



Drago Kunej and Rebeka Kunej

# Music from Both Sides

Gramophone Records  
Made by Matija Arko and the Hoyer Trio

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**MUSIC FROM BOTH SIDES**  
**Gramophone Records Made by Matija Arko and the Hoyer Trio**

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Front cover photos: Matija Arko (courtesy of the National Cleveland Style-Polka Hall of Fame and Museum) and a label of the gramophone record (GNI DZGP).

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Ljubljana, 2017





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## Foreword to the English Edition

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Slovenians in North America recognize Matt Hoyer as a musical pioneer and their first entertainment superstar, as influential today as he was in the 1920s. Now Drs. Rebeka and Drago Kunej present Hoyer as an important contributor to the history of folk music in Slovenia. With this book, the Kunejs establish his early recordings as valuable documents of traditional Slovenian music.

The music of the Matt Hoyer Trio was the right sound at the right time. A century ago, the only source of entertainment in Slovenian-American homes was probably a relative or boarder with an accordion. As gramophones became more affordable and prevalent in the 1920s, emigrant families could enjoy the music of their homeland with each record they played. Whether a farmer in Minnesota, a miner in Wyoming, or a factory worker in Cleveland, if one could afford a gramophone and records, one could stay in contact with their musical culture.

Matt Hoyer and his Mervar button box became early favorites. His expertise on the accordion made for especially lively polkas and smooth waltzes. His younger half-brothers Eddie and Frank Simoncic brought a New World sensibility to the trio with their guitar and banjo enhancing Matt's rhythms. Even today, songs like *Vesela Polka* and *Moj Prijatelj* are as danceable as they were ninety years ago. With the addition of singers, jokes and brief skits, the first Slovenian party records appear, such as *Domace Veselje*, presenting a vaudeville review in three minutes or less. As the Kunejs point out, Hoyer's recordings were also distributed in Slovenia and played on radio broadcasts.

Young musicians listened to Hoyer and added their American touch with stylings from jazz, show tunes, country music, and other nationalities. Frank Yankovic was one of the first to add English titles and lyrics to attract a wider, non-Slovenian audience. With its catchy melodies and easy lyrics, this new, commercialized "Cleveland-style" polka sound fit the bill just as post-war America looked for simple, good-time music. The best of this generation of music-makers earned national recording contracts and performed in ballrooms and on television. They eclipsed Hoyer but never forgot him. Bandleaders, such as Eddie Habat, Frankie Zeitz and Johnny Pecon paid tribute to Matt with their own slick versions of Hoyer favorites. In the late 1950s, Johnny Pecon



and Lou Trebar revived the spirit of the Hoyer party recordings as "Janez and Lojze", with old fedoras, handlebar moustaches, corny jokes and reedy Mer-var button accordions, which hadn't been seen since before the war. When the button box renaissance took off in the 1970s and 1980s, amateur players avidly listened to old Hoyer records and the musicians who knew him and brought a new appreciation of his pioneering music. The Hoyer legacy is still very much with us today.

In *Music from Both Sides*, Rebeka and Drago Kunej are the first to tell the story of Matt Hoyer, the Slovenian musician's musician, and the Matt Hoyer Trio, the first Slovenian-American polka band, and place them on the timeline of early 20th century recorded music, not only in North America, but in Slovenia as well.

*Joseph Valencic*

President, National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum

Cleveland, February 2017

## Foreword

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The music by Matija Arko, a native of Sodražica, left the biggest imprint in the United States. The environment he was originally from, however, was marked mostly by peddling. Like peddlers, he too left his home for the big wide world, the legacy he left behind the music that knew no bounds.

The book about Matija Arko (Matt Hoyer) was created as part of the project *The American Goes Back Home*, which included research work, an exhibition and multimedia contents. The project is a fine example of interinstitutional collaboration between the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU and the Museum of Ribnica and a result of the institute's many years of research work. The results of institute's research and the newly acquired knowledge were in 2015 integrated into the Museum of Ribnica's museum- and education-related activities. The institute's research work thus acted as a catalyst for cooperation and presentations at our museum.

Matija Arko left his native country at an early age and continued his life and creative path among the Slovenian immigrants in the United States. In the early 20th century, the emigration from the area of Ribnica was very intense, it was nothing unusual for people to leave for other parts of the world. Enriched with a cultural memory of his native country, Matija left for America, but he is now returning to Slovenia – with the exhibition and, even more so, with this monograph.

*Polona Rigler Grm*  
Managing Director, Museum of Ribnica

Ribnica, November 2015



## Acknowledgements

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We collected the materials for the book gradually and over a longer period of time, and developed the book's content with the aid of a number of people we talked to and our supporters from both sides of the Atlantic. The book could not have been written if, during our research on gramophone records, we had not met so many benevolent people who were willing to help us.

Our special thanks go to Joe Valencic, Charles Debevec, Richard Terselich, Joe Godina, Tony Petkovsek, Don Sosnoski, Bill Azman, Rose Marie Macek Jisa, as well as Matija and Breda Loncar, who made it possible for us to meet Matt Hoyer's granddaughter Pat McKibben, and also to Pat Budzilek Habat, Peter Zrinski and Suzana Kordiš, who have alongside many others patiently provided us with information on Matija Arko, the Hoyer Trio and their music.

An extremely valuable part of our work was the field research conducted in 2015 in Cleveland, Ohio, the USA, for which financial support has been provided by the Slovenian Research Agency and the Office of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Slovenians Abroad. We are immensely grateful for the many personal meetings with Slovenian immigrants and experts on polka music, as well as for the access to the materials and the data in the possession of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum, the Slovenian Genealogy Society International and other institutions and individuals associated with Slovenians in the USA and their musical heritage.

Our sincere thanks also go to everyone who has provided us with advice and encouragement, thus aiding us in researching and writing the book, especially to our colleagues at the Institute and to Urša Šivic, who is the monograph's editor.

The book was published as part of the project *Amerikanec na obisku v stari domovini / The American Goes Back Home*, which was coordinated by Marina Gradišnik, and carried out by the Museum of Ribnica (Ribnica Handicraft Centre) and the Institute of Ethnomusicology, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts – our sincere thanks for a most fruitful collaboration. We are also grateful to those who made this book possible by providing financial aid, namely the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of

Slovenia, Slovenian Research Agency, the Municipality of Ribnica and the Municipality of Sodražica.

For the English edition we are grateful for all their help and proofreading to Joe Valencic, John and Dawn Vidmar, Rich Terselic, Chuck Debevec and Mary-Allen Johnson.

Last but not least, we have researched and wrote about Matt Hoyer and his trio with the support and understanding of our family, our children Nejc, Neža and Nace, and with a lot of help from both sets of grandparents, who were willing to come to our aid and occasionally take on all of the work that needs to be done by the parents of school-age children. Our sincere thanks to all of you.

*Drago and Rebeka Kunej*

## Introduction

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Matija Arko, better known as Matt Hoyer in the USA, was born in 1891 in the Slovenian village of Sodražica and emigrated to the USA as a teenager. He brought his love of music and the accordion with him, and both became an important part of his life. Matija and his band, the Hoyer Trio, became hugely popular among Slovenians, as well as immigrants of other nationalities.

Much of Matija Arko's music is well documented and preserved on gramophone (phonograph) records, and provides a fascinating insight into his work and the history of Slovenian music in the United States. Although these recordings have tremendous cultural and documentary value and are an important source of information for research on Slovenian folk music and dance, as well as Slovenian musical heritage in general, until recently, they have been almost completely overlooked in Slovenia. This study of Matija Arko and the Hoyer Trio is the first of its kind in Slovenia and offers a detailed overview of the trio's gramophone records; the accompanying information and the historical and technical context contribute significantly to researching the highly-interesting audio material. The Hoyer Trio's recorded tunes<sup>1</sup> constitute invaluable folkloric, ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological material, as they are among the oldest sound recordings of Slovenian instrumental folk music. The musical heritage captured on old gramophone records can be a valuable aid in interpreting folk dance heritage. It reveals the character and the manner of playing dance tunes, as they were performed by musicians at the peak of their musical prowess. The interpretation matches that of an actual musician warming up a crowd of dancers.

By attempting to mix Slovenian folk music and various genres of American popular music of the time, Matija Arko laid the foundations of Slovenian-style or Cleveland-style of polka music, whose appeal soon crossed ethnic boundaries and won widespread popularity. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the development of Slovenian polka music, he was awarded one

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<sup>1</sup> In the book, the term "song" refers to vocal music, whereas the term "tune" is used in a general sense (e.g. a melody, a composition, a piece of music) and for instrumental music.

of the first Lifetime Achievement Awards, presented annually by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. Many experts consider Matija to be the originator of Slovenian-style polka music in the USA and often refer to him as the pioneer, the grandfather of the Cleveland-style polka music. This study of his recorded materials uncovers the beginning of the popularization and commercialization of Slovenian folk music, which became widely popular and available somewhat unexpectedly because of new technical developments and the emergence of the gramophone industry. Old gramophone records that feature music intended primarily for commercial use speak volumes about the social background of recording-related activities, the complexity of selecting the content and the style of performance, and the entire process of recording and marketing gramophone records.

In Slovenia, little has been known about Matija Arko / Matt Hoyer, and his musical endeavors until recently. The aim of the research, the exhibition (2015) entitled *Amerikanec na obisku v stari domovini / The American Goes Back Home*<sup>2</sup> in Matija's native Ribnica Valley, and this publication was to draw attention to his work and to the importance of his music both in the past and the present.

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<sup>2</sup> The exhibition's symbolic title is taken from one of the records from that period.

## From Matija Arko to Matt Hoyer

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Matija Arko has been completely overlooked in Slovenian lexicography. In fact, he does not appear in the Slovenian biographical lexicon *Slovenska biografija* (2015), nor in any other lexicons or encyclopedias. It was not until February 2013 that an article about Matt Hoyer was included in the Slovenian language version of *Wikipedia* for the first time (Wikipedia 2015). This "lack of familiarity" with Matija Arko in Slovenia is partly due to the fact that he used his stage name, Matt Hoyer, for most of his musical endeavors. Different versions of his proper name and surname have been used in written materials, such as various magazines and gramophone record catalogs, as well as inscriptions on records. Matt, Math., Mathias, Matija are used as his first name and Hoyer, Hojer, or even Arko or Simoncic as his surname. A variety of combinations of his first and last names can be found.<sup>3</sup> Although his American name, Matt Hoyer, was the most commonly used name, it is interesting to note that in the gramophone records that contain spoken parts, other musicians always refer to him as "Matija" or "Hoyer".

Even in his native village and in the Ribnica Valley, the memory of Matija Arko has faded. However, his early childhood years which he spent in this area profoundly influenced his musical work and are reflected throughout his recordings, music and artistic creations.

### The Beginnings in the Slovenian Lands

Matija Arko was born on February 22, 1891 in the village of Sodražica to Helena Arko. Her parents came from the village of Ravni Dol, and the family's house was locally referred to as "Pri Hojerju" (Hoyer's). It was only after the birth of their son Matija that Helena married Matija's father, Franc Simončič, who worked as a farmhand in Sodražica. This is most likely why Matija kept his

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<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of consistency, the American version of his name (Matt Hoyer), by which he was known in the world of music for the most part, is generally used in this book.





Figure 1: Sodražica in the late 19th century (courtesy of the Museum of Ribnica, inventory No. 607).

mother's maiden name. When he was six years old (in 1897), his mother died. In 1899, two years after her death, Matija's father emigrated to the USA, where he started a new life. A few years later, in 1904, Matija also left for Cleveland, joining his father.

Matija had spent only his childhood years in the Slovenian Lands and travelled to the New World as a thirteen-year-old boy. Very little is known about Matija's childhood in Slovenia. He most likely lived the way many other people did in the rural areas of the Dolenjska Region, dreaming of a new world, aspiring to find their opportunity for a better life than the one they had at home.

In the early 20th century, the majority of Slovenians who emigrated to the USA, followed a similar journey across the Atlantic. First they would travel overland, mostly by train, to major seaports. Despite its proximity to Slovenia, the seaport of Trieste was not frequently used for Slovenian emigration to America. Although it was a short overland journey to Trieste, it was a much longer ocean voyage. For this reason, the ports on the North Sea coast, namely Hamburg, Bremen and Le Havre, were the most frequently used ones. In Le Havre, trains would bring people straight to the pier and, after completing the formalities, the passengers for the USA would immediately board their ship (Kante 2002: 27).

In 1904, when Matija Arko left for America, the emigration of Slovenians

Figure 2: A standard business practice of organizing journeys to the USA in the early 20th century. Slovenian newspapers ran advertisements sponsored by various travel offices that offered the organization of such trips. One such notice was published in the newspaper *Slovenec* on May 7, 1904, offering a transatlantic voyage from Europe to the United States, the same voyage that was undertaken by Matija Arko (Slovenec 1904).



449 52-3

**Samo 6 dni!**

**Havre - New York**

vozijo zanesljivo najhitrejši brzo-  
parniki

**Francoske prekomorske družbe.**

Edina najkrajša črta čez  
**Bazel, Pariz in Havre v Ameriko.**

Veljavne vozne liste in brezplačna  
pojasnila daje edino  
**oblastveno potrjena potovalna  
pisarna**

**ED. ŠMARD A**

v Ljubljani, Dunajska cesta 6,  
blizu znane gostilne pri »Figovec«.

Figure 3: At that time, Slovenian newspapers in the USA would report on all the steamships that arrived from Europe; on May 31, 1904, the newspaper *Glas naroda – list slovenskih delavcev v Ameriki* published a news item reporting that a steamship, La Touraine, which had started its transatlantic journey in the French port of Le Havre, had arrived in New York. Matija Arko traveled as a passenger to America on this steamship as a thirteen-year-old boy (Glas naroda 1904).



**Kretanje parnikov.**

**V New York so dospeli:**

La Touraine 29. maja iz Havre.  
Barcelona 29. maja iz Hamburga.  
Bordeaux 30. maja iz Havre.  
Friesland 30. maja iz Antwerpena.  
Germanic 30. maja iz Liverpoola.

was at its peak. The business of various railway and shipping companies was flourishing, as many trips were sold out in advance. "As a result of this, the between-decks areas of all steamships operating between the USA and Europe have been sold out for the coming few months and can barely satisfy the demand for transport", as reported in the newspaper *Dolenjske Novice* on February 1,

1904. The price of sea transport included free medical care and food. However, its quantity and quality depended on the company that owned the ship (cf. Kante 2002: 30).

Not much is known about Matija Arko's journey across the Atlantic Ocean. It was probably similar to the journey of thousands of others who travelled to the USA. From 1892 onwards, immigrants had to first disembark at Ellis Island<sup>4</sup> in New York Harbor. Here, the officials registered the newcomers. On the basis of a list of standard questions and a medical examination, they then decided who would be permitted to actually disembark onto the shores of Manhattan and enter into the United States (Kante 2002: 33–35). *The List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the U. S. Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival* contains information about Matija Arko's arrival in America. Registry Room officials defined the thirteen-year-old Matija as a laborer and noted that he was on the way to Cleveland to his father Simončič, who had paid for his trip to America. His father's full address in Cleveland is also included – 209 East Madison (Ellis Island 2015). Moreover, the same source states that Matija Arko, listed as "Mathias Arko, an Austrian national"<sup>5</sup>, arrived in the United States on May 29, 1904, on board the ship La Touraine, which had started its voyage on May 21 in Le Havre.

## **Life in the USA and the Hoyer Trio**

After arriving in Cleveland, Matija lived with his father's new family. The house at 209 East Madison was occupied by the Simončič family. At the time of Matija's arrival, the family consisted of Matija's father Franc (who was called Frank in the USA) and his second wife Magdalena, their daughter Rosie approximately three, and Angela, born circa 1904. With Matija, the family now numbered five.

The USA census for the year 1910 (Census 1910), six years after Matija's arrival in America, reveals that the Simončič family had moved a few blocks away and was living in a rental at 990 East 63rd Street. The head of the household was indicated as father Frank, and both he and his wife Magdalena were listed as being 40-years old and had been married for 13 years. Both had been born in Slovenia, but immigrated to the USA at different times: Frank in 1899 and

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<sup>4</sup> Ellis Island is known by a few different names: the native Americans had referred to it as Gull Island, the local fishermen as Oyster Island. Numerous immigrants gave it another name – the Island of Tears, as this is where it was decided who was welcome on American soil and who was not. Thus, many tears were shed on the island – tears of joy, but also tears of disappointment and despair (Kante 2002: 33).

<sup>5</sup> At that time, Slovenians lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, hence the nationality of many Slovenians was listed as Austrian.

Figure 4: The house at 990 East 63rd Street in Cleveland, where Matija Arko and other members of the Simončič family lived for a few years (photo by Rebeka Kunej, 2015).



Magdalena in 1902. Frank spoke English and could read and write, whereas Magdalena spoke no English; both were unemployed. There were seven children in the family with son Matthew, aged 19, listed as the oldest child. He was listed as having been born in Slovenia as well, had come to the USA in 1902 and could speak English. He was unemployed as well. Their nine-year-old daughter Rosie was the last of their children born in Slovenia, while the other children, Angela (aged 6), Frank (5), Mimie (3), Edward (2) and Genny (3 months), were born in Ohio, USA. Four boarders lived with the Simončič family at the time, namely "Aloise Siltz" (Alojz Šilc, aged 28), Jack Rotar (26), Frank Budiak (27) and Andrew Budiak (20), all of whom were unmarried and factory workers. In addition to the Simončič family of nine, and four boarders, the house was also occupied by a young family of three (the "Mrchar" family) – father Frank, his wife Magdalena and their three-month-old son, Frank. Altogether, there were sixteen people living in the house.

Based on this census data, it can be concluded that Matija's father Franc and Magdalena married in Slovenia circa 1897. About two years after the wedding, Franc left for the USA, where he arrived on November 22, 1899 (Ellis Island 2015). His wife stayed in the home country, gave birth to their daughter Rosie, and left for the USA together with their daughter not long after her birth, in 1902, to join her husband.

The Simončič family of nine had four boarders staying with them in their apartment. Even though families were large, it was common at the time to welcome young Slovenian immigrants to board with them. For an agreed sum of money, the boarders got a roof over their head and usually food as well. This provided families with an additional source of income at the expense



Figure 5: The house on East 82nd Street in Cleveland's Newburgh neighborhood, where Matija Arko and his family lived (photo by Rebeka Kunej, 2015).

of space and privacy. The most famous Slovenian polka musician, Frankie Yankovic, remembered sharing a bed with several boarders during his youth. There would often be eight or even nine boarders staying at their house. As a child, he admired these young men, who were full of energy, wore nice clothes and loved having fun. They would often sing and joke with the girls. Many of them could play the diatonic accordion (also known as the "button box"), and it was one of the boarders, Max Zelodec, who taught young Frankie how to play (cf. Dolgan 2006: 23–24).

Matija Arko is mentioned for the first time in the 1910 census as the eldest son in the Simončič family. He was listed as Matthew with the surname Simončič, even though his official surname was Arko. The specified age is accurate, whereas the year of Matija's arrival in the USA (1902) is not, since the year indicated in *The List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the U. S. Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival* is 1904. At the time of the 1910 census, he was 19 years old, still unmarried, living with his father's family, could speak English and was without regular employment.

Numerous sources (e.g. Greene 1992: 82; Debevec 2014: 106; Lifetime Achievement 2015a) suggest that Matija had learned to play, make and repair accordions

Figure 6: A handbill advertising a picnic in 1916, where musical entertainment was provided by the Hoyer brothers (courtesy of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum).

**VABILO NA PIKNIK,**

KI GA PRIREDI

**DRUŠTVO "PRIMOŽ TRUBAR"**

ŠT. 126 S. N. P. J.

NA RECHARJEVI FARMI V EUCLID, OHIO

**V NEDELJO, DNE 30. JULIJA 1916.**

**VZEMI SHORE-LINE KARO STOP 126**

Ker je čisti dobiček namenjen za delnice S. N. DOMA, se pričakuje od strani članov in članic S. N. P. J. iz Clevelanda in okolice in slovenskega občinstva mnogo udeležbe. Na pikniku se bo licitiral velik "PURMAN", brata Hojar bodeta skrbela, da se bo prav po domače zaplesalo, odbor društva bo pa pre-skrbel, da bodo soudeleženci dobro in točne postreženi z raznimi okrepčili, in za prosto domačo veselo zabavo.

Za obilno udeležbo se še enkrat priporoča 

**Dr. Primož Trubar.**

in Slovenia, and also brought the skills necessary to repair and make accordions. He certainly kept playing the accordion after moving to Cleveland. One of the people who recalled this is Ivana Bricel (1957, 1985), who was living with the Simončič family's relatives at that time. She mentions that the relatives owned an inn in Cleveland, where young Matija would often play. Ivana Bricel's father, John Janzelj (locally referred to as Sivic), an immigrant from Ig in Slovenia, was very impressed with Matija's accordion playing and his musical talent. John was himself a good accordionist, who had learned to play the accordion as a child back home in Slovenia and often performed at weddings in Ig and the

surrounding area from the time he was twelve. He wanted to use his extensive experience to help Matija and it is believed that he was the one who taught the talented young man some Slovenian folk tunes, which Matija learned quickly and interpreted in his own unique way. One of these tunes was a wedding march that was later recorded by the Hoyer Trio on a gramophone record, entitled *Jaka na St. Clairu* (Jack on St. Clair).

Matija was not the only member of the Simončič family who possessed musical talent. Both of his half-brothers, Frank and Eddie, later became successful musicians, and actively collaborated with Matija even at a young age. Matija's highly successful musical activities probably contributed to his love of music and the accordion rubbing off on the two half-brothers, both of whom were much younger than Matija and were in 1910 only five (Frank) and two (Eddie).

