Conclusions

The publication of schlager music in interwar Riga was a relatively brand-new branch of publishing. Within the period, it can be seen how the music publishing industry improved. If at the beginning of the period, only some attempts to publish foreign schlager are notable, then at least 17 active schlager publishers in Riga at the turn of the 1930s (1928–1931). Whereas in the 1930s, when the first local composers of dance music started publishing more actively in Riga, the number of publishers decreased, reaching three in 1938 but only *Harmonija* remained until the Soviet occupation in 1940.

The Great Depression (1929–1933) in Latvia showed the lack of sustainability of the local music industry and showed how economic fluctuations can have a direct impact on the number of publishing houses and the quantitative indicators of the published editions. The available printed schlager editions suggest that publishing houses were short-lived, especially at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s and most often existed

for only a few years. Furthermore, publications of foreign schlager printed by such lithographers as Vilhelms Vītiņš at the end of the 1920s are characterized by poor-quality, often monochrome printing, on low-quality paper. All above mentioned give as a clear indication allows us to conclude that such an action was hasty, focused on quick profit, sporadic and opportunistic. Unfortunately, the circumstances of sheet music publication are almost always unclear, documentation is fragmented, and it is not possible to find out how many publications have survived. At the time they were issued for use, not as much for collecting. The pressure of the ideology of the authoritarian rule of Kārlis Ulmanis was damaging for many representatives of minorities in industry because of which their activities in culture and business gradually decreased. But at the same time, it cannot be denied that in the period between the wars there was a gradual approach to the observance of internationally recognized copyright norms in Latvia as well. Legislative changes narrowed the scope of sheet music publishers, professionalizing the industry. Music publishers-printers-traders formed a cooperation network based on mutual economic interests and technical capabilities. But only a few Riga sheet music publishers and printers were able to raise their reputation in the short span of 22 years between the world wars, leaving a lasting imprint on the publishing of schlager sheet music. For instance, Rūdolfs Pols, the owner of the *Edition Accord* publishing house could survive economic and political impacts and become one of the leading sheet music publishers as well as music printers in Riga. In contrast, most remained only as short-lived titles on fragmentarily preserved copies in libraries. Not achieving high profit in the economy and not being recognized by the elite of the time, the small industry of schlager publishers in interwar Riga has not yet earned the proper attention of popular music researchers.

Defining the possibilities of further research, perhaps a new aspect is opened by the question of the protection of the copyrights of Riga's local schlager composers abroad. On the other hand, the closer perspectives of the study of the local music industry are related to the interaction with the printed music and shellac records.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### ARCHIVE DOCUMENTS

- LNA LVVA 2996-15-21135. Latvijas Republikas izsniegtās pases. Rūdolfš Pols.
- LNA LVVA 2996-16-7546. Latvijas Republikas izsniegtās pases. Kārlis Reinholds.
- LNA LVVA 2996-17-38649. Latvijas Republikas izsniegtās pases. Alfrēds Šprote.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1473. (1935) Izraksts no Rīgas prefektūras par izdevniecību darbību.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1474. (1935) Sabiedrisko lietu ministrijas Preses un biedrību departaments (Kioski, spiestuves, izdevniecības) 1935. g.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1475. (1936) Poligrafiskās iestādes. Izraksti par pieteikumiem uz izdevniecību atļaujām.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1490. (1921) Grafiskās iestādes, 1921. g. Iekšlietu Ministrijas Preses un biedrību nodaļa.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1492. (1922) Grafiskās iestādes Rīgā. Iekšlietu ministrijas Preses un biedrību nodaļa.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1493. (1920) Grafiskās iestādes Rīgā. Iekšlietu ministrijas Preses un biedrību nodaļa.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1495. (1922) Grafiskās iestādes 1922. g. Iekšlietu ministrijas Preses un biedrību nodaļa.
- LNA LVVA 3724-1-1496. (1923) Grafiskās iestādes. Iekšlietu ministrijas Preses un biedrību nodaļa.
- LNA LVA 1987-1-17038. (1941) 1941.gada 14. jūnijā no Latvijas izsūtīto iedzīvotāju personas lietas. Felikss Starpiņš.

135

### SHEET MUSIC

- Cioja, Bernard. *Why not (Pourquoi pas)*. Fox-Trot [sheet-music]. Rīga: Edition Fox, [1927?]
- Hünemeyer, Hans (1929). *Blutrote Rosen*. *Slow-fox* [sheet-music]. Rīga: Edition Harold, [1929].
- Krome, Hermann, Huntley, James. *Wau-Wau-Stomp* [sheet-music]. Rīga: K. Reinhold, [1928]
- Populāras Melodijas. Nr. 1*. [sheet-music]. Rīga: Melodija, [1934]
- Profes, Anton. *Ursula: Foxtrot* [sheet-music]. Rīga: K. Reinhold, [19--].

Raymond, Fred (1927). *Wenn das Liebesbarometer auf schön Wetter steht*. From *Rewue Die Welt um Mitternacht* [sheet-music]; Rīga: K. Reinhold, [19-?].

Stroks, Oskars. *Russian Jazz. Русский джаз*. [sheet-music]. Rīga: Kazanova, [1937].

## PERIODICALS

Autora tiesību likums. *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* Nr. 11(1937). 622–630.

Celmiņš, Augusts. Tirdzniecības un ārzemju tirgotāju pārstāvju koncesionēšana. *Ekonomists* (1937). Nr.1, 19–20.

Kalniņš, Alfrēds. Muzika Igaunijā. *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 02.02.1924., 6.

Kļaviņš, K. Rīgas apgabaltiesas Tirdzniecības reģistra nodaļa. *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 05.12.1934., 6.

Kronika. *Latvijas Grāmatrūpnieks* (1930), Nr. 8, 2–3.

*Latvju Mūzika*, Nr. 1, 01.01.1921., 28.

Lācis, Vilis. (1940) Ministru Kabineta Lēmums. *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 10.05.1940., 2.

Likums par poligrāfiskām iestādēm. *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums*, (1924). Nr. 5, 54–55.

Likums par tirdzniecību ar poligrāfisko iestāžu ražojumiem, par bibliotēkām un lasītavām. *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* (1924). Nr. 21, 250.

Likums par valsts valodu. *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* (1935). Nr. 1, 1–2.

Noteikumi par valsts valodu. *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* (1932). Nr. 4, 23.

Pagaidu noteikumi par tirdzniecību ar drukas darbiem, par bibliotēkām un lasītavām. *Likumu un valdības rīkojumu Krājums* (1921). Nr. 4, 65–66.

Pārgrozījumi. *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* (1930). Nr. 19, 381

Paziņojumi. Koncerts Latvijas Konservatorijas zālē. *Rīts*, 25.01.1936., 8.

Preses Apskats. *Mūzikas Nedēļa* (1924). Nr. 8, 154–159.

Preses Likums. *Likumu un Ministru kabineta noteikumu krājums* (1938). Nr. 5, 119–123.

Rīgas pref. ārējā nodaļa. *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 05.08.1935., 8.

Tiesu sludinājumi. Rīgas apgabaltiesas Tirdzniecības reģistra nodaļa. *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 05.03.1940., 5.

Valdības rīkojumi un pavēles. *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 19.07.1935., 1.

Vietējās Ziņas. *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 20.01.1932., 6.

Z. B. Vīrs, ko pazīst visi komponisti. *Daugavas Vanagi: latviešu karavīru frontes laikraksts*, Nr. 11, 1944., 8.

Zilnieks, Juris. Pieskaņas. Filmas – muzikālo sēnalu avoti. *Brīvā Zeme*, 18.02.1938., 2.

Zirgēls, J. Rīgas apgabaltiesas VI iec. Tiesu izpildītājs. *Valdības Vēstnesis*, 27.09.1926., 5.

“Zu Tee Und Tanz. Band 5.” Die Generalvertreter Für Lettland K. Reinhold; Jul. Heinr. Zimmermann. *Rigasche Rundschau*: 18.10.1923, 2.

Kino Metropol. *Segodnja*. 06.05.1928, 7.

*Vse tancuūt, igraūt i poūt populārnye šlāgera i romansy. Večernee vremā: dejstvennaā russkaā gazeta*. 08.03.1924., 3.

## LITERATURE

Auziņš, Ansis (1942). *Latviešu, vācu un krievu grāmatrūpniecības vārdnīca*. Rīga: Latvju grāmata.

Bērtiņš, Atis Gunvaldis (2015). *Latviešu skaņuplašu vēsture I*. Rīga: Vesta-LK.

Bondare, Daiga (2011). *Kultūrsituācijas atspoguļojums nošu izdevumos Latvijā 1918. līdz 1944*. Maģistra darbs. Rīga: Latvijas Kultūras akadēmija.

Elliker, Calvin (1996). Sheet Music Special Issues: Formats and Functions. *Notes* 53, 9–17

Garofalo, R. (1999). From Music Publishing to MP3: Music and Industry in the Twentieth Century. *American Music* 17, 318–354.

Goldmark, Daniel (2007). Creating Desire on Tin Pan Alley. *The Musical Quarterly* 90, 197–229.

Grāvītis, O. (2000). *No operetes Liepājā līdz Kārnegi zālei Ņujorkā: latviešu komponista un pianista Aleksandra Okolo-Kulaka (1906–1989) likteņgaitas*. Rīga: Jumava.

Grīnbergs, Jānis (1925). *Grāmata par grāmatu: Latvijas grāmatrūpniecības arodu savienības grafiskās komisijas rakstu krājums, 1*. Rīga: J. Rozes apgādiens.

Gronow, Pekka, ILPO Saunio, and Christopher MOSELEY (1998). *An international history of the recording industry*. London: Cassell.

Grunte, Vija (2007). Oskars Stroks. Tango. *Latvijas Arhīvi*, 1, 73–94.

Izceļojušo vācu tautības pilsoņu saraksts (1940). Rīga: Iekšlietu ministrijas Administratīvā departamenta izdevums.

Kornberger, Monika Berta (2018). *Deutscher Schlager der Zwischenkriegszeit und seine Protagonisten in Wien “Einmal Sang Die Liebe Uns Ein Lied.”*. Dissertation. Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz.

- Kudiņš, Jānis (2019). *Oskars Stroks: Tango karaļa mantojums*. Rīga: Zinātne.
- Ledaunieks, Valija (1940). *Grāmatu izdevniecība*. Diploma Darbs. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.
- Liepiņš, Oļģerts (1982). *Tālos atspulgos: mana mūža atmiņas*. Toronto: Daugavas Vanagu Kanādas valde.
- Maļinovskis, Sergejs (2009). *Autortiesību rašanās un attīstība Latvijā 20. gadsimtā*. Bakalaura darbs. Rīga: LU Juridiskā fakultāte.
- Mūziķa Kalendārs: Rokasgrāmata (1934). Rīga: Kazanova.
- Pērkone, Inga (2008). *Kino Latvijā 1920–1940*. Rīga: Zinātne.
- Rūpniecības Statistika = Statistique de l'industrie*. (1939) Rīga: Valsts Statistiskā pārvalde.
- Rūpniecības Statistika = Statistique de l'industrie*. (1940) Rīga: Valsts Statistiskā pārvalde.
- Rūpniecības Statistika = Statistique de l'industrie*. (1938) Rīga: Valsts Statistiskā pārvalde.
- Salnais, V., Jurēvics, J. (1938). *Pirmā tirdzniecības skaitīšana Latvijā 1935. gadā*. Rīga: Valsts Statistiskā pārvalde.
- Švītiņa, Laura (2023). *Latvijas Skaņražu kopa (1923-1939) un tās nozīme mūzikas dzīvē*. Maģistra darbs. Rīga.
- Vītols, Jāzeps (1932). *Latvju mūzika. Latvieši II*, Rīga: Valters un Rapa.
- Zelmenis, Gints (2007). *Latvijas kultūras politika neatkarīgas valsts pastāvēšanas sākumā (1918-1922)*. *Latvijas Vēsture. Jaunie un Jaunākie Laiki*, Nr. 2, 28–40.
- Zelmenis, Gints (2012). *Latvijas Republikas kultūras politika 1918.–1934*. Promocijas Darbs. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.
- Boorman, Stanley, Eleanor Selfridge-Field, and Donald W. Krummel (2001). *Printing and Publishing of Music*. Vo. 1; Available at: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040101>. (Accessed 20.12.2023)
- Tawa, Nicholas (2014). *Sheet Music*. In *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press. Available at: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/documentID/omo-9781561592630-e-1002257275>. (Accessed 20.12.2023)
- 20. gadsimta Latvijas vēsture. II daļa* (2003). Ed. Valdis Bērziņš. Rīga: Latvijas Vēstures institūta apgāds.

# ŠLĀGERU (HITU) NOŠIZDEVUMU IESPIEŠANA UN IZDOŠANA RĪGĀ 20. GADSIMTA 20. UN 30. GADOS

Alberts Rokpelnis

## Kopsavilkums

Mūzikas izdošana un izplatīšana ir būtisks temats populārās mūzikas pētniecībā, ko dažkārt aizēno mūzikas, komponistu un izpildītāju biogrāfiju izpēte. Lai gan pēc Pirmā pasaules kara nošu pārdošanas apjoms globālā mērogā samazinājās, līdz pat Otrajam pasaules karam līdztekus ierakstu, filmu un radio raidījumu patēriņa pieaugumam drukātie mūzikas izdevumi saglabāja ievērojamu mūzikas industrijas tirgus daļu mūzikas. Savukārt šlāgeru izdošana starpkaru Rīgā bija relatīvi jauna nozare. Rakstā aplūkotā tēma ir saistīta ar mūzikas vēsturi, taču vienlaikus tajā krustojas dažādi jautājumi, piemēram, mūzikas iespiešana un izdošana, mūzikas pārdošana, juridiskie jautājumi un personību biogrāfiju pētniecību. Šī raksta mērķis ir analizēt šlāgeru iespiešanu un izdošanu Rīgā, akcentējot galveno industrijas personību lomu.

Līdzšinējos pētījumos populārās mūzikas izdevēju personības Rīgā ir minētas tikai margināli. Iespējams, tādēļ, ka lielākoties tie bija vācu un citu minoritāšu pārstāvji, kuru darbību Rīgā pārtrauca Otrais pasaules karš. Daudzi emigrēja, un viņu uzņēmumu dokumentācija, iespējams, tika iznīcināta. Līdz ar to viņu devums tautsaimniecībā un kultūrā ir līdz šim nepētīts un maz zināms. Tolaik no kritiski vērtējošām pozīcijām raugoties, sabiedrības elites acīs šlāgeri bija tikai lēta mūzika, kas drukāta uz nekvalitatīva papīra. Turpretī mūsdienās, cerot pārvarēt ideoloģiskos vai estētiskos aizspriedumus, kā pēdējais šķērslis paliek tikai jautājums par pieejamajiem vēstures avotiem. Raksta pamatā ir avoti, ko sniedz Latvijas Nacionālajā arhīvā pieejamie dokumenti par poligrāfisko iestāžu darbību starpkaru periodā, otra būtiska avotu grupa ir nošizdevumi. Uz tiem uzdrukātie nosaukumi un liecības presē, ļauj identificēt šlāgeru izdevējus un spiestuves, kā arī to darbības dinamiku un galvenās izdevējdarbības tendences starpkaru kontekstā.

Šajā rakstā no vācu valodas aizgūtais apzīmējums *šlāgeris* (Schlager) tiek lietots kā mūzikas industrijas žanra nosaukums, atsaucoties uz tā lietojumu mūzikas publicēšanā 20. gs. pirmajā pusē Latvijā. Mūzikas stilistikas ziņā tas attiecināms uz populāru t.s. modes deju-dziesmu, (vanstepu, tūstepu, šimmiju, tango, fokstrotu un citiem), kas komponēta izpildījumam agrīnā džeza ritmos. Tās raksturo melodiskums un dziesmu tekstu sentimentalitāte, kas nereti mijas ar aktuālām sociālām tēmām. Šlāgeru mūzika, kas tolaik bija komponēta operetēm, kinofilmām vai kā modes dejas, tika pārraidīta radio viļņos, izplatīta skaņuplatēs un publicēta nošizdevumos. Šī raksta izstrādē izmantots visizplatītākais šlāgeru publikāciju formāts 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gados bija nošu aranžējumi vienai balsij klavieru pavadījumā.

Pēc Latvijas Republikas proklamēšanas 1918. gadā jaunā demokrātiskā kārtība radīja jaunu tiesisko regulējumu, un biznesā ienāca vairāki jauni uzņēmumi, tostarp



tipogrāfijas (spiestuves) un izdevniecības. Šajā periodā mūzikas izdevējdarbības nozare strauji auga, būtībā veidojoties pilnīgi no jauna. Perioda sākumā ir novērojami tikai daži sporādiski mēģinājumi izdot ārzemju šlāgerizdevumus. Bet zināma kulminācija tika sasniegta 20. un 30. gadu mijā (starp 1928. un 1931. gadu), kad Rīgā gandrīz vienlaikus darbojās vismaz 17 šlāgeru izdevēji. Lielās depresijas (1929–1933) ietekme norāda uz vietējās mūzikas industrijas ilgspējas trūkumu. 20. gs. 30. gadu sākumā Rīgā regulāri sāka publicēties arī pirmie pašmāju populārās deju mūzikas komponisti, turpretī ārzemju šlāgeru nošu izdevēju skaits pamazām saruka. Sākot ar 1934. gadu, Kārļa Ulmaņa (1934–1940) autoritārajā režīmā kultūrā un arī mūzikas biznesā strauji pieauga cenzūras spiediens. Tā rezultātā 30. gadu vidū šlāgeru izdevēju darbība arvien sašaurinājās, un tas savā veidā veicināja arī pakāpenisku nozares profesionalizēšanu un virzīja uz starptautiski definēto autortiesību normu ieviešanu 1937. gadā. Darbības atļaujas Iekšlietu ministrija (pēc 1937. gada Sabiedrisko lietu ministrija) izsniedza vairs tikai komponistiem savu darbu publicēšanai, kā arī dažiem jau ilgstoši strādājošajiem uzņēmumiem.

Kopumā nošu izdošana Rīgā 20. gadsimta 20.–30. gados bija process, kurā mijiedarbojās vairāki dalībnieki: mūzikas izdevēji, iespiedēji un tirgotāji. Veidojot uz savstarpējām ekonomiskajām interesēm un tehniskajām iespējām balstītu industrijas tīklu, katra iespiedēja un izdevēja darbība atspoguļo noteiktas šlāgera izdevējdarbības nozares īpašības. Kopīgās iezīmes bija, piemēram, līdzīgi izdevumu formāti un dizains. Vienlaikus katra uzņēmēja darbības profilā saskatāmas arī atšķirības. Piemēram, tikai dažos gadījumos šlāgeru izdevēji darbojās ilgstoši, un tikai dažiem no tiem bija savas iespiedmašīnas. Piemēram, izdevniecības *Edition Accord* īpašnieks Rūdolfs Pols laikā no 1926. līdz 1939. gadam kļuva par vienu no vadošajiem nošu izdevējiem un iespiedējiem Rīgā, turklāt izdeva arī populāro mūziku, tostarp šlāgerus. Viņa uzņēmums spēja pārdzīvot gan ekonomisko krīzi, gan politiskos triecienus, jo izdeva gan akadēmisko, gan ārzemju un vietējo šlāgeru komponistu mūziku. Bet, piemēram, komponists Oskars Stroks, kurš izdevējdarbībā Rīgā darbojās gandrīz visu starpkaru periodu, ļoti koncentrējās uz savas mūzikas publicējumiem, vienlaikus aktīvi popularizējot jēdziena *šlāgeris* nozīmes paplašināšanos populāro deju mūzikas žanru kontekstā.

1940. gada vasarā Latvijas Republiku okupēja padomju armija, un varas iestādes pārtrauca privāto uzņēmējdarbību Latvijā. Līdz ar to 20. gadsimta 20.–30. gadu periods uzskatāms kā relatīvi noslēgts (atraits) periods Latvijas politiskās un arī kultūras vēsturē. Šajā īsajā 22 gadu periodā starp pasaules kariem tikai daži nošu izdevēji un iespiedēji bija spējuši nostiprināt savu kā šlāgerizdevēju reputāciju Rīgā, tādējādi atstājot paliekošu nospiedumu industrijas vēsturē un starpkaru perioda bibliogrāfijā. Lielākā daļa šo izdevēju vārdi palika tikai kā īslaicīgi nosaukumi uz fragmentāri saglabātajiem nošu eksemplāriem bibliotēkās.

# THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL AND SHORTWAVE RADIO BELGRADE IN THE SPREAD OF SERBIAN FOLKLORE AND SCHLAGER MUSIC IN THE 1930s

Nikola Komatović

In 1929, the regular broadcast of Radio Belgrade began in the broader area of the Yugoslav capital. The royal government immediately noticed the new media's potential. The regime invested in state-of-the-art broadcasting technology, which soon made it possible for a radio signal to reach even the most distant corner of the country. Almost expectedly, the ruling elites edited and censored the program from its very beginning.

Regular broadcasts included news, sports events, and talk shows, but – as in other countries – mostly music. Although virtually all the genres were present in the musical program, editorial board members underlined the significance of Serbian folklore and schlager. The former genre was associated with the majority of the population living in the rural areas of Serbia. The latter drew explicit references to the growing urban population, most notably Belgrade, which had developed Jazz nightlife and begun a process of proto-westernization.

These tendencies went even further into the mid-1930s when a shortwave program dedicated to the Yugoslav diaspora commenced. According to some evidence, which will be presented in this paper, these broadcasts became popular to an unprecedented degree. The first and second generations of Yugoslav expatriates sent letters and telegrams from all the continents, suggesting the type of music they wanted to hear.

The article explores how the popular music selection of the national and shortwave Radio Belgrade managed to capture the collective attention of the Serbs and other Yugoslavs worldwide in the era long before the Internet.

141

**Keywords:** Radio Belgrade, folklore music, schlager music, the 1930s

## Introduction and challenges

The present article aims to explore a new primary focus for musicologists and historians, and those engaged in media history. This aspect is an investigation of the status of musical genres conventionally not considered classical music within the programming scheme of the interwar national Radio Belgrade and Shortwave Radio. Therefore, in this research, we will approach it from the perspective of the history of media and communication, addressing certain issues such as endemic genre categorization and defining the status of individual compositions.

One of the major methodological challenges associated with this work was the objective lack of primary sources. This was primarily conditioned by the fact that a significant portion of the interwar archives of Radio Belgrade were destroyed during

the Nazi bombing of the Yugoslav capital in April 1941. Additionally, it is worth noting that, except for a small amount of provided data, the current administration of this media institution has shown a lack of understanding of the research of available material, thus not allowing us to conduct research on-site. Therefore, a significant part of this research relies on secondary sources, such as amateur recordings, testimonies, and recollections.

Among the scarce primary sources, it is worth mentioning the following:

1. Periodicals, including daily newspapers and the magazine of Radio Belgrade itself.
2. A few sound recordings, mainly not created in studio conditions (which are contained in the Radio Belgrade archive).

Periodicals are a valuable historical source through which we can confirm the radio's programming concept and the problems that arose from it. Concerning the recordings from the interwar period, two significant problems should be noted:

- a) No professional sound recording equipment existed in Belgrade before World War II.
- b) Even the existing recordings are often lost due to war operations and neglect.

It is worth mentioning that, thanks to its collaboration with the *Edison Bell Penkala* company (which had its representative production office in the present-day capital of Croatia), Radio Zagreb (founded in 1926) had the facilities for sound recording and, as a result, a lot of musical and dramatic material – not only Croatian but also Serbian – was preserved. Some musicians also went on world tours among the diaspora, and their performances were recorded, for example, in North America. Therefore, most of the musical numbers broadcast on Radio Belgrade were performed live in the studio and did not leave any sound recordings.

Besides, I want to thank Mr. Dragoslav Simić, the author, radio journalist, and historian, and Mr. Dragomir Pokrajac, a radio enthusiast from Serbia employed in the USA, who provided us with a significant amount of archival material and sound recordings in their possession (Pokrajac 2023). We conducted an interview and exchanged emails with both as part of the preparation for this work. In addition, I would like to thank Mr. Đorđe A. Brkić from the music archive of Radio Belgrade (Brkić 2023). He was the one who drew our attention to specific schlager compositions that have survived turbulent times and the historical bombing of the building, so we can say with relative certainty that they were broadcast during the 1930s.

## Historical context

On December 1, 1918, in Belgrade, the Serbian Prince Regent Alexander I Karađorđević (1888–1934) proclaimed the common state for all South Slavs. Initially named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, this state was officially renamed Yugoslavia in 1929, a name that is celebrated in the halls of modern history. The same year Yugoslavia got its name, a significant chapter in its and Serbia's media history was written on the fifth floor of today's building of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Knez Mihajlova Street in Belgrade: The regular broadcast of Radio Belgrade began. Whether Radio Belgrade was also the first electronic media in Yugoslavia is a matter of debate. In March 1924, the station started experimental, one-hour programming daily through a transmitter in the Belgrade suburb of Rakovica. However, according to journalist and chronologist Dragoslav Simić, this experimental program lasted only half a day, and the radio was broadcast sporadically from Belgrade in the following years. In May 1926, Radio Zagreb began regular programming, and various sources testify that they were the first electronic media in Southeast Europe.

The emergence of Radio Belgrade from the experimental phase in March 1929 coincided with the establishment of the so-called "January dictatorship" when King Alexander I Karađorđević carried out a *coup d'état*, abolishing the constitution and parliament due to the rising inter-ethnic tensions between Serbs and Croats. The new king's policy was, in fact, very similar to specific solutions from the communist period that would be adopted decades later: It entailed the maximum suppression of national freedoms, an insistence on the equality of the three then-constituent peoples (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes), and – media control (Ćorović and St. Protić 2020, 487–489). The state wanted to have control over Radio Belgrade, as evidenced by the fact that its long-term director was a high-ranking officer of the Yugoslav Royal Army, Colonel and later General Danilo Kalafatović (1875–1946) (Bjelajac 2004, 179).

143

## Musical context. Genre considerations

The cultural life of the kingdom inherited significant heterogeneity from previous eras. For a couple of decades, Slovenia, Croatia, the province of Vojvodina (in present-day Serbia), and Bosnia and Herzegovina were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. As provinces of Vienna – albeit distant – they were still considered part of the Habsburg cultural sphere. Italy had a strong influence in the coastal regions of Croatia (Istria and Dalmatia). However, the rest of the country – Serbia (with Kosovo and the Vardar Valley – present-day North Macedonia), Montenegro, and to a significant extent Bosnia – was still marked by a strong post-Ottoman cultural model, as the Turkish Empire had controlled the region for almost half a millennium. All these differences were reflected in musical life. While classical music had played a significant role in Croatia and Slovenia for centuries, it was only beginning in Serbia (Ćorović and Protić, 482–483).

On the other hand, perhaps due to the Turks (who did not allow the development of high culture among the enslaved “*rayah*”), Serbia had a very pronounced folkloric heritage, which was highly heterogeneous across various regions. However, by the end of the 19th century, a new genre emerged through the inevitable Westernisation of the barely independent state, later called *starogradska muzika* (lit., *old town music*). It was folk music adapted to modern ensembles suitable for performing in small salons and cafes and contained tonal harmonic (cf. Vesić 2015, 23). It’s worth noting that *starogradska* often had not been written or hadn’t notated arrangements but rather was passed on orally or simply by listening. This is also the most significant difference between *starogradska* and stylized folk music, which professional composers and ethnomusicologists arranged. Until after World War I, *starogradska* would constitute the basis of the Serbian urban musical tradition.

### Editing and programming. Archival materials

The music editor of Radio Belgrade from 1929 to 1937 was Petar Krstić (1877 – 1957), a composer of an older generation. According to musicologist Ivana Vesić, although Krstić tried to organize the program, he was under constant pressure from General Kalafatović (Vesić 2015, 21). As a result, the program included shows with *Starogradska muzika*, such as “Serbian Evening” or “Skadarlija Evening” (named after a bohemian quarter in Belgrade), which featured live performances of tavern groups that played folk and urban music without any predefined concept – to please the audience.

