

THINKING GLOBAL AND SOUNDING LOCAL: THE CASE OF  
KAJKAVIAN REPERTOIRE IN THE PRODUCTION OF EDISON BELL  
PENKALA IN THE 1920s AND 1930s

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*Abstract*

This paper presents initial findings in the research on the status of Kajkavian repertoire primarily in the production of Edison Bell Penkala. From its beginning in 1927, this Zagreb-based record company engaged local authors and performers. A significant part of this production consisted of repertoire in the Kajkavian dialect group of the Croatian language which, from the mid-nineteenth century, was an arena of debate on local versus ethno-national affiliations, related also to the issue of the standardization of language. Considering particularly the matter of locality which arose as a key con-

cept for interpreting the underpinnings of the record industry of the time, I aim to delineate the status of Kajkavian repertoire within the company's overall production, as well as its consequences for the formation of representative regional repertoire.

**Keywords:** record industry; localization; Edison Bell Penkala; shellac records; Kajkavian; Kajkavian song

**Ključne riječi:** diskografska industrija; lokalizacija; Edison Bell Penkala; šelak ploče; kajkavština; kajkavska popevka

*About the local and beyond: contextualizing the early record industry in Croatia*<sup>1</sup>

This paper is an outcome of the first stage of research on the status of Kajkavian repertoire in the early record industry in Croatia, primarily in the production

<sup>1</sup> This research is part of the project »The record industry in Croatia from 1927 to the end of the 1950s«, which started in 2020 and is fully supported by the Croatian Science Foundation (project IP-2019-04-4175). For more information on the project, see <<https://www.ief.hr/en/research/projects/project-diskograf/>>.

of the Edison Bell Penkala record company active from 1927 until 1938.<sup>2</sup> Within the given framework, I aim to address the predicament of detecting and delineating Kajkavian in the great bulk of recorded repertoire and present some of the preliminary findings on the relevant examples. In addition to the overall insight into the Kajkavian production of the three companies, I trace its profile specifically focusing on the EBP production and consider the matter of locality, which arose as a key concept for interpreting the underpinnings of the record industry of the time. Namely, as opposed to the current omnipresent globality as a principal feature of the record and music industry as a whole, it appears that its formative period was marked by the implementation of localization strategies at multiple levels: besides the localization of the record industry itself, the localization of the recording product was likewise present. This was particularly the case in the EBP business model, the first gramophone and record company in the region with its own production and distribution system.

As regards the music repertoire in general, localization firstly implied reaching for the local music performed by local musicians, secondly standard international repertoire performed by local musicians, and finally adaptations of, mostly, popular music.<sup>3</sup> A significant part of the local repertoire comprises the one in the Kajkavian dialect, parts of which are still often performed today and figure as representative for the region, hence I focus on its status within the entire production of the EBP and the two subsequent record companies. A stronghold for such a research objective is generated by the fact that Kajkavian was since the mid-nineteenth century an arena of debate regarding local and regional versus ethn-national affiliations, related also to the issue of the standardization of language. Relying on that, one of the questions arising is how the EBP, as the first Croatian and Yugoslav record company, negotiate the local/regional and linguistic differences of that time. As it operated in Zagreb, which is located in the Kajkavian region, the question is whether this had any effect not only on the profiling of Kajkavian repertoire as a closed whole but also on its further standardization. One possible path in answering these questions is detecting the processes operating in the background of the asserted localization strategies while considering the general market-driven orientation of the record industry which I will, due to the lack of available data, only marginally touch upon in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> As a branch of the English company Edison Bell and in alliance with the Zagreb pencil factory Penkala, it was founded as Edison Bell Penkala in Zagreb in 1926, and less than a year later started recording and releasing gramophone records (cf. Veljko LIPOVŠČAK: *Povijest proizvodnje gramofonskih ploča u Hrvatskoj*, in: Zvonko Benčić (ed.): *Povijest i filozofija tehnike: 8. Simpozij PIFT 2019.*, Zagreb: Kiklos – Krug knjige, 2019, 752). In the remainder of this paper I use the abbreviation EBP.

<sup>3</sup> The case of adaptations, a standard in musical practice of the time, is presented in more detail in this issue by the project associate Jelka Vukobratović.

### *On constructing the local by the means of a dialect*

Before presenting the matter in more detail, I shall indicate potential disparities between the current understanding of Kajkavian as opposed to the one(s) in the observed period. Both historical and socio-political circumstances over several centuries shaped the linguistic divisions into dialects. As a dialect group of the Croatian language, Kajkavian is nowadays one of the three main dialect groups spoken in Croatia, mostly in the Northwestern part of the country and in Gorski kotar, at the border with Slovenia and the Slovenian language in the west.<sup>4</sup> To the east and southeast of the Kajkavian dialect lies the Štokavian, and to the south of it the Čakavian dialect group.<sup>5</sup> In the past, the western Proto-South-Slavic idiom, from which today's Kajkavian developed, occupied a much larger territory, which is also evident in the Kajkavian distribution before migrations outlined at the beginning of the twentieth century by philologist Milan Rešetar.<sup>6</sup>