The 1920 population census (Census 1920) reveals that Matija Arko's life had changed significantly. He now had his own family and they lived as tenants at 3584 East 82nd Street. At the time, Matija (Matt) was 28, i.e. the same age as his wife Frances, who had been born to Slovenian immigrants in Ohio. The 1920 census also reveals that Matija had arrived in the USA in 1903 (sic). Both Matija and his wife could read and write, although they had not attended school. Matija worked as a "machinist" in a factory manufacturing springs, while his wife Frances was unemployed. They had three children; daughters Frances (aged 5) and Marie (3), and a son named Matt (1). The house was occupied by a number of other people – a married couple named Hočevar and their relatives Anton and Mary Zakrajšek, as well as three boarders: Joseph Barle, Lewis Ferfolja and Joseph Hočevar. Altogether, there were twelve people living in the house.

Between 1910 and 1920, Matija Arko started a family and created a new home, but the census data give no indication of when exactly he got married. Judging from the age of the oldest child, it was circa 1914. Some of the data contained in this census was likewise inaccurate, including the year of Matija's arrival in the USA (1903) and his age, according to which his year of birth would have been 1892.


During this period, his musical career took off and he started performing at various public events. As early as 1916, a handbill, an "Invitation to a picnic", was sent out, which among other things said "the Hoyer brothers will make sure you'll get to dance to some familiar tunes". This suggests that Matija was actively involved in playing at public events and was even back then using Hoyer, the name his mother's family from Slovenia was locally referred to, as his stage name. As can be seen from the handbill, Matija used the same name for the musical ensembles he played in, for example the duo with his half-brother, and at a later time also for the family ensemble, the Hoyer Trio. The year the picnic was held suggests it was probably Matija's half-brother Frank, aged eleven, who



Figure 7: One of the few photos showing the Hoyer Trio, with Matt playing a Mervar accordion and his half-brothers, Frank and Eddie Simončič, the banjo and the guitar respectively. On the floor, there is a chromatic accordion, which the Trio would use occasionally (courtesy of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum).

was the other half of the duo. At that time, Eddie was only seven, which was probably too young for him to be part of the duo. He later demonstrated an extraordinary musical talent.





**SPORTING CORNER**  
Edited by STANLEY ZUPAN.

**BIG DANCE COMING**  
**Collinwood will match innings**  
**with Bridgeport.**  
**Collinwood Prepares for Big**  
**Game.**

The St. Joseph Sports of Collinwood are starting their fall entertaining with a dance to be given Saturday August 28, 1926. The Sports ask that all who can possibly come to this party should make it their point to be there as there will be no regrets to count. It is rather early to start the dancing season, but as the dance is given in order to defray the expenses of the team when they travel down to Bridgeport to play the celebrated K. S. K. J. nine of that town on Labor Day the next, every one is asked to attend and thereby help Cleveland trim Bridgeport. As to the weather, it has been arranged with the weather man to give us a cool day so the dancing will be enjoyed without the necessity of wearing a bathing suit. As usual, refreshments will be served and all the rest of the trimmings that make the Sport dances howling blowouts. The well-known recording artists, The Hoyer Trio will furnish the enchanting strains for the restless feet.

If you miss this dance, you are missing a time of your life. Let's all go up and give the boys a rousing send off to Bridgeport. Next Saturday, Don't forget. Fireworks will start at 7:30 p. m.

Figure 8: An announcement for a big dance event in the bulletin *Glasiło KSK jednote*, where the musical entertainment is listed as being provided by the Hoyer Trio, by now a popular and established ensemble (Glasiło KSK jednote 1926).

According to some sources, by 1919 Matt Hoyer (Matija Arko) had become one of the most popular musicians in Cleveland (Greene 1992: 82). It is believed that this was the year when the Hoyer Trio was formed and when the Trio recorded their first gramophone record (cf. Z. F. 1986; Wikipedia 2015; Lifetime Achievement 2015a). Matt had teamed up with his half-brothers Frank and Eddie and formed the Hoyer Trio, with Frank playing the banjo, and Eddie mostly the guitar and occasionally the chromatic accordion. As far as the earliest recordings on gramophone records are concerned, 1919 is not correct. They recorded their first recording in 1924 (for more information see the chapter on Hoyer Trio gramophone records). As far as the Hoyer Trio's formation is concerned, 1919 appears correct. If that is the year of the Trio's formation, this makes Matt, Frank and Eddie aged 28, 14 and 11 respectively at the time. There is no doubt that only a few years later, the Hoyer Trio performed frequently at various public events and parties, and also began recording gramophone records.

The 1930 population census (Census 1930) reveals that the Arko family moved once again to a neighboring house on the same street (3582 East 82nd Street), where they lived as tenants. Matt was 39 years old and his wife Frances 38. The census also reveals that they had married at the age of 21 (Matt) and 20 (Frances). According to the 1930 census, Matt was working at a piano store and had come to the USA in 1901 (sic). Of the three children, only the sixteen-year old Frances was employed, working in the millinery industry.

Marie was then aged 12 and Matt was 11. In addition to the Arko family, the house was occupied by a family of nine, the Hrovats, which means that there were fourteen people living in the house. In 1930, Matt Hoyer was already an established musician, which is probably why he no longer worked in a factory, but at a music store. The census data suggests that he and his wife had gotten married circa 1912. They were the only occupants of the house to own a radio, which might indicate that the family's financial situation was somewhat better than that of the others.

In the period between 1920 and 1930, Matt Hoyer, alongside his half-brothers Frank and Eddie as the Hoyer Trio, performed on a regular basis. They were the first Slovenian polka band and achieved great popularity. They played mostly at weddings and parties held by Slovenians, as well as immigrants from other Slavic countries. The Trio's musical leader was Matt, who made arrangements of traditional tunes and occasionally also composed his own. During the Hoyer Trio's first few years, they often traveled around the mining towns of Pennsylvania and Ohio, most of the time driving Matt's old Ford automobile. Their style of playing and popularity, directly or indirectly, influenced almost all later musicians who played Slovenian Cleveland-style polka music in the United States.

During this period, the Trio started recording gramophone records and all of the Hoyer Trio recordings (of which there were very many considering the short period) were made between 1924 and 1929. They were recorded by three leading US record companies, namely Victor Talking Machine Co., Columbia Graphophone Co. and Okeh Records. The Trio's early records were immensely popular with listeners and very successful, selling in large numbers (Bricel 1957; cf. DAHR). In the 1920s, the Hoyer Trio was at the peak of its popularity and fame.

In 1924, when the first Hoyer Trio gramophone records were recorded, Frank and Eddie were still teenagers. As far as musical talent goes, Eddie quite obviously stood out; in 1926, when he was eighteen, he recorded a solo record playing the accordion (*Ančka pejt plesat*, Columbia 25063-F, W 107479-2). For three recordings made by an accordion duo, which were recorded during the same recording session in 1926 for Columbia, Eddie most likely collaborated with Matt. Subsequent musical endeavors are further proof that Eddie was a fine musician. In fact, Eddie was featured playing Slovenian polka music on the accordion in several movies (Gobetz 1980: 165). Under the name Eddie Simms, he was known as a Slovenian boxer, musician and actor, and appeared in a number of Hollywood movies.

The 1940 population census (Census 1940) reveals that the Arko family was at the time still living as tenants at the same address as ten years prior (3582 East 82nd Street). Matt was 49 and his wife Frances was 48, and two of their children



Figure 9: Matt Hoyer and Frank Novak playing together at a wedding in 1937 (courtesy of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum).

were living with them, Marie and Matthew, aged 22 and 21 respectively. According to the census data, Matt had no job and was looking for work, having been without a job for 208 weeks; his occupation was listed as "musician" and the industry he worked in as "private orchestra". He had no regular income due to unemployment, but did have some "other income". His wife Frances was also without a job or income, their daughter Marie was employed at a sawmill, and their son Matthew worked as a "press operator" in a steel mill. In addition to the Arko family, the house was occupied by Matt's son-in-law, Joseph Barle, his wife Frances (Matt's daughter) and their son Richard. Altogether, there were seven people living in the house.

Between 1930 and 1940, the Hoyer Trio's popularity suffered a slight decline, although Matt Hoyer was still very musically active in spite of his age. A leading role in the polka music scene was gradually assumed by younger accordionists, such as Johnny Pecon, Lou Trebar and Frankie Yankovic, and their bands. The Hoyer Trio itself had, in the meantime, undergone some changes – Eddie and Frank moved out of Cleveland and thus no longer played with the Trio from circa 1936 onwards. They were replaced by Matt's son Teddy (Matthew), who

Figure 10: Matt Hoyer with Millie Zeitz in the late 1940s (courtesy of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum).



was about eighteen at the time and played the accordion like his father, and Frank Culovic, who played the banjo. The new ensemble continued playing and performing, but did not record any gramophone records.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Hoyer Trio at the time consisting of two chromatic accordions and a banjo, played by Matt, his son Teddy, and Frank Culovic, continued playing and performing in public. Bill Azman, Jr., a personal friend of Teddy's and a great lover of the Hoyer Trio's music, remembers Teddy used to talk about how they traveled around the greater Cleveland area, where the Hoyer Trio frequently performed. During this period, one of the venues where the Trio



Figure 11: Teddy Arko, Matt Hoyer's son, who followed in the footsteps of his father and his musical tradition (courtesy of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum).



Figure 12: The grave marker for Matt (Matthew) Arko and his wife Frances at the Calvary Cemetery in Cleveland (photo by Drago Kunej, 2015).

often played was Tomsic's Bar, located at the intersection of East 40th Street and St. Clair Avenue, which for years was managed by Mary Tomsic (Azman 2015). The new Hoyer Trio ensemble was characterized by a different sound and style of playing. Father Matt still played the lead in a relatively simple manner, "the old way", while Teddy accompanied him, "embellishing" the basic tune.

Towards the end of his life, Matt Hoyer settled down in a house at 3630 East 78th Street in Newburgh, a section of Cleveland where his family had always



Figure 13: An Excelsior 120-bass chromatic accordion used by Matt Hoyer, now in the possession of Bill Azman, Jr. (photo by Bill Azman, 2015).

resided. He had a workshop in the house and repaired and tuned accordions (cf. Umeck 1961). He continued playing and performing on a regular basis, with his son, Teddy, and Frank Culovic as the new Hoyer Trio ensemble, until he fell ill in 1959, after which the family's musical tradition was carried on by Teddy, who played in various musical ensembles.

Matt Hoyer lived in his adopted homeland until his death on December 20, 1960. He died at home of cancer, aged 69. His obituary states that he was mourned by his relatives, son Matthew Arko, Jr., daughters Frances Barle and Maria Kavec, as well as four sisters and two brothers. His wife, Frances Arko (née Godec), had died six years prior to him (cf. Kaferle n.d.). They are buried next to each other in the local Roman Catholic cemetery, Calvary Cemetery in Cleveland.



Figure 14: The accordion made by Anton Mervar, which used to be played by Matt Hoyer, is now in the possession of the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum (photo by Rebeka Kunej, 2015).

Matt Hoyer was one of the first distinguished Slovenian accordionists in the USA. He excelled at playing the accordion, both the diatonic and the chromatic. He developed a unique style of playing, i.e. he played in a smooth flowing manner, yet with an abundance of special accents, which enriched his performance. Teddy believed (cf. Azman 2015) that his father Matt greatly preferred playing the chromatic accordion to the diatonic accordion. Matt thought the latter did not allow diversity in his performance. This might be why a story circulated that during live performances Matt Hoyer would often take his diatonic accordion apart and replace the reed blocks, thus changing the accordion's tuning. This allowed him to break the monotony of playing the diatonic accordion in only two or three keys.

For many years, Matt Hoyer played an accordion made by Anton Mervar, an established Slovenian accordion maker in Cleveland. The connection between

Hoyer and the Mervar accordion is indicated by the labels on some of Hoyer's gramophone records, where it is specified that the accordion used in the recording was made by A. Mervar. The purchase of new accordions is even included in one of Matt's records (*Samo da bo likof / Everything for a Bargain*, Victor, BVE 45369, V-23007). You can hear Matt bargaining the price and testing the sound of a new accordion.

Matt's son Teddy inherited both Matt's accordions, the Mervar accordion and an Excelsior 120-bass chromatic accordion. He had both of them restored and would play them on a regular basis. He sold the Excelsior chromatic accordion to his friend Bill Azman, Jr., an ardent admirer of the Hoyer Trio's music and an accordionist himself. Matt Hoyer's granddaughter inherited the accordion made by Mervar from Teddy and donated it to the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum.

Among the accordions on display at the museum is the Mervar accordion played by Matt Hoyer for a number of years. The same accordion is featured in some rare Hoyer Trio photos. Appearance-wise it is very similar to the diatonic accordion, the difference being that it is slightly larger. The label inside the accordion says the accordion was made by Anton Mervar, an accordion maker and owner of a music store on St. Clair Avenue. It was made on March 25, 1926, with the serial number 730. The label also mentions that the accordion was restored on January 29, 1967 by John Mikuš, an accordion maker at 6607 Edna Avenue in Cleveland. It is interesting to note that the treble side of the accordion is not tuned diatonically, but chromatically, which is documented by the inscriptions on the reed blocks. In the bass side, the tuning follows the characteristics of diatonic scale tunings, where, depending on the direction of the bellows on the same bass (and chorded) button, two different notes (chords) are produced, and also has all the characteristics of powerful and low bass (helicon) tones of diatonic accordions. It is not known whether the accordion was tuned like this when it was made in 1926 or whether it might have been retuned in 1967 during restoration work.





## Recording of Gramophone Records

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Record companies realized very early on that, in order to achieve market expansion, it was necessary for them to issue records in different languages and offer buyers recordings from a variety of musical cultures. They were aware that in order to sell gramophones and records potential consumers needed to be offered local music, which was familiar to them and with which many could identify (cf. Pennanen 2007). One of the sales strategies for attracting more buyers of gramophone records and gramophones in the USA was recording music performed by immigrants, including those from Europe. Since the music industry started seeing immigrants as potential buyers, record companies started recording the so-called "ethnic music" or music for "foreign-speaking" buyers. In doing so, the industry was largely counting on the immigrants' nostalgia for their homeland, hoping that this would increase record and gramophone sales.

The gramophone record industry dates back to the period of general global industrialization, which saw the emergence of mass production and consumerism. The growing international trade allowed a global market expansion, whereas legal regulations and patent protection contributed to the emergence of monopolistic conditions in the market (cf. Gronow 1982: 4). In order to better understand the challenges the Hoyer Trio and other Slovenian immigrant recording artists faced making recordings and the importance of these recordings in the immigrants' daily lives, it is necessary to review the beginnings of the gramophone record industry from different perspectives, including its historical conditions and available technological options.

### The Earliest Sound Recording Devices

The first attempts at inventing a sound recording device date back to the mid-19th century. One of the most successful attempts took place in 1857, when the Frenchman Léon Scott de Martinville (1817–1879) invented a device that he referred to as a *phonograph*. The device created a graphic recording of the sound waves, but allowed no playback.

A device that looked very much like the phonautograph was invented by Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931) in 1877 and was called the *phonograph*. Sound waves vibrated a diaphragm to which a cutting stylus was attached. Thus, the stylus created a hill-and-dale groove on the cylinder covered in tinfoil (the so-called vertical cut recording). Playback was accomplished the other way around; a rounded tip of the stylus, attached to the diaphragm, traced the hill-and-dale variations of the depth of the indentation in tinfoil, causing the diaphragm to vibrate, which then turned the vibrations into sound waves. In 1887, Edison succeeded in sound recording a children's song *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, which he shouted into the device and then managed to play it back. The device was a big hit with journalists, which resulted in Edison being dubbed "The Wizard of Menlo Park". In late 1877 and early 1878, Edison presented the new device to various newspapers and magazines, scientific societies, the President of the USA, the entire United States Congress and the Patent Office. He sold a few devices for different promotional purposes, which did make the public familiar with the innovation, but did not contribute to the device becoming a major consumer item. In 1878, Edison patented the phonograph, thus protecting his invention. Afterwards, he devoted himself to other work for a few years, especially to researching the electric light bulb and the electrical power distribution system (Borri n.d.).

The invention of the phonograph made a strong impression on Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. In Washington DC, he founded the Volta Laboratory Association, along with his cousin Chichester Bell and the scientist Charles Sumner Tainter, who had from 1881 onwards been working on developing a device called a *graphophone*. The device was very similar to the phonograph, but featured some improvements. In 1885 and 1886, their improvements were protected by patents in Canada and the USA, and in 1887 they launched a campaign to produce and sell graphophones. They wanted to buy Edison's patent, but Edison did not agree. Edison himself stepped up laboratory work alongside his associates to improve the phonograph, aiming to again become the leader in this field (Borri n.d.).

Between 1886 and 1887, Edison first entrusted work on the development of the phonograph to his researcher Ezra Gilliland, and in 1888, after a new research laboratory had been completed, Edison himself took over the task of improving the device. Following a legendary 72-hour work session, he completed his "Perfect Phonograph". The improved phonograph featured an electric drive mechanism (motor), a replaceable recording and reproducing head and a special device for erasing cylinders. Sound was recorded on a massive wax-coated cylinder, which consisted of beeswax, stearic acid, and ceresin. Thus, the phonograph was ready for production for use on a wider scale and marketed.

In the beginning, the phonograph and the graphophone were mostly marketed as dictating machines, which were in various "professional environments" supposed to replace shorthand. However, this did not turn out to be very successful. An alternative use presented itself in 1889, when, for the purposes of advertising, a phonograph featuring four stethoscope-like tubes, which people could use to listen to recorded music, was displayed. The coin-operated device was not only a precursor of the famous jukebox, but also a huge commercial success. It was purchased by owners of restaurants, bars, amusement parks, casinos, etc. The demand for these devices walked hand in hand with an increased demand for recorded cylinders used for playback.

However, the period of wax cylinder recordings and playback by means of phonographs was relatively short-lived, since the market leader role was assumed by gramophones. Part of the reason for the success of the gramophone was that they were much less complex compared to phonographs and could therefore be produced and sold at a lower price. The production of gramophone records was much cheaper than the production of cylinders. In 1913, Edison, who for a long time had refused to deal with gramophone records, started producing the so-called *diamond discs*, in which the sound was recorded as variations in the depth of the groove cut. He also produced special players to be used with the discs. Nevertheless, he continued producing cylinders for phonograph owners through 1929, when his company ceased to operate.

The *gramophone* was invented and patented circa 1888 by Emile Berliner (1851–1929), a German immigrant living in the United States. He had approached the idea of sound recording in a different manner and tried to completely avoid the existing patents (Edison's, as well as Bell and Tainter's). His idea was based on the phonautograph by Léon Scott de Martinville and, unlike Edison, he assumed the cylinder had no future as a sound-recording medium and hence opted for discs instead. He hand-propelled a 7-inch (18-cm) record with approximately 70 revolutions per minute, recording sound through a spiral groove being cut on only one side of the record. He also opted for Scott's laterally-cut grooves (side-to-side), which differed from the vertical cut in Edison's phonographs. The process itself was satisfactory, although the playback sound quality still left much to be desired and failed to reach the quality of phonograph-based playback. Therefore, the focus of Berliner's research in subsequent years was mainly on how to improve the sound recording process and in his 1892 patent he described an improved gramophone design. According to his findings, the groove in the record needed to have sufficient depth and hard edges, so it could steer the playback needle itself, without any of the additional mechanisms that were needed in phonographs (Friedman n.d.). This improved the laterally-cut groove process. This and the flat discs used as the recording medium were the

two key features that distinguished the gramophone from Edison's phonograph and later played a crucial role in securing the dominance of the gramophone and gramophone records over phonographs and wax cylinders (cf. LAC).

Above all else, Berliner's aim was to improve the technology for the mass production of discs. In 1893, he filed a patent for the production of zinc discs and copper negative copies of the discs, from which it was then possible to press discs from hard rubber and celluloid. Pressed discs were made from a much harder material than the wax cylinders at the time, which made them more durable. As early as 1889, Berliner started producing vulcanite or hard rubber disc copies, and in 1897, he began using a thermoplastic shellac compound. Shellac is a special natural resin of animal origin. The harder material and more strongly modulated grooves, on account of lower cut-resistance, allowed a somewhat louder playback than in cylinders. However, since the acid also corroded the groove walls, a relatively large surface noise was heard during playback (cf. Burt 1963: 772B; Friedman n.d.).

Berliner developed and started selling the first hand-driven gramophones circa 1894–1895. On Berliner's initiative, Eldridge Reeves Johnson, who later founded the Victor Talking Machine Company, developed a spring-wound drive mechanism (spring motor) with a triple ball-based centrifugal governor design to maintain a constant rate of speed. This ensured a relatively uniform speed and freed the user from the need to hand-crank the disc. In 1896, an improved gramophone with a spring motor came onto the market. Johnson supplied Berliner with gramophone spring motors and later on with other mechanical gramophone parts (Burt 1963: 772C). Johnson also developed a master disc production process for pressing (negative copies) from the recorded originals, so that recordings on the originals no longer had to be fixed by means of acid. The discs pressed in this manner boasted a much clearer sound and less noise. In 1899, Berliner was granted the right from Johnson to use this procedure.

## **The Beginnings of Gramophone Record Industry**

The sale of gramophones and gramophone records had been on a sharp increase ever since they came onto the market. However, in 1900 a court order prohibited Berliner's company from further producing and selling gramophones because of alleged patent infringement. Johnson, who owned a large factory for the production of gramophone parts, decided he would start selling gramophones and gramophone records on his own. He launched a major promotional campaign and mass marketed records produced by means of the new technological process. He reached an agreement with Berliner to use his patents, and in October

1901 a new company was established, the Victor Talking Machine Co which was owned by Johnson and Berliner and managed by Johnson. In the meantime, Columbia Graphophone Co., which had just started producing record players, obtained a patent for cutting records that was similar to Johnson's. Following patent-related complications, they eventually agreed on a joint use of the patent for pressing records. However, they did compete on the prices of gramophones, prestige, quality and popularity of the produced records (Burt 1963: 772C). Soon afterwards, the license for the mass production of records was also obtained by other companies, which resulted in the even greater production and ultimately the predominance of records over the wax cylinder industry.