Because of his resistance to Kalafatović, in 1937, Krstić was replaced by a group of young composers, mainly those educated at the Prague Conservatory – somewhat surprisingly, primarily of left-wing convictions. The position of chief music editor went to Mihajlo Vukdragović (1900 – 1967), and his deputy became Vojislav Vučković (1910 – 1942). The pressure expressed by the professional community at that time bore fruit, and Vukdragović and Vučković were given somewhat more leeway. For example, Vučković organized shows with avant-garde and atonal music and lectures on the subject. The pressure from the public prevented the cancellation of the shows mentioned above. Still, the chaotic airing of *starogradska* and folk music partly gave way to professional arrangements of folk material by composers such as Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac (1856 – 1914), Kornelije Stanković (1831 – 1865), Josif Marinković (1851 – 1931), and others (Vesić 2015, 24).

\*\*\*

As mentioned earlier, primary academic sources regarding this topic are quite rare. Therefore, we had to rely on secondary ones, including some amateur recordings. We can examine the several recordings of folk and *Starogradska* music that have survived. In that respect, a decisive event was the appearance of brother and sister Sima Begović and Lela Đorđević.<sup>1</sup> While Begović – the son of Tešimir Begović (1871 – 1936), a tenor of

<sup>1</sup> Biographical details for both are unknown, except that Begović died in 1944, while Đorđević survived the war and had children. Her son, Dragoljub Dika Đorđević (born in the early 1940s), was involved in folk music in later decades.



the Belgrade Opera and manager of the National Theatre – occasionally performed on the radio from the start of regular programming, his sister joined him around 1935. After that, they performed as a duo for many years – both were vocalists and guitar players. The band was expanded in August of the same year with two violins. In December 1937, Begović received permission from Vukdragović to form a professional folk orchestra of Radio Belgrade. What is certain is that, besides Begović, one of the orchestra leaders was also the first violinist, Vlastimir Pavlović Carevac<sup>2</sup> (1895–1965) – a lawyer by profession. Still, as a tavern musician, he was considered a virtuoso and a star. One of the song recordings of Begović and Đorđević that can be found on Dragoslav Simić's website is *Čije je moje devojče* (*Whose is my girl*).<sup>3</sup>

Some additional considerations related to this genre must be made. In the mid-war period, Belgrade was not immune to global trends. Already in the 1920s, the first Charleston record releases reached private collections. The popular belief, also present in some contemporary movies, is that by the 1930s, jazz clubs became a standard part of the rich nightscape of the Yugoslav capital. However, we will explain why this premise is somewhat overrated. It is certain that jazz, in the sense of a genre idea, arrived in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes already in the early 1920s, approximately half a decade after the first phonographic record of a jazz ensemble in the US. It is assumed that one of the first jazz bands in the territory of the fledgling country was the *Bingo Boys* from Zagreb, founded in 1923 (Vučetić 2012, 59). As noted by the author of the preface to Jakovljević's book, Radomir Ječincac, no audio recordings of Serbian Jazz ensembles from the interwar period have survived. In general, especially during the 1930s, jazz was identified with dance music (Jakovljević 2003, 60). The first declared jazz ensemble in Belgrade (and Serbia) was the *Jolly Boys*, most likely founded in 1929 (Jakovljević 2003, 60). According to some sources, this ensemble consisted of three saxophones, two trumpets, a trombone, and a rhythm section with a banjo. However, photographs of the ensemble testify that there were also a tuba, two violins, a double bass, guitar, ukulele, and possibly other instruments – which may indicate that the band was not solely focused on jazz music but rather adapted to various occasions (Jakovljević 2003, 59–61). Such evidence shows that pioneering bands, although probably primarily dedicated to jazz music, were considerably more “versatile,” performing not only jazz but also schlager compositions and even folk or Starogradska music. This genre heterogeneity is not unfamiliar to present-day event bands, which, for example, perform at weddings and other gatherings, covering a wide range of musical genres over several hours.

According to Marija Golubović (with this topic has been discussed multiple times), the term “Jazz” in the interwar period was globally more inclusive, encompassing all genres coming “overseas,” including original African influences and Latin dances like tango (Golubović 2024).

---

2 After World War II, Carevac played a significant role in reviving the work of the folk orchestra. He hired musicians who would become major stars for decades, such as Božidar “Boki” Milošević (1931–2018), the renowned clarinet player.

3 See the bibliography for more details.

Therefore, if jazz was challenging to define in the interwar Yugoslav cultural context, what about schlager? The answer to this question is not entirely straightforward. Still, it could very roughly be that it is a genre palette that encompasses everything that is not primarily jazz or folk music but may contain elements of them. The post-war Yugoslav Music Lexicon from 1972 defines schlager as “a popular, mostly vocal composition with simple instrumental accompaniment in the field of entertainment music” (Šlager 1972, 576). It clearly emphasizes that works of this genre can draw inspiration from “folklore, operetta, and Jazz.” (ibid.)

Additionally, it is noted that “most Schlagers become fashionable and are then forgotten. Only a small number of Schlagers remain in musical practice as “old hits,” i.e., as musical documents of an outdated fashion, a disappeared spirit of the times, reflected in popular character music.” (Šlager 1972, 576)

As already implied, no live recordings of schlager or popular music unrelated to Serbian or Yugoslav folklore have been preserved. In that sense, we can only speak of a strong and well-founded assumption about what was broadcast and what could have been broadcast. Based on record production and testimonies in the press, it is clear that so-called “dancing” music featured in the programming concept of Radio Belgrade (*Politika*, 09.10.1934). There is no surviving trace of jazz music being performed on Radio Belgrade.

However, there are certain indications that the schlager song *Adio Mare*, performed by a famous interwar singer, Milan Timotić (1908–1988), could have been broadcast on Radio Belgrade in the 1930s, although the recording is from the 1920s. Specifically, thanks to Mr. Brkić from the music archive of Radio Belgrade (Brkić 2023), it can be established that this song was preserved after World War II in the phonographic archive. Therefore, there is an excellent possibility that it was broadcast during the 1930s.<sup>4</sup> On a side note, Milan Timotić was one of the biggest singing stars of interwar Belgrade. An operatic tenor, he used to record for the *Odeon* label in the 1920s.<sup>5</sup>

### Shortwave radio

A significant milestone occurred in 1936, as Radio Belgrade launched a new service: a shortwave radio station. In the standard history of electronic media, which includes radio, television, and the Internet, the significance of shortwave radio stations is often overlooked. However, this medium played a significant role until the end of the Cold War. Due to the specific physical characteristics of shortwaves, these stations had a powerful reach and could be heard in remote parts of the planet, thus representing a kind of Internet of their time.

---

4 The song is available on YouTube. See bibliography for details.

5 He is best known for his episodic role in an unfinished musical from the early 1940s, *Priča jednog dana* (*The Story of a Day*). From that movie, his performance of the song *Svi vi što maštate o sreći* (*All of You Who Dream of Happiness*) was used in the famous 1982 comedy *Maratonci trče počasni krug* (*The Marathon Family*).

The shortwave radio station in Belgrade was launched from a separate studio in the current building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Knez Miloš Street, which at that time served as the headquarters of the Ministry of Forestry (Simić).

The program was broadcast daily, including news and collage programs in different languages and a rich music program. Interestingly, the shows were announced or signed off in three languages: Serbian, French, and German. Twice a month, because of the Dutch network of transmitters, in the night hours, two one-hour “transoceanic shows” were broadcast and aimed respectively at the diaspora in North and South America. The first was broadcast on March 14, 1937 (Simić). Though no more precise information is available, according to the news archive, it is known that the broadcasting of shows to Australia and New Zealand started later (*Politika* 23.01.1941, 20).

To some extent, the musical concept of Shortwave Radio was somewhat similar to the national Radio Belgrade, with an additional emphasis on folk and *Starogradska* music – probably to preserve national feelings among members of the Serbian and Yugoslav diaspora.

In this sense, the Sima Begović orchestra played a significant role and was often featured on the airwaves of this station.

For instance, the recording of the song *Sinoć mi dojde ludo mlado* (*Last night, a crazy young one came to me*) was taken with the equipment of the NBC radio network. NBC transmitters were used to amplify incoming shortwave signals in North America.<sup>6</sup>

147

### **Further development. Reactions**

During the 1930s, Yugoslav radio, like in the rest of the world, was fully expanding, especially in urban areas.

Besides the Belgrade and Zagreb centers, there was also one in Ljubljana (cf. Simić). Just before the start of WW2 in Yugoslavia (1941), a station was also founded in Skopje (Antić, 7). According to Dragoslav Simić, even at the beginning of that decade, there were joint broadcasts – a precursor to regional and national programs in the contemporary era. Yugoslav radio was also part of the International Broadcasting Union (a precursor to the European Broadcasting Union) (Simić 2023).

Radio Belgrade launched its magazine and was open to listener suggestions. The biggest radio stars were often interviewed, and reactions from listeners were published.

Moreover, some letters have been preserved in the private archive of Lela Đorđević’s family. In this sense, mentioning certain Serbian diaspora reactions is fascinating.

To illustrate, here is a letter, originally in Serbian, sent by a certain Božidar Igić, residing in Akron, Ohio, USA. He states, among other things:

---

<sup>6</sup> The recording is available at Simić’s website. See bibliography for details.

*Your broadcasting is of great interest to me as I also sing and play on the radio station "Srpske Melodije" ("Serbian Tunes")<sup>7</sup> and every week at the owner's luxury café and director of "Serbian Tunes," Mr. Sima Stanković in Cleveland, Ohio. (..)*

*As much as I express my warm congratulations to the program managers, so I do too to my, as you call them, popular colleagues, both men and women – and they truly deserve that name and award. For the songs they sang, "Anđo, moja Anđo" ("Anđo, my Anđo") and "Anđo na brodu" ("Anđo on the boat"), if I'm not mistaken, I would like to ask you to send me the lyrics or sheet music. (..) <sup>8 9</sup>*

(Simić)

From what has been stated, it is evident that within less than a decade of regular programming, Radio Belgrade and Shortwave Radio have gained significant popularity both in the country and among the diaspora. Listeners actively responded to the editing of this medium and sent their suggestions.

### **Reflection on the post-war period. Conclusion**

Today, when the Kingdom of Yugoslavia is a relic of history – almost a whole century old – the pre-war Radio Belgrade has also experienced a similar fate, and the general public knows very little about it, particularly about the popular music it broadcasted. Yugoslavia disappeared in the turmoil of war in 1941 and was re-established as a socialist federation in 1945.

The pre-war building of Radio Belgrade was directly hit in the Nazi bombing, leading to the destruction of a significant part of the phonographic archive (which posed certain difficulties in compiling this paper). German troops immediately occupied the Shortwave Radio building for propaganda purposes. Although the latter operated as the controversial *Sender Belgrade* during the war years and even broadcasted a rich musical program (including the wide-spreading of the infamous song *Lili Marlene*), its real-life continued only after liberation.

\*\*\*

By its nature of an overview, the present article has only touched the tip of the iceberg and, we hope, opened the doors to a somewhat forgotten chapter in the history of Serbian and Yugoslav media.

---

7 The history of the Serbian diaspora in overseas countries (USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) is well documented. Nowadays, Serbian communities in these countries are well-connected, and in some cities, like Chicago and Toronto, there are Serbian schools, newspapers, folklore societies, and even Serbian radio and television stations. However, the fact that Serbian immigrants had a radio program in the USA as early as the 1930s is new information to us.

8 Translation adapted by the author of this article.

9 Simić's website contains numerous letters from Đorđević's archive, both from the country and from around the world.

In the past two decades, significant progress has been made in researching this topic, including articles in media history and musicological texts (some of which are listed in the bibliography or cited). However, much remains hidden under the apparent veil of history. The overall increased interest in Serbian musical and media history before the First World War, as well as during the socialist era, makes the interwar period somewhat overshadowed and, in some cases, even a taboo subject (perhaps precisely due to the rigid attitude that prevailed for decades).

Nevertheless, as professional researchers, we are responsible for not allowing amateurs and enthusiasts to take precedence in this field.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Antić, Bora (1941). U prisustvu izaslanika Nj. V. Kralja, predsednika vlade Dragiša Cvetkovića, ministra g.g. Torbara i Pantića, i pretstavnika javnog života Južne Srbije, juče je na svečan način osvećena Radio-stanica u Skoplju. (*In the presence of His Majesty's envoy, Prime Minister Mr. Dragiša Cvetković, ministers Mr. Torbar and Pantić, and representatives of public life from Southern Serbia, the radio station in Skopje was solemnly inaugurated yesterday.*) *Politika*, 28.01.41, 7.

Bjelajac, Mile S. (2004). *Generali i admirali Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1918–1941. (Generals and Admirals of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1918–1941)*. Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije.

Blam, Mihailo (2011). *Jazz u Srbiji 1927–1941 (Jazz in Serbia 1927–1941)*. Belgrade: Stubovi kulture.

Brkić, Đorđe (2023). *Email message to the author*. 01.02.2023.

Ćorović, Vladimir, and Milan St. Protić (2020). *Ilustrovana istorija Srba. Dopunjeno izdanje: Od doseljavanja na Balkan do poslednje decenije XX veka. (Illustrated History of the Serbs. Revised edition: From the Settlement in the Balkans to the Last Decade of the 20th Century.)* Belgrade: Vulkan.

Golubović, Marija (2024). *Email message to the author*. 27.02.2024.

Jakovljević, Svetolik (2003). *Jedan vek džeza & Kratki prilozi za izučavanje džeza u Srbiji. (One Century of Jazz & Brief Contributions to the Study of Jazz in Serbia.)* Belgrade: Knjižara Žagor.

Pokrajac, Dragoljub (2023). *Email message to the author*. January 9.

Radio Belgrade. *Politika*, January 23.01.1941)

Radio Belgrade. *Politika*, October 09.10.1934.



Simić, Dragoslav (n.d. ). *Kratkotalasna radio stanica Beograd 1936–1941. Pevači Narodne muzike Lela Đorđević i Sima Begović. (Shortwave radio station Belgrade 1936-1941. Singers of folk music by Lela Đorđević and Sima Begović. Audio and Photo Archive.)* Accessed July 29.07.2023. <http://www.audioifotoarhiv.com/Porodicni%20tonski%20arhivi/porodicniarhivi.html>.

Simić, Dragoslav (2023). *Phone interview with the author.* 09.01.2023.

1972. Šlager. *Enciklopedijski leksikon “Mozaik znanja” – Muzička umetnost (“Schlager. Encyclopedic Lexicon “Mosaic of Knowledge”),* edited by Zdenko Štambuk, 576. Belgrade: Interpres.

Timotić, Milan (2014). *Adio Mare.* September 29. Accessed 03.03.2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzifJmRJIYU>.

Vesić, Ivana (2014). *Muzičko izdavaštvo između dva svetska rata kao izvor za proučavanje ekspanzije popularne muzike u Jugoslaviji: primeri izdavačkih kuća Jovana Frajta i Sergija Strahova. (Music publishing between two world wars as a source for the research of the expansion of popular music in Yugoslavia: the examples of publishing houses of Jovan Frajt and Sergije Strahov .)* Novi Sad: Matica srpska.

Vesić, Ivana (2015). Muzički program Radio Beograda između dva svetska rata i fenomen nacionalne i kulturne “pedagogije. (*The music program of Radio Belgrade between the two World Wars and the phenomenon of national and cultural’ pedagogy.*) *Radio i srpska muzika* (Muzikološki institut SANU), 15–30.

Vučetić, Radina (2009). Džez je sloboda (Džez kao američko propagandno oružje u Jugoslaviji). (*Jazz is Freedom (Jazz as American propaganda weapon in Yugoslavia.)*) *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* (Filozofski fakultet) 16 (3): 81–101.

Vučetić, Radina (2012). Trubom kroz gvozdenu zavesu – prodor džez u socijalističku Jugoslaviju. (*Trumpeting through the Iron Curtain - the breakthrough of Jazz in socialist Yugoslavia.*) *Muzikologija, časopis muzikološkog instituta Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti*, Vol. 13, 53–77.

# NACIONĀLĀ UN ĪSVIĻŅU BELGRADAS RADIO LOMA SERBU FOLKORĀS UN ŠLĀGERU IZPLATĪŠANĀ 20. GADSIMTA 30. GADOS

Nikola Komatovičs

## Kopsavilkums

Raksts analizē 1929. gadā regulāru apraidi sākušā Belgradas Radio ietekmi uz serbu folkloras un šlāgeru mūzikas izplatību. Raidstacijas programma tika veidota atbilstoši karalistes valdības ieteikumiem un atspoguļoja gan pilsētas, gan lauku mūzikas tradīcijas. Līdz 30. gadu vidum īsviļņu pārraides sasniedza dienvidslāvu diasporas kopienas visa pasaulē, sniedzot savu ieguldījumu to kultūrientitātes veidošanā.

Pētījums izgaismo pirmavotu trūkumu, jo liela daļa Belgradas Radio arhīvu tika iznīcināti Otrā pasaules kara laikā. Pētījuma tapšanā izmantoti tādi sekundārie avoti kā periodika, amatieru ieraksti un citas liecības. Raidstacijas vēstures rekonstrukcijā izšķiroša bijusi sadarbība ar arhīva darbiniekiem un Belgradas Radio ilggadējo redaktoru Dragoslav Simiču (*Dragoslav Simić*).

Belgradas Radio dibināts Karaļa Aleksandra I Karadžordževića diktatūras laikā, kad tika pastiprināta kontrole pār medijiem. Radio atspoguļoja Dienvidslāvijas kultūru daudzveidību, ko ietekmējušas Austroungārijas, Osmaņu impērijas un Rietumu tradīcijas. Tas kļuva par serbu folkloras mantojuma platformu, cita starpā atskaņojot arī "vecpilsētas mūziku" (*Starogradska muzika*), kurā apvienoti folkloras un Rietumu mūzikas elementi.

No 1929. Līdz 1937. gadam vecākās paaudzes komponists Petars Krstičs (*Petar Krstić*) veidoja programmas, kurās nereti tika iekļauts tavernu mūzikas dzīvais izpildījums. Par spīti cenzūrai vēlākie radio redaktori, piemēram, Mihajlo Vukdragovičs (*Mihajlo Vukdragović*) un Vojislavs Vučkovičs (*Vojislav Vučković*) programmās iekļāva arī profesionālas aranžijas un avangarda mūziku. *Starogradska* un tautas mūzika kļuva populāras plašās masās.

1936. gadā tika atklāta īsviļņu radio stacija, ar kuras palīdzību varēja sasniegt dienvidslāvu klausītājus visa pasaulē, īpaši Amerikā, Austrālijā un Jaunzēlandē. Ētērā atskaņotā *Starogradska* un tautas mūzika stiprināja kultūras saikni ar diasporas mūziķiem, vienlaikus veicinot arī repertuāra paplašināšanos.

Par šlāgeriem sauca populāru vokālo mūziku ar tautas mūzikas, operetes un džeza elementiem. Džezs bija populārs pilsētā, tomēr Belgradas Radio tas skanēja ierobežotu ētera laiku. Programmai bija raksturīga žanru daudzveidība, iekļaujot gan moderno, gan tradicionālo mūziku.

Raidstacijas nozīmīgumu apliecina atgriezeniskā saite no klausītājiem, piemēram, vēstules no diasporas. Belgradas Radio veicināja kultūras prakšu attīstību gan

Dienvidslāvijā, gan ārzemēs, veicinot Balkānos un citos kontinentos dzīvojošo dienvidslāvu saliedēšanos.

Pētījums izgaismo mediju vēsture nepētītu lauku, izceļot Belgradas Radio lomu serbu mūzikas saglabāšanā un popularizēšanā. Atklātais rada nepieciešamību pētījumus turpināt, lai pamazām aizpildītu ar mūzikas kultūru saistītos "balto plankumus".

## JAZZ AND POPULAR MUSIC IN ESTONIAN PERIODICALS IN THE 1920s AND 1930s

Aare Tool

This article aims to analyse the coverage of jazz and popular music in Estonian periodicals (such as the daily newspaper *Päevaleht*) in the 1920s and 1930s – a task facilitated by their inclusion in full-text databases (dea.digar.ee). In Section 1, a short overview of jazz and popular music in Estonia in that period is provided. The word “jazz” could be encountered in a variety of journalistic contexts, ranging from essays on modern culture to gossip and advertisements. In Section 2, I will describe how databases such as dea.digar.ee allow the use of quantitative methods of content analysis by means of which the number of occurrences of a musical term (“jazz”, “tango”, or “the Charleston”) in a certain period can be determined. Although not all the miscellaneous mentions of jazz in periodicals are musically insightful, they nevertheless speak aptly for the status that jazz music had as a symbol of “the modern way of life” (Section 3).

**Keywords:** Popular music studies, jazz, Estonian journalism, databases, content analysis.

Periodicals provide valuable information about the dissemination and reception of jazz and popular music in the 1920s and 1930s, and, in some cases, are one of the very few sources available on these phenomena of culture. This is so partly because it was only in the late 20th century that popular music studies emerged as a discipline, and the preservation of sources on popular music in archives started to be recognized as worthwhile. At the same time, periodicals are useful only to a certain degree as a source. While symphony concerts and opera/opera productions were reviewed regularly in Estonian daily newspapers and journals in the 1920s and 1930s, the journalistic coverage of jazz and other aspects of popular culture was much more erratic.

During the past decade, full-text databases (or “digital archives”) of periodicals emerged as a resource useful in various scientific disciplines related to history, media studies, linguistics, etc. The introduction of such databases has made historical newspaper articles easily accessible to researchers as a primary source, enabling them to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in analysing that content (for example, to determine when certain words first became part of the journalistic vernacular or to count the number of occurrences of certain terms/names in a period of time). This study is based on newspapers and journals accessible in the digital archive DIGAR. Thus, the usage of certain music-related terms can now be investigated from a quantitative point of view by employing content analysis, a collection of methods codified in various textbooks and increasingly relevant in the current “golden age” of content acquisition” (Neuendorf 2017, 212).

The collections of the Estonian digital archive DIGAR, hosted by the Estonian National Library (*Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu*), include, most importantly, periodicals and books, but also sheet music, photos and audio content (such as digitalized shellac discs). Digitalized newspapers, with optical character recognition applied, are available in *dea.digar.ee* (*Eesti Artiklid* [Estonian Articles]), while 1920s and 1930s journals can be found in *digar.ee* (*Digitaaalarhiiv* [Digital Archive]). The collection of newspapers in *dea.digar.ee* has been available since 2014, its content being regularly updated and proofread. The pre-WWII era is well represented there, with all the major newspapers of the 1920s and 1930s, among many others, fully displayable.

An overview of Estonian jazz and popular music in the 1920s and 1930s provided in Section 1 will form the context for a quantitative analysis of the words “jazz”, “tango”, and “the Charleston” as they occur in Estonian newspapers up to the year 1939 (Section 2). Although databases of periodicals analogous to DIGAR exist in several countries (such as the Latvian archive of periodicals, *periodika.lv*, or the archive of Historic American Newspapers at *chroniclingamerica.loc.gov*), the technical peculiarities of DIGAR, as well as linguistic nuances and the journalistic context of that period, need to be considered in using it as a resource. While the data acquired in quantitative analysis helps to illustrate certain general trends in the dissemination of musical terms, that knowledge is useful only when viewed next to the discourses manifest in these instances (Section 3), concerning how jazz was described and what it was considered to represent.

While jazz studies and popular music studies generally tend to function as distinctive disciplines, despite many aspects mutually relevant for both (see Reimann 2013, 13), jazz in the 1920s and 1930s cannot be considered separately from the other manifestations of popular culture. In the period in question, “jazz”, “popular music” (in Estonian: *lööklaulud* – meaning “hit songs”, *schlager*) and “dance music” were largely overlapping terms, “jazz” being used, however, more narrowly for the kind of “new” or “modern” dance music (the Charleston, foxtrot, etc.) that became the centrepiece of the burgeoning youth culture in the post-WWI era and stood in contrast to the “old” dances, such as the Viennese waltz. According to Crease (2000, 696), “jazz dance and music are so intertwined that the origins and early history of each would be unthinkable without the other.”

In his book on restaurant and café culture in Tallinn in the 1920s and 1930s, Kalervo Hovi (2017, 10) has described his field of study as “histories of marginalised groups”: an investigation of those aspects of every-day life that, once perceived as mundane, have largely been neglected in historical narratives. The same classification can largely be extended to the kind of music-making, including jazz, for which restaurants functioned as one of the primary venues during that period. That said, references to jazz were rather frequent in Estonian periodicals in those decades: “jazz” was a fashionable word that appeared in advertisements and was mentioned in newspaper articles in a variety of contexts.



## 1. “What are our people’s favourite dances?” Jazz and popular music in the 1920s and 1930s

As news about “jazz” spread from the US to Europe, it did not take long before a distinctive subculture of self-described jazz bands started to emerge in Estonia in the 1920s. In the Baltic region, the musical and technological innovations of that decade – often characterised as the Roaring Twenties in the American entertainment scene – appeared against the backdrop of radically new political realities. The Estonian Republic was declared in February 1918, followed by two years of defensive campaigns known as the Estonian War of Independence (1918–1920). Thus, the new developments in (popular) culture and technology coincided with a more general sense of renewal that was “in the air” in Estonia in the 1920s.

The history of jazz music in that period has been investigated thoroughly by Valter Ojakäär (1923–2016) in *Vaibunud viiside kaja* (2000, [*The Echo of Faded Tunes*]), the first volume of his four-volume series of books on Estonian popular music. Tiit Lauk in *Džäss Eestis 1918–1945* (2010, [*Jazz in Estonia*]) concentrated mainly on the emergence and dissemination of jazz, with an emphasis on the regional jazz music scenes outside Tallinn and “jazz concerts” organised in Tallinn and elsewhere in the 1930s.

The first half of the 20th century was an era defined, amongst other technological novelties, by gramophone records, cinema, and, perhaps most importantly, radio broadcasting. As radio broadcasting companies were established all over Europe during the 1920s, the age of mass media was truly born. Although the radio stations of that period, both in the US and European countries, declared themselves to be dedicated to educating the listener mostly with “serious” music (Hullot-Kentor 2009, 5–6), and radio programmes published in daily newspapers and specialised radio journals remained generic as far as popular music was concerned, it was namely then that the identity of popular music as “radio music” was forged.

The number of radio receivers owned in Estonia started to grow since the beginning of daily radio broadcasts in Tallinn on 18th December 1926. In the Baltic region, those who had access to a rather expensive vacuum tube receiver could listen to, in addition to the local radio station, tens of foreign radio stations, some from as far as Western Europe (Tool 2023, 135–136). European radio stations, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in particular, thus served as mediators of the new trends in popular music that had emerged in the US.

It was against this backdrop that jazz bands started to emerge in Estonia in the 1920s. According to the statistics by Lauk (2010, 196–197), in the period from the emergence of the first professionally employed jazz band (The Murphy Band) in 1925 to the end of the Estonian Republic in 1940, at least 110 ensembles and orchestras in Estonia who played jazz-influenced dance music existed, involving a total of approximately 750 musicians. While these ensembles typically adopted English-language names (The Murphy Band, Red Hot Ramblers, Merry Pipers, etc.), Central European models, manifested for example in the inclusion of the accordion in many of these bands, were no less noticeable. Performances by foreign jazz musicians in Estonia were then a rarity (Lauk 2010, 147–149).<sup>1</sup>

---

1 In this regard the situation was markedly different in Latvia, where performances by foreign musicians could be described as “a very important aspect in the development of Latvian jazz” in the 1920s and 1930s (Veitners 2014, 97).