In its early days, the gramophone industry retained the characteristics of records that were used by Berliner from the outset and were determined by the technical aspects of the initial production process: the disc size was seven inches and the recording was cut only on one side. At 78 rpm, up to two minutes of sound could be recorded on such discs. Later, the production technology was perfected and, after 1900, 10-inch (25-cm) records and soon after that also 12-inch (30-cm) records became increasingly common formats. In 1904, double-sided records were introduced for the first time. The use of 7-inch records soon ceased and the double-sided 10-inch records became the most frequently used format in the market (cf. Spottswood 1990).

Initially, all records were acoustically (mechanically) recorded. The horn guided the source's (e.g. singer's, musical instrument's) sound energy onto a diaphragm, which made it vibrate and cut (etched) a groove into a relatively soft material with an attached stylus. Due to a rough mechanical process with low-sensitivity, the sound source had to be relatively strong (loud), which is why it was necessary for performers to perform very close to the horn and without any dynamic changes, so as much of the sound energy as possible could be transferred onto the diaphragm and cut into the groove. The acoustic recording process made it difficult to record anything more than a few performers at a time. During recording sessions instrumental and vocal ensembles were often very limited in terms of the number of performers. The small number permitted them to stand close to the horn. Another recording-related characteristic was that some sound sources were more suitable for recording than others. Solo singers, brass instruments and some woodwind instruments were recorded relatively well and produced a more realistic sound. Hence many early music recordings feature solo voices, small vocal groups and adapted brass band ensembles.

The advent of the electrical sound recording process led to a substantial advancement in the recording of records; both the quality of the sound recordings and the technology improved. This method allowed recording ensembles consisting of any number of performers. In 1925, Henry C. Harrison of Bell Laboratories

introduced the electrical sound recording process to the public and the Western Electric Company soon developed a system and the equipment necessary for this recording method. In electrical recording, an acoustic-electrical conversion takes place first. A microphone captures sound, which is converted into an electrical signal that can then be processed electrically (amplified, filtered, mixed with others, etc.). An electrical signal processed in this way is then written onto a mechanical medium by means of an electrical cutting head (an electrical-mechanical conversion). The companies Victor and Columbia in the USA started using the new recording method in 1925, and all other record companies followed soon after that. After 1927, no companies were using the acoustical recording process any more (Lechleitner 2004). Electrically recorded records are distinguished by specific codes used on the discs. Often these are the characters C, W, or £ written in a small circle, which record companies used to document the sound recordings of higher quality. This heralded a new era in the field of sound recording.

In 1948, Columbia successfully launched new 12-inch records, which were played at a speed of 33.33 rpm and had a narrower groove, the so-called microgroove. The playing time of such records was about 23 minutes per side, hence its name long play (LP). A year later, the microgroove records were offered by another company, i.e. Radio Corporation of America (RCA). However, their records were 7-inch in diameter and were played at 45 rpm. Both formats of the new records established themselves as a consumer product quite quickly and remained popular for a very long time. The production of 78 rpm records ceased circa 1960 (cf. Burt 1963: 772F).

## **The Earliest Slovenian Gramophone Records**

Individual recordings of Slovenian songs and instrumental music on gramophone records were made soon after the new technology was introduced into the global market. They were intended primarily for the Slovenian market, recorded by various European record companies and preserved on different labels, such as Gramophone Co., Zonophone, Dacapo, Odeon, Jumbo, Jumbola, Homokord, Favorite, Kalliope, Lyrophon, Parlophon, Pathé etc. Record companies established recording studios in major European cities and many of the early Slovenian recordings were made in these studios. Quite a few of them were made in recording sessions in Ljubljana. For instance, the German company Favorite had two recording sessions in Ljubljana, in 1910 and 1911, and shortly after offered records of then-acclaimed Slovenian performers for the Slovenian market, which can be seen in the advertisements published in

Slovenian newspapers of that time (cf. Kunej D. 2012). The Gramophone Co. had recording sessions in Ljubljana in three consecutive years, i.e. in 1908, 1909 and 1910 (cf. Kelly 1995). Recordings for the International Talking Machines Co.'s label Odeon were probably also made in Ljubljana, since it is known that the company had a major recording session in Zagreb in as early as 1906 (cf. Bulić 1980: 11; Lipovščak 1997: 16–18).

The oldest preserved recordings of Slovenian music on gramophone records were most likely made in 1902 in Vienna, where the Slovenian opera singer Franc Pogačnik-Naval recorded two Slovenian songs for the Gramophone Co., namely *Pred durmi* (At the Door) and *Ljubici* (To My Lover). Both songs were issued on single-sided records, which were still produced at the time; they were listed with their German titles and labeled as "Slovenian traditional songs", although they were most probably newly-composed songs in a traditional folk style. Later other Slovenian as well as foreign performers occasionally recorded Slovenian songs. Newspaper advertisements reveal that at least some of these recordings were for sale in the Slovenian market, but probably not on a massive scale, as they were often not systematically marketed.

Although recordings that featured Slovenian material were produced by different record companies, it was the activities of the Gramophone Co. that played a major role in understanding the beginnings of the music industry in Slovenia (cf. Kunej D. 2014). In the early 20th century, Gramophone Co. monopolized the sale of gramophones and gramophone records in Europe (cf. Gronow and Englund 2007: 282) and its model of recording and the nature of its business practices set an example for a number of future record companies.

In 1907, the Gramophone Co. decided to employ a systematic strategy in order to enter the market in the southern part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Balkans and had frequent recording sessions in major regional centers of this geographic area. The company's first recording session in Ljubljana took place in 1908 and marked the beginning of a new era of recording and marketing records that featured Slovenian material. It was an important turning point as it encouraged marketing-related activities, which is evident from the advertisements in the newspapers at the time (for more information see Kunej D. 2014).

The early Slovenian gramophone recordings made in Europe often featured folk music. They were commonly performed by opera singers, theater actors and small vocal ensembles, who mostly had experience with classical western music. Consequently the aesthetics of the performance and the musical arrangements often followed the rules of western music. Especially interesting are Slovenian recordings of instrumental music, as they often feature folk dance tunes, performed by interesting musical ensembles that typically performed



this kind of music. Many Slovenian records, which were made prior to World War I in Europe, were later reissued and made available in the US market, and were primarily intended for Slovenian emigrants there.

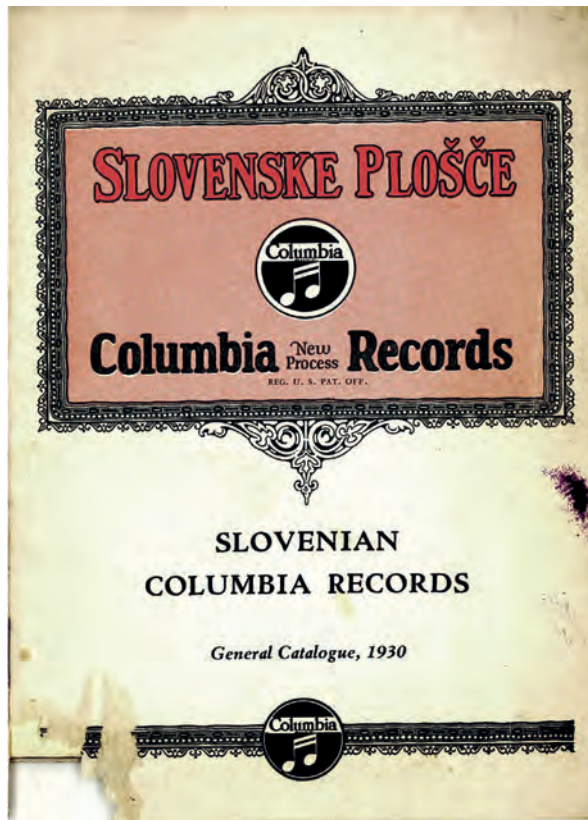
## Recording Immigrants' Music in the USA

Making and issuing records that featured music performed by immigrants from Europe presented an important market opportunity for American record companies as they saw the immigrants as potential buyers. To cater to the immigrants, the companies first focused on recording national anthems and other well-known songs from Europe, which were recorded with studio orchestral accompaniment. Later they added recordings of popular songs, as well as folk songs and tunes played on typical folk instruments. Therefore, a surprisingly large number of records recorded in the United States for foreign-speaking buyers feature recordings of folk music, which were produced in response to the



Figure 15: The cover of Columbia's 1919 catalog for Slovenian buyers in the USA (courtesy of the National Theatre Museum of Slovenia).

Figure 16: The cover of Columbia's 1930 catalog for Slovenian buyers in the USA (courtesy of Charles F. Debevec).



demand among the immigrants from the rural areas of their respective home countries. Listening to such records helped them remain connected to their native country and its culture. Among the reasons why immigrants were such good buyers and why they constituted such an important market are revealed in a message sent by Columbia to its record dealers in 1914:

With from five to eight thousand miles between them and the land of their birth, in a country with strange speech and customs, the 35,000,000 foreigners making their home here are keenly on the alert for anything and everything which will keep alive the memories of their fatherland – build them a mental bridge back to their native land. They are literally starving for amusements. With no theatres, except in one or two of the larger cities, few books in their native tongue, it is easy to realize why the talking machine appeals to them so potently, so irresistibly. Their own home music, played or sung by artists whose names are household words in their homeland – these they must have. They are patriotic, these foreigners, and their own intense interest in their own native music is



Figure 17: The cover of Victor's 1919 catalog for Slovenian buyers in the USA (courtesy of Charles F. Debevec).

strengthened by their desire that their children, brought or born in this *new* country shall share their love of the old. (Columbia Record 1914, cited after Spottswood 1982: 55)

Similar articles and texts on the profitability of records can be found in subsequent years as well and in the messages sent out by other record companies. For instance, Victor in 1928 similarly pointed out that "one of the greatest classes of record buyers of the present day is that of foreign-born residents" (Gronow 1982: 34).

The expansion of the gramophone industry in the first two decades of the 20th century went hand in hand with a growth in recordings and the sales of records featuring foreign-language recordings. For instance, between 1908 and 1923, Columbia issued around 5,000 recordings of domestic, predominantly popular music, which was marketed in the "A" catalog series, as well as about 6,000 foreign-language recordings from the "E" series aimed at immigrants (Gronow 1982: 5). There was also an increasing number of small record companies, in the early 1920s, there were nearly 150 of them in the United States, which had

entered the gramophone record market, trying to win a market share in this profitable industry.

Slovenian immigrants in the United States were, like immigrants of other nations, potential buyers of records. Large record companies decided to publish catalogs of Slovenian records intended for Slovenian buyers, in the Slovenian language. Even a cursory look at Slovenian recordings made in the United States prior to World War II, which are presented in the discography *Ethnic Music on Records* (Spottswood 1990: 1021–1043) reveals that nearly 600 recordings of Slovenian music were featured on gramophone records during this period. For the most part, these were various arrangements of folk songs, as well as quite a few folk dance tunes, played on the accordion or performed by small instrumental ensembles. An important part of these materials are the recordings by Matt Hoyer and his Trio.

### **Matrix Number**

During the era of 78 rpm records, which was also the period when the Hoyer Trio was actively recording, each performance or event could be recorded only as a whole. The tune was performed continuously from beginning to end, as no subsequent corrections or editing of the recorded material was possible. Thus, each recording was an independent sound event, recorded in its entirety and cut onto a master wax disc (the matrix). When it was created, each record was assigned a unique code that often consisted of alphanumeric characters, which uniquely identified the recording. It was inscribed or stamped into wax on the recorded master disc (the matrix), thus transferring it onto all subsequent pressings. As a rule, it is visible on each pressed record. This code is called the matrix number or the master number. On the record, it is typically printed onto the run-out groove area, i.e. the non-grooved area between the end of the final band on a record's side and the label. Since a record is allocated a matrix number at its creation, the matrix number is critical for its identification. The matrix number is uniquely associated with the creation and production (pressing) of records. Record companies initially used matrix numbers as a means of in-company control of the recorded material (e.g. in their registers of recordings, accountancy documents) and record pressings, but the numbers were also helpful in calculating the payment for recording engineers (cf. Kelly 2000: 14).

Matrix numbers often consist of several elements and also contain additional recording session-related information, such as the recording method used (either an acoustic or an electrical process) and the recording engineers' identification, but may also mark a copy of the original, etc.

A special part of the matrix number is the code for individual takes or cuts. Due

to the characteristics of the recording process, tunes frequently needed to be recorded again in their entirety to improve a take, especially if technical errors had occurred on a previous take. Thus, recording engineers often recorded multiple takes and decided at later time which take to issue on a record. Individual takes were given a take number, i.e. a number, a letter or some other character, which increased (changed) with the number of recorded takes. As a rule, a take is marked with a suffix added to the main number, although they may not always be printed together. Typically, individual takes were not necessarily recorded during the same recording session (or in a single recording day). Several years may have passed between some takes. What was important was that the same recorded material was performed by the same recording artist.

Record companies used different matrix number systems and types, hence the matrix numbers are often difficult to read or to fully understand from individual records, and a good knowledge of the matrix number system of a particular company is needed. The matrix number system used by the Victor label, which issued a number of records featuring Slovenian material, including the Hoyer Trio's first record, is presented below as an example.

The Victor Talking Machine Co. was founded in 1901 as a successor of the Berliner Phonograph Co. and soon became an industry leader in the production of gramophone records in the USA. At first, they used the same numeric codes for matrix numbers and catalog numbers, but in the spring of 1903, they introduced an autonomous and simple system of matrix numbers.

Each matrix number was composed of three parts, which were separated from one another by hyphens: a prefix in the form of capital letters, a consecutive (serial) number and the take number. Initially, letters were only used to mark the record size (e.g. A = 7-inch records, B = 10-inch records, C = 8-inch records). In the early 1920s, additional information was appended. After 1925, when the electrical recording process was introduced, the letters VE were added, which indicated the use of electromagnetic recording heads by Western Electric (e.g. BVE and CVE for electrically recorded 10- and 12-inch records respectively). When the recording heads of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) started to be used RC was used instead of VE, which made it BRC for 10-inch records (Moran 1995).

The main part of a matrix number is an increasing (serial) number. In 1903, these numbers started with "1" and increased up to the number "104075", which was reached in August 1936. After this, the count started from the beginning, which was marked with the prefix "00". This counting system was in use until the mid-1950s (Moran 1995). Take numbers are marked with a number – starting with 2, as the first takes were never marked.

Unfortunately, on records issued by Victor, matrix numbers were written on the spot that was later covered with a label and are therefore impossible to read. Only the take numbers are sometimes visible on the left edge next to the label. The matrix numbers can be found in discographies and lists of Victor's records.

Slovenian recordings typically come with the prefixes B and BVE, occasionally also C and CVE, which indicates that these recordings were made in a studio in Camden, New Jersey, during the periods of acoustic and electrical recording, and were mostly issued on 10-inch or, less commonly, 12-inch records.

## Recordings by the Hoyer Trio

Matt Hoyer recorded a large number of gramophone records with his Trio, occasionally solo, in duets and in collaboration with other musicians. The recordings were made between 1924 and 1929 for all three of the then leading USA record labels: Victor, Columbia and Okeh. The recording sessions took place in Cleveland, New York and Chicago. The number of recordings that the Hoyer Trio made on gramophone records is quite impressive especially taking into account the relatively short period of time that they recorded.

According to some sources (e.g. Kaferle n.d.; Gostilna 1985; Greene 1992: 82; Lifetime Achievement 2015a; IPA), the Hoyer Trio recorded for Victor as early as 1919. This however could not be confirmed. It is clear that no Hoyer Trio records were issued by Victor prior to January 1925, as no records are listed in Victor's catalog of Slovenian records (Victor 1925), nor can any be found in other discographies, records or catalogs pre-1925.

According to known data, the first recordings by the Hoyer Trio were made on November 30, 1924 in Cleveland, when Victor recorded some well-known Slovenian musicians, including four tunes performed by "Hoyer-jev instrumentalni tercet" (Hoyer Instrumental Trio) (cf. Spottswood 1990: 1028–1031; DAHR). The day after, on December 1, 1924, Matt Hoyer and Louis Spehek, as an accordion duo, recorded two more tunes, *Ljubimsko veselje* (Love's Joy) and *Urno skakaj* (On Sprightly Feet). Two of the Hoyer Trio recordings were not issued, however, two polkas, *Na poskok* (Jumping) and *Taniska* (Little Dancer), were issued on a double-sided record in the spring of 1925. A record featuring the two recordings by Matt Hoyer and Louis Spehek's accordion duo were issued at the same time. All of these recordings were made by means of the acoustic recording method, which was still in use at the time.

Some believe the recordings made by the Hoyer Trio and other Slovenian performers in Cleveland in 1924 were related to the grand opening of the Slo-



Figure 18: The Okeh record label, with Anton Mervar listed as the accordion maker (GNI DZGP).

venian National Home on St. Clair Avenue, which took place in 1924. Others even suggest that the recordings were actually made at that occasion (cf. Kaferle n.d.). However, this is very unlikely, as the Slovenian National Home on St. Clair Avenue was officially opened on Saturday, March 1, and Sunday, March 2, 1924, during an event that featured a rich cultural and musical program. In the preserved Victor's documents, which are referred to in detailed record lists (e.g. Spottswood 1990: 1028–1031; DAHR), the dates of the recordings are specified as November 30 and December 1, 1924.

The program for the event that was organized for the Slovenian National Home's grand opening gives no indication of the Hoyer Trio's participation, although all performing artists and the titles of the numbers they performed are listed. The gala dinner on that Saturday night featured, among others, a performance by the sisters Mimi and Josephine Milavec with a song called *Domovina* (Homeland). The Sunday afternoon concert included a variety of performers, including Josephine Lausche and Mary Udovich singing the song *Slovenska pesem* (Slovenian Song), the lyrics of which were written by Ivan Zorman and set to music by William Lausche. Both duos had recording sessions for Victor in Cleveland in late November. However, neither the three recordings by the

Figure 19: The label of the Hoyer Trio's first record, which was issued in the spring of 1925 by Victor (GNI DZGP).




Milavec sisters nor the four songs recorded by the other duo were among the songs performed at the grand opening.

The Hoyer Trio may have performed at the post-gala dinner dance on Saturday night, as the performing ensemble was not specifically mentioned in the event program. However, it is more likely that some other musicians performed; perhaps the "orkester Cankar" (the Cankar Orchestra), which provided musical entertainment during dinner and was also on the stage at the end of the festive event on Sunday evening, when a dance was held to round off the festivities. No performers were specified for the dance either.

In Cleveland, in late November and early December 1924, Victor organized recording sessions for both Slovenian performers and musicians of other nationalities. This proves that the company held an extensive multi-day recording session, which was obviously not connected to Slovenian music or the grand opening of the Slovenian National Home. Josephine Lausche and Mary Udovich were recorded on Friday, November 28, and were the only Slovenian performers on that day, although seven different recording artists and a total of seventeen tunes were recorded. On the following day, November 29, Louis Spehek recorded alongside other, non-Slovenian artists. Only Saturday, November 30, was dedicated exclusively to Slovenian musicians. On this day, the





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— godba trenutka kot tudi veličastna interpretacija največjih artistov, ki so rekordirani za vse čase na Victor rekordih. Vi lahko uživate to godbo danes — in vsak dan — v vašem lastnem domu.

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**Novih Victor plošč za marc:**

	Velikost	Cena
77897 Strunam Josephine Lausche in Sirota Mary Udovich	10"	.75
77898 Sveta Lucija Milavčevi sestri Flammarica (Mimi in Josipina)	10"	.75
77911 Slovanski ples Balkan Tamburizza Cukariško Kolo Orkester	10"	.75
77912 Sonja, Sonja Leo Baich Ko gremo čez morje Leo Baich, J. Skornjak	10"	.75
77915 Na psoček, polka Hoyer Instrumental Trio	10"	.75
77916 Urno akakaj, Waltz Louis Spehek in Ljubimsko veselje, šotič Math Arko	10"	.75


**Druge Victor plošče, ki bi jih morali imeti:**

77400 Vabilo Pastirček, Kvartet Slovenija	10"	.75
77810 V Variavskem ribjem izgu Poljska kri Vitkov Orkester	10"	.75
77811 Poljub, valček Charles Gapper Pesem ameha Henry Klausen	10"	.75
68674 Jelenja polka Sjadke rožice, valček Stahlova godba	12"	1.25

Katalog zastoj na zahtevo.

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**Victrola**  
Victor Talking Machine Company, Camden, N.J.

Figure 20: A newspaper advertisement that features the first Hoyer Trio record (Ameriška domovina 1925).

Milavec sisters and the Hoyer Trio made their recordings, among other artists. On Monday, December 1, the studio was once again reserved for musicians of various nationalities, including the aforementioned accordion duo consisting of Matt Hoyer and Louis Spehek.

It is very likely that the first Hoyer Trio recording session involved Anton Mervar, as suggested by some sources (cf. Gostilna 1986; Greene 1992: 82; Debevec 2014: 107; Lifetime Achievement 2015a). From 1921 onwards, Mervar owned a music store on St. Clair Avenue in Cleveland, where he sold accordions made by himself, as well as other instruments, gramophones and gramophone records. He had good business relations with record companies and helped them select Slovenian performers to be featured on records. Matt Hoyer and Anton Mervar knew each other very well and the popularity of the music by Matt Hoyer and the Hoyer Trio may certainly have contributed to the Trio being recommended to the record companies. It probably helped that Matt Hoyer played on accordions made by Mervar, as stated on the labels of some records.

An advertisement published in the newspaper *Ameriška domovina* (American Home) on February 27, 1925, reveals that Victor's announcement of new records intended for Slovenian buyers also included the recordings made during the 1924 recording session in Cleveland: a record with both Hoyer Trio recordings (*Na poskok*, *Taniska*), a record with the two recordings by Matt Hoyer and Louis Spehek, a record by the Lausche-Udovich duo and a record by the Milavec sisters. The advertisement stated the records would be issued in March 1925 and according to the *Discography of American Historical Recordings* (DAHR), the record by the Hoyer-Spehek duo was issued in April 1925, which suggests the recordings made during the recording session in Cleveland, including the Hoyer Trio's first record, were for sale in the spring of 1925.