Among the Estonian jazz bands in the late 1920s in Tallinn, The Murphy Band enjoyed a distinctive status. Its performances of “modern dance music” were broadcast weekly on the radio and, according to printed programme notes of the Estonia Theatre, the band was involved in several jazz-influenced operetta productions whenever the depiction of the “modern times” was required. Its leading members were the pianist Victor Compe (1895–1968) – “the author of the first Estonian foxtrot” whose speciality as an arranger was combining modern dance rhythms with Estonian folk tunes – and the percussionist Kurt Strobel (1904–1982).

*The Murphy Band* can be heard on several gramophone recordings released under trademarks such as *Columbia* and *His Master’s Voice*. These discs, however, are probably not fully representative of the real scope of their repertoire, which, according to Ojakäär (2000, 103–106), included, in addition to operetta tunes and German schlager, songs by American songwriters. One of the more elaborate advertisements of their gramophone records is reproduced in Example 1, the text below the cartoon reading as follows: “The best creator of the atmosphere at a joyful party is *The Murphy Band* (from the White Hall of the Estonia [Theatre]) on gramophone records by Columbia.” Thus, while listening to the syncopated folk tunes and operetta melodies, one could imagine being present at the prestigious place of entertainment the band was famously associated with. The repertoire of Estonian jazz bands in those days formed a mixture of everything required to entertain audiences of various backgrounds and musical tastes.



Parim meeleolu looja lõbusal koosviibimisel on  
**The Murphy Band**  
 (Estonia Walgest saalist)  
**Columbia plaatidel**  
 Hind kr. 3.—

8727. *Kaera Jaan* — lauluga. Mälustus (V. Compe) Foxtrot lauluga.  
 8728. *Sabajala wals*. Tõmba Jüri — lauluga.

**Marta Runge, sopran ja Konstantin Sawi,**  
 tenor-bariton The Murphy Band'i saatel.

8729. *Wiise operettidest* (seadn. V. Compe) I ja II osa.  
 8730. *Wiise operettidest* (seadn. V. Compe) III ja IV osa.

The Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd. London  
 Ainusindaja  
**A.-s. Karl Lemberg**  
 Tallinn, Wiru tän. 3.

Example 1. An advertisement of gramophone records by the best-known Estonian jazz band of the late 1920s, The Murphy Band (*Päewaleht*, 3.11.1928).

In connection with the disbandment of *The Murphy Band* in 1931, an interview with Kurt Strobel was published in *Raadioleht* ([*Radio Journal*], 19.07.1931) where he characterises the situation with ballroom dancing and describes how new dance music was disseminated in Estonia. As Strobel described himself as a follower of the so-called English style of playing (akin to the “American style”), the article was titled “Kurt Strobel – The Estonian Jack Hylton”:

“What are our people’s favourite dances? [...] Despite the laborious work of our dance tutors, our people have not yet learned to dance properly. Our only consolation is that, allegedly, they dance even worse in Latvia and Finland. And it is mainly because of the lack of skill that our dancers prefer foxtrot and the Viennese waltz. There are only a few of those who can dance tango, slow waltz, or slow fox. [...] It happens that now and then somebody requests something more vintage from the band – such as *Pas d’Espagne* – but for most people these old dances are something of a laughingstock. There’s nothing one can do about it: *sic transit gloria mundi*. [...]”

The audience constantly requires something new from the orchestra. But how would one get hold of the latest music? Here is an example from my time with *The Murphy Band*. We all remember well the hit song *Valencia* [from the 1926 silent movie of the same name, recorded by Paul Whiteman’s orchestra]. Interestingly this song came from London: the musicians listened to the London radio [BBC], where *Valencia* was being performed. They listened to it one evening and could not memorise it. Then they listened for another evening and put it on paper. Then, in the third evening they were ready to perform it themselves.” (*Raadioleht*, 19.07.1931)

In the 1930s, Kurt Strobel continued to lead his own orchestra, some of its performances preserved in a series of amateur recordings made in 1933. The recording of *Bugle Call Rag* (see Ojakäär 2000, 457–459) displays the orchestra’s familiarity with the early swing style, if not quite yet the soloistic prowess of its members. As revealed in comparing that recording with those by British and American bands of that period, Strobel’s orchestra, interestingly, used the same arrangement of the tune as recorded also by, for example, the British orchestra led by Harry Roy. By the end of the 1930s, however, some ensembles had emerged, most notably *Kuldne Seitse* (*The Golden Seven*), who could be described as proficient in performing improvised solos in the swing style (Ojakäär 2000, 156).

In the 1930s, there were ever-increasing attempts in Europe and the US to introduce jazz to concert platforms. The Estonian contribution to that trend was a series of “jazz concerts” in Tallinn, starting in November 1936; they were organised by Priit Veebel (Friedrich Webel, 1910–1944), a classically trained pianist, conductor, and composer of popular songs as well as a member of Strobel’s orchestra. These jazz concerts, although inspired by Paul Whiteman’s “symphonic” jazz, were an important step closer to the introduction of big band jazz in Estonia. In the late 1930s, references to “swing” started to appear in periodicals. Veebel’s *Fifth Grand Jazz Concert* (*Viies suur jazz-kontsert*) on

2nd November 1938 was advertised to include the performance of a “swing sextet!!!” (*Päewaleht*, 30.10.1938), and the advertisement of the concert on 3rd November 1939 stated simply “Swing, Swing, Swing” (*Päewaleht*, 01.11.1939).

While Strobel chose British orchestras as his main model, the nation-wide popularity of John Pori’s (1906–1947) orchestra stemmed more from its pronounced focus on “good old-fashioned” dance music, various Estonian adaptations of American popular songs (*Oh, They’re Tough, Mighty Tough in the West*), and arrangements of folk dances. Among Pori’s greatest “hits” was a waltz tune called *Viljandi paadimees* (*The Boatman of Viljandi*), released by *Bellaccord Electro* in 1937 – in fact, a skilful Estonian adaptation of *Gaujas laivinieks* by Alfrēds Vinters.

The level of caution one needs to exhibit in using periodicals as a source in research on popular music is aptly demonstrated in the case of the songwriter and restaurant musician Raimond Valgre (1913–1949, born Raimond Tiisel). Valgre completely evaded the attention of the press during his lifetime, even with several of his songs having been published in a series of popular song editions called *Modern Hit Songs* (*Modern lööklaulud*) in the 1930s, and it was only posthumously that he emerged as the best-known personality in Estonian popular music by far in the first half of the 20th century. Even more than a reminder of Valgre’s tragic fate in which his legendary status now largely lies, this fact should be taken as a description of the journalistic practices of the day.

158

## 2. Terms of popular music in periodicals according to quantitative content analysis

Knowledge of the Estonian dance and jazz music scene can be specified further by investigating the usage of certain keywords (jazz, tango, and the Charleston) in Estonian periodicals during that period. By using these words in a full-text search in newspapers (such as *Päewaleht*), it is possible to outline how references to certain cultural phenomena appeared in the Estonian language, when they were at their most influential and when they started to lose their ground. However, the quantitative data acquired in such inquiries is insightful only as far as the context (discourses) in which these words appear is taken into account.

As analysed by Hennoste and Kurvits (2019, 26–27), Estonian journalism during the period of the Estonian Republic (1918–1940) can be described as “versatile, differentiated, and modern”, encompassing daily newspapers, weekly tabloid newspapers, periodicals addressed to the “common man” or Estonia’s sizeable rural population, and provincial (regional) newspapers. Much of Estonia’s journalistic scene became dominated by major publishing trusts, whose output included, in addition to their main daily newspaper, various other periodicals. The daily newspaper with the largest print circulation was *Päewaleht* (modern spelling *Päevaleht*, 1905–1940), its number of printed copies ranging from 30 000 to 50 000 in the 1920s and 1930s (Hennoste, Kurvits 2019, 55).<sup>2</sup> Among

<sup>2</sup> The total population of Estonia, according to the 1934 census, was approximately 1.1 million people (presently, more than 1.3 million).

the other major daily newspapers of that period were *Waba Maa* [Free Land] (1918–1938), *Postimees* [Postman] (1886–1940), and *Uus Eesti* [New Estonia] (1935–1940); regional newspapers included *Sakala* (1878–1940), based in the town of Viljandi. After the military *coup d'état* in Estonia in 1934, as a result of which Konstantin Päts was installed as the authoritarian leader of the state, censorship was imposed on journalism, resulting in a steep decrease in the number of newspapers approved for publication (Hennoste, Kurvits 2019, 30–31); for instance, *Waba Maa* was closed in March 1938 due to censorship. This fact, in some cases, contributes to the downward curve in search results in dea.digar.ee during the second half of the 1930s. As Estonia was occupied by the USSR in summer 1940, Estonia's journalistic scene started to be thoroughly reorganised according to Soviet models, and, therefore, the period after 1939 lies beyond the scope of this study.

While using dea.digar.ee in research, one needs to remain mindful of its limitations, the impact of which can be minimised by carefully selecting suitable keywords for full-text search. Depending on the quality of digitalization, full-text searches can yield some false (or similarly spelled but irrelevant) results and, conversely, some of the keywords searched for will remain undetected. It is also important to note that dea.digar.ee presents the number of units (articles, columns or pages, depending on the accuracy of segmentation in the database) in which the search word was detected and is not suitable for analysing the total number of its occurrences. The built-in search engine of the user interface allows the use of logical operators AND, OR, NOT, and the results can be limited according to some specific criteria (names of the periodicals, period, etc.).

159

When choosing the search word(s), certain grammatical nuances of the Estonian language must be considered, especially those concerning the use of fourteen case forms both in the singular and the plural. Therefore, in searching for the word “jazz” in the database, an asterisk (\*) can be added to the end of the word (“jazz\*”). Thus, the various case forms of that word (for example, in the genitive: *jazzi*) are included in the results, as well as compound nouns (*jazzkontsert* [jazz concert]). Note that in the Estonian language the adapted spelling “*džäss*” can also be used, and this has been preferred by most editors since the 1940s up to the very recent. However, in the 1920s and 1930s this spelling was very rare.

## 2.1. Jazz in periodicals in 1919–1939

The word “jazz” seems particularly appropriate in demonstrating the possibilities of full-text search in dea.digar.ee due to its brevity and, at the same time, the specific way of spelling that excludes the possibility of coincidental matches with other words used in the Estonian language. According to Gerald Leonard Cohen (2015, 1), who analysed the usage of that word in US periodicals, “the term *jazz* designating a genre of music arose in Chicago, 1915”.



In Estonian newspapers, “jazz” can be first encountered in 1919. In a short article titled “The urge to dance is growing among the English” (“*Inglaste tantsuhimu kasvamas*”; *Tallinna Teataja*, 11.12.1919), “jazz” is mentioned, along with the foxtrot and “Tango 1920”, as one of the dances that many people, regardless of age and social class, are eagerly awaiting to learn in London and Paris. A more extensive description of jazz appears in 1921 in an article by Johannes Semper, a well-known Estonian literary figure. As he reports back from Berlin, jazz band music was being played in every restaurant, so that the whole city was “flooded with those exotic orchestras”. He continues with a description of the instruments commonly used in jazz bands, mentioning that the piano was played “not only with fingers, but all the limbs, including arms, knees and feet” (*Tallinna Teataja*, 16.04.1921). Similar descriptions of “jazz” – a word used then also for modern dance music and bands in general, with an emphasis on their “exotic” qualities – remained common throughout that period.

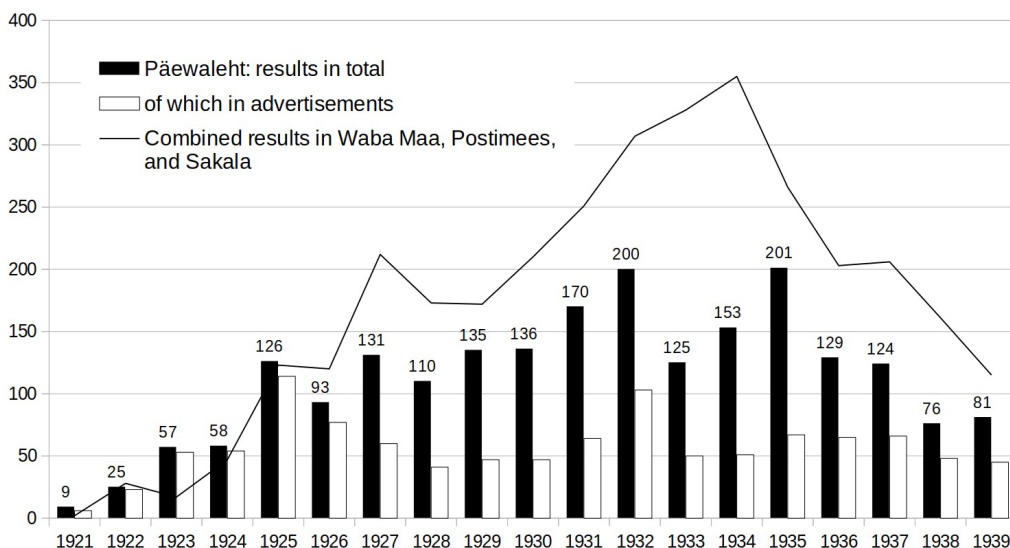
Reports about the exuberance of nightlife in major European cities stood in contrast to what had been the situation in Estonia. From late 1918 to early 1920, the newly founded Estonian Republic was preoccupied with a defensive campaign against the Bolsheviks and the Baltische Landeswehr in what is known as the Estonian War of Independence. The wartime ban on audience dancing in restaurants was, therefore, lifted in Estonia only in April 1920 (Hovi 2017, 97) and selling alcohol in restaurants was allowed in June 1920 (Hovi 2017, 77). Thus, it was only in the early 1920s that the entertainment scene in Tallinn recovered and dance orchestras started to be employed by better restaurants.

A search for “jazz\*” in *dea.digar.ee* in the period from 1919 to 1939 yielded 13 235 results in total (number of articles, columns or pages where that word appears one or more times), distributed between at least 100 periodicals (all the results are presented here as of February 2024). The five periodicals with the most occurrences of “jazz\*” (*Päevaleht* – 2139; *Waba Maa* – 1325; *Postimees* – 1179; *Sakala* – 792; *Uudisleht* – 549) amounted to a combined total of 5984 or 45% of all the results. An unequal distribution of the results between the periodicals has several reasons. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s *Päevaleht* was published 7 days a week (approximately 350 issues per year), whereas *Sakala*, for example, was issued 3 times a week (approximately 150 issues per year). There were also numerous short-lived periodicals, and some periodicals have not been fully digitalized. The amount of printed space dedicated to advertisements also plays an important role in this case.

## 2.2. Jazz in *Päevaleht*

In Example 2, the distribution of results for “jazz\*” in *Päevaleht* in the period 1921–1939 is presented as a column chart. While there were only 9 occurrences in 1921, the results peaked in 1932 and 1935 at 200 and 201 matches, respectively. It is important, though, to distinguish between the occurrences of that word according to the types of texts in *Päevaleht*. The inbuilt search engine of *dea.digar.ee* allows to sort the results in *Päevaleht* according to whether they occur in “advertisements” (usually on the

final pages of each issue or on the first page, but sometimes also embedded among other texts) or “articles” (all other texts). Among the Estonian daily newspapers in that period, *Päewaleht* relied the most on advertising, which could occupy almost a half of its printed space (Hennoste, Kurvits 2019, 40). Of the 2139 results for “jazz\*” in *Päewaleht*, 1081 are sorted as “advertisements” in *dea.digar.ee*, and this number of occurrences in advertisements does not include other announcements about concerts, theatre, and cinema in the culture section of the newspaper.



**Example 2.** Results for “jazz\*” in *Päewaleht* in 1921–1939 (column chart), compared to the combined results in *Waba Maa*, *Postimees*, and *Sakala* (line chart).

For comparison, the combined results for “jazz\*” during that period in three other newspapers – *Waba Maa* (last issue in early March 1938), *Postimees*, and *Sakala* – are presented as a line chart in Example 2. This curve mostly corresponds to the general trends in *Päewaleht*, highlighting the increase of results in 1926–1927, largely due to printed radio programmes being published in newspapers since the beginning of daily radio broadcasts in Tallinn in December 1926. Example 2 is informative mainly as a description of how the word “jazz” gradually appeared in the public sphere during the 1920s, while the fluctuations in the graph during the 1930s are due to a number of factors (including the existence of dedicated radio and entertainment journals) and should be interpreted with some caution.

As demonstrated in Example 2, the growth in results for “jazz\*” in *Päewaleht* in the period 1921–1926 was powered by advertisements (dance classes, theatrical performances, cinema, and entertainment available at restaurants), while there were just a few mentions of jazz in other texts (“articles”). The latter, nevertheless, contain several examples that are descriptive of the turbulent situation in culture. In the weekly illustrated supplement of *Päewaleht* (*Päewalehe Lisa*; 11.02.1924), an introduction to jazz was published over two pages, in which the author argues over whether jazz

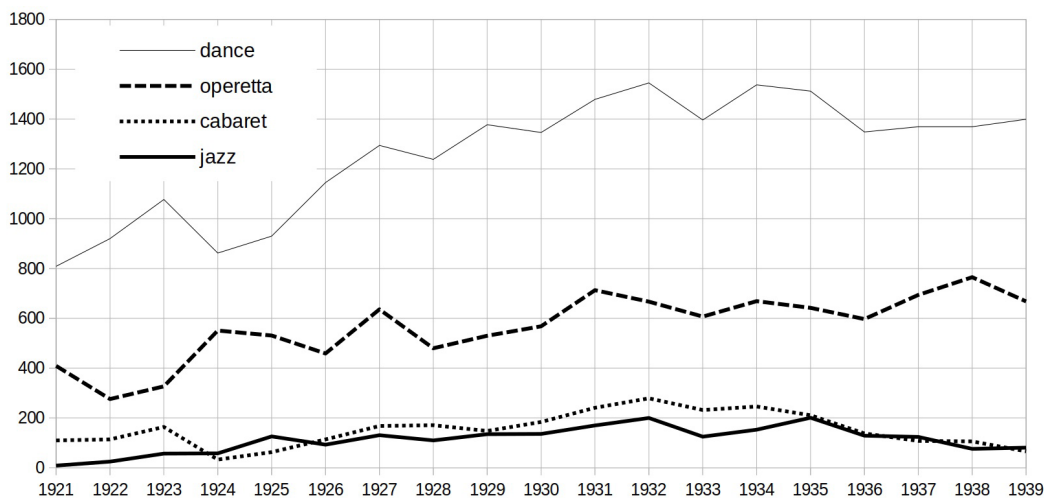
represented an “evolution” or a decline in taste in musical culture. Although mentions of jazz were rather few in number (58 occurrences, of which 54 in advertisements), jazz was described to be claiming ground vehemently in certain parts of Estonian society. For example, *Päewaleht* (26.03.1924) published a decree issued by public schools by which “jazz band music” on school premises and in classroom parties was henceforth forbidden in order to put a limit to “excessive merrymaking” among Estonian pupils.

Another mention of jazz stems from an article about how the world record for the longest dance marathon of shimmy was broken in America, and it includes an analysis of the “psychopathological” reasons that urge people to dance for such extended periods of time in a bout of “dance fever” (24.08.1925). Articles such as the one titled “How much money do jazz band leaders make” (25.01.1926) set the gossipy tone for much that would be written about jazz in the late 1920s and 1930s.

Radio programmes published in newspapers or specialised radio journals since the beginning of regular radio broadcasts in Tallinn in December 1926 are a major source of results for “jazz\*”. For example, the total number of articles mentioning jazz in *Päewaleht* in 1932 was 200, of which approximately 100 were in advertisements and 50 in radio programmes, whereas only the remaining 50 form what can be described as miscellanea: passing references to jazz in connection with various cultural events (“plays jazz [band]”), cinema, travelogues, novels published as a sequel, etc. Especially in advertisements, “jazz” was preferred to more neutral (and, to their disadvantage, longer) words, such as “*tantsumuusika*” (dance music). Thus, among the seemingly numerous results for “jazz” there is only a small percentage of “miscellaneous” articles which can be used as sources in analysing the opinions and attitudes surrounding jazz from a qualitative point of view. However, searching for some additional keywords in *dea.digar.ee* (such as the names of various dances or forms of entertainment) provides further insight into the trends of popular music in that period.

### **2.3. Some points of comparison: cabaret, operetta, and dance**

To put the previously mentioned results for “jazz\*” in *Päewaleht* (2139 occurrences) into context, certain other keywords, such as “*kabaree*” (cabaret), “*operett*” (operetta), and “*tants*” (dance), can be chosen as points of comparison (Example 3).



Example 3. Results for jazz (jazz\*), cabaret (kabaree\*), operetta (operet\*), and dance (tants\*) in *Pääwaleht*.

The word “cabaret” (“kabaree\*”) lies roughly in the same league as jazz with a total of 2896 results in *Pääwaleht* in 1921–1939. Cabaret, a form of musical and theatrical entertainment, was available at some restaurants in Tallinn. It fuelled fierce discussions in the 1920s and was even banned by the municipality in 1924–1925 (Hovi 2017, 109). Considered then a highly controversial phenomenon that undoubtedly represented “histories of marginalised groups”, the number of results for “cabaret” yet slightly exceeded those for “jazz” in the 1930s, as demonstrated in Example 3.

163

A search for “operetta” (“operet\*”; includes the genitive “opereti”, etc.) produced 10 789 results in *Pääwaleht* during that period. The genre of operetta was highly popular those days, operetta productions serving as a crucial source of income for the Estonia Theatre in Tallinn and the Vanemuine Theatre in Tartu. The quantity of results for “operetta” – a form of theatre presented by major cultural institutions and covered regularly in newspapers – is, expectedly, much higher than in the case of “jazz” or “cabaret”. This serves as a reminder that “jazz” formed just a fraction among the total mentions of musical or entertainment-related terms, and the number of occurrences alone does not fully reflect the cultural significance that was attributed to it in some of the texts. It is worth noting, though, that operetta productions then played an important role in popularising the jazz idiom, which was called for in “jazz operettas” in connection with depictions of modern urban milieu.

Furthermore, fluctuations in the occurrences of certain keywords must not be always interpreted as signs of change in the relevancy of the cultural phenomena they represent but can also be explained by shifts in the layout and focus of newspapers. To demonstrate this, results for a keyword as general and relatively neutral as “dance” (“tants\*”) are included in Example 3; the graph displays a steady increase of its occurrences in *Pääwaleht* in a period from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, as is also the case with several other keywords relating to music and entertainment.

## 2.4. The cases of tango and the Charleston

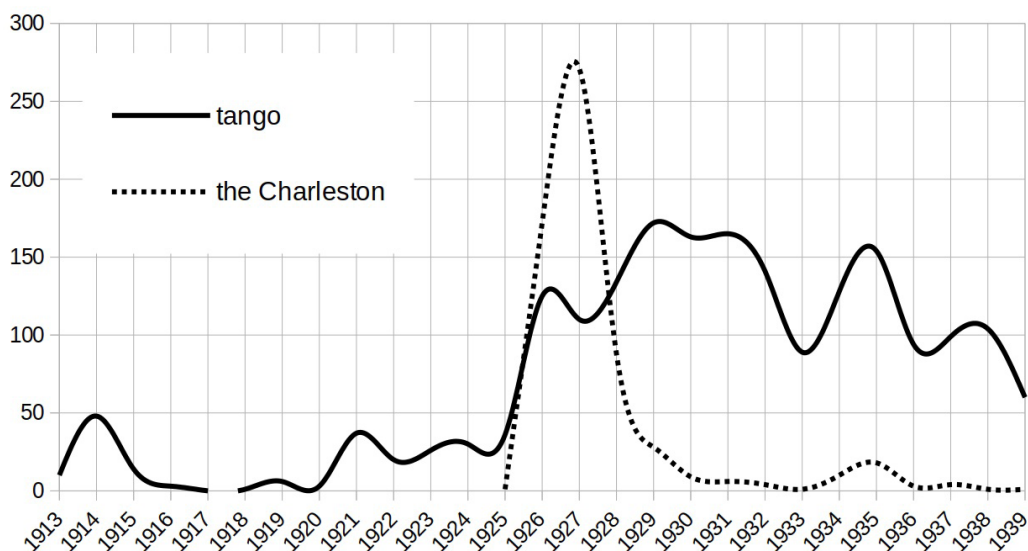
To demonstrate how the above-mentioned method of quantitative analysis can be used for other terms of popular music, let us concentrate on two dances: tango and the Charleston.

While most of the dances introduced in the first decades of the 20th century did not remain popular for long, tango was an exception: known in Europe before WWI, it survived throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and, in the Estonian context, well into the Soviet era (1940s, 1950s and beyond). In 1911, it was announced in a German-language newspaper published in Tallinn (Reval) that “a new fashionable dance has appeared in the Parisian salons and high society overnight and has pushed the well-known Apache Dance into oblivion. [..]The young and the old alike are practising eagerly to dance the Argentine tango gracefully and temperamentally” (*Feuilleton-Beilage der Revalschen Zeitung*, 22.01./4.02.1911). A few years later, the original eagerness was reported to have turned into a “craze” in America, as in New York everybody was dancing tango “everywhere, regardless of gender and age, all day and night” (*Ajaleht*, 23.12.1913/5.01.1914) – an example of journalistic exaggeration not uncommon in the coverage of new dances.

The Charleston was invested with cultural implications no less powerful than those of tango. According to Susan Currell (2009, 94) the Charleston became “the emblem of the decade” in American popular culture after being featured in a 1923 revue *Runnin’ Wild* with music by James P. Johnson. Reaching its peak of popularity in 1926, it could thus be described as “the signature dance of rebellious youth” that symbolised “the rejection of traditional social norms” and even the death-instinct of the Lost Generation (Currell 2009, 95–96). It was “rejected as ugly and vulgar by professional dance instructors and was condemned by civil, intellectual, and religious leaders as either the cause or symptom of a cultural decline” (Crease 2000, 700). In late 1926, the Charleston started to take hold in Estonia as well. “The dance of the future starts with the Charleston,” was boldly stated in *Päewaleht* (4.11.1926).

In Example 4, the combined number of results for tango (“tango\* AND tants\*”) and the Charleston (“charleston\* AND tants\*”) in four newspapers (*Päewaleht*, *Postimees*, *Waba Maa*, and *Sakala*) are presented. The operator “AND tants\*” (dance) is added in each case to improve the relevance of the results in Estonian-language periodicals.





**Example 4.** Results for tango (“tango\* AND tants\*”) and the Charleston (“charleston\* AND tants\*”) in *Päewaleht*, *Postimees*, *Waba Maa*, and *Sakala*.

The number of results for tango, reaching its first peak value shortly after its introduction in Estonia in 1914, sank in 1915–1920, that is during wartime, to the point of being negligible and began to recover in the early 1920s. The results for tango achieved their highest levels in the late 1920s when that dance was also favoured elsewhere in Europe. According to an article published in *Sakala* (27.04.1929; “What are the current dances” [“*Mida praegu tantsitakse*”]), tangos made up 50% of the dances requested by the audience in Berlin, and one particular tango song, *Ich küsse Ihre Hand, Madame* (*I Kiss Your Hand, Madame*) – title song from a 1929 German film starring Harry Liedtke and Marlene Dietrich – was described as particularly popular. In 1938, many of the results for tango in Estonian newspapers stemmed from advertisements for the German film *Tango Notturmo* (released in late 1937, starring Pola Negri).

The journalistic fate of the Charleston was markedly different than that of tango: mentioned the most in 1927, the number of results for the Charleston steeply declined, truthfully reflecting the loss of interest in that dance in the ensuing “swing era” of the 1930s (in the mid-1930s, though, the New Charleston was introduced). The case of the Charleston seems to highlight the main strengths of the quantitative method described here: this method is most relevant when analysing the reception of cultural phenomena characterised by clear time boundaries. Thus, it can be used to illustrate 1) the kind of synchronicity in which certain phenomena of popular culture were spread in the public sphere in the US and European countries, and 2) the “passing nature” of new (popular) music as a distinctive thread in the discourses of modern culture in the 1920s and 1930s.