The first Hoyer Trio record was extremely popular. In fact, more than 2,200 copies were sold (DAHR), which was considered a large number at the time. The record by the Hoyer-Spehek accordion duo achieved similar success with over 1,400 copies sold. Buyers' demand for both records most likely opened the door to Matt Hoyer and the Hoyer Trio for additional recordings. Within a few years they recorded an extensive repertoire. They recorded not only for Victor, but also for Okeh and Columbia.

Based on the list of Hoyer Trio records compiled by Louis Kaferle (Kaferle n.d.), the data from the publication *Ethnic Music on Records* (Spottswood 1990: 1021–1043), the online *Discography of American Historical Recordings* (DAHR), the preserved records and sales catalogs, as well as lists compiled in collaboration with collectors of old records, it was possible to compile quite a detailed list of the recordings made by Hoyer Trio members. In the following tables, recordings<sup>6</sup> are listed chronologically and by increasing matrix numbers.

Table 1: A list of the Hoyer Trio's independent, non-collaborative recordings.

Matrix No.	Title	Place and date of the recording session	Company	Catalog No.
B 31239-1	Na poskok – polka Jumping	Cleveland Nov 30, 1924	Victor	77915
B 31240-1	Taniska – valček Little dancer – waltz	Cleveland Nov 30, 1924	Victor	77915
B 31241-1	Zerker – valček	Cleveland Nov 30, 1924	Victor	-
B 31242-1	Talinska – valček	Cleveland Nov 30, 1924	Victor	-
B 31247-1	Ljubimsko veselje – šotiš	Cleveland Dec 1, 1924	Victor	77916

<sup>6</sup> The titles are listed with or without their English translations, i.e. as they appeared on the labels.

Matrix No.	Title	Place and date of the recording session	Company	Catalog No.
B 31248-1	Urno skakaj – valček	Cleveland Dec 1, 1924	Victor	77916
8936-A	Cleveland polka	Cleveland Feb 19, 1925	Okeh	24038
8937-A	Pokšotiš	Cleveland Feb 19, 1925	Okeh	24037 Co. 25011-F
8938-A	Holc haker marš	Cleveland Feb 19, 1925	Okeh	24044
8939-A	Na Marjance	Cleveland Feb 19, 1925	Okeh	24038
8940-A	Špic polka	Cleveland Feb 19, 1925	Okeh	24037 Co. 25011-F
8941-A	St. Clairski valček	Cleveland Feb 1925	Okeh	24047 Co. 25006-F
8945-A	Kranjski valcar	Cleveland Feb 20, 1925	Okeh	24044
8946-A	Ainc polka	Cleveland Feb 20, 1925	Okeh	24045 Co. 25007-F
8947-A	Newburgh march	Cleveland Feb 1925	Okeh	24047 Co. 25007-F
8948-A	Štajeriš	Cleveland Feb 20, 1925	Okeh	24045 Co. 25007-F
W 106568-2	Veseli rudarji – koračnica	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25041-F 25190-F
W 106569-2	Polka Štavarjev	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25043-F
W 106570-1	Peclarska polka	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25040-F
W 106571-1	Ti si moja – valček	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25043-F
W 106572-2	Hojer valček	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25040-F
W 106573-2	Coklarska koračnica	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25044-F
W 106574-2	Ptičja vohcet – šotiš	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25045-F
W 106575-2	Triglavski valček	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25044-F
W 106576-2	Sladki spomini – valček	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25041-F 25190-F
W 106577-2	Mazulinka	New York Mar 1926	Columbia	25045-F
W 107472-2	Pošter tanc	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25062-F

Matrix No.	Title	Place and date of the recording session	Company	Catalog No.
W 107473-2	Ribenska polka	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25062-F
W 107474-2	Clevelandski valček	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25059-F
W 107475-2	Jaka na St. Clairu – polka	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25059-F
W 107476-2	Šuster polka	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25060-F
W 107477-2	Sieben šrit – za ples	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25060-F
W 107478-1	Zadnji poljubek – valček	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25061-F
W 107479-2	Ančka pejt plesat – valček	New York Dec 1926	Columbia	25063-F
W 107513-1	Dunaj ostane Dunaj – koračnica	New York Jan 1927	Columbia	25078-F
W 107514-2	Treplan – za ples	New York Jan 1927	Columbia	25063-F
W 107515-2	Ven pa not – polka	New York Jan 1927	Columbia	25065-F
W 107516-2	Samo še enkrat – valček	New York Jan 1927	Columbia	25065-F
W 107517-2	Žuženberg – polka	New York Jan 1927	Columbia	25061-F
W 80927-B	Slovenska polka	Chicago May 20, 1927	Okeh	24056
W 80928-B	Veseli valček	Chicago May 20, 1927	Okeh	24057
W 80929-B	Gorenska polka	Chicago May 20, 1927	Okeh	24057
W 80930-A	Primorski valček	Chicago May 20, 1927	Okeh	24056
W 108140-2	Sokolska koračnica	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25074-F
W 108141-1	Šebelska koračnica	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25071-F
W 108142-2	Kde je moja ljubica – valček	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25074-F
W 108143-2	Moja Micka – polka	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25069-F
W 108144-2	Neverna Ančka – valček	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25078-F
W 108145-2	Stari šotiš	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25069-F

Matrix No.	Title	Place and date of the recording session	Company	Catalog No.
W 108150-2	Al me boš kaj rada imela	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25070-F
W 108151-2	Odpri mi dekle kamrico	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25070-F
W 108152-1	Moj prijatelj – polka	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25072-F
W 108153-2	Regiment po cesti gre	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25071-F
W 108154-2	Štajerska	Chicago July 1927	Columbia	25072-F
BVE 45359-2	Vipavska polka Polka from Vipav	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	81713 V-23034 25-3052
BVE 45360-1	Poskočna polka Jump polka	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	V-23001 25-3046
BVE 45361-2	Ljubljanski valček Waltz from Ljubljane	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	V-23001 25-3046
BVE 45362-1	Milka moja – valček My darling – waltz	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	81713 V-23034 25-3052
BVE 45363-1	Vesela polka (Vesela Ančka) Happy polka (Happy Anna)	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	81414 V-23033
BVE 45364-1	Lepa Jozefa – valček Beautiful Josephine – waltz	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	V-23002 25-3047
BVE 45365-1	Lisika – polka	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	-
BVE 45366-2	Terezinka Therese	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	V-23002 25-3047
BVE 45367-2	Empajriš	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	V-23007 25-3048
BVE 45369-1	Samo da bo likof Everything for a bargain	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	V-23007 25-3048
BVE 55499-1	Kar imam to ti dam – polka What I have, you may have	Chicago July 25, 1929	Victor	V-23013 25-3049
BVE 55500-1	Vesela dekleta – valček Happy girl – waltz	Chicago July 25, 1929	Victor	V-23013 25-3049
BVE 55501-1	Ne pozabi me – polka Don't forget me	Chicago July 25, 1929	Victor	V-23017 25-3050
BVE 55502-1	Po valovih – valček Over the waves	Chicago July 25, 1929	Victor	V-23017 25-3050
BVE 55503-1	Trboveljska – polka	Chicago July 25, 1929	Victor	V-23021 25-3051
BVE 55504-1	Novomeški purgarji – koračnica Professor Novomeški – march	Chicago July 25, 1929	Victor	V-23021 25-3051

Matrix No.	Title	Place and date of the recording session	Company	Catalog No.
W 111312-2	Veseli godec – polka	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25129-F
W 111313-2	Večerni valček	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25135-F
W 111314-1	Gozdni valček	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25129-F
W 111315-1	Hopsasa polka	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25135-F
W 111316-2	Moja ljubca – valček	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25128-F
W 111317-1	Katarina – polka	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25128-F
W 111322-3	Vesela Urška – valček	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25138-F
W 111323-3	Ribenčan Urban – polka	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25138-F
W 111324-3	Krasna Karolina – polka	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25143-F
W 111325-3	Samo tebe ljubim – valček	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25143-F

During their recording sessions, Matt Hoyer and his Trio often collaborated with singers of the Adrija choir, which was affiliated with St. Stephen's Church in Chicago and was at that time one of the best Slovenian church choirs in the United States. It was conducted by Ivan Račič, a music teacher, who was the church's organist and also a private music tutor. As a high school student Račič had received musical training, inter alia, with Hugolin Sattner and the cultural society Glasbena Matica in Ljubljana. After graduating from high school, he left for Chicago, where he continued studying music, graduated and devoted himself completely to music. The Adrija choir was known for their liturgical singing in the church and also held a number of performances and stand-alone concerts outside of church. It was the first Chicago-based choir to perform on the radio (cf. Račič 1928: 265; The Adrija 1934). It therefore comes as no surprise that the choir members also started recording gramophone records. The recordings, of which about 70 were made within a three-year period (1927–1929), were issued on Victor, Columbia and Electra labels. They cover humorous, sentimental, religious and other topics, which are commonly related to folk traditions, and include characteristic sketches with dialogue and song. Victor's archival data reveal that the majority of recordings involved six singers, i.e. a soprano and two altos, two tenors and a bass (DAHR). They often collaborated with other Slovenian recording artists, for example the Hoyer Trio, the Račič-Foys Or-

Table 2: A list of recordings made in collaboration between members of the Hoyer Trio and the Adrija Singers.

Matrix No.	Title	Place and date of the recording session	Company	Catalog No.
BVE 45368-2	Studentjeska pesem (Oj ti studentje!) Oh! These students	Chicago June 13, 1928	Victor	81413 V-23032
BVE 45956-2	Na pustni torek Shrove Tuesday	Chicago June 22, 1928	Victor	81520
BVE 45957-2	Domače veselje Good time at home	Chicago June 22, 1928	Victor	81414 V-23033
BVE 45958-2	Vojaški nabor Our future soldiers	Chicago June 22, 1928	Victor	81520
BVE 45959-1	Zeleni Jurj St. George (The green spring)	Chicago June 22, 1928	Victor	81413 V-23032
BVE 45960-2	Vandrovec A tramp	Chicago June 22, 1928	Victor	V-73000
BVE 45961-2	Cigani Gypsies	Chicago June 22, 1928	Victor	V-73000
BVE 55495-2	Ples v skednju – del 1 Dance in a barn – Part 1	Chicago July 24, 1929	Victor	V-23020
BVE 55496-2	Ob zimskih večerih – del 1 Winter in the country – Part 1	Chicago July 24, 1929	Victor	V-23016
BVE 55497-2	Ob zimskih večerih – del 2 Winter in the country – Part 2	Chicago July 24, 1929	Victor	V-23016
BVE 55498-2	Botrinja Christening party	Chicago July 24, 1929	Victor	V-73002
BVE 55511-2	Zlata poroka – del 1 Golden wedding – Part 1	Chicago July 26, 1929	Victor	V-73001
BVE 55512-2	Zlata poroka – del 2 Golden wedding – Part 2	Chicago July 26, 1929	Victor	V-73001
BVE 55513-2	Kadar imajo vsi Jožeti god St. Joseph's Day celebration	Chicago July 26, 1929	Victor	V-73002
BVE 55514-1	Ples v skednju – del 2 Dance in a barn – Part 2	Chicago July 26, 1929	Victor	V-23020
W 111318-2	Predpustna	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25127-F
W 111319-2	Brez cvenka in soli	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25127-F
W 111320-3	Na morju – del 1	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25132-F
W 111321-3	Na morju – del 2	Chicago Dec 1929	Columbia	25132-F

chestra and others. The recordings made in collaboration between the Hoyer Trio members and the Adrija Singers are listed in Table 2.

The titles in the Hoyer Trio's discography, which is comprised of 99 entries, speak volumes. On the one hand, they reveal a clear link between the recordings and Slovenian folk tradition, and on the other hand some of them are directly linked to immigrants in the USA. This group of recordings includes titles such as *Cleveland polka* (the Cleveland polka) and *Clevelandski valček* (the Cleveland Waltz), because the life of Slovenians in the USA is closely connected to this city, the home base of the Hoyer Trio. According to Viktorija Kante, most of the immigrants from the Ribnica Valley settled in Cleveland (2002: 35). The center of Slovenian immigrants in Cleveland was St. Clair Avenue and 1,082 Slovenians were believed to be living there in 1906; most of them had come from the area of Žužemberk and Ribnica. Thus, the western part of St. Clair Avenue was called "Žužemberk" and the eastern part "Ribnica" (Drnovšek 1998: 266). Many Slovenians, including Matt Hoyer and his family, lived in the older neighborhood of Newburgh, a few kilometers south of St. Clair. In this context, the titles listed below reveal the connection between the tunes and the immigrant neighborhood that spawned them: *Jaka na St. Clairu – polka* (Jack on St. Clair – Polka), *St. Clairski valček* (St. Clair Waltz), *Ribenčan Urban – polka* (Urban of Ribnica – Polka), *Ribenška polka* (Ribnica Polka), *Žuženberg – polka* (Žuženberg – Polka) and the *Newburgh March*. Similarly, the following titles trace themselves back to the immigrants' Slovenian homeland: *Gorenška polka* (Gorenjska Polka), *Kranjski valcar* (Carniola Waltz), *Ljubljanski valček* (Waltz from Ljubljane), *Novomeški purgarji – koračnica* (Professor Novomeški – March), *Primorski valček* (Primorska Waltz), *Slovenska polka* (Slovenian Polka), *Štajerska, Triglavski valček* (Triglav Waltz), *Trboveljska – polka* (Trbovlje – Polka) and *Vipavska polka* (Polka from Vipav). A fair share of the recordings have titles which are directly associated with Slovenian folk traditions, specifically the Slovenian folk dance (*Pokšotiš, Špicpolka, Ainc polka, Štajeriš, Mazulinka, Pošter tanc, Šuster polka, Sieben šrit – for dancing, Treplan, Stari sotiš, Empajriš*).

Others are derivations of folk songs: *Al me boš kaj rada imela* (Will You Love Me), *Odpri mi dekle kamrico* (Let Me in Your Room, Girl), *Regiment po cesti gre* (A Regiment Marches Down the Street), *Terezinka* (Theresa). Still others are related to customs and traditions that still prevailed in Slovenia at the time: *Predpustna* (Pre-Shrovetide Party), *Na pustni torek* (Shrove Tuesday), *Vojaški nabor* (Our Future Soldiers), *Zeleni Jurj* (St. George / The Green Sping), *Vandrovec* (A Tramp), *Botrinja* (Christening Party), *Ples v skednju* (Dance in a Barn), *Ob zimskih večerih* (Winter in the Country), *Kadar imajo vsi Jožeti god* (St. Josephs' Day Celebration).

Another group of titles have a personal and lyrical note, for example *Ti si moja*



– *valček* (You Are Mine – Waltz), *Veseli rudarji – koračnica* (Merry Miners – March), *Zadnji poljubek* (One Last Kiss), *Kde je moja ljubica – valček* (Where Is My Sweetheart – Waltz), *Moja Micka* (My Mary), *Neverna Ančka – valček* (Doubting Ann – Waltz), *Moj prijatelj – polka* (My Friend – Polka), *Milka moja – valček* (My Milka – Waltz), *Vesela Ančka – valček* (Merry Ann – Waltz), *Lepa Jozefa – valček* (Beautiful Josephine – Waltz), *Vesela dekleta – valček* (Happy Girl – Waltz), *Ne pozabi me – polka* (Don't Forget Me – Polka), *Veseli godec – polka* (Happy Musician – Polka), *Moja ljubca – valček* (My Sweetheart – Waltz), *Katarina – polka* (Katarina – Polka), *Vesela Urška – valček* (Merry Ursula – Waltz), *Krasna Karolina – polka* (Wonderful Caroline – Polka) and *Samo tebe ljubim – valček* (You're the Only One I Love – Waltz).

However, some of the Hoyer Trio music on gramophone records was not based on tradition, nor was it written by the Trio itself. Some of the recorded tunes were arrangements of compositions written by other artists, polkas, waltzes and marches, which were very popular among Slovenians. This category of tunes includes *Dunaj ostane Dunaj*, which is a famous Austrian march entitled *Wien bleibt Wien* by Johann Schrammel (also referred to as *Vienna Forever*); *Kar imam to ti dam* (What I Have, You May Have), which is a cover of the Czech polka *Baruška* by F. Kovarik; *Šebelska<sup>7</sup> koračnica* (the Šebelska March) by Hermann Josef Schneider, who entitled it the *Bienenhaus Marsch*; and *Po valovih* (Over the Waves), which is a cover version of *Over the Waves Waltz* by the Mexican composer Juventino Rosas (cf. Debevec 2014: 108).

In late 1929, Matt Hoyer and his Trio decided to do no more recording sessions, mainly because they did not want to become members of the Musicians Union, which became very active in the early 1930s. Union membership and payment of dues was a precondition for artists to be allowed to make records, which is something that Matt Hoyer in particular was against. Also, the stock market crash in the autumn of 1929 catalyzed by the Great Depression resulted in a substantial decline in sales and production. This greatly affected the recording, production and purchase of gramophone records. In 1929, for example, as many as 75 million records were sold, while a few years later, in 1933, sales amounted to a mere 6 million (Gronow 1982: 8). Considering the number of records sold, recording became simply too expensive of an endeavor for the Hoyer Trio.

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<sup>7</sup> The title on all of the record labels and in various discographies, without exception, reads *Šebelska koračnica*, although this is most likely a printer's error. The title is supposed to read *Čebelska koračnica* (Bees' March), which is suggested by the German original *Bienenhaus Marsch* (i.e. Beehive March).

## Records and Their Popularity with Buyers and Listeners

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The Hoyer Trio's records are found in almost all American gramophone record catalogs that were intended for Slovenian buyers. Hoyer Trio recordings are also included in a number of newspaper advertisements for records that featured Slovenian recording materials. In fact, record companies in the United States ran massive and systematic advertising and marketing campaigns for foreign-language music, mostly targeting the numerous immigrants, whom they considered to be important customers. In terms of sales, the gramophone industry's most important sales segment were, as expected, records, but also playback devices, i.e. gramophones, which were much easier to sell if buyers had the chance to listen to familiar, popular and appealing recordings.

The recordings by Matt Hoyer and his Trio were obviously very popular, hence their records were sold in large numbers, as evidenced by numerous record reissues. This is, *inter alia*, indicated by the labels that differ in design and the changed catalog numbers that appear on Hoyer Trio recordings, as well as different names of record companies that marketed the recordings. All reissues have the same matrix number (although it is not always visible on the record) that unequivocally identifies each recording and remains unchanged despite different issues.

### **The Meaning of Labels and Codes on Records**

In researching and documenting gramophone records, whatever is written on the label (which is located in the record's center), as well as the label's design and special codes next to the label reveal a good deal of information. The record's center includes an area where no sound can be recorded for technical reasons; due to an insufficiently long distance to the record's center in this area, the record's groove radius, and thus also the groove cutting speed, are reduced to such an extent that the quality of a sound recording gets significantly degraded. Therefore, this area – the so-called label area – is used as a place to indicate basic information about the recording. A paper label is adhered to this area; the

# Slovenske Grafofonske Plošče

## ZA PREDPUSTNO ZABAVO

POLKE, VALČKI, KORAČNICE, MAZURKE itd.

3777—Veselim se, polka, igra kranjska godba.—b) Rezika, valček, kranjska godba.  
 1626—Nov štajerski ples, štajeriš, kmetska godba.—b) Štajerska polka, kmetska godba.  
 24026—Bela Ljubljana, valček, harmonika z orkestrom.—b) Zlate sanje, polka, harmonika z orkestrom.  
 24027—Katra, polka, harmonika z orkestrom.—b) Gorjanski valček, harmonika z orkestrom.  
 1609—Držimo skupaj, hitra polka, kmetska godba.—b) Sezidal sem si vinski hram, petje.  
 3776—Spominjamo se Ljubljane, ples, kranjska godba.—b) Pogladski sanovi, kranjska godba.  
 3596—Ti si mila moja, valček, harmonika.—b) Ko sem k njej prišel, dvoglasno petje.  
 3594—Ljubi Janez, polka, kranjska godba.—b) Viszka je gora, dvoglasno petje.  
 3741—Vesela poskočnica, polka, dve harmoniki.—b) Na planinah, dvoglasno petje.  
 24018—Lepa naša domovina, vojaška godba.—b) Slovenska koračnica, vojaška godba.  
 24035—Radetzy koračnica, vojaška godba.—b) Pod dvojnim orlom, vojaška godba.  
 24037—Spic-polka, harmonika, kitara in banjo.—b) Pok-šutiš, harmonika, kitara in banjo.  
 24038—Clevelandska polka, harmonika, kitara in banjo.—b) Na Marjance, harmonika, kitara in banjo.  
 24044—Holchaker-mars, harmonika, kitara in banjo.—b) Kranjski valcer, harmonika, kitara in banjo.

PETJE, ENOGLASNO IN VEČGLASNO, TER SMEŠNICE.

7994—Pastirček, peje kvartet "Ljubljana."—b) Kozarček, peje kvartet, "Ljubljana."  
 6137—Sijaj, sijaj solnce, peje moški kvartet.—b) Ponočni pozdrav, tenor solo.  
 3258—Regiment, dvoglasno petje.—b) Sem slovenska deklica, dvoglasno petje.  
 3259—Vsi so prihajali, dvoglasno petje.—b) Divja rožica, dvoglasno petje.  
 4689—Na tujih tleh, dvoglasno petje.—b) Ko bi moj ljubi, dvoglasno petje.  
 24002—Naš maček je ljubco imel, moški kvartet.—b) Po celi vasi lučke ni, kvartet.  
 24008—Ko pridemo na sred vasi, moški kvartet.—b) Prav lepo mi peje črni kos, kvartet.  
 24015—Čiganska sirota, moški kvartet.—b) Je pa davi slanica padla, moški kvartet.  
 6121—Kako je Jerala frajtar postal, smešnica.—b) Na shodu, smešnica.  
 4992—Družinske sladkosti, smešen prizor.—b) Odkod je špela doma, smešno pripovedovanje.