### 3. “*Sic transit gloria mundi!*” Jazz discourses in periodicals

The new trends in dance music that reached Estonia in the 1920s – their dissemination powered by gramophone records, cinema, and (since the late 1920s) radio broadcasts – gave rise to conflicting modes of reception. “Jazz” was then often used as a keyword to refer to the “modern times” both in a positive and negative sense. The various discourses that surrounded dance music and jazz in the 1920s and 1930s, some exemplified previously, can be classified under three main categories: estrangement, progress, and decline. Reactions of estrangement were mainly due to what was perceived to be “exaggerated” in dance music (dancing tango has become a “craze”; pianists playing “not only with fingers, but all the limbs”, etc.). In many literary sources from the 1920s, jazz is mentioned next to symbols of technological progress, such as aeroplanes and radio broadcasting. Reports about the “dances of the future” (such as the Charleston) were then linked with a more general sense of technological optimism. At the same time, jazz was perceived as the epitome of post-WWI anxieties, as well as a reflection of the economic depression that started in the American stock market in 1929 and soon spread to Europe.

As was demonstrated in Section 2, while the word “jazz” appeared rather frequently in Estonian newspapers during that period, most of these occurrences were in advertisements or printed radio programmes. In articles, jazz was mentioned typically in a gossipy or sensationalist context, sometimes in connection with celebrity stories. The layout and tone of Estonian newspapers changed greatly in the 1920s compared to the previous period, producing much more variety especially in the form of tabloid journalism.

The gossipy tone of popular music coverage is exemplified by the context in which Oscar Strock (Strok) appeared in Estonian newspapers. In March 1931, it was mentioned that “the master of jazz music Strock, who resides in Riga, has composed a foxtrot dedicated to Miss Estonia” (*Postimees*, 01.03.1931). *Päevaleht* (2.03.1931) even published the Estonian lyrics of that song (*Miss Estonia 1931*) with sheet music (vocal + piano) included – undoubtedly a rare sight in daily newspapers – and then a longer feature story about Strock in connection with his performances in Tallinn (10.03.1931). Later that year, however, *Postimees* had a “scandal” to report from Riga: “The latest news of gossip in Riga is about the newest “schlager” by the schlager composer Strock – the scandalous bankruptcy of café *Barberina*” (*Postimees*, 20.11.1931). That story received a sequel a couple of months later: “While imprisoned, Strock continued to compose schlagers. [...] The new schlagers are titled *My Last Tango* and *Bankruptcy*” (*Postimees*, 16.01.1932).

As the economic depression reached Estonia in the early 1930s, these tales of woe certainly resonated with the local audiences. Later in 1932, a short article stated that jazz bands were on a decline in America due to the economic depression: “That is the opinion of the world’s most popular composers and conductors. [...] American musicians believe that jazz was merely a phenomenon of after-war conjecture. As the days of high tide are over [in economy], so are those of jazz, knee-length skirts and women’s bob haircut” (*Päevaleht*, 7.11.1932).

Among the various discourses that surrounded dance music and jazz in that period, those relating to “decline” or the “passing nature” of jazz can be regarded as particularly symptomatic of the tumultuous situation in culture. Since “jazz” was first described as one of the “modern dances” (Section 2.1), it did not seem unreasonable to assume that it would soon be, too, overshadowed by new and even more fashionable ones. The early 20th century saw a proliferation of dances advertised under various attractive names, and, indeed, the popularity of most of them did not last for long. In the 1920s, reports of the “death” of various phenomena of popular culture formed almost what could be described as a distinctive journalistic genre: “It sounds almost unbelievable, but according to a report from New York, the just recently praised Charleston, which began its way of triumph on the banks of the Mississippi and celebrated indescribable victories among the American [high] society, is now already among the dead” (*Päewaleht*, 24.01.1927). Foxtrot, tango and the Collegiate were reported as the dances now in fashion instead of the Charleston, while some were known to be campaigning to restore the long-faded popularity of the gavotte and the minuet – dances that the young found, however, too “lame”.

Accusations over “indecent” were often uttered as far as dance music was concerned, but this was certainly not a new way of thinking. As demonstrated by Knowles (Knowles 2009, 3), “anti-dance sentiments” existed long before the 20th century. In the early 20th century, however, certain new factors contributed to dance-related scepticism: nocturnal activity (dancing late into the night) was then a novel urban phenomenon made possible by the introduction of artificial lighting, and the tensions and anxieties it created were “prominently reflected in newspaper coverage of urban nights” (Leivategija 2023, 9). In the 1920s the frivolity of the new dances, performed in “shady” places of entertainment, started to be explained as due to the influence of the “fast pace” and “superficial” nature of the traumatised modern times.

Reactions to new trends in music remind us that the 1920s were a decade characterised by, among other phenomena, Oswald Spengler’s philosophy of history in *The Decline of the West* (published in 1918–1923), a work more multifaceted, though, than its title appears to suggest. Nevertheless, it became fashionable thereafter to detect the symptoms of *Untergang* in various manifestations of culture. It is important to note, however, that critical reactions to popular music on the one hand and modernist “serious” music on the other were in many aspects markedly similar. As popular music was then described as a symptom of social “anxiety” and the “highly unnatural state of affairs”, so was much of modernist music criticised for its “superficial” appearance which was supposedly due to abandoning the concepts of coherence developed in the age of Beethoven. For many, “noise music” manifested by the Italian futurists – especially Luigi Russolo in the treatise *L’arte dei rumori* (1916, [*The Art of Noises*]) – became the very epitome of new music as such. It was all too common then to (mis)use the word “futurism” (or “music of the future”) for various, often conflicting, concepts of modernist music. Discourses of decline were then intimately linked with visions of the “future”.

The discourse of *Untergang* in connection with modernist music is exemplified in an article by the Estonian musicologist Peeter Ramul, best-known as the author of the first book on general music history (up to Beethoven) available in the Estonian language (1930). In an article published in *Muusikaleht* ([*Music Journal*], 1925, Nos. 1 and 2) he proposed a system of classification for the major trends in modern music, weighed against the legacy of the “great classics”, as was common in the (German-language) musical historiography of that time. In conclusion, Ramul explains the social and cultural conditions that gave rise to Expressionism, Futurism, etc.:

“As a matter of fact, the pronounced nervousness manifested in today’s newest music is nothing to be surprised of. The character of modernism is due to the psychological conditions of our time. The current social, economic, and other living conditions are overall very abnormal. It is a period of crude materialism – one that suffocates the life-affirming way of thinking, so that the world succumbs to egoism. People mostly seek oblivion in the form of materialism and crude, “tickling” experiences. Instead of providing moral satisfaction, however, this weighs one’s soul down even further, leading to the nervousness of the entire society” (Ramul 1925, 25)

At the same time, one could not deny that, along with anxiety, the modern world had brought about progress – if not in arts and entertainment, then at least in technology. Therefore, jazz-related dances, like shimmy, were often mentioned (rather admiringly) next to modern machines and cinema:

“Jazz bands ramble now instead of [symphony] orchestras. More printed space is dedicated to cinema in newspapers than to literature, music, and theatre. Shimmy is being praised. Some of the more courageous dare to utter that time-honoured art, the one with a capital A, is altogether dead. It used to transcend life, covering it as a dome. Now the reverse has become a reality: new art grows from life itself. But since “life” means the major city with its machines, restaurants, bars, amusement parks, cinemas, and ball rooms, it is namely there that the seeds of new art should be looked for. And it exists there indeed in the form of cinemas, theatres for the masses, mass meetings, all kinds of jazz, shimmy, boxing, variety shows...” (Johannes Semper; *Kirjandus. Kunst. Teadus*. [Literature. Art. Science; supplement of *Päevaleht*] 03.07.1922).

The coverage of jazz in that period demonstrates that members of the musical scene were deeply divided in terms of their attitudes towards “serious” and “light” music. Apart from daily newspapers, new dance music and jazz were mentioned mostly in enthusiast-oriented journals in connection with radio broadcasts, gramophone records, and cinema, and there were also series of sheet music editions of schlagers published in the 1930s (e.g., *Modern lööklaulud* [*Modern Hit Songs*], *Helivõlu* [*Enchanted by the Sound*]). However, the most important music journal of that period *Muusikaleht* (*Music Journal*, 1924–1940), published under the auspices of the conservative Singers’ Union, provided notably little insight into popular music and, for the most time, was rather meagre in

its coverage of modernist “serious” music as well. While the research by Ojakäär (2000) and Lauk (2010) provides ample evidence of a lively popular music and jazz scene in Estonia in the late 1920s and 1930s, the burgeoning jazz culture in Estonia inevitably functioned against the backdrop of pronounced cultural conservatism prevalent in much of Estonian society. In passing descriptions of jazz in various texts, motives of estrangement and prejudice (references to jazz as merely “making noise”) tended to set the tone throughout that period.

## Conclusions

The project of digitalizing Estonian periodicals in DIGAR has opened new opportunities to evaluate the usage of popular music terms in the 1920s and 1930s. By using full-text searches, it can be determined how many times certain terms occurred in newspapers during the period in question. This makes it easier than previously to focus on the journalistic “minutiae”, such as advertisements or radio programmes published in daily newspapers, which are, nonetheless, descriptive of the general trends in the dissemination of “jazz” and other terms of popular culture. While the results gathered by using methods of quantitative analysis are not always informative on their own, they help to illustrate and specify the existing knowledge acquired by other means. This is exemplified in the case of the Charleston, a dance that defined the Roaring Twenties in American culture: in Estonian periodicals it appeared in the 1926 and was mentioned the most in 1927, roughly the same time as the peak of its popularity in the US. That kind of synchronicity in popular culture and its coverage in different countries and continents aptly illustrates, most of all, the effectiveness of the new means of communication that shaped the 20th century.

Defining the public image of jazz during that period remains a complicated task: although “jazz” was then undoubtedly a word of fashion, the coverage of jazz and other manifestations of popular culture in periodicals tended to be either understated (brief advertisements instead of more extensive coverage) or their impact exaggerated in a sensationalist manner (reports of various short-lived “crazes” in popular culture in Estonia or abroad). While the word “jazz” appeared rather consistently in Estonian newspapers from the mid-1920s onwards, the frequency of its occurrences was not significantly high compared to, for example, that of operetta. Nevertheless, many texts in periodicals attest to the significance that was then ascribed to jazz as a symbol of the “modern times” both in its positive (technological progress) and negative aspects (anxiety, commerciality, superficiality). Periodicals digitalized in DIGAR can be used as an important resource in determining the most general trends in the dissemination of music, and they provide a distinctive perspective on some of the attitudes that surrounded jazz and popular culture in the public sphere in the 1920s and 1930s.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PERIODICALS

*Ajaleht* (1913), *Feuilleton-Beilage der Revalschen Zeitung* (1911), *Kirjandus. Kunst. Teadus* (1922), *Muusikaleht* (1925), *Postimees* (1931–1932), *Päevaleht* (1924–1927, 1931–1932), *Raadioleht* (1931), *Sakala* (1929), *Tallinna Teataja* (1919, 1921).

### LITERATURE

Cohen, Gerald Leonard (2015). *Origin of the Term “Jazz”*. Rolla: Missouri University of Science & Technology

Crease, Robert P. (2000). Jazz and Dance. *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*. Bill Kirchner (Ed.). Oxford. Oxford University Press, pp. 696–705.

Currell, Susan (2009). *American Culture in the 1920s*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hennoste, Tiit, Roosmarii Kurvits (2019). *Eesti ajakirjanduse 100 aastat [100 Years of Estonian Journalism]*. Tallinn: Post Factum.

Hovi, Kalervo (2017). *Kuld Lõvi ja Kultase ajal: Tallinna restoranikultuuri ajalugu 1918–1940 [The time of Kuld Lõvi Restaurant and Kultas Café: The History of Restaurant Culture in Tallinn 1918–1940]*. Translated from Finnish by Piret Saluri. Tallinn: Varrak.

Hullot-Kentor, Robert (2009). Introduction. – *Theodor W. Adorno. Current of Music. Elements of a Radio Theory*. Edited with an Introduction by Robert Hullot-Kentor, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 1–40.

Knowles, Mark (2009). *The Wicked Waltz and Other Scandalous Dances: Outrage at Couple Dancing in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries*. Jefferson (N.C.); London: McFarland.

Lauk, Tiit (2010). *Džäss Eestis 1918–1945 [Jazz in Estonia in 1918–1945]*. Tallinn: Argo.

Leivategija, Karin (2023). ‘Dance is a disease for us’: dancing through the night as a threat to moral order in urbanizing Estonia. – *Urban History*, First View, 1 – 22.

Neuendorf, Kimberly A. (2017). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Ojakäär, Valter (2000). *Vaibunud viiside kaja. Eesti levimuusika ajaloost [The Echo of Faded Tunes. On the History of Estonian Popular Music]*. Volume 1. Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus.

Ramul, Peeter (1925). Mõni sõna modernismist muusikas [Some Words on Modernism in Music]. – *Muusikaleht*, 1925, No.2, 24–25.

Reimann, Heli (2013). Jazz Research and the Moments of Change. – *Etnomusikoloogian vuosikirja*, Vol. 25, 8–33.

Tool, Aare (2023). Theodor W. Adorno raadioteooria: tõlgenduskatse Eesti vaatenurgast 1920. ja 1930. aastatel [Theodor W. Adorno’s Radio Theory: An Interpretation from the Estonian Perspective of the 1920s and 1930s]. – *Res Musica*, No. 15, 123–143.

Veitners, Indriķis (2014). Ārzemju džeza mūziķi Latvijā 20. gadsimta 20.–30. gados [Foreign Jazz Musicians in Latvia up to 1940] – *Mūzikas akadēmijas raksti*, XI, 88–99.

# DŽEZS UN POPULĀRĀ MŪZIKA IGAUNIJAS PERIODIKĀ 20. GADSIMTA 20. UN 30. GADOS.

Āre Tols (Aare Tool)

## Kopsavilkums

Periodika sniedz vērtīgu informāciju par džeza un populārās mūzikas izplatību un klausītāju atsaucību Igaunijā 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gados, un dažkārt tas ir viens no retajiem pieejamajiem avotiem par šo kultūras fenomenu vispār. Tai pat laikā kā avots periodika ir izmantojama tikai līdz zināmai robežai. Simfoniskie koncerti un operas iestudējumi 20. un 30. gados Igaunijas dienas laikrakstos un žurnālos tika recenzēti regulāri, par džezu un citiem populārās kultūras aspektiem žurnālisti rakstīja drīzāk sporādiski.

Tomēr atsauces uz džezu minētā laika Igaunijas presē nebija retums – bija daudz reklāmas sludinājumu, kuros sastopams vārds “džezs” un citi populārās mūzikas termini, savukārt rakstos pieminēti daudz un dažādi konteksti. Apkopojumu par minēto terminu lietojumu 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gados būtiski atvieglo to iekļaušana tādās pilnu tekstu datubāzēs kā Igaunijas digitālais arhīvs DIGAR ([dea.digar.ee](http://dea.digar.ee)). Tādējādi šobrīd par šiem terminiem iespējams veikt kvantitatīvus pētījumus. 1. nodaļā sniegtais pārskats par džezu un populāro mūziku Igaunijā 20. un 30. gados veido kontekstu vārdu “džezs”, “tango” un “čarlstons” izplatības kvantitatīvajai analīzei Igaunijas laikrakstos līdz 1939. gadam (2. nodaļa). Lai arī DIGAR līdzīgas periodikas datubāzes eksistē vairākās valstīs (piemēram, Latvijas preses digitālais arhīvs [periodika.lv](http://periodika.lv) vai Amerikas vēsturisko laikrakstu datubāze [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov)), izmantojot DIGAR kā resursu, jāņem vērā tā tehniskās iespējas, kā arī valodas nianse un konkrētā perioda žurnālistikas konteksti. Kvantitatīvās analīzes ceļā iegūtie dati ļauj izgaismot galvenās mūzikas terminu izplatības tendences kopā ar avotos sastopamajiem diskursiem par džezu un populāro deju mūziku (3. nodaļa).

Spriežot pēc tā, cik bieži vārds “džezs” parādās 20. gadu laikrakstu sludinājumos, tas noteikti bija galvenais pārdošanas instruments vairākām izklaides vietām. Starp vairākām 20. gadu beigu Igaunijas džeza grupām *The Murphy Band* bija īpašs statuss. 1931. gadā *Raadioleht* (*[Radio žurnāls]*, 19.7.1931.) tika publicēta intervija ar vienu no sava laika pazīstamākajiem džeza mūziķiem – Kurtu Strobelu. Tajā viņš apraksta, kā jaunā deju mūzika izplatās Igaunijā:

Publika nepārtraukti pieprasa no orķestra kaut ko jaunu. Bet kā notiek saskarsme ar jaunāko mūziku? Man ir piemērs no *The Murphy Band* pieredzes. Mēs visi labi atceramies hitu *Valensija*. Interesanti, ka šī dziesma nāk no Londonas – mūziķi klausījās Londonas raido [BBC], un tajā skanēja *Valensija*. Viņi paklausījās to vienu vakaru un nevarēja iegaumēt. Tad viņi paklausījās vēl vienu vakaru un to pierakstīja. Trešajā vakarā viņi jau bija gatavi paši to spēlēt.” (*Raadioleht*, 19.07.1931.)

Definēt džezas publisko tēlu pētāmajā periodā ir sarežģīts uzdevums. Lai arī “džezs” neapšaubāmi bija modes vārds, džezas un citu populārās kultūras parādību atspoguļojums periodikā ir vai nu nepietiekams (īsi sludinājumi nevis plašākas publikācijas), vai arī tā ietekme ir pārspīlēta sensacionālā manierē (ziņas par dažādiem īslaicīgiem “trakumiem” Igaunijas vai ārzemju populārajā kultūrā). Lai arī vārds “džezs” Igaunijas laikrakstos kopš 20. gadu vidus bija sastopams diezgan regulāri, tie tomēr nebija tik būtiski apmēri, salīdzinot kaut vai ar opereti. Tomēr daudz tekstu periodikā apliecina, ka džezs tika uztverts kā “moderno laiku” simbols gan pozitīvi (tehnoloģiju progress), gan negatīvi (dumpinieciska, komerciāla, virspusēja parādība). DIGAR datubāzē (dea.digar.ee) digitalizēto periodiku var izmantot kā svarīgu resursu, lai konstatētu mūzikas izplatības galvenās tendences, turklāt tā piedāvā atšķirīgu perspektīvu attiecībā uz to, kā džezs un populārā kultūra tika uztverta 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gadu sabiedrībā.

# THE FIRST LATVIAN JAZZ MUSICIANS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE LATER DEVELOPMENT OF JAZZ IN LATVIA

Indriķis Veitners

The article is dedicated to the first Latvian jazz musicians – Voldemārs Lācis, Oskars Saulespurēns, Jack Michalitzky, Eduards Ābelskalns – and their role in Latvian jazz history. The purpose of the paper is to examine the activities of these jazz musicians – the course of their lives, their creative activity in the 1930s, and their impact on the further development of Latvian jazz in the 1940s and later. The article is based on archive materials, video sources, interviews and press materials, and collections of Latvian National Museum of Literature and Music.

**Keywords:** jazz, jazz history, jazz musicians, Latvia, Latvian jazz history, shellac records.

When it comes to Latvian jazz musicians in the period up to the summer of 1940, there are still many unknowns. The details of many musicians' biographies are known, yet their activities have not been studied in depth. Publicly available information about these musicians is very fragmented, sporadic and difficult to find. The only exception seems to be the 2020 documentary film *On piano – Jack Michalicky! The first known Latvian jazz pianist (Pie klavierēm – Džek Michalicky. Pirmais zināmais Latvijas džeza pianists)*, which can be viewed on Youtube, but it is not a scientific study.<sup>1</sup>

The question of the fate of the first jazz musicians after the 1940 occupation, and in the following political and historical collisions, is particularly compelling. Of course, it was a very difficult time for a large number of musicians, often with a very harsh outcome. However, not for everyone.

After the publishing of my monograph *History of Latvian Jazz 1922–1940*, I focused more on the research of later periods and events in the history of Latvian jazz. Surprisingly, and somewhat unexpectedly, in the process of research previously unknown information about Latvian jazz pioneers appeared. The information is not complete and research needs to be continued. However, it is important to take a look at Latvia's first jazz musicians and their impact on the Latvian jazz development in later years one more time.

The following article focuses on some of the most important jazz musicians in Latvia and their fate during World War II and the subsequent occupation of the USSR. It is important to note that a very large proportion of Latvian pre-war jazz musicians emigrated after the war or were killed during the war. Such a fate, for example, was in the face of most Jewish musicians who made up a large part of the Latvian jazz players up to 1940. Therefore, only a small number of pre-war jazz musicians survived and stayed in post-war Latvia.

1 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB0pssfA4K0&list=PLPoGddOgVifoolmaUNwV1aV6qVIreY\\_CD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fB0pssfA4K0&list=PLPoGddOgVifoolmaUNwV1aV6qVIreY_CD)

## 1. Some new testimonies about 20th century interwar jazz musicians in Riga

**Jack Michalicky**, whose life ended in 1941, was once considered the best jazz pianist in Latvia (his real name was Solomon Shlomo, in Latvian Solomons Šloma, 1908–1941). Despite his short and very tragic fate (he died in the very first days of the Nazi German occupation), Michalicky's fame as a jazz pianist was legendary at the time, therefore, he can be deservedly considered as one of the most important first Latvian jazz musicians.

A short biography<sup>2</sup> – born in Smolensk, Michalicky studied for a short time in Paris with the famous pianist – professor Isidor Philipp.<sup>3</sup> After returning to Latvia in 1931, he played in practically all the leading Latvian jazz orchestras – in the *Šmits'– Krēmers' orchestra* in 1933, in the Mischa Alyansky orchestra in 1936 (*Segodnā Večerom*, 18.08.1936, 6), and in many others. In 1939, Michalicky led his own small big band at the “Lido” restaurant in Jūrmala. The enthusiastic memories of his contemporaries about the concert performance of this orchestra have been well preserved. As one of the best orchestras, Michalicky's band also accompanied foreign guest artists who regularly visited Jūrmala's entertainment venues (*Jaunākās Ziņas*, 04.07.1939).

It is no coincidence that several other leading jazz musicians of the time (discussed below) were also members of the orchestra – Oskars Saulespurēns – alto saxophone, Voldemārs Lācis – trumpet and Verners Troics – drums.

The recordings of the *Bar Trio* created by Michalicky, Saulespurēns and Troics are among the best examples of early Latvian jazz. In total, 11 compositions were recorded, presumably in the fall of 1940 (LNA LVKFFDA, BE, matrix Nr. 5024–5029, record nr. 3942, 3943, 3944). It is Michalicky's characteristic, intelligent stride piano playing style, restrained phrasing and nice, light swinging rhythm that are the qualities that both contemporaries and colleagues valued the most. Michalicky was definitely one of the best Latvian jazz musicians of that time and undoubtedly also a role model for later Latvian jazz pianists (Freimane, interview as of 11.12.2009; Bērtiņš interview as of 21.07.2012).

As mentioned above, in 2020, the music publishing house *Jersika Records* created the documentary film *On piano – Jack Michalicky! The first known Latvian jazz pianist*. Here, a big thank you must be given to the head of the publishing house, Mareks Ameriks (1980), whose search in the Kino-Phono-Photo-document Archive has also brought such extremely interesting discoveries as this short fragment of silent cinema, dating from around the beginning of the 1930s, which shows a ball in Riga – dancers and a jazz orchestra (LNA LVKFFDA, F51, Doc. Nr. 497).

The most interesting things are the visible musical instruments – especially the drum set. In a short clip, the foot or bass drum pedal is also clearly visible; something which could possibly serve as a date. The video clearly shows the drummer's playing

2 Hereinafter the biographical facts of the musicians are taken from the monograph *History of Latvian Jazz 1922–1940*, generally based on collection of the National Museum of Literature and Music – the catalog of musicians' biographies, as well as the collection of Elmārs Zemovičs.

3 *Isidor Philipp* (1893–1934), pianist, piano professor at the Paris Conservatory.



technique – inking the cymbal with his hand – widely used by jazz drummers at that time and sometimes still today.

## **2. Continuation of the activities of certain jazz musicians in Latvia during the Soviet Occupation**

As for the most important Latvian jazz musicians of the interwar period, we should mention the trumpeter **Voldemārs Lācis** (1909–1985), who played actively until the 1950s, the vibraphonist Eduards Ābelškalns and the aforementioned saxophonist Oskars Saulespurēns and drummer Verners Troics.

The Lācis' archive has been preserved in the collection of the Museum of Literature and Music (Voldemārs Lācis' collection). It contains the jazz magazines *Metronome* and *Melody Maker*, sheet music, instrument catalogs, and correspondence with foreign publishing houses. These materials show that Voldemārs Lācis corresponded intensively with several foreign music publishers, from whom he ordered sheet music, sometimes from even as far away as Australia. They are proof of his awareness of global developments in jazz and that he certainly served as a source of information for his fellow musicians.

Lācis was a member of the Belgian Jazz Club, so he was well informed about jazz developments in the world and Europe. There was even a correspondence between Lācis and the legendary trumpeter Louis Armstrong. A unique fact; although, unfortunately, these letters are now lost (Zemovičs, interview 10.10.2008).

Lācis played in the best popular music orchestras of the 1930s (Teodors Kaiser's orchestra in 1931, Y.M.C.A. orchestra in 1932 and 1933, Herberts Šmit's orchestra in 1933, Valentins Janson's orchestra in the late 1930s, Jack Michalicky's orchestra in 1939, and soon after the end of the Second World War in Benjamin Chuzhoi's orchestra from 1946 to 1950). He can be seen in photographs and heard in most of the shellack records published by *Bellacord Electro*.

Composer Raimonds Pauls and jazz musician Zigurds Linde also shared their memories of Lācis, remembering him as a "very serious, punctual gentleman", who had a large library of sheet music, which he did not entrust to anyone. He always personally distributed, and then scrupulously collected the parts of the compositions before and after the concerts (Linde, interview 08.10.2008).

Lācis was undoubtedly one of the few truly competent jazz specialists in Latvia in the post-war period, who also actively played in various orchestras until the end of the 1950s. Unfortunately, in the political climate of that time, when jazz music had a conditionally "semi-legal" status, the knowledge of Lācis had no application and the new generation of Latvian jazz, which began to work actively at that time, was often unable to fully appreciate the experience of the older musicians. In the case of Lācis, his manner of playing was also more characteristic of the 1930s – something which could seem outdated and old-fashioned to the new generation of jazz musicians in the

late 1950s. This aspect was once emphasized by jazz drummer Zigurds Rezevskis in an interview (Rezevskis, interview 13.10.2008). However, there were musicians who learned from Voldemārs Lācis, and he is deservedly considered one of the figures that unites Latvian jazz musicians of the first independence and later generations.

Saxophonist **Oskars Saulespurēns** (1906–1998), the colleague of Lācis, is a truly legendary personality, one of the first Latvian professional saxophonists, who played in practically all the leading popular music orchestras of the 1930s.

Born in Riga, Saulespurēns worked in a photo company from 1922 to 1928. After serving in the army (1929–1930), he started playing in various ensembles and orchestras, while simultaneously studying at the Riga People's Conservatory (1933).

His professional activity in the 1930s was very broad:

In 1931 he played in Teodors Kaiser's orchestra;

In 1932 and 1933, the Y.M.C.A. in the orchestra, which also includes the first recorded jazz solo in Latvia;

In 1935, in the cafe *Kongress* orchestra, conducted by Vladimir Vlashek;

In 1939, in the Michalicky orchestra at the *Lido* restaurant in Dzintari;

1939–1940 in the *Alhambra* restaurant orchestra;

1940–1941 at the *Lido* restaurant.