CENE:—Posamezna plošča stane skupno s poštnino 25c.—7 plošč stane \$5.00.—14 plošč \$9.00.—  
 20 plošč \$12.00.—Vseh 24 plošč pa pošljemo za \$14.00.  
 Prvo ime pri številki je ena stran plošče, b) znači drugo stran plošče.  
 Izrežite ta oglas, zaznamujte katere plošče naročite in ga pošljite nam s svojim natančnim naslovom.  
 V zalogi imamo tudi grafofonske igle nove vrste. Vsaka igra 10 komadov. 150 igel stane s poštnino 50c, 350 igel stane \$1.00.  
 Pišete nam lahko slovensko ali angleško.  
 Z vsakim naročilom, ki presega \$3.00, pošljemo lep stenski koledar zastonj.

**Jugoslav American Corp. 455 W. 42nd St. New York, N.Y.**  
 (Prej Jos. Vogric.)

Figure 21: A 1926 advertisement for gramophone records, which appeared in a newspaper published in the United States. The advertisement featured some records by the Hoyer Trio, which is clear from the titles and the corresponding catalog numbers (Amerikanski Slovenec 1926).

so-called *run-off groove area*, *end-groove area* or *dead wax* around the label is a non-grooved area between the end of the final band and the label area that contains no sound recording material. Additional information is often stamped or inscribed here, typically in the form of alphanumeric codes. The earliest records had no paper labels and all information was handwritten on the disc.

At first glance, inscriptions in the record's center, especially on the label and the area surrounding it, which were prepared by the manufacturer during production, do not reveal a great deal of information about the recording. They mainly contain basic information about the content, i.e. the title of the recording, artist



**Latest Slovenian Records  
for Singing and Dancing**

25185—"Moj očka ima konjca dva," Polka, Male Quartet Prešeren.  
"Z veselimi srcem vodim," Polka, Male Quartet Prešeren.

25186—"Mila, ali hočeš ti moša," Male Quartet Prešeren.  
"Ben hodu res zanjo," Waltz, Male Quartet Prešeren.

25187—"Kaj pa ti pobiš," Male Quartet Prešeren.  
"Oj kod bova vandraja," Waltz, Male Quartet Prešeren.

25178—"Ta židana marela," Lausche and Udovick duet.  
"Men' vseeno je," Lausche and Udovick duet.

23961—"Pesekona polka," Hoyer Trio.  
"Ljubljanski valček," Hoyer Trio.

23902—"Terezinka," Hoyer Trio with singing.  
"Lepa Josefa," Waltz, Hoyer Trio.

23907—"Empjariš," Hoyer Trio.  
"Šamo da bo likof," Hoyer Trio with chorus.

23913—"Vesela dekleta," Waltz, Hoyer Trio.  
"Kar imam to ti dam," Polka, Hoyer Trio.

23912—"Ne pozabi me," Polka, Hoyer Trio.  
"Po valovih," Waltz, Hoyer Trio.

23921—"Novomeški purgarji," March, Hoyer Trio.  
"Trboveljska polka," Hoyer Trio.

**COMPLETE SELECTION OF OTHER RECORDS AND YOUR  
FAVORITE POPULAR RECORDS ON DECCA RECORDS**

Hear the new Wireless Record Player, plays through ANY radio,  
operates anywhere in your home without wires or connections to  
7. in radio. Finer, Clearer Tone.

**FOR RECORDS COME TO**

**MERVAR'S**

6921 St. Clair Ave. -r- Cleveland, O.

Figure 22: Anton Mervar, a Cleveland-based vendor, advertised Slovenian records in the weekly *Ameriška domovina* (American Home) with the slogan »Latest Slovenian Records for Singing and Dancing«. Some of the records offered were by the Hoyer Trio and had been recorded already in the 1920s (*Ameriška domovina* 1939).

**Najnoviješe**

**IN DRUGE GRAFOFONSKE  
PLOŠČE.**

**MOŠKI KVARTET "JADRAN"  
POJE:**

25049—Prišla bo spomlad.  
Zadovoljni Kranjec.

25047—Sijaj, sijaj solnce.  
En starček je živel.

25046—Ljubezen in pomlad.  
Slovensko dekle.

25039—Na potu v stari kraj. I. del.  
Na potu v stari kraj. II. del.

25037—Sinoči je peša.  
Stoji, stoji Ljubljana.

**TRICET ROJAKA HOJERJA  
(harmonike):**

25045—Mazulinka.  
Ptičja ohcet.

25044—Coklarska koračnica.  
Triglavski valček.

25043—Polka štaparjev.  
Ti si moja, valček.

25041—Veseli rudarji, koračnica.  
Šladki spomini, valček.

25040—Hojer valček.  
Pečlarska polka.

**RAZNI GLASBENI KOMADI:**

25048—Na kranjskih gorah, polka.  
Gospodarski ländler.

25042—Daleč v gozdu, valček, orkester.  
Večerni valček, orkester.

25038—Temne oči, orkester.  
Bora, koračnica.

25036—Slovenski valček, 4 harmonike.  
Radostna polka, 4 harmonike.

25035—Slovenska narodna, tamburaši.  
Slovenska polka, tamburaši.

25034—Sokolska koračnica, vel. godba.  
Češka koračnica, vel. godba.

25030—Večerno veselje, voj. godba.  
Vsi naenkrat, voj. godba.

25026—Tirolski valček, I. del, citre.  
Tirolski valček, II. del, citre.

25023—Pavel, narodna, kmetska godba.  
Peter, narodna, kmetska godba.

25020—Stari kranj. valč. Lovšin, barni.  
Štajerska, Lovšin, harmonika.

**RAZNI PEVSKI KOMADI:**

25033—Oj, tam za goro, moški kvart.  
Gor čez jezera, moški kvartet.

25018—Sreč, moški in ženski glas.  
Rožmarin, moški in ženski glas.

25017—Zapoj mi ptička, gdč. Grahek.  
Ptička, gdč. Grahek.

25005—Kaj ne bila bi vesela, sestri  
Milavec.  
Sirotek, sestri Milavec.

25031—Pred volitvami, šaljiva.  
Na sveti večer, šaljiva.

3 plošč pošljemo za ..... \$2.50  
5 plošč pošljemo za ..... 4.00  
10 plošč pošljemo za ..... 7.50  
Kdor naroči 20 plošč, dobi eno zas-  
tonj za darilo.

Z vsakim naročilom od 5 ali več  
plošč pošljemo 50 igel zastoj.

Vsaka igla igra 10 komadov.


V zalogi imamo še mnogo drugih  
plošč. Pišite po cenik in sicer na:

**JUGOSLAV AMERICAN CORP.,**  
455 W. 42nd ST., NEW YORK, N.Y.

Figure 23: A special section of an advertisement, which was published in early 1927, featured new records by the »Tricet rojaka Hojerjak« (The Trio of Hojer, a Fellow-Slovenian) (*Amerikanski Slovenec* 1927).

**Instrumentalne Plošče**  
**Hoyer Trio** (Instrumental Selections)

10 Inch 75c.


25071F	{ Šebelska Koračnica. Regiment Po Cesti Gre.	
25072F	{ Štajerska. Moj Prijatelj, Polka.	
25074F	{ Sokolska koračnica. Kde je moja Ljubica, Valček.	
25078F	{ Neverna Ančka—Valček. Dunaj Ostane Dunaj—Koračnica.	

Hoyer Trio


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**VPRAŠAJTE ZA DODATNI SEZNAM!**

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**COLUMBIA SLOVENIAN RECORDS**



(Instrumental Selections, Continued)

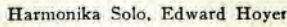
25045F	{ Mazulinka. Ptičja Vohcet.	
25044F	{ Coklarska Koračnica. Triglavski valček.	
25043F	{ Polka Staparjev. Ti si moja—Valček.	
25069F	{ Stari Šotiš. Moja Micka—Polka.	
25065F	{ Samo še enkrat (Valček). Ven pa not—Polka.	
25063F	{ Ančka pejd plesat—Valček. Treplan (Za Ples).	
25062F	{ Polšter Tanc. Ribenška Polka.	
25059F	{ Jaka na St. Clairu. Polka. Clevelandski Valček.	
25041F	{ Veseli rudarji—Koračnica. Sladki spomini—Valček.	
25040F	{ Hojer Valček. Pečlarska Polka.	

Figure 24: In a special instrumental music section, the catalog *Slovenske plošče Columbia Records* (Slovenian Columbia Records) from 1930 offered records by the Hoyer Trio (courtesy of Charles F. Debevec).

names, and occasionally also the author of the recorded materials. Some of the information included here (the matrix number, the brand, the catalog number) are seemingly less important for the record's identification and documentation due to a variety of coded forms, and listeners of old records may be less familiar with them or may understand them to a lesser extent. However, these particular items of information convey facts about the recordings and the times during

which they were created. It is thus important to understand them and also take them into account when researching recorded music.

If one is familiar with the matrix number and the catalog number, it is possible to follow individual reissues of the recorded material and determine whether the same matrices, original recordings, were used for different reissues and, due to changes in marketing, possibly also for records with different catalog numbers. During the course of label trading, the changing of the recordings' ownership and various reissues, the information about the recorded materials on the label of the final product (i.e. the record) may have completely changed, while the matrix number, which identified individual sound recordings, remained unchanged almost without exception.

Records only rarely include the date and the place of recording sessions or the record pressing. The matrix number can frequently help to determine a recording's time frame or determine the time and the place of a recording session, as it was assigned to the recording when the recording was made. The catalog number in conjunction with the label and its design, can aid in determining when a record was issued.

Initially, labels on records contained information about the record trade name (brand) under which record companies offered certain recordings in the market, and at the same time specified the recordings' owner (the recordings' rights holder). A label with the name, graphic design and logo is thus a trademark of the record company that marketed certain sound recordings. Record companies commonly marketed their sound recordings on different labels that were aimed at specific segments of the market and for customer differentiation. They could also use labels to point out the different types (e.g. genres) of recordings and designate the recording's price range, which visually illustrated the prestige of the recorded materials. Thus, the first issues of well-established performers were in a higher price range, while reissues of less acclaimed performers were in a lower price range. Record companies also traded in labels and the label-related recording rights, which is why certain labels repeatedly changed hands. Today, label names allow identifying the company that issued a record or the trademark by means of which the publisher categorized and marketed a certain group of records. When it comes to documenting and cataloging the issued gramophone records, the label name signifies the record publisher (Miliano 1999).

## **Catalog Number Series**

To make recordings aimed at immigrants more readily identifiable in the market, record companies often used distinct series of catalog numbers for such

recordings. At first, these series were represented by large blocks of catalog numbers that were reserved for foreign-language recordings. Later, with the growing number of such recordings, large companies started to mark individual series with prefixes and suffixes. Sellers and better-informed buyers who were familiar with catalog number series were thus able to immediately see which ethnic group was targeted by that catalog number.

Victor, Columbia and Okeh attached specific catalog numbers to these types of recordings. They were at the time the leading gramophone companies of foreign-language records in the US, which published catalogs of records by Slovenian artists in Slovenian and the companies for which the Hoyer Trio recorded a number of records (cf. *Novi Slovenski* 1919; Victor 1925; *Glavni katalog* 1932).

### **Victor**

During its first years, Victor had no specific catalog numbers, but used matrix numbers instead (Spottswood 1990: xxxi). Up until 1905, different labels were used for different record sizes (Victor, Monarch and Deluxe for 7-inch records, 10-inch records and 12-inch records respectively). Later, when only two sizes (i.e. 10- and 12-inch records) prevailed in the market, then the Victor label was used for both. Like Columbia, Victor from 1908 onwards also started issuing double-sided records and both American music and music for foreign-speaking buyers (ethnic music) were thus marketed jointly in different blocks of catalog numbers. Circa 1912, individual blocks of catalog numbers were allocated to general ethnic recordings and followed the chronological order specified below (cf. Spottswood 1990; Gronow 1982):

62000–63999 (between 1908 and 1912) for 10-inch records,  
65000–65999 (between 1912 and 1914) for 10-inch records,  
67000–67999 (between 1914 and 1916) for 10-inch records,  
68000–68999 (between circa 1908 and 1928) for 12-inch records,  
69000–69999 (between 1916 and 1917) for 10-inch records,  
72000–73999 (between 1917 and 1923) for 10-inch records,  
77000–79499 (between 1923 and 1927) for 10-inch records,  
80000–80799 (between 1927 and 1928) for 10-inch records,  
81200–81999 (between 1928 and 1929) for 10-inch records,  
59000–59102 (1928) for 12-inch records.

In 1928, Victor was taken over by Radio Corporation of America (RCA), which retained the Victor label. The following year, RCA revised its catalog numbering system and introduced the prefix "V". Each ethnic group was allocated its own block of numbers. The numbers also varied by the different-size records.

Figure 25: The catalog number 77915 indicates that this Hoyer Trio record appeared on the market between 1923 and 1927 (GNI DZGP).



Figure 26: The catalog number V-23002 indicates that the record was issued after 1928, when the catalog numbering system was revised; a different label design in the picture indicates two issues of the same recording (GNI DZGP).







Figure 27: The record with a new label design, the name RCA Victor and a changed catalog number (25-3046) attest to a relatively late reissue of this Hoyer Trio recording (after 1942) (GNI DZGP).

Slovenians were given the block of catalog numbers starting with V-23000 for 10-inch records and V-73000 for 12-inch records. According to presently available information, forty 10-inch records were issued in these series between 1929 and 1942 (from V-23000 to V-23039) and only three 12-inch records (from V-73000 to V-73002). Some materials recorded by Slovenian performers can also be found in the series from V-1 to V-818, which represents "international" recordings. In 1934, Victor introduced a new bottom-end label, the Bluebird label, under which they issued foreign-language recordings at a very low price. None of the recordings are known to be Slovenian.

In 1942, RCA replaced the Victor label with the RCA label and overhauled its entire catalog system. The majority of the RCA labelled recordings intended for immigrants were reissued materials from the former "V" series with new catalog numbers. Slovenians, Serbs and Croats were given a joint block of numbers starting with 25-3001, where the Slovenian records fell between the numbers 25-3046 and 25-3056. "International" recordings from the 1945–1959 period are included in a series with numbers from 25-0001 to 25-2000.

The Hoyer Trio recorded a total of 37 tunes for Victor. The recordings sessions were held in 1924, 1928 and 1929. Fifteen of the recordings made for Victor were recorded in collaboration with the Adrija Singers. The first recordings dating back to 1924 were made acoustically and the others by means of electricity. They were marketed in various catalog series, which indicates a large number of reissues.

## Columbia

After it was established in the 1880s, Columbia changed hands several times, but remained involved in issuing sound recordings the entire time. During the early years, Columbia produced wax cylinders and from 1902 onwards gramophone records as well. Up until 1908, they marketed only single-sided records, which featured both American and ethnic music (music for foreign-speaking buyers) in different blocks of catalog numbers. When the company started issuing double-sided discs, they created catalog series that indicated the type of recording with prefixes in the form of capital letters, i.e. "A" for American recordings and "E" for foreign (European) recordings, however, there were a few other ethnic series that were intended mainly for export (e.g. to South America, Japan). The series that is of particular interest to Slovenians is the "E" series, as it includes the first recordings of Slovenian music issued by Columbia. Individual blocks of numbers in this series followed consecutively in chronological order (cf. Gronow 1982; Spottswood 1990):

E1–E4999 (between 1908 and 1920) for 10-inch records,  
E5000–E5283 (between 1908 and 1923) for 12-inch records,  
E6000–E6140 (between circa 1915 and circa 1923) for 10-inch records,  
E7000–E7999 (between 1920 and 1923) for 10-inch records,  
E9000–E9112 (1923) for 10-inch records.

As a result of the changes in record production technology, Columbia changed its catalog numbering system in 1923: the prefix "A" was replaced by the suffix "D" (i.e. domestic), the prefix "E" by the suffix "F" (i.e. foreign), and the recorded materials that were intended for export were given the suffix "X". In the "F" series, each ethnic group was given its own block of numbers, which differed according to the size of records. Slovenians were allocated the block of numbers between 25000 and 26000 for 10-inch records and between 68000 and 69000 for 12-inch records. According to presently available data, 197 10-inch records were issued in these series between 1923 and 1952 (from 25000-F to 25196-F), as well as seven 12-inch records (from 68000-F to 68006-F). Some materials recorded by Slovenian performers, such as early recordings by Frankie Yankovic, "America's Polka King", can be found in the 12000-F series, which was used for "general instrumental music".

The Hoyer Trio's recording sessions for Columbia took place in 1926, 1927 and 1929, and the Trio recorded a total of 48 tunes, of which four recordings were made in collaboration with the Adrija Singers. All tunes were recorded by means of the electrical process and were issued in the "F" series. Labels with different designs indicate that there have been several reissues.



Figure 28: Various examples of Columbia labels with the Hoyer Trio recordings from the »F« series (GNI DZGP).

Figure 29: Okeh and Odeon labels featuring a recording titled *Pokšotiš* by the Simončič brothers – the Hoyer Trio. The labels of the recording made in 1925 include information about the accordion maker, Anton Mervar, which is somewhat unusual and confirms a close link between the Hoyer Trio and Mervar, a music dealer who often aided Slovenian performers in arranging recording sessions with various record companies (GNI DZGP).



## Okeh

Okeh was a record label of the American Otto Heineman Phonograph Supply Co. (renamed General Phonograph Corporation and Okeh Phonograph Co. in 1920 and 1926 respectively), which was licensed to sell Odeon records by the European company Lindstroem in the United States. In 1926, the Okeh Phonograph Co. was taken over by Columbia, which kept the Okeh label until 1933, when Columbia was taken over by RCA (Sutton 2008: 318).

Circa 1921, the company started mass-producing foreign-language records on 10-inch discs. They often marketed records made in the USA under the Okeh label and licensed European records under the Odeon label. At the time, the company started using various blocks of catalog numbers to mark the recordings



Figure 30: The Hoyer Trio recordings produced by Okeh were marketed on various labels. The piece of information highlighted on the 1927 Okeh label is the use of the new electrical recording process and the *Pokšotič* reissue on the Columbia label includes the original matrix number (8937) and the Okeh label catalog number 24037-B (GNI DZGP).



for individual ethnic groups or target audiences. Individual blocks of catalog series were used for both labels simultaneously and the label type indicated where the recordings were made (in the USA or Europe). Based on the catalogs for foreign-language records from 1923, 1926 and 1928, Pekka Gronow and Richard Spottswood ascertained that Slovenians had been allocated the block of catalog numbers from 24001 to 25000. The lowest catalog number (in 1923) was 24014 and the highest number (in 1927) was 24060. The 1928 catalog included no recordings from the Slovenian series (cf. Gronow 1982: 41; Spottswood 1990: xl). The Hoyer Trio recordings from 1927 have the catalog numbers 24056 and 24057, which indicates relatively late Slovenian issues in this catalog series.

The first Hoyer Trio recordings for the Okeh label were made in 1925 by means of the acoustic process. In 1927, for the Trio's second recording session, the

acoustic process was replaced by the electrical process. A total of 14 tunes were recorded. They were issued in the catalog block with numbers from 24001 to 25000, which was reserved for Slovenian recordings. When Okeh Phonograph Co. was taken over by Columbia, some of the Hoyer Trio recordings were re-issued on the Columbia label and included in the Slovenian block of catalog numbers in the "F" series.

## Reissues for a New Target Audience

A large number of Hoyer Trio records were reissued in Europe and intended for sale on the Slovenian market. This is evidenced by *Glavni katalog Columbia 1932* (Columbia's Main Catalog 1932), which was printed by Columbia

Figure 31: An example of a *Šuster polka* reissue for the Slovenian market (GNI DZGP).



Figure 32: A record with the label His Master's Voice, which features a recording by the Adrija Singers and Matt Hoyer – *Vojaški nabor* (Our Future Soldiers). The inscription on the label, the catalog number and some other codes indicate that the record was pressed in the city of Ústí nad Labem (German name: Aussig an der Elbe) in what was at the time Czechoslovakia, where the Gramophone Co. had a branch office, which catered mostly to the area of today's Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and some other Central European countries (courtesy of Peter Zrinski).



Table 3: A list of recordings reissued by Columbia in Europe.

Matrix No.	Title	Performer	Catalog No.	Company
–	Mazulinka	Hoyer Trio	D 30820	Columbia
–	Ptičja vohcet	Hoyer Trio	D 30820	Columbia
–	Samo še enkrat	Hoyer Trio	D 30815	Columbia
–	Ven pa not	Hoyer Trio	D 30815	Columbia
–	Ančka pejt plesat	Hoyer Trio	D 30816	Columbia
–	Treplan	Hoyer Trio	D 30816	Columbia
–	Odpri mi dekle kamrico	Hoyer Trio	D 30812	Columbia
–	Al me boš kaj rada mela	Hoyer Trio	D 30812	Columbia
–	Zadnji poljubek	Hoyer Trio	D 30819	Columbia
–	Žuženberg polka	Hoyer Trio	D 30819	Columbia
–	Pečlarska polka	Hoyer Trio	D 8231	Columbia
–	Hojer valček	Hoyer Trio	D 8231	Columbia
–	Veseli rudarji – koračnica	Hoyer Trio	D 8230	Columbia
–	Sladki spomini – valček	Hoyer Trio	D 8230	Columbia
–	Neverna Ančka – valček	Hoyer Trio	D 30810	Columbia
–	Dunaj ostane Dunaj – koračnica	Hoyer Trio	D 30810	Columbia
–	Polka Štaperjev	Hoyer Trio	D 8229	Columbia
–	Ti si moja – valček	Hoyer Trio	D 8229	Columbia
–	Coklarska koračnica	Hoyer Trio	D 8228	Columbia
–	Triglavski valček	Hoyer Trio	D 8228	Columbia
–	Sokolska koračnica	Hoyer Trio	D 30843	Columbia
–	Zim-bum-polka (tamb. zbor "Orao")	Hoyer Trio	D 30843	Columbia
–	Moja ljub'ca – valček	Hoyer Trio	DV 152	Columbia
–	Katarina polka	Hoyer Trio	DV 152	Columbia
–	Veseli godec	Hoyer Trio	DV 258	Columbia
–	Gozdni valček	Hoyer Trio	DV 258	Columbia
–	Vesela Urška – valček	Hoyer Trio	DV 279	Columbia
–	Ribenčan Urban – polka	Hoyer Trio	DV 279	Columbia
–	Krasna Karolina – polka	Hoyer Trio	DV 556	Columbia
–	Samo tebe ljubim – valček	Hoyer Trio	DV 556	Columbia
–	Moja Micka – polka	Hoyer Trio	DV 557	Columbia
–	Regiment po cesti gre (s petjem)	Hoyer Trio	DV 557	Columbia
–	Štajerska	Hoyer Trio	DV 558	Columbia
–	Moj prijatelj – polka	Hoyer Trio	DV 558	Columbia
–	Ribenška polka	Hoyer Trio	DV 560	Columbia
–	Pošter tanc	Hoyer Trio	DV 560	Columbia
–	Clevelandski valček	Hoyer Trio	DV 579	Columbia
–	Jaka na St. Clairu – polka	Hoyer Trio	DV 579	Columbia
–	Sedem korak (Sieben Schritt)	Hoyer, accordion solo	D 8528	Columbia
–	Šuster polka	Hoyer, accordion solo	D 8528	Columbia

Graphophone Jugoslavenko d. d. in Zagreb. The stamp on the catalog reveals that the catalog was distributed by the Tehnik store, which was owned by Josip Banjai and located at 20 Miklošič Street (Miklošičeva cesta 20) in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The records from the catalog, including records by the Hoyer Trio, were readily available in Ljubljana. They were pressed in England; in fact, a piece of information highlighted in the catalog is that this was an "English import". Therefore, the records' catalog numbers differ from the numbers of the USA-based Columbia and correspond to the numbers of Columbia based in the UK. Although no matrix numbers are listed in the catalog, a comparison of the titles and the recordings reveals that almost all the tunes that the Hoyer Trio had recorded independently for Columbia in the USA were reissued for the European market and listed in the 1932 *Columbia's Main Catalog*. The Hoyer Trio recordings from the catalog are listed in Table 3.

The records reissued for the Slovenian market included some of the records the Hoyer Trio had recorded for Victor. In Europe, they were pressed and reissued by the Gramophone Company on the label His Master's Voice (HMV). Victor, which took over the manufacturing and sales activities of Emile Berliner's company in the USA in 1901, and the London-based Gramophone Co., which was established in 1898 on the initiative of Berliner, established a close and long-term cooperative business arrangement. The two companies cooperated both in the development of technology and in the exchange of recorded material. For instance, Gramophone Co. adopted new technology, i.e. Victor's record pressing process, and started using paper labels. What was of particular value for Victor was their agreement on exchanging recordings and matrices, which gave Victor access to famous performers and artists, most of whom were at the time from Europe (for more information see Kunej D. 2014). The exchange of recordings, and thus also the expansion of the sales markets of both companies, was of mutual benefit. The records issued by the Gramophone Co. also include Slovenian recordings produced by Victor, including recordings that were recorded in collaboration with members of the Hoyer Trio.

Record companies assessed that the Hoyer Trio's music was sufficiently interesting and appealing to immigrants of other nationalities. Therefore, some of the Trio's recordings were issued with a translated title or under a different title, as the record companies' aim was to target non-Slovenian buyers and expand the product market. These recordings have the same matrix numbers, but different catalog numbers than the Slovenian issues, as they were offered to a different target audience. Table 4 shows the original (Slovenian) titles of Hoyer Trio tunes in Column 1 with the titles of the non-Slovenian issues listed underneath.



Table 4: A list of Hoyer Trio recordings intended for buyers from other ethnic groups.

Matrix No.	Title	Company	Place and date of the recording session	Catalog No.
8939-A	Na Marjance – polka Marianella Polka	Okeh	Cleveland Feb 19, 1925	24038 8660 (Voc)
8936-A	Cleveland polka Entre Rancheros – Polka	Okeh	Cleveland Feb 19, 1925	24038 8660 (Voc)
W 106573-2	Coklarska koračnica Coklařská – polka	Columbia	New York Mar 1926	25044-F 65-F
W 106571-1	Ti si moja – valček Až ráno – valčík	Columbia	New York Mar 1926	25043-F 65-F
W 107515-2	Ven pa not – polka Regina polka Jen vesele – polka	Columbia	New York Jan 1927	25065-F 1065-F 96-F
W 107516-2	Samo še enkrat – valček Naša lijepa – valcer Na táboře – valčík	Columbia	New York Jan 1927	25065-F 1056-F 96-F
W 80927-B	Slovenska polka Warszawska polka Knäpparpolka Vstuviv – polka	Okeh	Chicago May 20, 1927	24056 11330 19216 26050
W 80928-B	Veseli valček För Försten Gängen – Vals Palangos Valcas	Okeh	Chicago May 20, 1927	24057 19216 26050
W 80929-B	Gorenska polka En Riktig Gris – polka	Okeh	Chicago May 20, 1927	24057 19215
W 80930-A	Primorski valček Amore Campagniolo – valzer Siwe Oczy – walc Gammal Vastgötavals	Okeh	Chicago May 20, 1927	24056 9322, Co14710F 11330 19215
W 108140-2	Sokolska koračnica	Columbia	Chicago July 1927	25074-F 1070-F
BVE 55501-1	Ne pozabi me – polka Nepamiřsk manęs – polka	Victor	Chicago July 25, 1929	V-23017 V-14024
BVE 55502-1	Po valovih – valček Per vilnis – valcas	Victor	Chicago July 25, 1929	V-23017 V-14024
W 111312-2	Veseli godec – polka Veselý musikanti – polka	Columbia	Chicago Dec 1929	25129-F 151-F
W 111314-1	Gozdni valček Horský valčík	Columbia	Chicago Dec 1929	25129-F 151-F

Titles in foreign languages and catalog numbers that reveal what ethnic groups and what markets the records targeted (cf. Gronow 1982: 32–44; Spottswood 1990: xxxiii–xlvi) indicate a wide diversity of target audiences. For instance, seven Hoyer Trio recordings, which were issued by Columbia, were later reis-

Figure 33: A reissue of a Hoyer Trio recording on a record to be broadcast on the *Voice of America* radio (courtesy of Charles F. Debevec).



sued for the Czech-speaking (*Coklařská – polka*, 65-F; *Až ráno – valčík*, 65-F; *Jen vesele – polka*, 96-F; *Na táboře – valčík*, 96-F; *Veselý musikanti – polka*, 151-F; *Horský valčík*, 151-F) and Croatian- (or Serbo-Croatian-) speaking buyers (*Regina polka*, 1065-F; *Naša lijepa – valcer*, 1056-F; *Sokolska koračnica*, 1070-F). Two recordings from Victor (*Nepamiřšk manęs – polka*, V-14024; *Per vilnis – valcas*, V-14024) were intended for immigrants from Lithuania. The Okeh label reveals an even greater diversity in the target market for the Hoyer Trio recordings, as six recordings were reissued for Polish (*Warszawska polka*, 11330; *Siwe Oczy – walc*, 11330), Scandinavian (*Knäpparpolka*, 19216; *För Försten Gängen – Vals*, 19216; *En Riktig Gris – polka*, 19215; *Gammal Vastgötavals*, 19215), Lithuanian (*Vstuvij – polka*, 26050; *Palangos Valcas*, 26050), Italian (*Amore Campagnolo – valzer*, 9322, 14710-F) and even Mexican listeners (*Marianella Polka*, 8660; *Entre Rancheros – Polka*, 8660).

During World War II, some of the Hoyer Trio recordings were reissued on transcription discs to be played on the *Voice of America* radio, which was at that time part of the Office of War Information. The discs in question were 12-inches in diameter and had a rotational speed of 78 rpm, however, they were not made of shellac like most of the records for sale at the time, but of flexible vinyl. Thus, such records were lighter than the shellac records, and also less fragile, and therefore more suitable for transportation and long term use. In addition to the recordings' titles, performers and the ownership, the records' labels also listed specific alphanumeric codes used for identification. Recordings by various Slovenian performers, most of which are records by the



Figure 34: A reissue of folk tunes performed by the Hoyer Trio in a newer gramophone record format (courtesy of Charles F. Debevec).

Lausche-Udovich duo, the Hoyer Trio, the Adrija Singers and Moški Kvartet Jadran (Jadran Male Quartet), were included in the *Jugo-Slav Supplement 1*, which suggests that they were part of a larger series of Yugoslav recordings made at the time. A collection of records in the possession of Charles Debevec contains six such records with twelve Hoyer Trio recordings, demonstrating that these were reissues of Columbia and Victor records made during different recording sessions in 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1929. In addition to the records by the Lausche-Udovich duo, the majority of records preserved in the collection are by the Hoyer Trio, which suggest that the Trio's music was very popular with the *Voice of America* listeners.

Some Hoyer Trio recordings were later reissued in a newer gramophone record format with a narrower microgroove and the rotational speed of 33.33 rpm, which appeared on the market in the early 1950s and was widely used until the introduction of digital audio formats. The preserved vinyl record entitled *Slovenian Old Time Dances*, on which it is specified that the record was a reissue of older recordings, features the tunes of four Slovenian folk dances performed by the Hoyer Trio.

In 1984, some Hoyer Trio recordings were issued on an audio cassette entitled *Hoyer plays Hoyer*. Recordings on Side A were performed by Matt's son, Teddy, in collaboration with Frank Culovic, and Side B featured a reissue of five tunes from gramophone records from the 1920s: *Moja Micka – polka*, *Štajerska*, *Stari*

Figure 35: The cover of the Hoyer Trio CD *Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America*, issued by JSP Records.



*šotiš*, *Kde je moja ljubica – valček* and *Sokolska koračnica*. Thus, the cassette actually presented the entire Hoyer Trio's musical journey, from the music featured on old gramophone records to music from a later period, when Frank and Eddie Simončič were no longer part of the Trio (cf. *Ameriška domovina* 1984).

The music by Matt Hoyer and his Trio held the interest of listeners up until the present day and numerous Trio's recordings can now be found on YouTube. In 2010, JSP Records included the Hoyer Trio music on one of three CDs entitled *Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America*. The material for the CDs was selected and edited by Richard Terselic and Charles Debevec. The CDs feature three of the most prominent performers of Slovenian music from the 1920s whose gramophone records were issued in the USA. The performers' diversity (i.e. a male vocalist, a female vocal duo, an instrumental trio) makes for an excellent presentation of musical endeavors by Slovenian immigrants at the time. The first CD contains twenty recordings by the Hoyer Trio and the accompanying text gives a brief description of the performers and lists some basic data about the recordings. This provides listeners with good insight into the period when the recordings were made and a more complete understanding of the recorded materials. The presented audio materials have been carefully selected and the recordings are in chronological order, which makes for a fairly good presentation of the performers' repertoire.

Due to an outdated sound recording format the Hoyer Trio music was until

recently accessible only to a narrow circle of people, however, current reissues and online availability now make their music accessible to a global audience and a new generation of listeners. Music from old gramophone records has generated a great deal of interest, which is evidenced by the attention devoted to public presentations and events that feature this kind of music. The Hoyer Trio recordings on YouTube are a testament to the resurgence in interest in this music.

## About the Recorded Materials

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Old gramophone recordings have immense cultural and documentary value. Many present the oldest sound recordings of Slovenian music. The recorded dance tunes in particular are invaluable ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological materials, as they are without a doubt the oldest sound recordings of Slovenian instrumental folk music. They are considerably older, by a few decades, than the recordings of instrumental folk music obtained in field research. Although the Hoyer Trio recordings are not the oldest recordings of Slovenian music and folk dance tunes on gramophone records, they are nevertheless part of a very early period of sound recordings of Slovenian music and are a valuable source of material for various studies.

### Folk Music on Hoyer Trio Records

Records by the Hoyer Trio can be a very important sound source for ethnochoreological research. The trio's recordings are of great value primarily because the existing number of recorded folk dance tunes is much greater in comparison to the recordings of other Slovenian performers prior to World War II, i.e. before any systematic field recordings were made by ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists in Slovenia.

Sound recording of folk music in Slovenia has more than a century long tradition. According to known data, the earliest recordings of folk music in the Slovenian Lands were made by foreign researchers, i.e. Béla Vikár and Evgenia E. Lineva (cf. Kunej D. 2008), however, the work of Slovenian researchers and folk music collectors came to fruition almost at the same time with foreign researchers. In 1914, *Odbor za nabiranje slovenskih narodnih pesmi* (Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs) bought a phonograph, which was used by Juro Adlešič to make wax cylinder recordings (Kunej D. 2004/2005, 2005).

The endeavors to create sound documents of folk music were stepped up in

1934 with the establishment of the Folklore Institute, the predecessor of the present-day Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU (abbreviated as GNI). The Institute's tasks also included the research on folk dances and instrumental folk music, as well as sound documentation. Some of the objectives defined in the Institute's Constitutional Charter were not realized until after World War II, when the number of the Institute's employees increased and the Institute acquired the necessary technical equipment, which allowed the capture of the resonance of the "disappearing" Slovenian folk dance music by means of field research. In 1954, GNI acquired two tape recorders, which resulted in the establishment of systematic field recordings of folk music as well as folk dance music. In 1955, the Institute began the creation of what is now an extensive sound archive (Kunej D. 1999). Since all sound recordings on wax cylinders from the early 20th century are of singing, it is considered that the first field recordings of instrumental folk music – which was generally intended for dancing – were not made until after World War II. However, these recordings are not the oldest recorded Slovenian dance tunes, as the repertoire of Slovenian performers who made recordings for the record companies also included examples of folk music traditions. From 1908 onwards, the available audio materials on gramophone records thus include recordings of various folk dances (e.g. *štajeriš*, *šotiš*, *tramplan*, *mrzulin* etc.), which may be up to half a century older than the Institute's field recordings.

Matt Hoyer, who was born in the village of Sodražica and had learned his first tunes playing the accordion while still in his home country, recorded folk traditions with the other members of the Hoyer Trio on a large number of gramophone records. The Trio's recordings are thus an important part of the mosaic of sounds from the Ribnica Valley's folk music. They represent the oldest recordings of instrumental folk music from that area. The Institute's first field recording of folk music in the Dolenjska region did not take place until 1955 in the area of Loški Potok (GNI TZ 2a), merely a year after the Institute had acquired a sound recording device and started documenting folk music through fieldwork. Most of the materials from the region where Matt Hoyer was born were collected in the 1960s. A planned and systematic collection of folklore material and its exploration was undertaken in this area between 1962 and 1966. The study of folk music of this region resulted in the publication of the monograph *Ljudska glasba med rešetarji in lončarji v Ribniški dolini* (Folk Music among the Sieve-Makers and Potters in the Ribnica Valley) (Kumer 1968). This research generated more than 600 recorded sound examples of folk music, which are kept in the GNI's Sound Archives. For the most part, these are folk songs, but there are also some recordings of instrumental music.

During the early years of his life spent in the Slovenian countryside, Matt Hoyer

Figure 36: Zmaga Kumer conducting fieldwork (GNI Fototeka).



accumulated cultural capital which he used at a later stage of his life in the USA. Even as a child and teenager, he must have picked up a good many tunes, which he later recorded on gramophone records, but he probably also learned some of them from other Cleveland-based Slovenian immigrants (cf. Bricel 1985). A number of these tunes can be defined as folk dance tunes, which is indicated by the titles of some of his records, namely *Mazulinka*, *Pošter tanc*, *Treplan – za ples*, *Stari šotiš*, *Empajris*, *Šusterpolka*, *Siebenšrit – za ples* and *Štajeriš*. It is interesting to note that some of the folk dance tunes were recorded by Matt Hoyer as a solo performer. It is also important to note that generally the Trio's recordings are only instrumental. Singing was rare. It was included only when the Trio collaborated with other performers, who usually sang well known Slovenian folk songs, always in the Slovenian language. Slovenian folk dance music had initially been characterized as "pure" instrumental music. However, due to its transformation into folk pop music in Slovenia in the second half of the 20th century this feature was gradually lost. Singing with instrumental



accompaniment is typical of the later period of Cleveland-style polka music, which reached its peak with the musical career of Frankie Yankovic (1915–1998), who translated Slovenian folk songs into English.

Recent research on old gramophone records has revealed that the Hoyer Trio is not the only performer from the Ribnica Valley whose recordings of folk dance tunes date back to the period prior to World War II. A hitherto little known performer was Hoyer's contemporary Frank Lovšin from the village of Goriča Vas near Ribnica. Lovšin played the diatonic accordion and recorded a few instrumental tunes during the same period (1924–1929). They were issued on Columbia and Victor gramophone records. The list of Lovšin's recordings is significantly shorter than Hoyer's, which suggests that his music was not as appealing or well-known as Hoyer's.

Listening to old gramophone records reveals that the Hoyer Trio music can be, in terms of ethnochoreology, classified into five categories, namely polkas, waltzes, marches, folk dances and other. Some polkas, waltzes and marches are part of the folk dance repertoire but have also been assigned to individual categories that include music of folk origin or composed music. Thus, the folk dance category includes all the tunes that belong to the remaining folk dances.

The majority of music featured on the Hoyer Trio records includes various polkas and waltzes. They comprise 71% of their recordings. The fact that the largest share is polkas (37%) comes as no surprise as these tunes are popular not only among Slovenians, but also among a wide range of listeners from other European traditions. However, a rather significant share of the recorded tunes belongs in the folk dance category (16%), which is somewhat larger than the share of marches (9%) (cf. Kunej R. 2013).

The decision on what to record depended on each individual performer and their own preferences and repertoire, and on the response and demand of buyers. USA-based buyers of the Hoyer Trio records were for the most part probably Slovenian immigrants who arrived from rural areas and wanted to remain connected to their home country and culture through listening to the familiar music. These recordings can be viewed as pure music, but they can also be used to bring back memories of the immigrants' home country. From today's perspective, these records should be viewed for their musical merit while also recognizing their cultural context. Thomas Turino (2008) argues that music recordings can be compared to snapshots taken by travelers (tourists) on vacation that help them recall memories of past events. In this context music is only a tool for rekindling a certain memory, not the real thing, but a representation of something else. In the USA, Slovenian music was only one type of the so-called ethnic music issued by record companies. This ethnicity-based

music was marketed as a memory of the homeland, making it only one of the gramophone industry's strategies to attract buyers. In 1925, Victor published a Slovenian-language catalog in the USA, addressing the Slovenian audience, its potential customers, with the following:

With Victor's help you can listen to music from your home country and enjoy the best and the most beautiful of what the country you were born in had to offer. It rekindles the memories of the bygone days of your youth in a faraway land. The songs you used to sing, the music you used to dance to, all of it sung or played by the best and most popular artists, your fellow countrymen. (Victor 1925: [1])

The majority of the data on folk dances in the Ribnica Valley, where Matt Hoyer had spent his youth, was collected in the 1960s. Zmaga Kumer conducted a geographically representative and perhaps one of the most thorough studies of folk music in Slovenia. This research provided the basis for a list of folk dances in the Ribnica Valley (Kumer 1968: 410–422). This dance repertoire was compared to the dance repertoire based on the Hoyer Trio discography. Table 5 reveals a striking similarity in the selection of folk dances.

Table 5: A comparison of the folk dance repertoire in the Ribnica Valley and the materials recorded by the Hoyer Trio.

REPERTOIRE OF FOLK DANCES FROM THE RIBNICA VALLEY (based on Kumer 1968)	The dance tune is part of the materials recorded by the Hoyer Trio
Abrahama gredo	-
ajnc –polka	Yes
beksl (ples z metlo)	Yes
kmečki valček	-
kolo (pouštr tanc)	Yes
koutr šivat	Yes
mazulka (mazurka, mazolka)	Yes
nojkatoliš	-
nojpayeriš	Yes
pokšotiš (potowčenc, pokčotiš, čotiš, šotiš)	Yes
puštrtanc	Yes
špicpolka	Yes
špigutanc (špeiguček)	Yes
štayeriš (oberštayeriš)	Yes
šuštarska (šuštar-polka)	Yes
tuplirana (potresena polka)	Yes
zibenšrit	Yes
zic-polka	Yes
zmišlaj	Yes

The table demonstrates that most of the tunes from the folk dance repertoire (16 out of 19), created through the Institute's field research, had been recorded by Matt Hoyer and his Trio almost four decades prior to the field recording. This establishes that the words used in the Victor catalog introduction ring true: "There is hardly a song or a tune that has been composed that you and your friends could not enjoy, providing you own Victor's Victrola" (Victor 1925: [2]).

In comparing the data sets, an important difference needs to be pointed out. In comparison to the repertoire of any musician that was recorded during the Institute's field research of the folk music in Ribnica and the surrounding area, Matt Hoyer's (the Hoyer Trio's) recorded repertoire is considerably broader. The list of folk dance tunes in the Ribnica Valley, presented in Table 5, has actually been compiled from the repertoires of several individual musicians. In fact, at the time of the recording, individual musicians were each able to play only a few tunes from the above list of folk dances. Moreover, with a few rare exceptions, the musicians recorded during the field research had been born in the 20th century and were thus much younger than Matt Hoyer.

The musical heritage preserved on old gramophone records is a valuable aid in the interpretation of folk dance heritage (cf. Kunej R. 2014). When it comes to the Hoyer Trio gramophone records, this applies to the recordings made in the 1920s. The Trio's music, which is based on tradition and is enriched through the music genres popular in the USA at that time, provides an insight into the musical heritage of the Ribnica Valley. The Trio's recordings are useful in uncovering the character and the manner of playing dance tunes. They are performed by musicians at their peak, whose performance delivered for the purposes of recording a gramophone record matches that of an actual musician who is trying to warm up the dance atmosphere.