He was also a member of Valentins Janson's orchestra in the late 1930s.

During the Second World War, between 1941–1945, Saulespurēns played the clarinet and saxophone in the Riga Radiophone Symphony Orchestra but in the first post-war years, he played in the Riga Construction Workers' Club together with Lev Tokarev-Sinkop. In later years, he played in various Riga restaurant orchestras.

Similarly to Voldemārs Lācis, Saulespurēns also intensively collected and distributed materials about jazz. According to his son Mārtiņš Saulespurēns, his father translated Gene Krupa's school of jazz drums in the late 1930s – a textbook, probably the first teaching tool for jazz percussion instruments in Latvian, as well as Rudolph Dunbar's (1907–1988) clarinet playing school (Saulespurēns, interview 21.11.2008). Zigurds Rezevskis and Pauls Pavasaris (the drummer in the *Daile* dance ensemble), also remember the Krupa school, which is said to have "traveled around" in a rephotographed form (Rezevskis, interview 13.10.2008).

On the other hand, the Latvian jazz pioneer and drummer **Verners Troics** (1912–1987) played drums in the Y.M.C.A. jazz orchestra in the 1930's, participated in the orchestras of Valentins Jansons and Oskars Stroks (also known as Oscar Strock or Strok), as well as in *Bellaccord Electro* recordings. Troics can be heard in *Bar Trio* recordings with Jack Michalicky, where you can hear his swinging drum playing style with brushes. In the summer of 1941, he was saved by chance from the fate of Jack Michalicky escaping the holocaust at the beginning of the war by being invited to Moscow to participate in

the culture days of the Latvian SSR as a member of the Latvian SSR State Opera and Ballet Theatre Orchestra. During the war, Troics was a member of the Red Army, and after the end of the war he returned to Latvia and continued to play in different orchestras and ensembles. As Zigurds Rezevskis remembers, at that time Troics was one of the few pre-war musician-drummers with a clear understanding of jazz stylistics and manner, as well as appropriate playing technique, who also willingly shared his knowledge with the new generation (Rezevskis, interview 13.10.2008).

Oskars Saulespurēns and Verners Troics together with the ensemble (Edmunds Goldšteins at the piano) can be seen for a short moment in the cinema chronicle *Padomju Latvija (Soviet Latvia)*, in the story about the opening of the hotel *Rīga* in 1956 (LNA LVKFFDA, F8, Doc. Nr. 1558).

But the most successful, the longest and the most prominent carrier of any pre-war jazz musician has to be that of **Eduards Ābelskalns** (1914–1982) – probably the first Latvian vibraphonist, a member of many pop orchestras and ensembles, and someone who played in both the *Bellaccord Electro* orchestra, the legendary Latvian Radio Jazz Sextet, and REO.<sup>4</sup>

Ābelskalns was born in Kursk, Russia. After graduating from Gulbene High School in 1932, he worked at the factory VEF for a year. By 1934, Ābelskalns was playing in orchestras.

In February 1934, he played in the cafe *Gambija*, later in the cafe *Kalns* in Jūrmala. From 1935 to 1938, Ābelskalns was a member of the orchestra at the *Tempo* restaurant, but in the season of 1938–39 he worked in the restaurant *Klosterpagrabs*. The end of 1939 was spent in Jūrmala, at the Majori, restaurant *Corso*, and in 1940, Ābelskalns plays in *J. Steins* restaurant in Riga.

In the 1930s, Ābelskalns participated in the arrangements of the *Bellaccord Electro* jazz orchestra – he can be seen in the photo in the 1935 *Bellaccord* catalogue (*Bellaccord Electro*, 1935,18). From 1939 to 1940, Ābelskalns also studied for a short time at the Latvian Conservatory under professor Augusts Kukainis (1901–1984), but with the Soviet occupation, he left his studies (probably due to the political situation and problems).

After the Soviet occupation, in the summer of 1940, Ābelskalns became a member of the orchestra of the legendary cafe *Otto Schwarz*, where he continued to play during the German occupation, simultaneously performing with the Radio Dance Orchestra.

Immediately after the second Soviet occupation, Ābelskalns started playing in the newly formed Radio Symphony Orchestra, where he worked until 1951 as a vibraphone soloist. From 1952 to 1955 he played in the “Rīga” cinema orchestra, and between 1955–1957 and 1959–1961 at the restaurant *Astoria*.

---

4 REO (*Rīgas Estrādes orķestris*) was first Latvian professional variety and jazz music Orchestra (1957–1975), by the Philharmonic of the Latvian SSR. Performed jazz classics, original music by Latvian authors, songs in jazz and variety style, with their outstanding performance in Latvia and beyond.

In 1956, Ābelskalns became a member of the first professional Latvian jazz collective – the *Radio Variety Sextet*, and a year later – in 1957 – the newly formed REO (*Riga Variety Orchestra*), where he worked intermittently until 1961. From 1961 to 1966, he again worked at the restaurant *Rīga*, followed by four years in the newly formed Latvian Radio light and pop music orchestra (until 1970s). Two years followed at the restaurant *Kaukāzs*, Ābelskalns' last band was the *Rīga* brass band (1972–1976). Eduards Ābelskalns died on April 2, 1982 in Riga.

Ābelskalns' vibraphone can be heard in *Bellaccord Electro* orchestra recordings of the 1930s, and on those of the *Latvian Radio Variety Sextet*, the REO and the Latvian Radio Light and Variety Music Orchestra (Latvian Radio bigband) after the war, where the clear sound of his vibraphone attracts attention (Mazvērsīte 2020,144).

Ābelskalns' sound and manner resembles that of the famous US jazz vibraphonist Lionel Hampton, whose characteristic “fast” vibrato is well heard in Ābelskalns' playing. Ābelskalns instrument is also surrounded by legends – at that time it was the only vibraphone in Latvia made by the American manufacturer *Premier* (which was once sent to him by his brother from Australia). This instrument, unique in its time, is currently in the possession of our percussion teacher Artis Orubs at the Latvian Music academy (Veitners 2015, 38).

178

Although initially sounding not dissimilar to the world famous *Benny Goodman Sextet* (including the vibraphone, guitar and clarinet), in several arrangements the impression of a slightly different, later period, but no less famous jazz line-up can be clearly heard in the work of the *Radio Variety Sextet*. It is the sound of the famous English jazz pianist George Shearing's quintet with vibraphone, guitar and piano, playing in block chord technique with nice unison lines. The characteristic, timbrally soft and romantic sound, known in jazz history as “the Shearing sound”, was very popular around the world in the 1950s and is also recognizable in some of the Radio sextet recordings. A typical example of Shearing's sound can be heard, for example, in Aino Bāliņa's song *Kam gaidi mans draugs* (*Why do you wait, my friend*) and *Good night*.

Although Ābelskalns' activity in Latvian popular music was quite long and successful, it is thought this was largely determined by the vibraphone's niche as a specific instrument. The excellent *Premier* instrument, combined with his very professional playing, ensured Ābelskalns a stable place in the Radio Sextet, the REO and other orchestras for many years. There is no disputing the importance of Ābelskalns as a great jazz musician (Rezevskis, interview 13.10.2008).

## Conclusions

In most cases, those Latvian jazz musicians who managed to survive the changes of time and the difficult historical turns of the 1940s, continued their activities into the 1950s, influencing the further development of Latvian jazz.

However, this impression was largely limited by ideological restrictions, the considerably more difficult acquisition of information about jazz events and the different understanding and approach to jazz of the new generation of musicians, which was more related to the development of modern jazz.

The old generation – the musicians of the 1930s – mostly represented the swing style, formed in a completely different musical aesthetic. Modern jazz deviations such as bebop and cool often earned a very negative attitude from these musicians, whereas the representatives of the new generation often considered the *Bellacord* sound of the 1930s to be hopelessly outdated.

The very harsh life experience must also be taken into account, as a result of which many musicians of the past were quite simply afraid to openly play jazz – music with an unclear official status, due to which some had even suffered repression. This attitude, as well as the loss of demand after the previous time of music, largely determined by completely different aspects of the change of musical fashion, but most importantly, the demands of the ruling ideology and the general state control, largely determined the departure of these musicians in the “shadow” and to some extent can be seen as a “survival strategy” for them. They chose a more peaceful path – restaurants, dance orchestras in clubs or even teaching work.

All of these factors, as well as the small number of surviving musicians, greatly reduced the impact of the previous generation, and from the end of the 1950s onwards, a new generation of jazz musicians began to work in Latvian jazz, which strongly tried to follow the development and example of American jazz.

The sound and experience of the 1930s no longer seem relevant. Perhaps this is the reason why, at the end of their lives, most of the “old” musicians were mainly active in restaurant ensembles, whose repertoire was more in line with their understanding of the jazz sound.

However, they were not forgotten. Boris Mohir, an activist of the *Riga Jazz Club*, gave completely unexpected information when I interviewed him in connection with the *Vasaras Ritmi* festival. Being a fan of traditional jazz, in around 1980 he had organized a concert of veteran Latvian jazz musicians at the *Riga Jazz Club*. Both Oskars Saulespurēns and Verners Troics as well as several other old jazz musicians, whom Boris had found with great difficulty and persuaded to perform, took part in the concert. Most of the participants were said to be over 80 years old, most of them at that moment almost completely forgotten and having long since left the stage. The event was turned into a touching journey through the beginnings of Latvian jazz with the participants’ reminiscences and music (Mohir, interview 18.03.2021).



Unfortunately, no further information about this concert has been preserved, but apparently it was the last joint public performance of the surviving Latvian jazz pioneers. Mohir also recorded the concert, but the recording has unfortunately been lost. I really hope that it will be possible to reveal more details about this event – a unique testimony to the very beginnings of Latvian jazz and its continuation up to the present day.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Archives

#### Latvian State Archive of Audiovisual Documents (LNA LVKFFDA)

Book of records and descriptions of records [*Skaņuplašu 2. oriģinālu uzskaites un aprakstu grāmata*], *Bellaccord Electro*, Nr. 1/5877–1568/4482.

LNA LVKFFDA, BE, matrix Nr. 5024–5029, record Nr. 3942, 3943, 3944.

Collection of Documents of the Miežitis family. [*Fonds Miežīšu dzimtas dokumentu kolekcija*] Fund Nr. 51, Doc. Nr. 497. Sadzīves ainas, dokumentāls materiāls, 1925–1939.

LNA LVKFFDA, F51, Doc. Nr. 497.

Cinema journal *Padomju Latvija* Nr. 39, December 1957. Fond Nr.8, Doc. Nr. 1558

LNA LVKFFDA, F8, Doc. Nr. 1558

#### The National Museum of Literature and Music

Voldemārs Lācis' collection.

### Interviews

Bērtiņš, Atis (1932–2020). Time and place: “Birznieki”, Rumbas parish, Kuldīga county, 21 July 2012. Interviewer I. Veitners. Digital sound file. Length of the recording: 2 h. 30 min. Owned by I. Veitners.

Freimane, Valentīna (1922–2018). Time and place: Rīga, Al. Čaka street 64–5, 11 December 2009. Interviewer I. Veitners. Digital sound file. Length of the recording: 1 h. 5 min. Owned by I. Veitners.

Linde, Zigurds (1938–2021). Time and place: Rīga, Kleistu 10–89, 8 October 2008. Interviewer I. Veitners. Digital sound file. Length of the recording: 1 h. Owned by I. Veitners.

Mohirs, Boriss. (1944). Time and place: Rīga. 18. March 2022. Interviewer I. Veitners. Digital sound file. Length of the recording: 2 h. Owned by I. Veitners.

Rezevskis, Zigurds (1938). Time and place: Rīga, Rakstniecības un mūzikas muzejā, Talsu street 1, 13. October, 2008. Interviewer I. Veitners. Digital sound file. Length of the recording: 1 h. Owned by I. Veitners.

Saulespurēns, Mārtiņš (1943). Time and place: Rīga, Elizabetes street, 21. November 2008. Interviewer I. Veitners. Digital sound file. Length of the recording: 1 h., 28 min. Owned by I. Veitners.

Zemovičs, Elmārs (1938) Time and place: Rīga, Elizabetes street, 10. October, 2008. Interviewer I. Veitners. Digital sound file. Length of the recording: 2 h. 20 min. Owned by I. Veitners.

## Literature

Anonimnyj. Zavtra benefis orkestra M. Al'ānskogo. *Segodnā Večerom*. 18.08.1936, Nr. 188, 6.

*Bellaccord Electro* (1935). "Bellaccord Electro" skaņuplašu katalogs. [b. v.: b. i.], 40.

Mazvērsīte, Daiga (2020). *Melnbaltās dziesmas*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.

Mūziķa kalendārs (1935). *Mūziķa kalendārs – rokasgrāmata*. Rīga: Kazanova, 224.

Veitners, Indriķis (2018). *Latvijas džeza vēsture 1922-1940*. Rīga: Musica Baltica.

Veitners, Indriķis. (2015). Piemirstais Eidis. *Mūzikas Saule*, nr. 2, 38.

[No title]. *Jaunākās Ziņas*, 04.07.1939.

# PIRMIE DŽEZA MŪZIĶI UN VIŅU LOMA TURPMĀKAJĀ DŽEZA ATTĪSTĪBĀ LATVIJĀ

Indriķis Veitners

## Kopsavilkums

Raksts veltīts pirmajiem Latvijas džeza mūziķiem, aplūkojot to ieguldījumu džeza aizsākumos Latvijā un pēctecību – kādā veidā pirmo Latvijas džeza mūziķu darbība ir atbalsojusies un iespaidojusi vēlāko Latvijas džeza attīstību līdz pat mūsdienām.

Latvijas džeza attīstību neapšaubāmi ietekmējuši politiskie un vēsturiskie notikumi (Otrais pasaules karš, PSRS un Vācijas okupācijas un uzspiestā komunistiskā ideoloģija). Neskatoties uz tiem, džeza pionieru darbība turpinājās arī vēlāk, lielā mērā nosakot tālāko džeza attīstību Latvijā. Tomēr joprojām ir daudz nezināmā, un šo mūziķu vēlākā darbība līdz šim dziļāk nav tikusi pētīta.

Īpaši saistošs ir jautājums par pirmo džeza mūziķu likteni pēc 1940. gada okupācijas, sekojošajās politiskajās un vēsturiskajās kolīzijās. Pēc monogrāfijas *Latvijas džeza vēsture 1922–1940* iznākšanas 2018. gadā ir parādījusies arī jauna, iepriekš nezināma informācija par vairākiem Latvijas džeza pionieriem.

## Jaunas liecības par džeza mūziķiem Latvijā starpkaru periodā.

Savulaik par labāko džeza pianistu Latvijā tika uzskatīts **Džeks Mihaļickis** (1908–1941). Par spīti īsajam un ļoti traģiskajam liktenim (viņš gāja bojā jau pašās pirmajās nacistiskās Vācijas okupācijas dienās), Mihaļicka kā džeza pianista slava tolaik bija leģendāra, līdz ar to viņš pelnīti var tikt uzskatīts par vienu no nozīmīgākajiem pirmajiem Latvijas džeza mūziķiem. Mihaļicka, Saulespurēna un Troica izveidotā *Bāra trio* ieskaņojumi ir vieni no kvalitatīvākajiem Latvijas agrīnā džeza paraugiem.

Mūzikas izdevniecības *Jersika Records* 2020. gadā izveidoja dokumentālo filmu *Pie klavierēm – Džek Michalicky! Pirmais zināmais Latvijas džeza pianists*, kas ir skatāma vietnē *Youtube*. Filmā redzams īss mēmā kino fragments (domājams, 20. gs. 30. gadu sākums), kurā redzama balle Rīgā – dejojāji un džeza orķestris. Video labi redzama raksturīga bundzinieka spēles tehnika, ar roku tušējot šķīvi, kā arī džezam raksturīgs instrumentārijs.

## Džeza mūziķu darbības turpinājums Latvijā PSRS okupācijas laikā

Kā nozīmīgākie Latvijas džeza mūziķi starpkaru periodā, kas darbojušies arī vēlākajos laikos, jāmin trompetists Voldemārs Lācis, saksofonists Oskars Saulespurēns, bundzinieks Verners Troics un vibrafonists Eduards Ābelskalns.

**Visvaldis Lācis** (1909.–1985.), kurš aktīvi spēlēja dažādos orķestros līdz pat 50. gadu nogalei, bija viens no nedaudzajiem, tiešām kompetentajiem džeza speciālistiem Latvijā pēckara periodā. Viņa arhīvā atrodami džeza žurnāli *Metronome* un *Melody Maker*, nošu un instrumentu katalogi, sarakste – vēstules ar ārvalstu izdevniecībām, kā arī notis,

kas apliecina Lāča informētību par džeza norisēm pasaulē. Diemžēl tā laika politiskajā realitātē, kad džeza mūzika bija nosacīti “puslegālā” statusā, Lāča zināšanām nebija pielietojuma, un Latvijas džeza jaunā paaudze, kas tieši tolaik aktīvi sāka darboties, ne vienmēr pilnvērtīgi novērtēja veco mūziķu pieredzi. Tomēr Lācis pelnīti uzskatāms par vienu no figūrām, kas vieno pirmās neatkarības un vēlāko paaudžu Latvijas džeza mūziķus.

Lāča kolēģis, saksofonists **Oskars Saulespurēns** (1906–1998) arī ir leģendāra personība, viens no pirmajiem latviešu profesionālajiem saksofonistiem, kurš 30. gados spēlēja praktiski visos vadošajos tā laika populārās mūzikas orķestros. Pēc kara Saulespurēns spēlēja dažādos Rīgas restorānu orķestros. Līdzīgi Lācim, arī Saulespurēns ir intensīvi vācis un izplatījis materiālus par džežu, tai skaitā pārtulkojis Džina Krupas (*Gene Krupa*) *Džeza bungu skolu* – mācību grāmatu, iespējams, pirmo džeza sitaminstrumentu mācību līdzekli latviski, kā arī *Klarnetes spēles skolu*, kas pār fotografētā veidā bija viens no nedaudzajiem tolaik pieejamajiem izziņas līdzekļiem par džežu.

Latvijas džeza pionieris, bundzinieks **Verners Troics** (1912–1987) 30. gados spēlēja sitaminstrumentus Y.M.C.A. kapelā, muzicējis V. Jansona un O. Stroka orķestros, kā arī *Bellaccord* orķestra ieskaņojumos. Troics ar savu svingojošo džeza spēles manieri ir dzirdams *Bāra trio* ieskaņojumos kopā ar Mihaļicki. Pēc kara Troics bija viens no nedaudzajiem pirmskara bundziniekiem ar skaidru izpratni par džeza stilistiku un manieri, kā arī atbilstošu spēles tehniku, kurš arī labprāt dalījies ar savām zināšanām ar jauno paaudzi.

Tomēr no pirmskara laika džeza mūziķiem visilgāk un redzamāk darbojies **Eduards Ābelskalns** (1914-1982) – iespējams, pirmais latviešu vibrofonists, daudzu estrādes orķestru un ansambļu dalībnieks, kurš spēlējis gan *Bellaccord Electro* orķestrī, gan leģendārajā Latvijas Radio džeza sekstetā, gan REO. Ābelskalna skanējuma un manieres paraugs ir ievērojamais ASV džeza vibrofonists Laionels Hemptons (*Lionel Hampton*), kura raksturīgais “ātrais” vibrato labi dzirdams Ābelskalna spēlē, turklāt Ābelskalnam piederēja tolaik vienīgais amerikāņu firmas *Premier* vibrafons Latvijā. Ābelskalna darbība Latvijas populārajā mūzikā bija diezgan ilga un veiksmīga, domājams, ka to lielā mērā tomēr noteica arī vibrofona kā specifiska instrumenta niša. Lieliskais *Premier* instruments savienojumā ar ļoti profesionāla mūziķa spēli bija faktori, kas nodrošināja Ābelskalnam stabilu vietu gan Radio sekstetā, gan REO un citos orķestros daudzu gadu garumā.

## Secinājumi

Tie Latvijas džeza mūziķi, kuriem izdevās izdzīvot laiku maiņās un smagajos vēstures griežos 20. gs. 40. gados, vairumā gadījumu turpināja savu darbību arī 50. gados, ietekmējot tālāko Latvijas džeza attīstību, lai arī tai šķēršļus lika ideoloģiskie ierobežojumi, ievērojami apgrūtinātā informācijas ieguve par džeza aktualitātēm, kā arī jaunās mūziķu paaudzes atšķirīga izpratne un pieeja džezam, kas bija saistīta ar modernā džeza attīstību. Vecās paaudzes – 30. gadu mūziķi pamatā bija svinga stila pārstāvji, kas bija veidojušies pavisam citā mūzikas estētikā. Modernie džeza virzieni kā bībops un kūls nereti izpelnījās visai noliedzošu attieksmi no šo mūziķu puses, turpretī jaunās paaudzes pārstāvji 30. gadu *Bellacord* skanējumu bieži uzskatīja par neglābjami novecojušu.

Noteikti jāņem vērā arī ļoti skarbā dzīves pieredze, kā rezultātā daudzi iepriekšējo laiku mūziķi gluži vienkārši baidījās atklāti spēlēt džezu – mūziku ar neskaidru oficiālo statusu, kuras dēļ daži pat bija cietis no represijām, tādēļ izvēlējās mierīgāku ceļu – restorānus, deju orķestrus klubos vai arī pedagoģisko darbu. 30. gadu skanējums un pieredze vēlāk vairs nešķita aktuāli, un, iespējams, tas ir iemesls, kādēļ vairums “vecu” mūziķu dzīves nogalē pamatā darbojās restorānu ansambļos, kuru repertuārs vairāk atbilda viņu izpratnei par džeza skanējumu. Šie aspekti, kā arī izdzīvojušo mūziķu nelielais skaits mazināja iepriekšējās paaudzes ietekmi, un, sākot ar 50 gadu beigām Latvijas džezā sāka darboties jauna džeza mūziķu paaudze, kas izteikti centās sekot ASV džeza attīstībai un paraugam.

Pētījuma laikā atklājās arī jauni fakti – negaidītu informāciju sniedza Rīgas džeza kluba aktīvistis Boriss Mohirs, kurš apmēram 1980. gadā Rīgas džeza klubā bija noorganizējis Latvijas džeza mūziķu – veterānu koncertu. Koncertā piedalījušies Oskars Saulespurēns, Verners Troics un vairāki citi vecākās paaudzes džeza mūziķi. Diemžēl nekāda tuvāka informācija par šo koncertu nav saglabājusies, taču acīmredzot tā ir bijusi pēdējā Latvijas džeza pionieru kopīgā publiskā uzstāšanās, unikālu liecība par Latvijas džeza pašiem aizsākumiem un turpinājumu līdz pat mūsdienām.



# OSKAR STROCK (OSCAR STROK) AND EDDIE (ADY) ROSNER: BERLIN IN THEIR LIVES AND MUSIC

Dmitri Dragilew

The article is devoted to the Berlin period of creativity of Oskar Strock (1893-1975) and Eddie Rosner (1910-1976), which coincided with the tumultuous years of 1929–33 and was marked by fruitful participation in the Berlin music scene, collaboration with the same colleagues, the emergence of their first hits, and the release of their first records. It explores the common influences and mutual interactions, the characteristics and significance of Strock's new works against the backdrop of the development of tango in Germany and Europe. The focus is on Berlin as a transit point and melting pot, where the music of Strock and Rosner first reached a broad listening audience, the differences between Strock's works, the dramatic or tragic paradigms he proposed and optimistic salon and cabaret tangos, that dominated the European tango scene at the time, when new traditions and vectors were being established, defining the character of tango in several countries and the gradual departure from consumer music towards the emergence of jazz and tango as autonomous musical genres. The article also discusses the emergence of Eddie Rosner as a distinctive jazz musician who maintained an interest in tango throughout his artistic life and career.

**Keywords:** Oskar Strock (Strok), Eddie Rosner, Eastern European jazz and tango, Berlin, interwar period

## Introduction

It is no exaggeration to say that in many ways, the episodes in the Weimar Republic were important in the artistic careers of Oskar Strock (1893, Daugavpils – 1975, Riga) and Eddie Rosner (1910, Berlin – 1976, West Berlin). First and foremost, both names relate to the German capital because of the initial success celebrated there. For Rosner, who was born in Berlin and later lived there continuously, this success was immediate (despite his family's connection to Poland – his father initially and later also his musical connection). For Strock, no less talented, but a slightly older musician, the success was somewhat delayed.

Strock's activities in Germany have hardly been researched. In research and, above all, in perception, there has been almost no reflection regarding the fact that Berlin was also Oskar Strock's first international "starting location". Although he was an alumnus of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, born in the territory of current Republic of Latvia and until mid-1920s, lived only in Russia and Latvia, in-depth studies prove that Strock actually became a tango composer and bandmaster, particularly in Berlin. Strock was almost 20 years older than his colleague Rosner, but his compositional career up to that point had not been very significant or extensive. For Rosner, his success came as a music interpreter: member, a sideman of diverse dance- and jazz-orchestras was particularly important, decisive and spectacular.

Both Rosner and Strock turned out to be either carriers or transporters of Western culture, which they brought to Eastern European soil. Both of them worked at the intersection of genres and in that border area where schlager, also popular song and utility music ends, and real jazz and tango begin. They laid the foundation of tango and swing in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia, leading the way for popular music. However, for various reasons, still an unfair and generally wrong tendency can be observed, namely, in several historical narratives the work by Rosner and Strock falls outside the framework of jazz or tango canons, or is even ignored.<sup>1</sup> In the 1930s, they were persecuted both in Germany, from where they were forced to flee in 1933 from the Nazis, and in the Soviet Union. And here we should not forget about the prohibition to perform their works or to mention their names. Consequently, it led to a certain oblivion. Dictatorial regimes almost managed to erase both names from cultural memory.

This article does not go into all the details of Rosner's early development as a musician and Strock's connections with Berlin, which began in the 1920s and were particularly intense between 1929 and 1933 (in 1932 the composer lived in Berlin hoping to settle here permanently). It looks at the general points that connect Strock and Rosner, as well as their particular status in context of the European jazz and tango community, particularly the Eastern European jazz and tango community. Both musicians were of Jewish descent, both collaborated with the same German colleagues: for example, we can speak about dance orchestra leaders Marek Weber and Efim Schachmeister in Berlin. In some aspects Weber, Schachmeister, conductor Otto Dobrindt and composer Walter Jurmann could be seen as connecting persons or "links" between Strock and Rosner.

### **Berlin: Transit and starting point, meeting place, crossroads, hit forge**

At the time, when Oskar Strock was preparing the recording session of his first tango *Black Eyes* in Berlin and finally made it through the Marek Weber Orchestra (Rec. 1; Rec. 2), Adi Rosner, who would later be called Ady and Eddie, was part of the Marek Weber Orchestra's line-up. It is not proven whether Rosner participated in the recording, but it cannot be ruled out either. We assume that Strock and Rosner often worked with the same session musicians as the boundaries between the main line-ups of the large dance orchestras to a certain extent were fluid. Strock shows constant interest in the works of such authors as Paul Abraham (Pál Ábrahám) and Friedrich Hollaender (Hollander), whose music was performed by the Weintraub Syncopators Ensemble with Eddie Rosner at *Trumpet and Violin*. Moreover, Strock called the German version of the tango *Black Eyes* almost similarly to one of Friedrich Hollaender's songs: *Zwei dunkle Augen* (*Two dark eyes*; Rec. 3), and for another tango he completely borrowed the name

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, Alexandra Malli does not mention Oskar Strock at all among other composers in her Masters' thesis *The compositional reception of the Tango Argentino* over the years 1910–1940, despite the fact that it provides a fairly comprehensive panorama and statistics for European countries, primarily German-speaking, including Malli's mentioned "directory of all tangos" based on Hofmeister's monthly reports 1910–1940 and the ONB library catalogue (Malli 2013, 36–47, 54–63, 163–332).

from the foxtrot *Wenn wieder Frühling ist (When Spring Comes Again)* by Paul Abraham (Bergmeier 1982, 29) (Rec. 4). The instrumental piece “*Only in Sebastopol*”, by Ernst Steffan, recorded in the *Berliner Singakademie* by the band *Weintraub Syncopators* from 1929 (Rec. 5) shows similar arrangement patterns that can also be seen in the recording of Efim Schachmeister *Wie siehst Du aus? (Novoye bublički)* by Oskar Strock from the same year (Rec. 6).

In August 1930, Oskar Strock worked in Berlin with Walter Jurmann, who was also a singer and would later become a Hollywood composer writing music, for example, for such a film as *His Butler's Sister*. The Strock-Jurmann collaboration is documented by recordings released the same year in the German capital by *Adler Electro* (Rec. 7; Rec. 8). Curiously, one of the recordings was called: *Mein Liebster muss Trompeter sein (My favorite has to be a trumpeter)*; Rec. 7). By the way, it should be noted that at the recording session for “Adler-Electro” Strock fell back on the new and very popular song *Veronika, der Lenz ist da (Veronika, spring is here)* by Jurmann, also two of Friedrich Holländer's songs from the film *The Blue Angel* have been used (Rec. 9; Rec. 10). The band *Weintraub Syncopators* (1924–1933) provided the soundtrack for this film. From December 1932 to February 1933, Jurmann was part of the team as a composer responsible for filming the UFA sound film *Heut' kommt's drauf an (Today's what matters)* with the famous German actor Hans Albers in the leading role. *Weintraub Syncopators* appeared in the film and was one of the few show bands that were constantly commissioned by the film industry (Bergmeier 1982, 29–30). Of the five songs recorded then, Walter Jurmann composed four. They were also recorded in Berlin with the Odeon Artists Orchestra under the direction of Otto Dobrindt. Additionally, there was a tango: *Immer wenn ich glücklich bin, muss ich schrecklich weinen (Whenever I'm happy, I cry terribly)*; Rec. 11). It is interesting that Dobrindt was the one who made the second vocal-with-orchestra- recording of the Strock's tango *Černye glaza / Schwarze Augen (Black Eyes)* in Berlin (Rec. 12).

At the international symposium dedicated to Oskar Strock held in Daugavpils, Latvia in 2007, it was said that particularly “Riga between the two wars – as a more or less comfortable city, with numerous cafes, restaurants, dance halls – became an environment that, in a good sense, provoked Oscar Strock to experiment in the tango genre [..]” (Neminušij 2007, 73). But it is known that Berlin was characterized by much more musical provocation possibilities and much more of an extensive range of leisure activities. Over and beyond, there were many light music orchestras and record companies here. Before the Nazis came to power, the state did not try to interfere, direct or label certain art as degenerate. Berlin was a “melting pot” and a gathering place for many active forces. “The list of bands committed to *Haus Gourmenia* alone reads like an encyclopedia of jazz from around 1930” (Wolfram 1992, 46). “The *Barberina* was one of the first large dance palaces in the west of Berlin in the 1920s.” (Ibid., 59)

Among the best-known locations were also *Barberina* and *Casanova* – Oskar Strock used these names for his commercial projects in Riga. The Berlin *Barberina* program of February 1933 contains information that “Kapelle Widmann with its jazz soloists provides entertainment” and “Nadeschda Feodorova, the beautiful Russian sings to

the dance” (Wolfram 1992, 62). Certainly, Kurt Widmann soon became one of the most accomplished bandleaders in Germany, and the Russian presence was relatively large.

Most dance orchestras that performed before 1933 were led by bandmasters who came from the former Tsarist Russia. Some of them used pseudonyms. Violinist Lev Goltsman began to call himself Dayos Bela, pianist Hermann-Bernhard Leopoldovich Biek, a native of Tallinn, began to be called Ben Berlin, violinist Samuil Baskin took the Nickname Sam Baskini; Violinists Ilya Livshakov and Efim Shachmeister kept their names (cf. e. g. Lotz 2006). In 1930–31, Dayos Bela and Efim Schachmeister were engaged for programs in *Casanova* (Wolfram 1992, 63). All these musicians had great success, regularly captured on records, which were released in large numbers. Almost none of them composed music or had any composer ambitions. All of them managed to leave Germany and thus avoid the Holocaust. Most finally ended up in Argentina. Almost no one retained their former popularity in a new place, and weren’t able to gain fame comparable to that which they had enjoyed in Berlin. They did not become the founder of or the brightest, leading representative of a certain genre, as happened with Strock and Rosner in Latvia, in Poland, in the Soviet Union and more other countries.

While Friedrich Holländer, Walter Jurmann, Paul Abraham, Marek Weber and Efim Schachmeister went towards literally American direction after 1933 (Kühn 1996; Walendowski 2005; Buxbaum 2006; Lotz 2006), whether North or South, Rosner and Strock acted as mediators within the European continent and even became the co-founders of the corresponding traditions of several places. One could say with complete certainty, without speculation, that Rosner and Strock are united not only by their joint work, so to speak, in various locations, first in Berlin and later in the USSR. They have a special role in implanting certain styles and ways of playing on foreign soil.

As for Rosner, the ballrooms of the Weimar Republic and their progress in terms of jazz and revue should be mentioned. Rosner brought this experience to Poland and the USSR (Brodânskij 1940; Bulgak 1961; Il’in 1961; Saul’skij 1990; Dragilev 2011). While Strock was inspired by the culture of Berlin, he created a new type of tango that contrasted with what was previously cultivated in the German capital. This neither went unnoticed nor without consequences. Besides, the performances of Oskar Strock (1935) and the Weintraubs (although without Eddie Rosner, 1937) in Japan, Rosner’s guest appearances in Scandinavia (1938) were as essential as Strock’s influence on development of the Polish tango with the assistance and mediation of Publisher Joseph Altschuler, poet and translator Władysław Szlengel, singer Olga Kamińska and Jerzy Siemionow among others. And we should not forget the Romanian Tango related to the work by Peter Leschenko and the initial ignition of Finnish tango in the 1940s, which was an involuntarily exercised acquaintance of Finns to Russian tango music - genre that essentially formed in its turn under the decisive influence by Strock. The impact by Strock can also be observed in former Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, France and Italy.

## Tango or foxtrot? What kind of tango?

The Russian poet Andrei Bely observed Berlin's nightlife of the 1920s and witnessed how foxtrot fever had swept through Germany rather than tango fever. Some of the youth representatives called this capital the "black international of modern Europe". The poet was horrified and concluded: "everyone is dancing in Berlin" – from billionaires to workers and beggars – "from seventy-year-old women to seven-year-old babies." They dance in "plyasulni" (*plâsul'ni*), as Bely dubbed any ballrooms and halls, "decent, semi-decent, completely indecent. Germans and Viennese, Czechoslovakians and Swedes, immigrants from Poland are dancing and China, Tsarist Russia, Japan, England..." (Mierau 1987, 56).

The German musicologist Fred Ritzel notes that around 1923, the tango offered in the German music industry started to decrease and was less than ten years earlier (Ritzel 1988), when the tango boom in Paris was observed. When analytically looking back at the popularity of the genre in comparison to the other dances, a discrepancy emerges between the historical truth and today's image that prevails in the collective memory. This image reveals a distorted overestimation: it is often believed that the tango was in great demand even before 1928. In fact, and contrary to this idea, there are only nine tangos out of a total number of 8 editions of the popular series of music books *Zum 5 Uhr Tee* (*For 5 o'clock tea*), published by the Viennese Boheme Publishing House (Vienna-Berlin-New York, 1925-26, with 18 to 20 songs per booklet). These include *Ein bisschen Feuer* (*A Little Fire*) by Ralph Benatzky and *Märchen, die uns der Wind erzählt* (*Fairy Tales that the Wind Tells Us*) by Bert Silving, two French compositions (e.g. *Tango d'un Solitaire* by R. Lessig-Turin), two Italian ones, one American, two songs focus on Latin American (sic!) cities.

The demand was addressed within relatively modest limits: local titles did not overflow, and true Argentinian productions were not clearly evident. When they were, these were titles such as *Adiós muchachos* dated 1928, in which Argentina is considered a bearer of bad luck. However, this song has been given new, absolutely meaningless and conservative-bucolic German lyrics that fit well into the prevailing misconception of tango (Rec. 13). The bright major key and deceptive, cheerful original interpretations had led to completely wrong conclusions. Amazingly, the tragic, almost blasphemous and "terribly black lyrics" (Riedel 2016, 198) of the Argentinian original by César Vedani correspond to the song by Sergei Rachmaninoff, to words by Fyodor Tyutchev (*Fëdor Tûtčëv*, op. 26, No. 2) *Vsë otnâl u menâ* (*He took everything from me*), paired at the same time with the bitter courage of some Russian gypsy romances.<sup>2</sup> Everything suggests that foxtrot was the focus of interest in Germany and if, exceptionally, it was about tango, the compositions in the tango rhythm should – contrary to Argentinian practice – not appear depressing, but either ironic or life-affirming.

The constitutive narrative and constructive peculiarities of the then still relatively new Argentine tango canción (the lament of an abandoned man, a tragic love affair,

2 [https://notes.tarakanov.net/katalog/ko\\_mpozitsii/vse-otnyal-y-menya/](https://notes.tarakanov.net/katalog/ko_mpozitsii/vse-otnyal-y-menya/)



which is now more resigned and not crying out for revenge) appeared at the end of the 1920s in Europe and especially not really arrived or wanted in Germany (Malli 2013, 78). The lyricists provided material that left the performers with no choice but to slip into the role of a charmer or a likeable, reasonable and reliable cavalier or to play a father figure. A typical example is the tango by Benatzky – (*Come into my arms, beautiful woman*) dated 1922. Due to the fact that Benatzky is one of the composers who wrote tangos particularly often, this reference is not insignificant (Malli 2013, 57). The lyrical “I”, characterized by lovesickness and personal unhappiness, was by no means the focus (Rec. 14).

There was no highly emotional “settlement” to any dangerous and merciless “man-eating libertines”. If anything, the women were not begged to, but “gently admonished and wisely taught”, with a background knowledge that a lady is normally dependent on a man. Entirely in line with the edifying and entertaining “schlager” energy or strategy, the man should not lament and whine, but be portrayed as full of seductive confidence, so that the audience is not unpleasantly surprised and possibly deterred by an excessive dose of direct melancholy and sentimentality. As with Arthur Schnitzler, the woman could also bear the characteristics of the already established figure of the “sweet girl”, who, as is well known, representing a counterpart to the *femme fatale* and had appeared much more often in the cheerful foxtrots.

From a musical point of view, European authors outside of the cabaret stage who dealt with tango alongside other ballroom dances and created new feel-good hits, practiced less intellectually charged, but “precious”, cultivated, operetta-like and serenade-like songs, set in extremely light tones, which basically looked for their origin and model in the Habanera by Sebastián Iradier *La Paloma*. As with almost every hit, love was the focus of attention, but one that seems above all optimistic, hopeful and carefree, which one could possibly sing about in a playfully flirtatious and tongue-in-cheek manner, but above all superficially. Without daring to show subjectivity, philosophical depth and impassioned bitterness, and savoring sharp contrasts, the music and lyrics here contribute a solemn or soothing character; the listener should indulge in beautiful thoughts, whether they be memories or visions of the future (Rec. 15; Rec. 16. Rec. 17; Rec. 18).

These songs show a symptomatic template: they are mostly conceived in the major, in the form verse-refrain (AB). The B-sections (refrain) are always in the major. At that time part A was often called “song” and the refrain was called “tango”. The series of such works is innumerable. The Spanish *Kapellmeister* Juan Llosas, who resided with his tango orchestra in the Berlin dance palace *Femina* (today’s Ellington Hotel of Berlin) and recorded several songs for labels *Grammophone* and *Ultraphone* (both his own and those of other authors) or *Orchestrola* (as Juan Sassoli, in his repertoire showed a celebratory, magnificent major charisma (Rec. 19; Rec. 20). It is no coincidence that Llosas increasingly turned to atypical tango instrumentation and the corresponding sound over time, which no longer had anything to do with tango (Rec. 21; Rec. 22).



## Choosing tango

The great Latvian poet Ojārs Vācietis once wrote: „sing the saddest song, but you will be happy“<sup>3</sup>... The famous Russian poet Oleg Tschukhoncev (*Oleg Čuhoncev*) paraphrased him in an adaptation and made his own conclusion, summarized: “The saddest motive is better than silence” (Vacietis 1990, 39). Strock seemed to have a similar point of view, an analogous approach, having caught and having felt the corresponding thunderous changes in society. After his first Berlin premiere – the foxtrot *Novye publički* (*New Bagels*) and the recording session for *Adler Electro* – he quickly abandoned (and with some exceptions – for example, the shimmy *Polly*) from composing entertaining, up-tempo-numbers or gave up foreign novelty songs on discs, although he advertised them. In Strock’s tangos, there are hardly any show-booth-like, schematic conventions or cabaret alienation effects.

Also, entertaining tasks of international dance- and show-music, in which only an almost gutted rhythm frame for an irrelevant hit remains from the Tango Argentino and the emotional, dramatic, psychological, sometimes bizarre message is degraded or reduced to a secondary, weakened and suppressed quality, did not meet Strock’s requirements. On the other hand, he tries to use the “mood painting”, the “melancholy of disappearance” and the depiction of feelings to bring the legacy of a European “classic”. Thus, the general requirements of an evergreen hit are always met. After all, the tango created by Strock not only appears as an almost objective genre of urban everyday music, but also as the bearer of a new emotional layer.

Strock obviously used the works that were known as the first tangoes or the pieces that played a key role in the genesis of the genre. There is much to suggest that Strock was not oriented towards the preferences of consumers with popular props. Finally, the affinity of the first two bars of *Moë poslednee tango* (“My Last Tango”) with Bizet’s basic motivic pattern, tragic-fatal Catabasis is doubly intertextual and should be understood as a nested and continuing meta metaphor that refers to other predecessors and above all to one primal melody by Iradier, the other melody by the same Iradier as the initial image and basic template (Dragilev, Nowack 2019).

Most of Strock’s works are conceived in the stringent minor, slow, somber and melancholic. Even in the songs, however, which are deceptively bright in character and have radiant major cadences, “wavering” sounds come through: the elements of the minor in the major key, with elegiac raptures. The break with the previous Russian tango cabaret tendencies, as well as with the Berlin tango custom- in which the meaning of the genre shrank to a decorative role or was relatively narrowly specified, the applied utilitarian purposes, the exalted theatrical devices, stylized-cheerful or salon cabaret “guidelines” can be heard. It is neither provoked nor ironic, ambiguously or boldly acted, no exotic story is told, and there is no one-dimensional entertainment either.

---

3 In Latvian: “Nodziedāt pašu skumjāko, bet būs priecīgi.”

The lyrical “I” comes first as the ultimate, discreetly “equipped” with the message of a “shortened drama of fate”, if one uses Dieter Reichardt’s term (Reichardt 1984, 114), with world pain, which ensures understandable recognition features and comparable effects and the listener into a world of feelings that can be familiar to almost every affine recipient. The lyrical “I” invites the audience to identify using very general emotional expressions. The whole structure – melodically and textually – is characterized by a sublime, cantilena-like, elegiac-lyrical language that shows an inner restlessness from the start, but in contrast to many “gypsy romances”, is stricter and more dominant, only sparingly affected by longing and farewell told. However, we can say that the theme of a failed love is a maneuver to refer to existential threats.

Riga cultural scientist Boris Ravdin already spoke in his broadcasts for the BBC about the thought of finiteness arising in Strock’s Tangos (Archive of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner Society). This in turn corresponds to the basic gesture of the tango, to an opinion or reading of Enrique Santos Discépolo, according to which a tango represents a “mixture of anger, pain, faith and deprivation” (or to the maxim of the other Argentine poet Ramon Gomez de la Serna: in contrast to other music, the one plays to heal wounds, tango is there “to open the wounds and put your finger in them”) (Reichardt 1984, 147; Birkenstock, Rüegg 1999, 23). In the tango text of *Black Eyes* Strock comes incredibly close to Cortusi’s *La Cumparsita* text: “Those eyes were my luck, I look for them everywhere, but can’t find them anywhere” so says Cortusi (Birkenstock, Rüegg 1999, 127). “Two black eyes fairy tale splendor was all my happiness, they can’t be forgotten anywhere, where are you hiding now, who is the other one close to you?” – is what Strock says when we read the German adaptation by Paul Eplée that was published in Riga from 1930 and a trans linear translation of the original Russian text together or side by side (Archive of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner Society).

Nevertheless, consciously or unconsciously, Strock went above and beyond the depiction of abandonment, the longing for the beloved or the pain of separation, especially by musical means. He offered something new. This is evident through its following special features. Far from the morbid exoticism of a *Theater Guingol* (among others *Les Apaches* as Art-Figure), far from a more or less schematic exoticism of distant trips to foreign countries—which was typical for the Russian tango before the revolution and in the time of NEP, far from the superficiality of the salon-entertaining German variant or its German cabaret form, but also far from the songwriter-like, direct, sometimes exaggerated and crude accusation of a woman, which *lunfardo* flaunts even more drastically, which was characteristic of *tango canción* in Argentina.

It should not be forgotten that it was only in the 1930s that Gardel’s songs came to light which – as is usually the case in Europe – have an orchestral accompaniment and, like Strock’s, primarily express a memorable cantilena-like melody. Strock created a genre which was, to use the words of Fred Ritzel ostensibly “escapist tango with a negative emotional tendency, can be named, which starts on the basis of the standard situation, but generalizes it in such a way that love story seems to extend symbolically

to life circumstances in general” (Ritzel 1988, 54). Unhappy love appears as a substitute, a representation of everything else, it is extrapolated and functions as an euphemist replacement for a detailed expression. The success of “escapist” as a definition is debatable; after all, it’s less about an ivory tower, loss of reality, and more about fear, homelessness, inner emigration and Aesopian language. The analysis of the musical situation and the entertainment stage of that time gives reason to assume that it was Strock, who turned out to be the instigator and pioneer of the new style. Focusing on melancholic pathos on the verge of despair; they are mostly total minor tangos with melodic parts in a harmonic minor, chromatic steps in melodic phrases and in the accompaniment, which create either a lamenting or lethargic atmosphere.

There are indications that the fame and influence of Strock and the authority of his music after 1929–30 – meaning after the days of its famous premiere of *Black Eyes* (“with Russian chorus singing”, as it said on the label) and Marek Weber as Orchestra-Leader – were relatively rapidly growing, although his name didn’t necessarily became known (Rec. 23). It is very symbolic that the release of the record is dated November 30, 1929 – that is, six days after the start of the stock market crash in the United States, which ended just the day before on Black Tuesday, October 29. We can say that in Germany came the first music reactions – proof and evidence of influence – 1930 together with the so-called response to *Black Eyes* – *You still long for Black Eyes* by Strock own, where, despite the “Russian refrain”, its linguistic affiliation was no longer separately reported (Rec. 24). Furthermore, one must mention *Liebe war es nie* (*Love Was Never*) (1931) by Fred Markusch, which actually came from Hungary, that appeared on records as an alleged “Russian tango”: explicit subtitles or direct names on the label were either intended to simulate the provenance or to symbolize a stylistic affiliation (Rec. 25).

Markusch’s next tango *Ob Du mich lieb hast* (*Whether you love me*) is also one of them and was recorded by Marek Weber (Rec. 26). Actually, one should also include the tango song *Kleine Sehnsucht* (“A Little Longing”) by Friedrich Holländer, which is still very popular today, written in 1930 as part of the incidental music for *Phaea*, a comedy by Fritz von Unruh and recorded by *Weintraub Syncopatos* as “Jazz symphonists under Holländer” (Rec. 27). The A part of this tango, from bar 4 to bar 18 in its strict minor, is so close to the tone and idiom of Oskar Strock that the B part (refrain), which is in the major, but is very timid, delicate and fragile, makes the previous ones melancholic sequences only confirmed.<sup>4</sup> A similar conveying emotional state and methodology can also be seen in Walter Jurmann’s no less well-known song *Ohne Worte lass uns scheiden* (*Without Words, Let’s Divorce*) from the Austrian film *Ausflug ins Leben* (*Journey into life* (1931; Rec. 28)). We can even exclude the rather parodic song *Play me a Russian tango on the balalaika* by Jurmann’s closest employee Bronislav Kaper from 1931 (Rec. 29).

In Poland, these tendencies reached a culmination in 1936 in the tango *Ta ostatnia niedziela* (*Last Sunday* or *Utomlënnoe solnce* (*Exhausted Sun*) in the Russian version]

---

4 <https://kulturakademin.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Eine-kleine-Sehnsucht.pdf>

by Jerzy Petersburski, who previously worked with German patterns and set pieces (see *O Donna Clara*). It is certainly not a coincidence that also began in 1930 and that at this time the number of sad Polish tangos, which adopt the Strock's *tango canción* habitus and are composed in the characteristic continuous minor and tone, increasing strongly, rapidly and continuously. The first, which still has traces of the old Apache exoticism, but already has "one foot in the new emotional layer", is the song *Nie odchódź ode mnie* (*Don't Leave Me*) (Artur Gold-A.Włast ) from the revue *Uśmiech Warszawy* (*The Smile Of Warsaw*) from 1930 (Rec. 30). Of course, we can consider this situation in the spirit of phenomena developing in parallel, but firstly, a number of facts speak in favor of our hypothesis, and secondly, these processes need to be considered comprehensively and separately.

### **Weintraub Syncopators and "consorts" as an (alternative) "interface and hot spot"**

Let's summarize so far. The time of the above-mentioned developments and phenomena coincides with the breakthrough and successes of Oskar Strock's first tangos, which were recorded in Berlin by Marek Weber and Otto Dobrindt, among others, as well as Eddie Rosner's work with Weber and Weintraub (Bergmeier 1982, 23). Nothing is known about any specific encounters between Strock and Rosner, there is no solid evidence, but it is entirely possible. It was a short and intense period, on the eve of the escape from Berlin. Strock and Rosner were very active people who were not afraid of risk and adventure or exaggeration. It is completely clear that Strock followed the activity of the *Weintraub Syncopators* band, and it is not for nothing that he borrowed two track names from this band's repertoire.

Weintraub recalled in 1979: "Each of us used five music instruments. So we could play pieces like *Rhapsody in Blue*. We just changed instruments during performance."<sup>5</sup> Playing different instruments was accompanied by playing with props, lighting effects, dressing up, comedy situations. For example, like this: the beam of a spotlight snatched out a musician, depicting a saxophone solo while a flute sounded in the darkness. In the repertoire of the *Weintraub Syncopators*, they creatively mastered and many elements of the then light music – the Charleston – and tango, Latin American rhythms and the new Viennese operetta, French chanson, Chicago jazz and early swing, frivolous lyrics, in which absurdist techniques coexisted with parodies about conservative Prussian morality.

*Syncopators* amazed the viewer many times divers, as they would say now, an integrated approach to the matter. An important factor in success was entertainment – pantomime and buffoonery (Dragilev 2011; Dümmling 2022). Perhaps the most famous song was the work of Jurmann and Kaper – *My Gorilla Has a Villa in the Zoo*, in which the ensemble not only plays, but also sings in the manner of the very popular vocal group

---

<sup>5</sup> Weintraub's recollections are based on Jörg's Süsenbach and Klaus Sander German documentary (Süsenbach, Sander 2000).

*Comedian Harmonists* (Bergmeier 1982, 29). Later, Rosner would implement the findings of his colleagues in Poland (admiring local critics), and in the Soviet Union (theatrical comic-satirical and parody-humorous six-minute jazz suites *From two to five* and *Black Eyes*), which, however, have only been handed down as audio documents (Rec. 31).

The Weintraub's band was considered a jazz band and often called themselves jazz symphonists. Strock went even further and called his formation Jazz Orchestra at his recording session in Berlin. So positioned Strock himself as the conductor of a jazz orchestra (Rec. 32), in contrast to many others in Berlin, who identified themselves as Leaders of Dance Orchestras (Tanzkapellmeisters). He soon published a sheet music album in Riga called *Russian Jazz*. The next one was Dajos Béla, seen in the 1932 film *Gitta discovers her heart* with the then very successful Hungarian actress and singer Gitta Alpar, who was very popular in Berlin. Dajos Béla's piano was played by Franz Grothe, a later very well-known composer and conductor whose pieces Strock was also happy to mentioned in the publishing announcements, catalogs and reference books of his publishing house (Dragilev 1995). The music for *Gitta discovers her heart* was written by the Hungarian composer of Russian-Jewish descent Nicholas (Miklós) Brodsky. A year earlier he also became known through the release of the tango *O Cara Mia* (Rec. 34).

Oskar Strock chose this name as a reserve title name for his tango *Musen'ka* (*Musenka*), in which he tried to stick to life-affirming operetta-like German or Italian patterns (Archive of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner Society). And the waltz *What can be as beautiful as your love* from the film *Gitta discovers her heart* was later taken over as the romance *Pis'mo* (*Message*) by the Soviet singer Claudia Schulschenko (*Klavdiâ Šul'ženko*), who also interpreted Strock's works. But in the pieces that Strock named in the same way as Hollaender and Abraham, he suggested his own dramatic alternatives - as if out of defiance towards the ironic, light-hearted and mischievous initial counterparts. Compared to the compositions of Hollaender and especially Abraham, the tango-works of the same name by Strock was painted in disturbing tones, full of vague forebodings or hints of impending or already completed negative changes, contained notes that reflected the mood of a crisis.

Interestingly, Oskar Strock was fascinated by Abraham and found his fate and the circumstances of the escape from Berlin much more terrible than his own. Later, Strock repeatedly recalled how Abraham's operetta *Ball im Savoy* had its acclaimed premiere in Berlin on Christmas Eve 1932 (December 23), and how Paul Abraham was physically attacked by the Nazis at the entrance to the Great Playhaus (today – Friedrichstadtpalast) in February 1933 and was not allowed in. Completely shocked, he fled from the fascists to his Hungarian homeland, in the end, as it soon turned out, only to travel on to New York via Paris and Havana after a few years (Waller 2021; Meesmann 2023). In the early 1930s, Abraham held his famous goulash parties in a rented town house on Fasanenstrasse in Berlin, which was often referred to as a private palace. We can assume, that Strock, who lived nearby at the Pension Radloff Rumland on Kurfürstendamm 226 (Archive of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner



Society),<sup>6</sup> was also one of the invited guests, since Abraham was known for his polite and generous manner.

### Something about Rosner in relation to tango

The young trumpet player Rosner, one of the most promising musicians of the European jazz scene of the time, in turn, already showed interest in tango. A comparison of some facts, assumptions and statements allows us to come to the conclusion, that he most likely already at that time made his addition to Fred Scher's polish tango *Jak gdyby nigdy nic* (*As if nothing had happened*) (Michalski 2007, 740), which he only recorded in the USSR (Rec. 34). For this song Rosner wrote his own introduction or verses and let it later called *Ostan'sâ* (*Stay with me*) in the Russian version. We noticed that his collaboration with Fred Scher also continued. Shortly after his arrival in Poland, Rosner recorded the tango *Ty i ja* (*You & Me*) by Scher for *Syrena Records* (Rec. 35). However, both songs were typical examples of tango based on German patterns.

The Polish *Band of Eddie Rosner*, touted as an American sensation and revue orchestra, performed at the locale *Alhambra* in Riga for several weeks in October 1938 (*Segodnâ večerom*. No. 235, 13.10.1938). As is well known, Oskar Strock also played here. In 1937, about a year before, Rosner made a remarkable recording of the tango *Dlaczego?* (*For what?*) by Zygmunt Schatz for *Syrena-Electro* in Warsaw (Rec. 36). The arrangement and playing style is completely in the spirit of Argentinean (atypical for Polish tangos and is in the vein of) *Orquesta Típica*.