The experts on Slovenian folk dance who listened to the available Hoyer Trio recordings were impressed with the Trio's performances and pointed out the suitability of the music for dancing. This is not always the case when it comes to the recordings obtained through field research. Most of the field recordings held in the sound archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology were not made during actual dance events, but during research of bygone dance traditions. As a result of this, the recorded dance tunes are performed in various ways, i.e. sung (murmured) or whistled, played by a solo musician, and only a few of the dance tunes are recorded as performances by actual bands with a regular line-up. The researchers have focused their field research on the traditions that were on the verge of dying out or had died out completely. Consequently, informants, both dancers and musicians, had to recall many dance tunes, although they were not played for their original purpose, i.e. dancing, but to be recorded by a researcher whose aim was to record and document the old

dance tradition. Often musicians could not remember the entire dance tune. At times, because of old age, they had diminished psychophysical abilities that did not allow for the type of execution the performers themselves desired or the way they remembered it to have been performed. This raises a question of how a particular dance tune would have sounded if it had been played by the same folk musicians 40 years prior, when they were at their peak and the tune was still played for dancing. An answer to this question can partly be provided by the commercial recordings on gramophone records.

In support of this argument, the next subchapter presents a case study focused on the recordings of a specific folk dance known in the vicinity of Matt Hoyer's native village. The aim is to illustrate how suitable, meaningful and indicative gramophone records are as a relevant source for the interpretation of the dance heritage, assuming, of course, that the data accompanying the recordings on gramophone records (the so-called metadata) is known. Quite often this turns out to be a problem, as the sources in question are mostly historical and many important details related to the recorded performers and the circumstances surrounding the recording have usually been lost, destroyed or forgotten.

### **A comparison between the gramophone records and field recordings**

The dance called *zibenšrit* (the Seven Step Dance) was known in most of Europe and in Slovenia as well. In fact, it was one of the most widespread folk dances in the Slovenian Lands in the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Its most common Slovenian name, *zibenšrit*, is a non-standard word, a version of the German expression *Siebenschritt*, which suggests that the dance came to Slovenia from German-speaking areas. Rarely did the people refer to the dance in any other way than with the Slavicized version of the German expression: *Siebenšrit*. The most common exception to the dance's name was a fully Slovenianized version of the name: *sedem korak*. This Slovenian phrase is used as the title of a *zibenšrit* recording by Matt Hoyer on the labels of his gramophone records.

This dance was well-known in Ribnica and its surrounding area. According to research conducted in the 1960s, it was known in the town of Ribnica, the villages Prigorica, Gorenja Vas, Žigmarice, Podklanec, Sušje and Kračali, but it was no longer danced in all of them. In some places the locals still danced to it, while in others, they could only recall it.

The *zibenšrit* melody has been completely adapted to dance. It is generally comprised of 12 measures. The first motif, consisting of two measures, is repeated as a response in a higher position and rarely in the same one. The second motif appears in measure 5 and is then repeated in a higher tone or, more common-

## Zibenšrit

GNI M 26.190

Prigorica, 1963

The musical score for Zibenšrit is written in 2/4 time with a tempo of 108. It is in G major and consists of ten measures. The first system contains measures 1-5, and the second system contains measures 6-10. The melody is characterized by short, rhythmic phrases and is repeated in the second system. The chords are G, D, G, D, G, C, D, G, D, G.

Figure 37: A *zibenšrit* melody recorded by Marija Šuštar in the village of Prigorica in 1965 (GNI M 26.190, transcription by Valens Vodušek).

ly, in a slightly changed tonal sequence. The third motif in measures 7 and 8 rounds off the melody. Then, the second and third motifs are repeated again (measures 5–8). *Zibenšrit* is characterized by paraphrases, short and humorous songs, which helps one memorize the dance's melody and rhythm. Several such songs were known in Ribnica and the surrounding area.

The *zibenšrit* is a simple dance with a characteristic structure of seven steps. The dance is composed of two parts. The first part consists of seven steps (dance motif A) and is repeated. The second part consists of three side steps (dance motif B), which are repeated in the opposite direction, and a four-step turn (dance motif C).

According to the audio materials kept in the GNI's archives, the oldest instrumental field recording of the *zibenšrit* dance was made not far from the Ribnica Valley, on September 27, 1956 in the village of Mali Log in Loški Potok (GNI M 20.415). On this occasion, *zimšrit* (*zibenšrit*) was played on the accordion by Matija Anzeljc, who had been born in 1901. In her book, Zmaga Kumer listed seven Ribnica Valley villages, where people were still familiar with the *zibenšrit* in the 1960s, adding: "In some places, people can still dance to it, while elsewhere they can only remember its name" (Kumer 1968: 413). The GNI's sound archives contain several recordings of *zibenšrit* melodies from the Ribnica Valley that were recorded on tape in the 1960s.

## Sieben Šrit - za ples

Columbia

W 107477; 25060-F

New York, 1926

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Sieben Šrit - za ples'. It is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 85. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system has four measures, and the second system has five measures. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. Chord markings 'G' and 'D' are placed below the bass line. The second system includes first and second endings, indicated by '1.' and '2.' above the staff.

Figure 38: The *zibenšrit* melody performed by Matt Hoyer (transcription by Luka Sraka and Urša Šivic).

One of the recordings was made on March 14, 1965 in the village of Kračali. It is a *zibenšrit* melody (GNI M 27.078) played on the accordion by then 73-year-old Janez Čampa (locally referred to as Botrni stric – the Godfather). He was born in 1892 and played at local weddings when he was a young man, most often in the village of Gora and on several occasions also in Loški Potok. Slovenian ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists had long considered his two recordings (GNI M 20.415, GNI M 27.078) to be the first, or at least very old, sound recordings of the *zibenšrit* dance tune from this area until they (again) listened to an old gramophone record with Matt Hoyer's recording. In fact, Matt Hoyer could also play the *zibenšrit*, as evidenced by the recording on the gramophone record (GNI DZGP), which was made in December 1926 in New York and features the then 35-year-old immigrant Matt solo performing the *zibenšrit* dance tune on the accordion. The previously overlooked "American" recording of *zibenšrit*, which was made for commercial markets, thus adds a new piece to the mosaic of the sonority of Slovenian folk dance music from the area of Ribnica and complements the sound image documented by researchers through field recordings.

A comparison between the recording made in Kračali and Matt Hoyer's recording speaks volumes. The distance between the locations of the two recordings is very great, more than 6,800 kilometers (more than 4,200 miles), however,



Figure 39: A gramophone record with a recording of the *zibenšrit* tune that was issued in the USA (GNI DZGP).



Figure 40: Hoyer's *zibenšrit* recording was reissued in Europe (GNI DZGP).

the audio materials have a lot in common. Both musicians played the tune for the same folk dance and both tunes were performed on the accordion. Both musicians were from the same area. Their respective native villages were just over 7 kilometers (less than 4.5 miles) apart (Sodražica, Kračali), and the two musicians were born a year apart (1891 vs. 1892). There are two significant differences between the recordings they made: the reason for the recordings

Figure 41: The *zibenšrit* recording, which was originally issued in the old gramophone record format, was later issued on a vinyl record (courtesy of Charles F. Debevec).



and the time when the recordings were made. The "American" recording was made 39 years before the "Slovenian" one. The first recording was made by the Columbia record company in December 1926, at a time when the folk dance tradition in the Slovenian Lands was still very much alive. This is noticeable from the strong character and determined way of playing, an appropriate tempo (i.e. not too fast), as well as a rhythm- and meter-wise suitable performance – the recorded music makes one want to dance and is easy to dance to. The mere fact that the recording of this dance was included in the record in the first place demonstrates that records mainly featured what people wanted to listen to (cf. Gronow and Englund 2007). In contrast, the 1965 recording from Kračali was made as a documentary recording of a nearly forgotten tradition played by an older person whose psychophysical abilities were gradually diminishing. What is more, it was recorded at a time when the *zibenšrit* dance was only rarely danced in that area.

The popularity of the *zibenšrit* recording made by Matt Hoyer is attested to by its reissues. The original recording from 1926 was first issued by Columbia in the USA. The performer listed on the record's label (see Figure 39) is "Math. Arko Hoyer", who played the tune solo on the accordion, which is noted on the record itself. It also identifies this music "for dancing". The tune's title is written as *Sieben Šrit*, an unusual derivative from the German version of the dance's name.

The record with this tune was later reissued in England and was primarily intended for the Slovenian market. It is clear from some of the extant catalogs



that the record was available in Slovenian stores. This might be the reason why the tune's title on the label has been changed to the Slovenian version *Sedem korak* (i.e. Seven Step), with the original title from the issue in the USA added in brackets (see Figure 40).

The popularity of Hoyer's *zibenšrit* is further evidenced by a reissue (see Figure 41) that belongs to a later era of the gramophone industry, when records with a new record format and a different number of revolutions per minute (33.33 and 45 rpm) were available in the market. *Zibenšrit* was issued on a double-sided record with the title *Slovenian Old Time Dances*, which, in addition to *zibenšrit*, featured the tunes of three other dances, i.e. *mazurka*, *šotiš* (schottische) and *šuštarska polka* (the shoemaker polka). The label explicitly states that it is a reissue of original recordings, materials recorded in the past. According to some sources, this record was produced exclusively for the purpose of teaching Slovenian folk dances in the United States and was not supposed to be for sale in retail stores. This is confirmed by the label, where no record company or publisher is mentioned, which is certainly a rare omission in the history of the gramophone industry.

The Hoyer Trio not only helped to shape the Slovenian musical world in the USA, but their musical practice and activities also fostered transnational links and might have even co-influenced the original environment. In the decades leading up to World War II, the Hoyer Trio's music was present in Slovenia as well. Various gramophone record catalogs indicate that the Trio's records were available in the Slovenian market. They were for sale in stores in Ljubljana and likely in other major Slovenian towns as well. All three of the catalogs made available by Anton Rasberger, a shopkeeper who owned a store on Miklošič Street (Miklošičeva cesta) in Ljubljana, include Hoyer Trio records (Seznam 1930; Dodatek 1930a, 1930b). At the request of his customers, Rasberger would also send the purchased records by mail. The Trio's records were featured in *Glavni katalog Columbia 1932*, which was available in the technical store owned by Josip Banjai on Miklošič Street in Ljubljana.

There is a dearth of information to permit researchers to assess to what extent this type of music reached "typical" bearers (creators, performers, listeners etc.) of Slovenian folk dance heritage. However, there is no doubt that individuals living in the rural areas of the Slovenian Lands did own a gramophone and listened to music on gramophone records. It can be assumed that American gramophone records may have at least partially influenced the folk musicians' performance at the time, i.e. the music that is considered to be folk music, or (perhaps more appropriately) the popular music in rural areas in the first half of the 20th century.

In the Slovenian Lands, people could also listen to the Hoyer Trio's gramophone records on the radio, although prior to World War II radio receivers were somewhat rare. Radio Ljubljana's program schedules from the 1920s and the 1930s reveal that the Hoyer Trio gramophone records were aired on a regular basis, usually at least once a week. Some gramophone records with the Hoyer Trio recordings even made it back to Ribnica. While visiting an informant in 2015, a curator of the Museum of Ribnica not only noticed some old books, but also a few Hoyer Trio gramophone records among the informant's library.

Research into how instrumental folk music was transmitted has revealed that folk musicians learned their repertoire from different sources. For instance, field notes (GNI TZ 16: 137) reveal that musician Janez Perušek (born in 1907) from the village of Podklanec near Ribnica learned some tunes he played on the accordion mostly from other "old musicians", and others from gramophone records. The field notes also mention that at the age of 17 (i.e. in 1924) Perušek started performing at weddings and other dance parties. That same year, his fellow countryman Matt Hoyer already had his music issued on gramophone records in the USA, which were soon for sale in the Slovenian Lands as well.

Gramophone records were not the only means of influencing the interaction of musical practices between Ribnica and immigrants in the USA. This role was also assumed by musicians and their musical instruments who traveled to the USA and back home. One of these musicians was Venc (Vinko) Zajc, locally referred to as Kovačev from Žigmarice (born in 1885), who had spent some time in the USA (1913–1920) when he was younger and "even played at weddings and Slovenian immigrant events in his spare time while there". He brought home from his trip not only his earnings, but also "some new tunes" (Kumer 1968: 432). It is also known that on one particular occasion a musical instrument traveled to the USA and back home on its own. The accordion that was played by France Kromar, locally referred to as Šamutkov from Dolenja Vas (born in 1932), had at first been owned by his grandfather, who "once sold it and it went to the USA with the new owner, but then they bought it back because they felt it belonged to the family" (Kumer 1968: 77). All in all, there are quite a few accordions in Slovenia today that were made by Anton Mervar in Cleveland, the accordion maker who also made accordions for Matt Hoyer.

Researching Hoyer Trio gramophone records from an ethnochoreological perspective has demonstrated that the repertoire of a certain musician was broader than suggested by field research after World War II, and that the folk dance tunes were transmitted from one musician to the next as well as learned through recordings on gramophone records.

In the field of the folk dance heritage of the Ribnica Valley, taking into account

old gramophone records as an ethnochoreological source has uncovered new performances of folk dance tunes recorded in the USA that are significantly older than the previously known "oldest" recordings in Slovenia. Ethnochoreologists (and ethnomusicologists as well) are thus faced with a new task, i.e. to focus their research endeavors not only on field recordings of folk music, but also on the hitherto overlooked audio materials featured on old gramophone records. Researching the latter reveals the previously unknown sonority of folk dances.

## **The Heralds of Polka Music**

Matt Hoyer and his Trio were among the first performers of a new style of music. They created a sound that became the foundation of what is today called polka music, achieving remarkable success with it. Matt is often considered to be the pioneer of the Cleveland-style polka music (cf. Dolgan 2006: 16).

Among immigrants to the USA, a new music genre developed, one that was based on a domestic tradition and was intertwined with popular music genres of the immigrants' new homeland, the so-called polka music. However, the term includes not only polka music, but also the music of waltzes, schottisches, mazurkas and the tunes of other folk tradition-based dances. Polka music is actually a popular and modernized version of various folk tunes and dances of European immigrants that were brought with them from the old country. It is not a single type of dance music, but a combination of different tunes that used to be typical of European rural areas. It includes a variety of dance forms characteristic of different ethnic groups. Polka music actually represents a commercialized version of the music that was brought to the USA by European immigrants and combined with modern music genres (cf. Greene 1992: 2). At the time of World War I, this type of music was referred to as "old time music", and occasionally also as "international music".

Although polka music was performed by musicians of different nationalities, it was Slovenian performers that have greatly contributed to the development and spread of this genre. The main center of Slovenians in the USA was Cleveland, a city where the immigrant ethnic groups had a very active musical life. Slovenians arrived in Cleveland circa 1885, mostly for economic reasons, and found work in rapidly developing local industries. By 1910, the number of Slovenians living in Cleveland amounted to 15,000, which was the third largest settlement of Slovenians anywhere (Greene 1992: 81). When they arrived in Cleveland, they encountered the music performed by German and Czech bands, but they also brought their own traditional music.

Cleveland soon became a center for a special style of polka – the so-called "Cleveland-style" or "Slovenian-style". Music was a major part of the social life of Slovenian immigrants in Cleveland and accordionists were the darlings of the Slovenian community. Members of many families could play the accordion well and were under the spotlight at social events, where they would play old folk songs and tunes, which people knew how to dance to.

One of the greatest advantages of polka music was its "danceability" (Greene 1992: 13). Dances held in halls, which became very popular in the 1920s, were well suited to the music of various immigrant ethnic groups, especially because European instrumental folk music was typically associated with dancing. The emergence of polka music resulted in a revival of dances from the folk tradition and, at the same time, led to the emergence of a dance community composed of both members of various ethnic groups and individuals with American roots. The latter learned the dance steps that had previously been the sole domain of immigrant ethnic communities. The most memorable dances for Slovenians living in Cleveland were held at the Slovenian National Home, which was opened on St. Clair Avenue in 1924. The large and beautiful hall could accommodate 500 dancers at a time. Most of the dancers were young people aged 17 to 25, who could come unaccompanied and find a dance partner right there. Polka music had the right tempo and energy to encourage swift turns and other dance figures (cf. Dolgan 2006: 12–19).

One of the most important promoters of Slovenian music in Cleveland was Anton Mervar, who had come to Cleveland in 1913, aged 27. At first, he made a living as a factory worker, thus supporting his wife and a child. From Slovenia, he brought the skills necessary to make accordions, which he continued making and repairing in his spare time in the USA. In 1921, he opened his own music store on St. Clair Avenue, selling a variety of musical instruments, especially his handmade diatonic accordions (button boxes). These button boxes were very popular with Slovenians at that time and available at a relatively affordable price (Gostilna 1986; Greene 1992: 82–83).

Owing to the high quality of his accordions, Mervar soon became more widely known and also the most respected diatonic accordion maker in the USA. Although he was only a passable player of the accordion himself, his button boxes boasted the most beautiful sound (Dolgan 2006: 11). His store in Cleveland became a meeting place for musical aficionados, a popular hangout for numerous musicians such as music teacher and choirmaster John Ivanusch, pianist Ivan Zorman, band leader Victor Lisjak, as well as the famous and popular accordionist, Matt Hoyer.

In the 1920s, record companies had already started issuing records with tunes

that inspired polka music. This influenced the American music industry, as record companies always endeavored to find hits that would appeal to as many listeners as possible. Some companies were well aware of the internationalization of music for dance events and dance enthusiasts and viewed polka music as a particularly suitable type for popularization (Greene 1992: 13). Mervar, whose store offered gramophone records, knew that Slovenians, with a few notable exceptions, had not made any recordings for the leading record companies. Therefore, he got in touch with various record companies and helped Matt Hoyer and his Trio on their way to recording gramophone records, thus contributing significantly to the spread and popularity of the Trio's music.

The second individual who significantly contributed to the development of polka music in Cleveland was William Lausche, a Slovenian dentist, who had also been trained in music. By pairing Slovenian folk music tradition with American popular music of the time, he contributed the sound that became the basis for what is now called Cleveland-style polka music (Dolgan 2006: 16).

William Lausche was an amateur musician, who was well acquainted with both traditional Slovenian music and contemporary American jazz. His parents, Louis and Frances Lausche, had moved to Cleveland as teenagers circa 1890. Although William's father Louis died in 1908, when William was only 10 years old, he had been a good role model for William's life, which combined two cultures, his native Slovenian culture and the modern American culture. He had helped many immigrant Slovenians deal with legal, social and religious issues, and adapt to life in their adopted country. Later the Lausche family established a building that housed various facilities for immigrants (Greene 1992: 172–175).

William's mother Frances encouraged her children to play music and many of them received musical training. When he was ten, William started learning how to play the piano and completed his musical education by 1920. Although he was talented, he decided against becoming a professional musician and instead completed his dentistry studies in 1922. Music remained his great love and as a pianist he performed in various nightclubs in Cleveland and the surrounding area. He was obsessed with both Slovenian folk music and modern genres. He would constantly hum various songs, even while working on his patients' teeth (Dolgan 2006: 16).

An even more important part of his life was his work as a composer. He succeeded in pairing Slovenian traditional music with elements of contemporary American jazz. From the mid-1920s to the beginning of World War II, he made a number of cover versions of songs that combined traditional and contemporary music genres.

William Lausche's music was spread mostly through gramophone records and

Figure 42: The cover of a book about the life and music of Frankie Yankovic (Dolgan 2006).



the radio. His earliest gramophone recordings were made in a similar fashion to those by the Hoyer Trio, in 1924 in Cleveland for Victor. William recorded four songs with his sister Josephine and her friend Mary Udovich, accompanying the two singers on the piano. Later, a similar ensemble recorded for Columbia in New York on a number of other occasions and made numerous recordings, which became very popular and had a significant impact on other polka performers. William kept recording and composing throughout his life; he wrote his very last composition in the same year he died, in 1967.

In terms of the development of polka music, the music and gramophone records by the Hoyer Trio and the Lausche-Udovich ensemble are important mainly because of the popularity of their musical style among young performers, especially among the accordionists and bands that were active in the Cleveland area around World War II. Accordionists Johnny Pecon, Eddie Habat, Lou

Trebar, Johnny Vadnal and Frankie Yankovic evolved into popular musicians while listening to the music performed by the Hoyer Trio and William Lausche. Inspired by the enthusiastic crowd of dancers, they enhanced the music and adapted it to a wider audience. Cleveland-style polka music reached the peak of its popularity with Frankie Yankovic, who, during the process of Americanizing Slovenian music, developed a style that was not only appealing to other ethnic groups, but also to lovers of popular music in general. He made two million-selling records in 1948 and 1949, and was crowned "America's Polka King" in 1948. He received a Grammy in 1986, the first ever to be awarded for this music genre.

The Hoyer Trio's performances and their gramophone records were not only very popular, but they also influenced virtually all future generations of Slovenian performers of Cleveland-style polka music in the USA. After World War II, quite a few tunes that had previously been recorded by the Hoyer Trio were arranged, renamed and rerecorded by other polka performers in the USA. Debevec (2014: 108) lists the following examples: *Coklarska koračnica* was recorded by Johnny Pecon as *Zip polka*, *Pečlarska polka* was renamed *Strabane polka* by Frankie Yankovic, *Ribenška polka* was changed into *Strawberry Hill Polka* by Eddie Habat, and *Šebelska koračnica* was recorded by Johnny Vadnal, who renamed it *Swing Shift Polka*. However, the artists usually either replaced



Figure 43: The cover of an LP with recordings by Zeitz and Mlakar in tribute to the Hoyer Trio (courtesy of Tony Petkovsek).

the second part of these tunes with their own composed part or replaced it with a part of another tune.

In the 1960s, two acclaimed polka musicians of Slovenian descent, Frankie Zeitz and Joe Mlakar, recorded a number of tunes, performing them in tribute to Matt Hoyer and his Trio. The recordings were issued on three LP albums, where it was clearly pointed out that they featured the music performed in the "Hoyer Trio Style", which was also the title of one of the three albums. Frankie Zeitz was particularly fond of Hoyer Trio's music, as he had been born in 1918 in Cleveland's Newburgh neighborhood, where Matt Hoyer and his family had lived as well. Matt was his musical idol and inspired Frankie to play the accordion when he was a youth. Some time later, the two played together on several occasions. In 1959, Frankie moved to California, where he continued his successful musical career as a polka musician. Joe Mlakar also became very enthusiastic about the Hoyer Trio music at an early age. He was born in 1923 in Minnesota, where his father taught him how to play the diatonic accordion. He learned the Hoyer Trio tunes from the Trio's gramophone records. He later moved to California and became the ambassador of Slovenian polka music. Frankie Zeitz, who mostly played the chromatic accordion, and Joe Mlakar on the diatonic accordion together recorded five LP albums, three of which are devoted to the same style of playing as the Hoyer Trio's (cf. Lifetime Achievement 2015b; Trustees Honor 2015).