With regard to the specifics of tango music, which always makes a tango recognizable, we could also fall back on the Argentine term *compás*, for which there is no adequate translation. Michael Lavocah compares it to Puls and places it somewhere in the area of the beat, but admits that it also has to do with agogics and articulation (Lavocah 2015, 6). Just like the feeling of swing in jazz, this is not just about a subjective listening impression of basic beats in every time signature, even if they are not very pronounced and regular, but about a sensorimotor tension, where, for example, overlapping rhythms and speech tone accents are freer. Recitation comes into play. *For what?* is an instrumental tango, at least nobody sings on the recording. It should be noted that, Zygmunt Schatz is the composer, who later, during the war, was to direct the camp orchestra near Lemberg and played the tangos on the death marches (Waitman 2018, 445–471; Zabarko, Müller, Müller 2019).<sup>7</sup> In 1944, Rosner chose the title name *What for?* for a very successful original composition, in which he, to a certain extent, followed in Strock's footsteps or followed his instinctive example.<sup>8</sup>

6 Interviews with Strock's daughter Vera Strock in 1999 and further researches (Archive of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner Society).

7 See also: <https://sztetl.org.pl/de/node/3709>, <https://argumentua.com/stati/tango-smerti-muzyka-zakolyuchei-provolokoi-reikha>

8 <http://a-pesni.org/drugije/zatchem.htm>



This particularly succinct tango-song, conceived in a minor key, contains, perhaps like no other, the echoes of Russian folklore through its diatonic and plagal endings. The composition was recorded in two versions: an instrumental version and one with voice performing together with the tenor Georgiy Vinogradov (Rec. 37). The song also had lyrics intended for female vocals. This tango became by far the most popular of all the tangos that Rosner wrote and played. Through surviving original recordings and successful remixes as well as thanks to sheet music published at the end of the 1960s for piano, the tango *For what* remains relatively well-known today. The Moscow recording of Eddie Rosner's tango *Svidanije (Rendezvous)* from 1940 sounds less like a German or Polish dance and jazz orchestra and more like a symphonic, very pathetic and soundtrack-ready Hollywood and André Kostelanetz template.<sup>9</sup> The only definitive reference here seems to be *Jalousie* by J. Gade was definitely justified, although the motif was not taken over. Also worth mentioning are recordings of the tango songs by his arranger Jerzy (Juriy) Belzatsky (*Rosita* and *Secret Island*; Rec. 38).

Further, the opening figure in its dominant basic idea in the instrumental tango *Rosita* can in turn be associated with Strock. Through the rhythmically concise use of pizzicatos from the strings in the first part of this tango (the opening figure is continued here and, as it were, saved: there is always an eighth note at the front, the overall picture ultimately produces a fifth-fall sequence), Rosner's big band was again in the style of playing of an Argentinean *Orquesta Típica* relatively close (Rec. 39). The second part, which could also be viewed as a refrain, was conceived in major, but reveals a romantic rapture, reinforced by a lyrical trumpet solo by Rosner. Unfortunately, the *Fantasy of Argentine Folk Songs and Melodies* performed by the orchestra<sup>10</sup> has not survived either as an audio document or as a score. However, one can assume that the name of the fantasy corresponded to the euphemistic methods used in the USSR to mask the real thing. It is quite possible that this piece represented a potpourri of the well-known western tangos, which were not necessarily of Argentine origin.

On August 14, 1946, a few months before his arrest, Rosner managed to record another instrumental tango of his own, *Prošaj, ljubov' (Farewell, love)* which leads back to the tango *Golubye glaza (Light blue eyes)* by Oskar Strock. Despite a major part, which is not a refrain, but takes the role of an interlude or intermezzo and the transition, the minor idiom and aesthetics in this tango set the tone (Rec. 40).<sup>11</sup> While he was still in the labor camp, Rosner wrote tangos: in 1951 he composed the tango *Rutka* for accordion, dedicated to his wife (Michalski 2007, 772). After his release from prison, Rosner again began to perform tango being one of the first and few of their kind in the country. However, despite general liberalization and an inattention to the political "thaw," tango was not beyond the reach of official criticism. One of the eager critics of the *Oriental Tango* played by the Eddie Rosner Orchestra said that this "obtrusive" composition only aroused and spread longing or melancholy (Zak 1960).

9 <https://music.apple.com/ru/album/1539624738>, <http://kkre-12.narod.ru/rozner/svi.mp3>

10 Concert program (Archive of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner Society).

11 Eddie Rosner, State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR, Soviet Jazz Legends, Eddie Rosner Vol.1 © Copyright Looks like Music Released in 2017

Since Rosner had a meager discography in the 1950s and 1960s and was always striving to outwit or circumvent repertory commissions that were still active, we can, in the words of Michael Lavocah, “only imagine the riches that perished without recording and are known only to those who heard them live” (Lavocah 2015, 124). How did this *Oriental Tango* sound and what kind of tango was that even called that cannot be determined at the moment and also until recordings and more detailed information are found? With regard to Rosner, the author of the present work has already been able to register several times that despite all the shortcomings of the audio documents that have survived, there remains a glimmer of hope: the recordings gradually appear out of nowhere like a miracle – whether from concerts or from unpublished studio recordings, they improve the evidence. In any case, in 1962 Rosner recorded the tango song *Domani* (*Tomorrow*) by the Italian composer Salve D’Esposito in the original language (Rec. 41).

We will probably never find out how and why Rosner chose this particular piece. In all these years, Rosner has not been allowed to conduct any guest performances or tours abroad. Except for an improvised solo performance in a Karlovy Vary café during the Prague 65 jazz festival, nothing else is documented. Perhaps the decision with the tango *Domani* was simply because Rosner often had an Italian component in his programs in the 1960s. D’Esposito was a regional great in the field of Neapolitan songs. English researcher Michael Lavocah noted a certain compatibility between Neapolitan song and tango and highlighted the possibility of arranging these songs as tangos (Lavocah 2015, 151). The new Rosner Orchestra sounds different than was usual for the formation led by Eddie Rosner in the 1940s. The sound is luscious, massive and heavy on brass, there is also a powerful beat with many phrasings, agogic moments and reverberation effects in the singing, which at the end of the piece achieve the effect of a voice receding.

Around 1969, Eddie Rosner wrote the tango *Slova lûbvi* (*Words of Love*; Rec. 42), which amazingly linked to Oskar Strock’s new tango *Tvoi glaza* (*Your Eyes*, first published in 1975) (Rec. 43), and corresponded melodically. Rosner’s new tango was recorded by the popular Udmurt singer Margarita Suvorova. It is also interesting that texts for both tangos – by Strock and Rosner – were provided by Juri Zeitlin (*Ůrij Cejtlin*), a musician and author who had previously worked intensively with Rosner and even played in his orchestra.

Nothing is known about any contacts between Strock and Rosner dating back to this period, but the very fact of both works being so similar, the approximate coincidence in timing and the same author of the words, may give rise to the assumption of a non-random corresponding echo-elements as dialogue of two masters. Strock in the 1950-70s visited Moscow much more often than Rosner visited Riga. Upon returning to (West-)Berlin in 1973, Eddie Rosner managed to produce a big show program featuring the singer Lev Pilshchik (*Lev Pil’sik*) from Riga, who had already emigrated to the United States at that time and specially came to Berlin to participate in the new show (Kravčinskij, Peredrij 2020, 122). But Rosner’s passing in 1976 ruined all the future plans.

## Final considerations

Most probably, the most important genre for Strock was tango, meanwhile, Rosner clearly preferred jazz. If we understand the German word “schlager” as a hit, as the highlight of the program, as a work that claims to become evergreen, the element of hit-ness has always been important for both Rosner and Strock. Strock and Rosner have spoken about this in various ways for various newspapers and magazines at various times (*Rižskoe vzmor'e*, No. 1; 1929; *Sovetskaâ muzyka*, No. 11, 1956). And nevertheless, the elements of the show were brought to the Soviet stage exclusively by Rosner. All of Strock's attempts ended in pre-war Latvia, at the latest when he was expelled from the Union of Composers. They both became Soviet citizens in 1939–40, at approximately the same time – with a difference of less than a year. Despite all the obstacles, Rosner managed to bring to the Soviet musical world not only the show-know-hows and skills of Weintraub Syncopators, but also swing style, which he mastered even better after leaving Germany – in Belgium, France and Poland.

A separate topic would be to compare further vectors of influence and its degrees by Strock and Rosner in the world. After World War II spread Strock's works throughout the world, they were pointwise recorded and performed in different countries. At the same time, they were almost officially removed from musical processes in the USSR. We can only provide sporadic and often barely attributed examples of performances of works from the Rosner Orchestra's repertoire or the appearance of his recordings outside the USSR. Among the most well-known cases were the recordings of two Foxtrots: the *Cowboy song* as an almost anonymous and attributed to Alexander Zfassmann (*Aleksandr Cfasman*) *Riding song* by the Leipzig Dance Orchestra under Kurt Henkels in GDR and the new version of *Paren'-parenek* (*Guy-guy*), recorded as *Cicha Woda* (*Still Water*) in Warsaw by Zbigniew Kurtycz (Michalsky 2007, 762).<sup>12</sup> Rosner brought true swing to the Poland and USSR, this was his real achievement. Strock in turn, was not only groundbreaking tango composer. His “signature” was left behind, noticed at least selectively in tango music of several countries.

---

<sup>12</sup> See e. g. <https://www.offiziellecharts.de/titel-details-1381843> .

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### ARCHIVES

Archive of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner Society (including materials from the private archive of Oskar Strock).

### SOUND RECORDINGS

1. *Schwarze Augen*. Tango. Oskar Strock. Marek Weber und sein Orchester mit russischem Refraingesang. *Electrola*, Matr.-Nr. BNR817, Berlin, 30.10.1929.
2. *Schwarze Augen*. Tango. Oskar Strock. Marek Weber und sein Orchester mit Russichen Refrain. The Gramophone Co. *His Master's Voice*, Matr.-Nr. 3286, Berlin, 30.10.1929.
3. *Zwei dunkle Augen*. Tango. Friedrich Holländer. Friedrich Holländer mit seinen Weintraub Syncopators. *Odeon*, Matr.-Nr. O-2355, (Bestell-Nr. 6553), Berlin, Juli 1927.
4. *Wenn wieder Frühling ist*. Foxtrot. Paul Abracham, Robert Gilber und A.Robinson. Weintraub Syncopators. *Electrola*, E. G. 2721, Berlin, November 1932.
5. *Nur in Sebastopol*. Foxtrot. Ernst Steffan. Weintraub Syncopators. *Electrola*, 22-40072, Kat.-Nr. E. G.1484, Berlin, 22.08.1929.
6. *Wie siehst Du aus? (Neue Bublitschki)*. Efim Schachmeister und sein Jazz-Orchester. *Polydor*, Matr. -Nr. 874 BT, Kat.-Nr. 40.086, Berlin, 1929.
7. *Mein Liebster muss Trompeter sein*. Foxtrot. Hans May, Alexander Flessburg. Jazz-Orchester Oskar Strock mit Refraingesang. *Adler-Electro*, Nr. 5490 (Matr.-Nr. 7527), Berlin August 1930.
8. *Veronika, der Lenz ist da*. Foxtrot. Walter Jurmann, Fritz Rotter. Oscar Strock mit seinem Jazz-Orchester (mit Refraingesang). *Adler-Electro*, Nr. 5490 (Matr.-Nr. 7528), Berlin, August 1930.
9. *Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt*. Friedrich Holländer. Aus dem Tonfilm *Der Blaue Engel*. Jazz-Orchester Oskar Strock mit Refraingesang. *Adler-Electro*, Matr.-Nr. 7371/Kat.-Nr. 5522, Audiphone 2099.
10. *Nimm Dich in Acht vor blonden Frauen*. Friedrich Holländer. Aus dem Tonfilm *Der Blaue Engel*. Jazz-Orchester Oskar Strock mit Refraingesang. *Adler-Electro*, Matr.-Nr. 7478/Kat.-Nr. 5522, 5590, Berlin, August 1930.
11. *Immer wenn ich glücklich bin, muss ich schrecklich weinen*. Foxtrot aus dem Hans-Albers-Tonfilm *Heut kommt's drauf an*. Musik: Walter Jurmann und B.Kaper, Text: Fritz Rotter. Hans Albers mit Odeon Künstlerorchester Otto Dobrindt. *Electrola*, E.G. 2735 / *Odeon*, 1410-1, Berlin, Februar 1933.

12. *Černye glaza*. O. Strok. Isp. Ūrij Morfessi s saksof. orkestrom Dobri. U roâlâ knâz' Sergej Golicyn. *Odeon*, Matr.-Nr. Ro 1201, Berlin, 07.04.1930.
13. *Zwei rote Lippen und ein Tarragona*. (Sanders). Text von Friedrich Schwarz. Saxophon-Orchester Dobbri mit Gesang: Max Mensing. *BEKA B*, 6942-II, Matr. 38226, Berlin, 1930.
14. *Komm In Meine Arme, Schöne Frau*. Tango-Milonga. Ralph Benatzky. Marek Weber. *Parlophon*, Matr.-Nr.: 2-5902 585, Kat.-Nr.: P. 1355.
15. *Oh, Fräulein Grete*. Musik: Juan Llossas, Text: F. Löhner-Beda. Alfred Beres mit Orchester, Refraingesang: Walter Jurmann. *Ultrapphon*, A 762 (15 357), Berlin, October 1930.
16. *Blonde Claire*. Tango. Musik: Juan Llossas, Text: Ritter. Juan Llossas, Original Argentinische Tango-Kapelle mit deutschem Refraingesang: Leo Monosson. *Gramophon*, Matr.-Nr.: 22 625 / 2225 Br-II, Berlin 1932.
17. *Ein bisschen Puder, ein bisschen Schminke*. Tango. (Rosen-Ebeler-Meisel-Schwarz), Juan Llossas, Original Argentinische Tango-Kapelle mit deutschem Refraingesang: Leo Monosson. *Gramophon*, 23 623/ C 40 271 (1294 BT-II), Berlin, 1931.
18. *Singen leis' die Geigen*. Tango. (Becce-Rosen, Lion). Tango. Juan Llossas, Original Argentinische Tango-Kapelle mit deutschem Refraingesang: Leo Monosson. *Gramophon*, 23 624/ C 40 272 (1295 BT-I), Berlin, 1930.
19. *Du gehst so fremd an mir vorbei*. Tango. Musik: Ernst Steffan. Text: Artur Rebner. Juan Sassoli mit seinem Tango-Orchester. Refraingesang: Walter Jurmann. *Ultrapphon / Orchestrola*, Nr. 2375, Berlin, 1929.
20. *Ein Blick ins Auge*. Tango. Musik: Gynla und Geiger. Text: A. Löbl. Juan Sassoli mit seinem Tango-Orchester. Refraingesang: Walter Jurmann. *Ultrapphon*, 10526, Berlin, 1930.
21. *Happy Feet*. Foxtrot aus dem Film *Der Jazzkönig* (Jack Jellen), Juan Llossas mit seinen Künstlern vom Ballhaus *Femina*. *Primissa Electro Record*, Nr. 125981, Berlin, 1930.
22. *Abends in der kleinen Bar*. Foxtrot. (Kötscher /Graff). Juan Llossas mit seinem Tanz-Orchester. Gesang: Schuricke-Terzett. *Imperial*, Nr. 17253.
23. *Schwarze Augen*. Tango. Oskar Strock. Marek Weber und sein Orchester mit russischem Refraingesang. *Electrola*, Kat.-Nr. E.G 1827, Matr.-Nr. BNR817, Berlin 30.10.1929.
24. *Du sehnst Dich immer nach dunklen Augen*. Tango. (Oskar Strock). Marek Weber und sein Orchester. Refrain: Marex Belorussoff. *Electrola*, Kat.-Nr. E.G. 2153, 14.11.1930.

25. *Liebe war es nie. (Blonde Natascha)*. Russ. Tango. (Fred Markush). Text: Fritz Rotter. Orchester Lewis Ruth. Tanz-Orchester mit Refrain-Gesang. *Electrola*, Kat.-Nr. E.G. 2503, Matr.-Nr. E-OD 788/I. Berlin, 15.02.1932.
26. *Ob du mich wirklich lieb hast. Zigeunerträume*. Tango. (Markusch). Text: Rotter. Marek Weber und sein Orchester. Tanz-Orchester mit Refraingegang. *Electrola*, Kat.-Nr. 2608, Matr.-Nr. E-OD 1072/II, Berlin, 01.09.1932.
27. *Eine kleine Sehnsucht*. Tango. Text und Musik von Friedrich Holländer. Friedrich Holländer und seine Jazz-Symphoniker. Aufgenommen im Beethoven-Saal zu Berlin. *Electrola*, Kat.-Nr. E.G. 1866, Matr.-Nr. BLR6205/I, Berlin, April 1930.
28. *Ohne Worte lass uns scheiden*. (W.Jurmann, arr. Nico Dostal). (R.Bernäuer, R.Österreicher). Hans Grünhut mit Orchester. *Edison Bell*, PK 296, SS 947.
29. *Spiel mir auf der Balalaika*. Einen russischen Tango. (Dr. B.Kaper). Text: Fritz Rotter. Marek Weber und sein Orchester. Refrain: Leo Moll. *Electrola*, Kat.-Nr. E.G. 2392. Berlin, 18.08.1932.
30. *Nie odchodź ode mnie*. (Artur Gold-A.Włast). Tango z Rewii *Uśmiech Warszawy*. Kazimierz Szerszyński. Ork. *Odeon* pod. dyr. H. Warsa. *Odeon*, O. 236082. Warszawa, 1930.
31. *Ot dvouh do pâti*. Fantaziâ na temy detskikh pesen. Gos. džaz-orkestr BSSR p/u Èddi Roznera. Solisty: Û.Blagov, P.Gofman i L.Markovič. DZZ 13139/40, Moskva, 8.09.1945; *Oči černye*. Šutočnoe obozrenie. Obr. È. Roznera i T.Kulieva. Gos. džaz-orkestr BSSR p/u Èddi Roznera. DZZ. 13173/74. Moskva, 17.09. 1945.
32. *Veronika, der Lenz ist da!* Foxtrot v. W.Jurmann, Text v. Fr. Rotter. Oscar Strock mit seinem Jazz-Orchester (mit Refrain-Gesang). Adler-Electro, Matr.-Nr. 7528, Bestell-Nr. 5490, Berlin, August 1930.
33. *O Cara Mia*. Tango. (Carter and Brodsky). Geraldo's Gaucho Tango Orchestra (With Vocal Chorus). Columbia, CB 302. London, DF 805 Paris. *O Cara Mia*. (Carter and Brodsky). Jack Hilton and His Orchestra with vocal refrain. *RCA Victor*, Matr.-No No. 22928B, London 02.07.1931.
34. *Ostan'sâ*. Muz. È.Roznera i Šeera, sl. Û.Cejtlina. Gos. džaz-orkestr BSSR p. u. Èddi Roznera. Solo: G.Vinogradov. *Aprelevskij zavod*, Nr. 13185, 1945.
35. *Ty i ja*. Tango z filmu "Amerykańska awantura". (Scher). Orkiestra taneczna *Syrena-Rekord* pod dyrekcją Ady Rosnera. *Syrena-Electro*, 8846, Matr.-Nr. 27938. Warszawa, Febr. 1937.
36. *Dlaczego?* Tango (Schatz). Orkiestra taneczna *Syrena-Rekord* pod dyrekcją Ady Rosnera. *Syrena-Electro*, 8846, Matr.-Nr. 27941. Warszawa, Febr. 1937 .
37. *Začem?* Tango. Muz. Èddi Roznera. Gos. džaz-orkestr BSSR p.u. Èddi Roznera. Solist: G. P. Vinogradov. Solo na trube: Èddi Rozner. *Aprelevskij zavod*, No. 12210, Moskva, 1944.



38. *Tajnyj ostrov*. Tango. Muz. Ů. Bel'zackogo. Sl. Ruseckoj. Gos. džaz-orkestr BSSR p. u. Èddi Roznera. *Aprelevskij zavod*, No. 13230.
39. *Rozita*. Tango. Muz. Ů. Bel'zackogo. Gos. džaz-orkestr BSSR p.u. Èddi Roznera. Solist: G. Vinogradov. Solo na trube: È. Rozner. *Aprelevskij zavod*, No. 13182. Moskva, 04.10. 1945.
40. *Prošaj, lúbov'*. Tango. Muz. Èddi Roznera. Gos. džaz-orkestr BSSR p.u. Èddi Roznera. Solo na trube: È. Rozner. *Aprelevskij zavod*. No.13906, Moskva, 14.08.1946.
41. *Zavtra*. (S. D. Èspozito). Èstradnyj orkestr p/u Èddi Roznera. Na ital'ânskom âzyke. A. Baâdžan. VSG, D-00011270, Moskva, 1962.
42. *Slova lúbvi*. Muz. È.Roznera. Slova Ů.Cejtlina. Margarita Suvorova. *Zolotaâ Kolleciâ Retro*. Bomba Music, BoMB 033-433/434.
43. *Tvoi glaza*. Muz. O. Stroka. Slova Ů.Cejtlina. Vladimir Trošin. Instr. ansambl' *Melodiâ*. *Melodiâ*, C62-05612.

## AUDIOVISUALS

Süsenbach, Jörg; Sander, Klaus Sander. *Bis ans andere Ende der Welt*. Cine Impuls Berlin für ARTE / WDR 2000.

203

## PERIODICALS

Gastrolí amerikanskogo orkestra Èdi Roznera prohodât v *Al'gambre* s vydaûšimsâ uspehom. *Segodná večerom*, No. 235, 13.10.1938.

Kak sozdaûsâ šlagera: Beseda s izvestnym kompozitorom O. D. Strokom. *Rižskoe vzmor'e*, No. 1, 1929.

Rozner È. My ne dolžny zabyvat' o slušatelâh / Čto vy думаete o džaze i legkoj muzyke?: Besedy v red. *Sovetskaâ muzyka*, No. 11, 1956.

## LITERATURE

Brodânskij, Boris (1940). Èstradnye zapiski. *Iskusstvo i žizn'*, No. 7.

Bergmeier, H. J. P. (1982). *The Weintraub Story incorporated. The Ady Rosner Story*. Menden: Der Jazzfreund.

Birkenstock, Arne; Rüegg, Helena (1999). *Tango. Geschichte und Geschichten*. DTV, 23.

Buxbaum, Elisabeth (2006). *Veronika der Lenz ist da: Walter Jurmann - Ein Musiker zwischen den Welten und Zeiten*. With a catalog raisonné by Alexander Sieghardt. Wien: Edition Steinbauer.

Dragilëv, Dmitrij (1995). *Izdatel'skaâ aktivnost' (i rasprostranenie pečatnoj produkcii) na ruskom âzyke v Latvii 20-30-h gg. Na primere nemassovyh i specializirovannyh izdanij. Diplomnaâ rabota.* Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte.

Dragilev, Dmitrij (2011). *Èddi Rozner: Šmalâem džaz, holera jâsna!* Nižnij Novgorod: Dekom.

Dragilew, Dmitri, Nowack, Natalia (2019). *Tango in Russland – Russischer Tango?* Mainz: Schott Campus.

Dümmling, Albrecht (2022). *Mein Gorilla hat eine Villa im Zoo. The Weintraubs Sycopators zwischen Berlin und Australia.* Regensburg: ConBrio.

Il'in, V. (1961). Muzykal'noe revû. *Sovetskaâ muzyka*, No. 12.

Kravčinskij, Maksim; Peredrij, Andrej (2020). *Dissidenty sovetskoj èstrady.* Nižnij Novgorod: Dekom.

Kühn, Volker (Hrsg.) (1996). *“Bei uns um die Gedächtniskirche rum...” Friedrich Hollaender und das Kabarett der zwanziger Jahre (Archiv-Blätter).* Berlin: Stiftung der Akademie der Künste.

Lavocah, Michael (2015). *Tango-Geschichten: Was die Musik erzählt.* Norwich: Milonga Press.

Lotz, Rainer E (2006). *Deutsche Hot-Discographie. Cake Walk, Ragtime, Hot Dance & Jazz - ein Handbuch.* Bonn: Lotz Verlag.

Malli, Alexandra (2013). *Die kompositorische Rezeption des Tango argentino in den Jahren 1910-1940.* Masterarbeit an der Karl-Franzens-Uni und der KUG in Graz

Michalski, Dariusz (2007). *Powrocmi jak za dawnych lat... czyli historia polskiej muzyki rozrywkowej (lata 1900–1939).* Warszawa: Iskry.

Mierau, Fietz (1987). *Russen in Berlin.* Leipzig: Reclam Verlag.

Meesmann, Karin (2023). *Paul Abraham. Zwischen Filmmusik und Jazzoperette.* Wien: Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag.

Neminušij, Arkadij (2007). *Černye glaza v evropejskoj kul'ture meždu dvuh vojn.* Daugavpils, Provincial'nyj al'manah *Hronos*, No. 9.

Polânskaâ, Mina (1987). *Fokstrot belogo gusara.* Sanktpeterburg: Demetra.

Reichardt, Dieter (1984). *Tango.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp-Verlag.

Riedl, Gerhard (2016). *Der noch größere Milonga-Führer: Ein amüsan-satirischer Ratgeber zum argentinischen Tango.* Norderstedt: BoD – Books on Demand.

Ritzel, Fred (1988). *Schöne Welt, du gingst in Fransen!: Auf der Suche nach dem authentischen deutschen Tango. Musikalische Werdegänge.* Herausgegeben von H.Rösing. Hamburg: CODA-Verlag, 75–92.

- Saul'skij, Ūrij (1990). Èddi Rozner — večnyj skitalec. *Muzykal'naâ žizn'*, No. 13.
- Vacietis, Oârs [Vācietis, Ojārs] (1990). *Stihotvoreniâ*. Moskva: Detskaâ literatura.
- Waller, Klaus (2021). *Paul Abraham - Der tragische König der Jazz-Operette*. Fürth: Starfruit Publications.
- Waitman, Wade Beorn (2018). Last Stop in Lwów: Janowska as a Hybrid Camp. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, No. 32 (3), 445-471.
- Walendowski, Werner (2005). *Marek Weber (1988–1964)*. Booklet zu der CD Marek Weber und sein Orchester in der Reihe Die großen Deutschen Tanzorchester. Membran Music, Hamburg .
- Wolfram, Knut (1992). *Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste*. Berlin: Edition Hentich.
- Zabarko, Boris; Müller, Margret and Müller, Werner (Hrsg.) (2019). *Leben und Tod in der Epoche des Holocaust in der Ukraine: Zeugnisse von Überlebenden*. Berlin: Metropol-Verlag.
- Zak, Vladimir (1960). Èstradnyj orkestr Èddi Roznera. *Sovetskaâ muzyka*, No. 2.

# OSKARS STROKS UN EDIJS ROZNERIS: BERLĪNE VIŅU DZĪVĒ UN MŪZIKĀ

Dmitrijs Dragiļevs

## Kopsavilkums

Veimāras Republikas periods bija izšķirošs pianista Oskara Stroka (1893, Daugavpils – 1975, Rīga) un trompetista Edija Roznera (1910, Berlīne – 1976, (Rietum)Berlīne) radošajā karjerā, jo tieši Berlīnē 20. gadsimta 20. un 30. gadu mijā abi guva pirmos panākumus arī kā populārās mūzikas komponisti. Vienlaikus abi mūziķi bija nozīmīgas figūras, sava veida celmlauži un eksperimentētāji tango un džeza attīstībā un popularizēšanā Austrumeiropas valstīs.