For the most part Matt Hoyer and his Trio remained faithful to folk music from their home country and added no special embellishments to the music they performed to appeal to listeners, which later became characteristic of polka music. Matt was a good musician with great sense of rhythm and a good sense of what appealed to dancers. He played in a calm manner while sitting down, in much the same way folk musicians had played in the past. In the 1920s, he was not only the best-known Slovenian accordionist in Cleveland, but was also very popular due to his infectious sense of humor and warm personality. He paired the Trio's accordion with the banjo and the guitar, and combined traditional Slovenian music with jazz and other popular music genres in the US, which turned out to be a winning combination.

He received a Lifetime Achievement Award for his outstanding contribution to Slovenian polka music, awarded by the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. He is considered by many experts to be the originator of Slovenian polka music in the USA and is often called the "pioneer" or "grandfather of Cleveland-style polka music".

A large part of Matt Hoyer's music has been documented and preserved on gramophone records, which offer fascinating insight into his work and the





Figure 44: The building that houses the National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame and Museum (photo by Rebeka Kunej, 2015).

history of Slovenian music in the USA. The study of the recorded materials thus reveals the beginnings of popularization and commercialization of Slovenian folk music, which, aided by new technical advances and the emergence of the gramophone industry, flourished to unexpected heights. Recordings from both sides of old gramophone records by Matija Arko and the Hoyer Trio combine music from both sides of the Atlantic, from the old and the new homelands. They reveal much more than it may seem at first sight.

### Glasba z obeh strani

Gramofonske plošče Matije Arka in Hoyer tria

Matija Arko, po domače Hojer, rojen v Sodražici, se je že kot mladenič izselil v Ameriko in s seboj ponesel veselje do glasbe in harmonike. Glasba je pomembno zaznamovala njegovo življenje in s svojo skupino Hoyer trio je postal zelo priljubljen med Slovenci, pa tudi izseljenci drugih narodnosti. S prepletanjem slovenske ljudske glasbe in različnih oblik ameriške popularne glasbe tistega časa je postavil temelje t. i. *polka glasbe*, ki je zaradi privlačnosti prestopila etnične meje in pozneje postala vsesplošno popularna. Veliko glasbe Matije Arka je dokumentirane in ohranjene na gramofonskih ploščah, ki dajejo vpogled v njegovo delo in zgodovino slovenske glasbe v ZDA. O Matiji Arku, ki je bil v Ameriki bolj znan kot Matt Hoyer, in o njegovem glasbenem ustvarjanju smo v Sloveniji vedeli zelo malo, zato smo želeli s knjigo opozoriti na njegovo delovanje in pomen, ki ga je imela njegova glasba in ga še vedno ima.

Matija Arko se je rodil 22. februarja 1891 v vasi Sodražica. Starši njegove matere Helene Arko so živeli v Ravnem Dolu, njihovi domačiji pa se je po domače reklo pri Hojerju. Helena se je šele po Matijevem rojstvu poročila z njegovim očetom Francem Simončičem iz Sodražice, zato je Matija obdržal materin priimek. Ko je imel šest let, je njegova mama umrla. Dve leti po njeni smrti se je oče izselil v ZDA in si tam ustvaril novo družino. Čez nekaj let, leta 1904, je k očetu v Cleveland odšel tudi Matija. V svoji drugi domovini je živel vse do smrti leta 1960.

V začetku 20. stoletja v slovenskih časopisih najdemo oglase različnih potovalnih pisarn, ki so ponujale organizacijo poti v Ameriko. V časopisu *Slovenec* je bil 7. maja 1904 objavljen oglas za prekomorsko pot iz Evrope v Ameriko, po kateri je v svet odšel tudi Matija Arko. *Glas naroda – list slovenskih delavcev v Ameriki* je 31. maja 1904 poročal, da je v New York prispel parnik La Touraine, ki se je čez ocean odpravil iz francoskega pristanišča Le Havre. Prav s tem parnikom je v novo deželo pripotoval tudi takrat trinajstletni Matija Arko.

V Clevelandu je Matija že kot mladenič pogosto igral harmoniko v gostilni, ki so jo imeli njegovi sorodniki. Tam naj bi njegov talent prepoznal tudi eden od slovenskih gostov, ki mu je nato pomagal pri učenju novih viž. Matija se je igranja in verjetno

tudi osnov izdelovanja harmonik sicer naučil že v domovini. Razvil je samosvoj način igranja, obvladal pa je tako diatonično kakor tudi 120-basno kromatično. Bil je eden prvih prepoznavnih slovenskih godcev na diatonično harmoniko v ZDA.

S svojima polbratoma Frankom in Eddiem Simončičem je ustanovil skupino Hoyer trio, poimenovanem po hišnem imenu svoje mame, ki ga je prevzel tudi za svoje umetniško ime (Matt Hoyer). V skupini je Matija igral harmoniko, Frank bendžo, Eddie pa predvsem kitaro in občasno tudi kromatično harmoniko. Skupina se je kmalu uveljavila in postala zelo priljubljena. Igrali so na porokah in drugih zabavah Slovencev, pa tudi pripadnikov drugih slovanskih narodov. Glasbeno delovanje tria je usmerjal predvsem Matija, zanj je prirejal ljudsko glasbo, občasno pa jo je tudi sam skladal. S svojim načinom igranja in priljubljenostjo so neposredno ali posredno vplivali na skoraj vse glasbenike, ki so izvajali slovensko polka glasbo v ZDA.

Po letu 1936, ko sta se Frank in Eddie Simončič izselila iz Clevelanda in nista več mogla igrati v triu, sta z Matijo v Hoyer triu začela igrati njegov sin Teddy (kromatično harmoniko) in Frank Culovic (bendžo). Skupaj so igrali do začetka Matijeve boleznileta 1959, nato pa je družinsko glasbeno pot nadaljeval sin Teddy.

Matt Hoyer je s svojim triom – občasno pa tudi sam, v duetu ali v sodelovanju z drugimi izvajalci – posnel zelo veliko gramofonskih plošč. Posnetki so nastali med letoma 1924 in 1929 v Clevelandu, New Yorku in Chicagu, in to za vsa tri vodilna gramofonska podjetja v ZDA: Victor Talking Machine Co., Columbia Gramophone Co. in Okeh Records. Število posnetkov je za razmeroma kratko obdobje snemanja precej impresivno.

Prodaja plošč z glasbo priseljencev je bila za gramofonska podjetja v ZDA pomembna tržna priložnost. V ZDA je bilo namreč veliko priseljencev, predvsem iz Evrope, in glasbena industrija je v njih videla potencialne kupce plošč, zato je začela snemati t. i. *etnično glasbo* oziroma glasbo za *tuje govoreče* kupce. Zelo veliko tovrstnih plošč vsebuje posnetke popularnih in ljudskih pesmi ter značilnih ljudskih glasbil, saj so priseljenci z njihovo pomočjo želeli ohraniti spomine na domovino.

Slovenski priseljenci v ZDA so bili dobri kupci gramofonskih plošč, na katerih je bila posneta predvsem ljudska, a tudi druga priljubljena glasba. Pomemben delež tega gradiva predstavljajo posnetki Hoyer tria. Ker so slovenskim – tako kot drugim – priseljencem prodala veliko plošč, so večja gramofonska podjetja kataloge plošč objavljala tudi v slovenskem jeziku. Že površen pregled slovenskih posnetkov, nastalih v ZDA do začetka 2. svetovne vojne, pokaže, da je v tem obdobju na gramofonskih ploščah izšlo skoraj 600 posnetkov slovenske glasbe. Med njimi so predvsem različne priredbe ljudskih pesmi, poleg tega pa kar nekaj ljudskih plesnih viž, zaigranih na harmoniko ali v manjših inštrumentalnih zasedbah. Pomembno mesto med tem gradivom zavzemajo posnetki Hoyer tria.

Gramofonska podjetja so posnetkom, ki so bili namenjeni priseljencem v ZDA, za

lažjo prepoznavnost na tržišču pogosto dodelila posebne serije kataloških števil. Sprva so takšne serije predstavljali veliki bloki kataloških števil, ki so bili rezervirani za *tujejezične* posnetke, po letu 1920, ko se je število tovrstnih posnetkov zelo povečalo, pa so večja podjetja posamezne serije začela označevati s predponami in pripnami.

Tudi podjetje Victor, eno vodilnih gramofonskih podjetij v ZDA, ki je za naše izseljence izdajalo kataloge plošč s posnetki slovenskih izvajalcev v slovenskem jeziku, je za tovrstne posnetke uvedlo posebne kataloške oznake. V prvih letih delovanja sicer niso imeli posebnih kataloških števil, ampak so namesto njih uporabljali kar številke matric. Okoli leta 1912 so začeli uporabljati posamezne bloke kataloških števil, ki so bili dodeljeni tujim posnetkom (angl. *general ethnic*) in so si kronološko sledili v določenem vrstnem redu. Leta 1928 je podjetje Radio Corporation of America (RCA) prevzelo Victorja, vendar je obdržalo ime blagovne znamke (labelo) Victor. Naslednje leto je prenovilo sistem kataloških števil in uvedlo predpono »V«; vsaka etnična skupnost je dobila svoj blok števil, ki je označeval tudi velikost plošč. Slovencem so dodelili blok kataloških števil z začetkom pri V-23000 za 10-inčne plošče in pri V-73000 za 12-inčne plošče. Leta 1942 je podjetje RCA opustilo labelo Victor in jo nadomestilo z labelo RCA ter prenovilo celoten kataloški sistem. Pri večini objavljenih posnetkov, namenjenih priseljencem, so le ponatisnili gradivo iz nekdanjih serij »V« z novimi kataloškiimi številkami. Srbi, Hrvati in Slovenci so dobili blok števil z začetkom 25-3001, pri čemer so slovenske izdaje označene s številkami od 25-3046 do 25-3056.

Prvi posnetki Matta Hoyerja in njegovega tria na gramofonskih ploščah so bili narejeni 30. novembra 1924 v Clevelandu. Podjetje Victor je namreč konec leta 1924 posnelo nekaj znanih slovenskih izvajalcev, med njimi tudi štiri viže, ki jih je zaigral »Hoyer-jev instrumentalni tercet«. Dveh posnetkov niso objavili, dve polki, *Na poskok* in *Taniska polka*, pa sta na dvostranski plošči izšli spomladi 1925.

Očitno je ta plošča med poslušalci postala zelo priljubljena, saj je bilo prodanih več kot 2200 izvodov, kar je bilo za takratne razmere precej. Prodajni uspeh je skupini odprl vrata do nadaljnjih snemanj, kar so s pridom izkoristili in v nekaj letih posneli obsežen repertoar.

Matt Hoyer in njegov trio sta prenehala snemati leta 1929. Razlog je predvsem ta, da se niso hoteli vključiti v »združenje glasbenikov« (sindikato), ki je v začetku tridesetih let 20. stoletja postalo zelo aktivno. Čeprav je bilo članstvo v njem pogoj za snemanje plošč, Matt Hoyer ni želel postati njegov član. Poleg tega je borzni zlom jeseni 1929 sprožil veliko gospodarsko krizo, ki je občutno zmanjšala potrošnjo in produkcijo. To se je odražalo tudi v snemanju, proizvodnji in kupovanju gramofonskih plošč. Snemanje plošč je za Hoyer trio glede na število prodanih izvodov postalo predrago.

Gramofonska podjetja so se že zgodaj zavedala, da za prodajo gramofonov in plošč potrebujejo posnetke lokalne glasbe, ki je kupcem domača in s katero se lahko mnogi

identificirajo. Spoznali so, da morajo za razširitev tržišča posneti plošče v različnih jezikih in zajeti različne glasbene kulture. Najbolj celovito in sistematično so se oglaševanja in trženja ljudske glasbe lotila gramofonska podjetja v ZDA, saj so s tovrstnimi posnetki želela nagovoriti predvsem številne priseljence, v katerih so videla odlične kupce. Za gramofonsko industrijo pa je bila poleg prodaje plošč pomembna tudi prodaja predvajalnih aparatov – gramofonov. Te je bilo veliko lažje prodajati, če so kupci na njih lahko poslušali tudi njim domače, priljubljene in privlačne posnetke. Zato ni presenetljivo, da je bilo veliko slovenske glasbe posnete ravno v ZDA; izvajali so jo tako izseljenci sami kakor tudi gostujoči umetniki iz stare domovine. Plošče Hoyer tria zasledimo v skoraj vseh katalogih, ki so bili namenjeni slovenskim kupcem v ZDA. Poleg tega lahko njihove posnetke najdemo tudi v številnih časopisnih oglasih, ki so ponujali gramofonske plošče s slovensko vsebino.

Posnetki Matta Hoyerja in njegovega tria so bili pri poslušalcih očitno zelo priljubljeni, o čemer pričajo tudi številni ponatisi plošč. Na to nas že na prvi pogled opozorijo oblikovno različne nalepke (labele) kakor tudi preimenovanja gramofonskih podjetij in spremenjene kataloške številke na posnetkih Hoyer tria. Pri vseh ponatisih pa ostaja enaka številka matrice (čeprav je s plošče ni mogoče vedno razbrati), ki enoznačno določa posamezni posnetek in se pri različnih objavah ne spreminja.

Gramofonska podjetja so ocenila, da je glasba Hoyer tria dovolj zanimiva in privlačna tudi za izseljence drugih narodnosti. Zato je nekaj posnetkov Hoyer tria izšlo s prevodom naslova posnetka ali z drugačnim naslovom, saj so s tem želeli plošče približati tujim kupcem (npr. Čehom, Poljakom, Hrvatom, Litovcem, Skandinavcem, Italijanom, Mehičanom) in seveda razširiti prodajno tržišče. Ti posnetki imajo enake številke matric, a druge kataloške številke kot slovenski izvodi, saj so jih ponujali drugi ciljni publiki.

Veliko plošč Hoyer tria so ponatisnili tudi v Evropi, kar dokazuje tudi *Glavni katalog Columbie* iz leta 1932, ki ga je v Zagrebu natisnila Columbia Graphophone Jugoslavensko d. d. Iz žiga na katalogu je razvidno, da je bil nekdanji last prodajalne Tehnik v Ljubljani, ki jo je imel Josip Banjai. Plošče iz kataloga, med njimi tudi Hoyer tria, je bilo v Ljubljani torej dokaj preprosto dobiti. Natisnjene so bile v Londonu, saj je v katalogu posebej poudarjeno, da gre za »engleski import«. Zato so tudi kataloške številke plošč drugačne od tistih, izdanih pri ameriški Columbii, in ustrezajo oznakam angleškega podjetja Columbia. Če primerjamo oba seznama posnetkov, lahko ugotovimo, da so v *Glavnem katalogu Columbie* iz leta 1932, natisnjenem v Zagrebu, ponatisnjene skoraj vse viže, ki jih je Hoyer trio za podjetje Columbia posnel v ZDA.

Glasba Matta Hoyerja in njegovega tria je še danes zanimiva za poslušalce, saj njihove posnetke zasledimo med objavami na spletnem portalu YouTube, leta 2010 pa jih je založba JSP Records ponatisnila na zgoščenki.

Stari gramofonski posnetki imajo izjemno kulturno in dokumentarno vrednost, saj

mnoge štejejo med najstarejše zvočne zapise slovenske glasbe. Predvsem posnete plesne viže so neprecenljivo etnomuzikološko in etnokoreološko gradivo. Predstavljajo zagotovo najstarejše zvočne zapise slovenske instrumentalne ljudske glasbe. V Sloveniji so najstarejši terenski zapisi plesne ljudske instrumentalne glasbe namreč nastali šele po letu 1955, ko je Glasbenonarodopisni inštitut v Ljubljani dobil prvi magnetofon in z njim začel sistematično snemati na terenu.

Na gramofonskih ploščah Hoyer tria je veliko posnetkov viž slovenskih ljudskih plesov. Čeprav med posnetim gradivom prevladujejo polke in valčki, precej posnetih melodij (16 %) pripada značilnim ljudskim plesom. Prevladujoč delež polk in valčkov ne preseneča, saj gre za melodije, ki izhajajo iz evropskih tradicij in tako niso bile blizu le Slovincem, temveč širšemu krogu poslušalcev.

Glasbena dediščina, ki je zvočno dokumentirana na starih gramofonskih ploščah, nam je lahko v veliko pomoč pri interpretaciji ljudske plesne dediščine. V primeru gramofonskih plošč Hoyer tria, ki so nastale v 20. letih preteklega stoletja, najprej zaradi posnetkov glasbe, ki temelji na izročilu in je obogatena s popularno zvočnostjo ZDA tistega časa. A hkrati predstavljajo doslej najstarejše posnetke ljudskoplesnih viž Ribniške doline. Z njimi se odkrivata značaj in način izvedbe plesnih viž, saj jo izvajajo glasbeniki na vrhuncu moči, njihova izvedba pa se ujema z dejansko godčevsko prakso ob plesu.

Zibenšrit je bil od konca 19. stoletja do prve polovice 20. stoletja eden najbolj razširjenih slovenskih ljudskih plesov. Danes ga izvajajo le še folklorne skupine, je del učne snovi v šoli, sicer pa plesne oblike zibenšrita na plesnih zabavah današnjih prebivalcev Slovenije ne zasledimo več.

Zibenšrit je znan v precejšnjem delu Evrope. Slovensko ime je popačenka nemškega *Siebenschritt*, iz česar sklepamo, da se je ples razširil z nemškogovorečega ozemlja. Tudi v Ribnici in njeni okolici je bil ples dobro znan; plesali so ga na primer v Prigorici, Ribnici, Gorenji vasi, Žigmaricah, v Podklancu, Sušjah, pri Kračalih in tudi drugje.

Plesno vižo zibenšrit je Matt Hoyer posnel decembra 1926 v New Yorku za gramofonsko podjetje Columbia. Vižo je zaigral solistično na diatonično harmoniko, kar je razvidno tudi iz napisa na plošči, ki poudarja še, da gre za glasbo »za ples«. Ime viže je zapisano kot nenavadna izpeljanka iz nemškega jezika, »Sieben Šrit«. Plošča s to vižo je bila pozneje ponatisnjena v Londonu in tako namenjena predvsem slovenskemu tržišču. Iz nekaterih ohranjenih katalogov plošč lahko razberemo, da so slovenski trgovci v svojih prodajalnah domačim kupcem ponujali tudi to ploščo. Morda je naslov viže na labeli zato poslovenjen v Sedem korak, v oklepaju pa je dodan še izvirni naslov z natisa v ZDA.

Priljubljenost posnetka zibenšrita dokazuje vnovični ponatis, ki sodi v poznejše obdobje gramofonske industrije, ko so se na tržišču že uveljavile plošče novega formata in z drugačnim številom obratov na minuto (33 in 45 o/min). Zibenšrit je izšel na

dvostranski plošči s skupnim naslovom *Slovenian Old Time Dances* (Slovenski stari plesi), na kateri so bili poleg zibenšrita še viže mazulinke, starega šotiša in šušter polke. Na labeli je posebej omenjeno, da je gradivo ponatis izvirnih posnetkov, torej v preteklosti posnetega gradiva. Po nekaterih podatkih naj bi bila ta plošča izdana izključno za poučevanje slovenskega ljudskega plesa v ZDA in naj ne bi bila v redni prodaji. To potrjuje tudi labela, na kateri ni navedenega gramofonskega podjetja oziroma glasbene založbe, ki bi ploščo tržila, kar je redka izjema v gramofonski industriji.

Med priseljenci v ZDA se je oblikovala nova glasbena zvrst, ki je izhajala iz domačega izročila in se prepletla s popularnimi glasbenimi tokovi v novi domovini, t. i. polka glasba. Izraz ne zajema le melodij polk, ampak tudi valčke, sotiše, mazurke in druge plesne, temelječe na ljudskem izročilu. Čeprav so polka glasbo izvajali glasbeniki različnih narodnosti, so prav slovenski izvajalci veliko pripomogli k oblikovanju in širjenju te glasbene zvrsti.

Cleveland je kmalu postal središče polka glasbe, kjer se je razvil poseben »Cleveland Style«, imenovan tudi »Slovenian Style«. Polka glasbo je na vrh popularnosti popeljal Frankie Yankovic. Ta je proces amerikanizacije slovenske glasbe razvil v slog, ki ni bil privlačen le za druge etnične skupine, ampak za ljubitelje popularne glasbe nasploh. Izdal je dve plošči z milijonsko naklado, imenovali so ga »ameriški kralj polke«, leta 1986 pa je za svoje dosežke dobil tudi nagrado Grammy, ki so jo takrat prvič podelili za tovrstno glasbo.

Matt Hoyer s Hoyer triom sodi med tiste izvajalce, ki so začeli z novim slogom polka glasbe in dosegli izjemen uspeh. Harmoniki sta se pridružila bendžo in kitara, slovenski tradicionalni glasbi pa primesi jazza in druge popularne glasbe tistega časa v ZDA, kar je bila očitno zmagovita kombinacija. Njihovi nastopi in gramofonski posnetki niso bili le zelo priljubljeni, ampak so vplivali tudi na prihodnje generacije slovenskih izvajalcev »Cleveland Style« polka glasbe v ZDA. Za izjemen prispevek k razvoju slovenske polka glasbe je Matt Hoyer prejel nagrado za življenjsko delo, ki jo podeljuje National Cleveland-Style Polka Hall of Fame v Clevelandu. Matijo imajo mnogi za začetnika slovenske polka glasbe v ZDA in ga pogosto imenujejo kar pionir ali stari oče »Cleveland-Style Polka Music«.

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