Rozners un Stroks (īslaicīgāk) darbojās Berlīnes daudzveidīgajā un intensīvajā mūzikas vidē, sadarbojās ar dažādiem džeza un deju orķestriem un ansambļu vadītājiem (diriģentiem), dažkārt vieniem un tiem pašiem (M. Vēbers, J. Šahmeisters, V. Jurmans). Abi arī uzmanīgi sekoja līdzi Berlīnes populārās (šlageru un džeza) komponistu (piemēram, P. Abrahama, F. Holandera) daiļradei. Gan Stroka, gan Roznera daiļradē jūtama Berlīnes mūzikas vides ietekme Eiropas 20. gadsimta Eiropas džeza un tango kultūrā. Pēc nacionālsociālistu nākšanas pie varas abi mūziķi 1933. gadā devās projām no Vācijas, gūstot atzinību tieši ar Rietumeiropas muzikālo naratīvu sintēzi, adaptāciju un mijiedarbību ar amerikāņu tradīciju piemērošanu vietējam kontekstam. Stroku un Rozneru arī vieno Vācijas un PSRS totalitāro politisko režīmu negatīvā attieksme viņu ebrejiskās izcelsmes dēļ.

Rakstā aplūkota 20. gadsimta 20. gadu un 30. gadu pirmās puses Berlīnes deju kultūra, kurā tango popularitātes ziņā zaudēja fokstrotam. Neraugoties uz stereotipisku priekšstatu par tango lielo popularitāti, fakti liecina, ka vācu mūzikas industrijā pieprasījums pēc tango šajā periodā bija diezgan pieticīgs un specifisks. Tolaik Vācijas galvaspilsētā dominēja bezrūpīgi un optimistiski tango, to dziesmas žanra tekstos galvenais nebija emocionāli pārdzīvojumi. Mūzika mažora skaņkārtā tiecās radīt vieglu, dzīvesprieģīgu noskaņojumu, kas galīgi neatbilda daudz dziļākajai un nereti pat traģiskajai Argentīnas tango dziesmu tematikai.

Dažādu apstākļu dēļ Strokam uzturoties Berlīnē 1929. gadā un 1932.–1933. gadā, tieši tur notika viņa kā mūziķa un populārās mūzikas komponista starptautiskā debija. Tangodziesmās Stroks priekšroku deva emocionāli tiešai izteiksmei, nevis tīri izklaidējošam raksturam. Apzināti vai neapzināti Stroks distancējās no deju zāļu *prasībām*, virspusējas deju mūzikas, un, kaut kādā mērā atspoguļojot arī Argentīnas tango tradīcijas, centās pārraidīt *pasaules sāpes* un *izzušanas melanholiju* pat tad, kad runa bija *tikai* par mīlas drāmām. Stroks deva priekšroku minora skaņkārtai, dažkārt radot drūmu un melanholisku atmosfēru. Viņa kompozīcijās saklausāma eksistenciāla trauksme, kas rezonē ar tango raksturu. Emocionālais dziļums atšķir Stroka mūziku

no dekoratīvākiem un utilitārākiem tango sacerēšanas veidiem, kādi dominēja 20. gadsimta starpkaru Eiropā.

Stroka popularitāte 30. gados acīmredzami pieauga līdz ar tango *Melnās acis* (1929, Rīga) triumfa gājienu, liekot pamatus turpmākajai tango mūzikas attīstībai Vācijā un Polijā, kur sāka parādīties līdzīga rakstura tēmas, pamazām atsakoties no mažora skaņkārtas un kabārē elementiem. Stroka pieeja sasaucās ar kultūras procesiem, kuru rezultātā notika pārvirzīšanās uz introspektīvāku un emocionāli piesātinātāku muzikālo izteiksmi. Interesanti, ka Stroka nošizdevums *Krievu džezs* (1937, Rīga) un vairāku skaņuplašu ieraksti liecina par, iespējams, Berlīnes iespaidā radušos vēlmi iekarot arī džeza pasauli. Tomēr komponists savā jaunradē palika savā paradigmā, ārpus džeza stilistikajām idiomām.

Rakstā aplūkoti arī Roznera agrīnie panākumi, kļūstot par virtuozu džeza trompetistu. Berlīnes ansambļa *Weintraub Syncopators* (1924–1933), kurā darbojās Rozners, inovatīvo pieeju priekšnesumos raksturoja tango, džeza un operetes sintēze, arī joku un pantomīmas elementu iekļāvums. Ansamblis bija pazīstams ar radošām aranžijām un īpašu teatralitāti, kas iedvesmoja Rozneru gan tālākajā mūziķa un ansambļu vadītāja karjerā, gan komponista darbībā.

Rozners ietekmēja arī tango attīstību Polijā, kur viņš dzīvoja no 1935. līdz 1939. gadam. Interese par Argentīnas tango atspoguļojas viņa šajā laikā radītajās aranžijās, kas tika izdotas skaņuplatēs. Otrā pasaules kara laikā nonākot PSRS, Rozners turpināja komponēt tango. Dažas viņa kompozīcijas, piemēram, *Ardievu, mīla! (Prošaj, lūbov'!)* sasaucas ar Stroka tango mūziku. Pat atrodoties ieslodzījumā Gulagā (20. gadsimta 40. gadu otrajā pusē un 50. gadu pirmajā pusē), Rozners rakstīja tango, par ko liecina saglabājušās partitūras. Arī pēdējos dzīves gados, neraugoties uz dažādiem šķēršļiem, viņš savās koncertprogrammās iekļāva tango par spīti tam, ka dažkārt viņa kompozīciju stilistika tika kritizēta. Viens no pēdējiem Roznera opusiem, tango *Mīlas vārdi (Slova lūbvi)*, sasaucas ar tajā pašā laikā tapušā Stroka tango *Tavas acis (Tvoi glaza)* melodiku.

Oskara Stroka un Edija Roznera radošajā darbībā un likteņos ieraugāmas līdzīgas iezīmes. Abu karjerās nozīmīga bija izrādījusies Berlīne, abi komponisti kļuva par lideriem savos žanros. Tādēļ svarīgi ir pievērst uzmanību abu spilgto personību ieguldījumam 20. gadsimta Eiropas populārās mūzikas kultūrā un vēsturē.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Jānis Kudiņš**, PhD, is a graduate of the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music (in 1997 he obtained a Bachelor's degree, in 1999 he obtained a Master's degree). In 2008, he defended his doctoral work in musicology. He has been a lecturer at the JVLMA since 1996 (a Professor since 2017), as a Researcher he also works in the Center for Scientific Research (he was the Head of the Center from 2008 to 2012). From 2008 to 2017 he was the Head of the Department of Musicology. His major interests in musicology are linked with several issues. These issues include Latvian and Baltic music history in 19th–20th century; the concepts of Style, Modernism and Post-Modernism in music and art; methodology of scientific research; European popular music culture from the first half of the 20th century. He is the author of several scientific publications (including two monographs) in Latvian and English. He also actively participates in various international seminars and conferences in Latvia and other countries.

**Kamilė Rupeikaitė**, PhD, is associate professor of music history at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (since 2010; from 2007 to 2010 – lecturer) and senior researcher at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute (since 2022; from 2012 to 2022 – researcher). Since 2023 she also works as an editor for the journal *Menotyra* (Studies in Art), published twice a year by the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Rupeikaitė has defended doctoral thesis on the subject of semantics of musical instruments in the Bible at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (2006) and has also studied at Paideia European Institute of Jewish Studies in Stockholm (2004–2005). She has participated in international conferences in Lithuania, Finland, UK, Slovenia, Israel, Estonia, Germany, Poland and elsewhere, has published over 20 articles in peer-reviewed Lithuanian and foreign publications. Her monograph *Dialogai. Kompozitorius Anatolijus Šenderovas* (2020) on contemporary Lithuanian composer Anatolijus Šenderovas was awarded by the Lithuanian Composers' Union. Research interests of Rupeikaitė include multicultural contexts of music, symbolism of musical instruments, musical phenomena in the Bible, and musical culture of Lithuanian Jews.

**Marianne Betz**, PhD, is a flutist and a musicologist, is a Professor of Musicology at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" Leipzig. Her research explores transatlantic relations, focussing on American music of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as on Early Music. She is the editor of G. W. Chadwick's *String Quartets* (A-R 2006/2007) and his opera *The Padrone* (MUSA 2017/2020), as well as the author of a monograph on Chadwick (*George Whitefield Chadwick: An American Composer Revealed and Reflected*, Pendragon Press 2015). Her publications include articles for the *Handwoerterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Archiv fuer Musikwissenschaft*, *Die Musikforschung*, *Musical Quarterly*, *American Music*, the *Grove Dictionary of American Music*, the *Yearbook of the American Music Research Centre* (Boulder, CO), and the *Oxford Handbook of Opera*. In 2016 she was the recipient of the Thomson-Fellowship, in 2023 of the Wayne Shirley-Fellowship, both offered by the Society for American Music.



**Marija Golubović**, PhD, studied piano at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. She holds a PhD in contemporary history (Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade). Since 2019, she has been employed at the Institute of Musicology SASA (Belgrade) and holds a research associate position. Currently, she serves as the secretary of the journal *Musicology*, published by the Institute of Musicology SASA. Her fields of interest include Russian musical emigration, jazz and popular music in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the interwar musical life of Belgrade, and Russian and Serbian piano music. She is a member of the Musicological Society of Serbia and the International Association for the Study of Popular Music.

**Alberts Rokpelnis**, MA in History, has a master's degree from the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the University of Latvia, where he defended the thesis *The Political Context of Lyrics of Popular Music Songs in the 1920s and 1930s: Case Study of Alfrēds Vinters and Brāļi Laivinieki* (2012, scientific supervisor Prof. Ilgvars Butulis). Two of his articles on the activities of the BellaccordElectro record factory in the 1930s are partly related to this topic; they were published in 2012–2013 in the University of Latvia journal *Latvijas Vēsture. Jaunie un Jaunākie Laiki* (Latvian History: Modern and Most Recent Times). As a historian at the Valmiera Museum (since 2012), Rokpelnis has organised the ethnomusicological exhibition *Rural Chapels and Musicians in Vidzeme in the First Half of the 20th Century* (2014). In 2015, Rokpelnis began studying in the doctoral programme in historical musicology at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music under Prof. Jānis Kudiņš. He has participated in several local and international conferences, including the Congress of the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (2017, National Library of Latvia) and the XXIV European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (2018, Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music). At both conferences, Rokpelnis presented his research about Latvian schlager composer Alfrēds Vinters and the reflection of his music in historical sources. His general research interests focus on social aspects of Latvian popular music in the 20th century, the history of Latvian phonograph records and schlager music of the interwar era. Since 2022 Alberts Rokpelnis is elected research assistant at JVLMA Scientific Research Centre.

**Nikola Komatović**, PhD, graduated from the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Gesine Schröder (his thesis focused on the harmonic language of César Franck) in 2018. He previously completed his Bachelor's in Music Pedagogy (2011) and Master's in Music Theory (2012) studies at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. Komatović researches historical theories (in the first line, historical theories of tonality and harmony in France), the development of methodology in Eastern Europe (former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia) and China, Popular Music, and certain aspects of modern and postmodern Music (heritage of Ancient Greek and Byzantine Music). In 2023, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts home board granted him the title of independent research associate.

**Aare Tool** is a lecturer of musicology at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. In 2011, he defended his Master's degree and, in 2016, his PhD thesis in Musicology at the EAMT, with a focus on music theory and analysis. His research interests include Estonian music in the first half of the 20th century, transformational (neo-Riemannian) methods of harmonic analysis, and the history of music and technology (radio broadcasting). In his PhD thesis, he analysed a number of works by the Estonian composer Eduard Oja (1905–1950) in the context of the wider compositional trends of the period, with a special emphasis on the modes of limited transposition. He has also published on Jean Sibelius: "Jean Sibelius and the Modes of Limited Transposition" in *Jean Sibelius's Legacy: Research on his 150th Anniversary* (Daniel Grimley, Tim Howell, Veijo Murtomäki, Timo Virtanen (Eds.), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017). Since 2017, he has been a member of the Estonian Young Academy of Sciences (Eesti Noorte Teaduste Akadeemia).

**Indriķis Veitners**, PhD, jazz musician, researcher of Latvia jazz history, professor at JVLMA, jazz saxophonist, clarinetist and teacher. In 2014, he defended a doctoral thesis entitled *Latvian jazz history 1920–1944*, the first scientific research in jazz history in Latvia, followed by the internationally awarded monograph of the same title in 2018 published by editorial *Musica Baltica*. Indriķis Veitners has taken part in several scientific conferences dedicated to jazz in Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK. 2008–2009 worked as jazz history expert in the Museum of Literature and music, hold the position of jazz expert in the Music and dance field commission at the State Culture Capital Foundation. Member of jury of the Great Music Award of Latvia in 2013. In 2016, Veitners organized an international musical project *Ethnic Process* with Vladimir Chekasin and Latvian and Lithuanian jazz students, and performed at *Birštonas Jazz festival*. Indriķis Veitners is a member of the first *Latvian Radio Bigband* until its liquidation in 1995. Currently plays in *Mirage Jazz Orchestra* and *Dixieland Sapņu komanda 1935 (Dream Team 1935)* as well as in other jazz groups together with leading Latvian jazzmen. Indriķis Veitners is one of founders of Latvian professional jazz education – in 2003, he established the first professional jazz education program at Riga Dome Choir School. In 2008, he opened the Jazz Department at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music and keeps leading it. Works as assistant professor at JVLMA, teaching jazz history and other subjects. Since 2015 Indriķis Veitneris is a guest lecturer of jazz history in Viljandi Culture Academy, Estonia.

**Dmitri Dragilew**, MA in Musicology, is a founder and chairman of the International Oskar Strock and Eddie Rosner Society, Leader of The Oskar Strock & Eddie Rosner Orchestra®, as well as an active musician, pianist, arranger and songwriter. Born in Riga, since 1994 based in Germany, where he studied at Franz Liszt University of Music in Weimar (1997–2000). Creator of Oskar Strock's tango programme performed in Germany, including Thuringian Parliament, Berlin's Deutschlandhaus, *Centrum Judaicum*, Augsburg City Hall, Jewish communities in Hamburg and Schwerin, and concert halls in Suhl, Erfurt, and other cities. Dragilew also works as music

journalists and gives lectures and seminars in universities, i.e. Daugavpils University (Latvia), Free University of Berlin, Georg-August University of Göttingen, European University Viadrina (Frankfurt/Oder) and other. As a performer participates in jazz music scene in Europe, collaborates with recording companies, singers and musicians. In 2015, Dragilev established the tango band *Kapelle Strock*, a regular performer in tango festivals and other events. In 2017, he was the artistic director of the concert series at *Blackmore's Berlins Musikzimmer*. Holds a record contract with *Emil Berliner Studios*.

For contact information of the authors please do not hesitate to ask:  
lauma.mellena.bartkevica@jvlma.lv

## ZIŅAS PAR AUTORIEEM

**Jānis Kudiņš**, PhD, absolvējis Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmiju (1997. gadā Bc. art. mūzikas vēsturē un teorijā, 1999. gadā Mg. art. muzikoloģijā) un 2008. gadā ieguvis doktora zinātnisko grādu muzikoloģijā. JVLMA docētājs kopš 1996. gada, profesora amatā ievēlēts 2017. gadā. Kā pētnieks darbojas arī Zinātniskās pētniecības centrā (bijis centra vadītājs no 2008. līdz 2012. gadam). Laikā no 2008. līdz 2017. gadam pildījis Muzikoloģijas katedras vadītāja pienākumus. Docētie studiju kursi un pētnieciskās intereses saistītas ar Latvijas un Baltijas mūzikas vēsturi (19.–20. gadsimts); stila problēmiku, 20. gadsimta modernisma un postmodernisma jēdzieniem mūzikā un mākslā; zinātniskās pētniecības metodoloģiju; 20. gadsimta pirmās puses Eiropas populārās mūzikas kultūru. Vairāku zinātnisko publikāciju autors latviešu un angļu valodā (to vidū divas monogrāfijas), aktīvs zinātnisko konferenču un semināru dalībnieks Latvijā un citās valstīs.

**Kamile Rupekaite** (*Kamilė Rupeikaitė*), PhD, ir Lietuvas Mūzikas un Teātra akadēmijas mūzikas vēstures docente (kopš 2010. gada; lektore no 2007. līdz 2010. gadam) un Lietuvas Kultūras pētniecības institūta vadošā pētniece (kopš 2022. gada; pētniece no 2012. līdz 2022. gadam), kopš 2023. gada – Lietuvas Zinātņu akadēmijas izdotā žurnāla *Menotyra (Mākslas studijas)* redaktore. 2006. gadā Kamile Rupekaite Lietuvas Mūzikas un teātra akadēmijā aizstāvējusi doktora disertāciju par mūzikas instrumentu semantiku Bībelē. Studējusi arī *Paideia* Eiropas Ebreju studiju institūtā Stoklomā (2004.–2005.). Autore piedalījusies starptautiskās konferencēs Lietuvā, Somijā, Apvienotajā Karalistē, Slovēnijā, Izraēlā, Igaunijā, Vācijā, Polijā un citviet. Publicējusi vairāk nekā 20 rakstus recenzētos Lietuvas un ārzemju žurnālos. Sarakstījusi monogrāfiju *Dialogai. Kompozitorius Anatolijus Šenderovas* (2020) par mūsdienu lietuviešu komponistu Anatoliju Šenderovu, par kuru saņēmusi Lietuvas Komponistu savienības apbalvojumu. Kamiles Rupekaites pētnieciskās intereses galvenokārt saistās ar multikulturāliem mūzikas kontekstiem, mūzikas instrumentu simboliskajām nozīmēm, mūzikas fenomeniem Bībelē un Lietuvas ebreju mūzikas kultūru.

**Marianne Beca** (*Marianne Betz*), PhD, ir flautiste un muzikoloģe, Leipcigas Fēliksa Mendelszona-Bartoldi Mūzikas un teātra augstskolas profesore. Viņa pēta transatlantiskās attiecības mūzikā, īpaši 19. un 20. gadsimta amerikāņu mūzikā, kā arī seno mūziku. Sastādījusi un rediģējusi Džordža Vaitfilda Čedvika *Stīgu kvartetu* (A-R 2006/2007) un viņa operu *Patrons* (MUSA 2017/2020) izdevumus, publicējusi monogrāfiju *Džordžs Vaitfilds Čedviks: amerikāņu komponists atklāsmēs un analizē* (*George Whitefield Chadwick: An American Composer Revealed and Reflected*, Pendragon Press 2015). Publicējusi zinātniskus rakstus *Mūzikas terminoloģijas rokasgrāmatai* (*Handwoerterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*), izdevumiem *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Archiv fuer Musikwissenschaft*, *Die Musikforschung*, *Musical Quarterly*, *American Music*, *the Grove Dictionary of American Music*, *the Yearbook of the American Music Research Centre* (Boulder, CO), kā arī Oksfordas Operas rokasgrāmatai (*Oxford*

*Handbook of Opera*). 2016. gadā saņēmusi Tomsona stipendiju, bet 2023. gadā – Veina Šērlija stipendiju, kuras piešķir Amerikas Mūzikas biedrība.

**Marija Goluboviča** (*Marija Golubović*), PhD, studējusi klavierspēli Mūzikas fakultātē Belgradā. Ieguvusi doktora grādu mūsdienu vēsturē Belgradas Universitātes Filosofijas fakultātē. Kopš 2019. gada strādā Belgradas Muzikoloģijas institūtā SASA kā pētniece. Pašlaik ir arī Muzikoloģijas institūta SASA žurnāla *Muzikoloģija* sekretāre. Interesu lokā ietilpst krievu mūziķi emigrācijā, džezs un populārā mūzika Dienvidslāvijas Karalistē, starpkaru perioda mūzikas dzīve Belgradā, kā arī krievu un serbu klaviermūzika. Autore ir Serbijas Muzikologu biedrības un Starptautiskās Populārās mūzikas pētnieku asociācijas biedre.

**Alberts Rokpelnis**, Mg. hist., absolvējis Latvijas Universitātes Vēstures un filozofijas fakultāti, aizstāvējis maģistra darbu *Populārās mūzikas dziesmu tekstu sociālpolitiskais konteksts 20. gs. 30. gados: Alfrēds Vinters un Brāļi Laivinieki* (2012, zinātniskais vadītājs – prof. Ilgvars Butulis). Ar šo tematiku daļēji saistīti arī divi viņa raksti, kas veltīti skaņuplašu fabrikas *Bellaccord-Electro* darbībai 20. gs. 30. gados; 2012.–2013. gadā tie publicēti Latvijas Universitātes žurnālā *Latvijas Vēsture. Jaunie un Jaunākie Laiki*. Kopš 2012. gada ir Valmieras muzeja vēsturnieks. Veidojis izstādi *Lauku kapelas un muzikanti Vidzemē 20. gs. pirmajā pusē* (2014); to gatavojot, veicis arī etnomuzikoloģisku izpēti. Kopš 2015. gada prof. Jāņa Kudiņa vadībā studē vēsturisko muzikoloģiju JVLMA doktorantūrā. Studiju ietvaros piedalījies vairākās starptautiskās konferencēs, tostarp Latvijas Nacionālās bibliotēkas organizētajā Mūzikas bibliotēku, arhīvu un dokumentācijas centru asociācijas kongresā (2017) un 24. Eiropas etnomuzikoloģijas seminārā. Abās konferencēs uzmanības centrā bija latviešu šlāgeru komponista Alfrēda Vintera radošā darbība un tās atspoguļojums vēstures avotos. Zinātnisko interešu loks ietver arī 20. gs. 20.–30. gadu populārās mūzikas sociālos aspektus Latvijā, skaņuplašu vēsturi un šlāgermūzikas vēsturi. 2022. gadā ievēlēts par zinātnisko asistentu JVLMA Zinātniskās pētniecības centrā.

**Nikola Komatovičs** (*Nikola Komatović*), PhD, ieguvis doktora grādu Vīnes Mūzikas un Skatuves mākslas universitātē, 2018. gadā aizstāvējis doktora disertāciju par Sezāra Franka harmonisko valodu profesores Gezīnes Šrēderes (*Gesine Schröder*) vadībā. Pirms tam viņš ieguvis bakalaura grādu mūzikas pedagoģijā (2011) un maģistra grādu mūzikas teorijā Belgradas Universitātes Mūzikas fakultātē. Komatovičs pēta vēsturiskās teorijas (galvenokārt tonalitātes un harmonijas vēsturiskās teorijas Francijā), metodoloģijas attīstību Austrumeiropā (bijušajā Padomju Savienībā un Dienvidslāvijā) un Ķīnā, populāro mūziku un vairākus modernās un postmodernās mūzikas aspektus (sengrieķu un bizantiešu mūzikas mantojumu). 2023. gadā Serbijas Zinātņu un Mākslas akadēmija piešķīra Komatovičam akadēmijas locekļa – neatkarīgā pētnieka statusu.

**Āre Tols** (*Aare Tool*) ir muzikologs, Igaunijas Mūzikas un teātra akadēmijas lektors. 2011. gadā IMTA aizstāvējis maģistra grādu, bet 2016. gadā – doktora disertāciju mūzikas teorijā un analizē. Tola pētniecisko interešu loks saistās ar 20. gadsimta pirmā puses Igaunijas mūziku, harmonijas analīzi transformējošām (Hugo Rīmaņa skolas sekotāju) metodēm, kā arī mūzikas un tehnoloģiju (radiopārraižu) vēsturi. Savā disertācijā pētnieks analizējis virkni igauņu komponista Eduarda Ojas (1905–1950) kompozīcijas, īpašu uzmanību pievēršot ierobežotās transpozīcijas modiēm. Publicējis pētījumu par Žanu Sibeliusu un ierobežotās transpozīcijas modiēm *Jean Sibelius and the Modes of Limited Transposition* kolektīvajā monogrāfijā *Jean Sibelius's Legacy: Research on his 150th Anniversary* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017). 2017. gadā bijis Igaunijas Jauniešu zinātņu akadēmijas loceklis.

**Indriķis Veitners**, PhD, džeza mūziķis, Latvijas džeza vēstures pētnieks, JVLMA profesors, džeza saksofonists, klarnetists un pedagogs. 2014. gadā aizstāvējis promocijas darbu *Latvijas džeza vēsture 1920–1944*, kas ir pirmais zinātniskais darbs par Latvijas džeza vēsturi. Monogrāfija ar tādu pašu nosaukumu izdota 2018. gadā izdevniecībā *Musica Baltica*, un tā ir saņēmusi vairākus starptautiskus apbalvojumus. Piedalījies vairākās džezam veltītās zinātniskās konferencēs Dānijā, Nīderlandē un Lielbritānijā. No 2008. līdz 2009. gadam Veitners bijis džeza vēstures eksperts Rakstniecības un mūzikas muzejā, darbojies kā džeza eksperts VKKF Mūzikas un dejas nozares ekspertu komisijā, 2013. gadā strādājis Lielās Mūzikas balvas žūrijā. 2016. gadā Indriķis Veitners organizēja starptautisku muzikālu projektu *Ethnic Process* kopā ar Vladimiru Čekasinu un Latvijas un Lietuvas džeza studentiem, kā arī uzstājās *Birštonas džeza festivālā*. Pirmā *Latvijas Radio bigbenda* dalībnieks līdz tā likvidācijai 1995. gadā. Patlaban aktīvi darbojas bigbendā *Mirage Jazz orchestra* un diksilendā *Sapņu komanda 1935*, kā arī citos džeza sastāvos kopā ar vadošajiem Latvijas džeza mūziķiem. Indriķis Veitners ir viens no no Latvijas profesionālās džeza izglītības iedibinātājiem, 2003. gadā izveidojot pirmo profesionālo džeza izglītības programmu Rīgas Doma kora skolā. Kopš 2004. gada džeza vēstures un saksofona spēles docētājs Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmijā un Rīgas pedagogijas un izglītības vadības augstskolā (līdz 2017. gadam). 2008. gadā izveidoja džeza katedru Jāzepa Vītola Latvijas Mūzikas akadēmijā, un joprojām ir katedras vadītājs. Kopš 2015. gada strādā kā viesprofesors džeza vēsturē Vīlandes Kultūras akadēmijā Igaunijā.

**Dmitrijs Dragiļevs** (*Dmitri Dragilew*), Mg. art. muzikoloģijā, Starptautiskās Oskara Stroka un Edija Roznera biedrības dibinātājs un priekšsēdētājs, *The Oskar Strock & Eddie Rosner Orchestra*® mākslinieciskais vadītājs. Dzimis Rīgā, bet kopš 1994. gada dzīvo Vācijā, kur mācījies Veimāras Franča Lista Mūzikas Universitātē (1997–2000). Oskara Stroka tango programmas veidotājs Vācijā. Programma skanējusi Tiringenes parlamentā, Berlīnes *Deutschlandhaus* zālē, Jūdaisma centrā (*Centrum Judaicum*), Augsburgas mērijā, ebreju kopienu zālēs Hamburgā un Švērinā, kā arī koncertzālēs Zülā, Erfurtē un citviet. Dragiļevs strādājis arī kā mūzikas žurnālists, lasījis lekcijas un vadījis



seminārus universitātēs, piemēram, Daugavpils Universitātē (Latvija), Berlīnes Brīvajā Universitātē, Georga Augusta Universitātē Getingenē, Eiropas Viadrinas Univeristātē Frankfurtē pie Oderas un citur. Kā mūziķis darbojies uz Eiropas džeza skatuvēm, sadarbojies ar ierakstu kompānijām, dziedātājiem un mūziķiem. 2015. gadā dibinājis tango grupu *Kapelle Strock*, kas regulāri piedalās tango festivālos un citos pasākumos. 2017. gadā bijis koncertsērijas *Blackmore's Berlins Musikzimmer* mākslinieciskais vadītājs. Mūziķim ir ierakstu līgums ar kompāniju *Emil Berliner Studios*.

Autoru e-pastus var uzzināt, sazinoties ar žurnāla galveno redaktori:  
lauma.mellena.bartkevica@jvlma.lv