According to linguist Mijo Lončarić, the first writings in Kajkavian dialect date back to the mid-nineteenth century, the period of the beginning of the scholarly approach to the study of Croatian dialects. With a stronghold in the Illyrian movement, Croats at that time strove to adopt a single literary language: after the Kajkavian dialect was abandoned, the one based on Štokavian was embraced.<sup>7</sup> Although the Kajkavian remained in use in everyday speech and folk literature, including folk songs, it began – through political and cultural circumstances – to adopt Štokavian features.<sup>8</sup> Due to the internal dialectal division, Kajkavian dialectal differentiation is significant, specifically in areas bordering other dialect groups where the distinction is yet more blurred. Dialectal difficulties thus arise from the fact that the group of Kajkavian dialects, just like other such entities, is not a unique linguistic idiom but a specific and complex structure, a diasystem consisting of numerous subdialects.<sup>9</sup> This is only one of the reasons why, in the context of early record industry research, even their preliminary detection becomes rather

<sup>4</sup> Emphasizing how difficult it is to determine the boundaries, Aleksandar Belić, in the 1929 National Encyclopedia of Serbian-Croatian-Slovene, states that Kajkavian is spoken north of the Kupa in three counties: Varaždin, Zagreb and partly in Križevci-Bjelovar; then in Međumurje, in parts of the Hungarian counties of Salatski, Šomotski and Križevski, and less in Western Hungary and Slovakia. It is also found south of the Kupa, in the northern part of the Croatian Littoral and in Istria. Aleksandar BELIĆ: Narodna enciklopedija srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačka/Kajkavski dijalekt, <[https://hr.wikisource.org/wiki/Narodna\\_enciklopedija\\_srpsko-hrvatsko-slovena%C4%8Dka/Kajkavski\\_dijalekt](https://hr.wikisource.org/wiki/Narodna_enciklopedija_srpsko-hrvatsko-slovena%C4%8Dka/Kajkavski_dijalekt)> (access 17 December 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Anita CELINIĆ: Kajkavsko narječje / Kajkavian, *Hrvatski dijalektološki zbornik*, 24 (2020), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Mijo LONČARIĆ: *Kajkaviana & Alia. Ogledi o kajkavskim i drugim hrvatskim govorima*, Čakovec: Zrinski – Institut za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje, 2005, 108.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Mijo LONČARIĆ: *Kajkaviana & Alia. Ogledi o kajkavskim i drugim hrvatskim govorima*, 97.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Stjepan IVŠIĆ: Jezik Hrvata kajkavaca. O stogodišnjici našega novoga pravopisa i književnog jezika, *Ljetopis JAZU*, 48 (1936), 55.

<sup>9</sup> M. LONČARIĆ: *Kajkaviana & Alia. Ogledi o kajkavskim i drugim hrvatskim govorima*, 131.

challenging. In the best-case scenario, recordings available for listening clearly indicate their dialectal affiliation. Unfortunately, in a large number of cases they are unavailable or of poor quality, so the second step considers the linguistic and/or locational determinants often indicated in the secondary data, for example sheet music or sales catalogues. More often, the detection process is reduced to the title contained on the recording item label or in the sales catalogue (which can be surprisingly misleading),<sup>10</sup> and to the identification of characteristic artists. More detailed insights into the addressed aspects, which I present in the following sections, are based on the primary and secondary sources studied so far by the associates within the project group: recordings (mostly digitized versions available online) and records in terms of physical objects, including recording item labels, then sales catalogues, relevant literature, sheet music, daily press and specialized magazines kept in public and private collections in Croatia and abroad.<sup>11</sup>

### *Kajkavian on record: an insight into Zagreb-based shellac record production*

The story of Kajkavian word and music recorded on shellac by domestic companies begins right after the EBP started producing gramophone records in Zagreb.<sup>12</sup> Among the first Kajkavian releases, particularly interesting and highlighted in EBP's sales catalogues is the record containing the Christmas carol »Narodil nam se kralj nebeski« and the sacred song »Tebe Boga hvalimo«. It was broadcast and recorded live in an enviable technological undertaking in Zagreb Cathedral on 4 December 1927,<sup>13</sup> and released for sale just before Christmas as the first live recording in continental Europe (Z-1229).<sup>14</sup> I am singling it out at the beginning of my discussion because »Narodil nam se kralj nebeski«, as Lončarić argues, dates

<sup>10</sup> »Recording item label« refers to information contained on the record, prevailing on the sticker.

<sup>11</sup> In the latter category, these are primarily advertisements in *Svijet*, *Novosti*, *Kulisa*, and *Jutarnji list*.

<sup>12</sup> Although various companies have recorded commercial records in Croatia before the EBP, starting from the beginning of the twentieth century, it is worth mentioning the field or non-commercial cylinder and disc recordings of Kajkavian from the same period kept in the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv. Its digitised versions were published in 2009 in a collaboration between the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, in the first of the two series of material recorded on the territory of today's Croatia or among Croats living outside Croatia. In addition to their cultural-historical significance, they are also valuable in terms of dialectology. Of relevance for this specific research are the very first recordings made by Milan Rešetar in 1901 during his investigation of dialect boundaries in northern Croatia and in Molise together with the sizeable collection of Josip Široki encompassing items of all South Slavic music and various dialects. For more information on the recorded material, see <<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/phonogrammarchiv/publications/audio-and-video-publications/the-complete-historical-collections-1899-1950>> (access 17 December 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Zvonko BENČIĆ – Siniša FAJT – Branko HANŽEK: The First Remote Recording of Gramophone Records in Continental Europe (Zagreb, 1927) for HISTELCON 15, *History of High-Technologies and their Socio-Cultural Contexts Conference (HISTELCON), 2015 ICOHTEC/IEEE International*, Tel-Aviv: IEEE, 2015, 1-13.

<sup>14</sup> In the whole of this paper I indicate the sales number of each record.

back to the thirteenth century and is one of the oldest Kajkavian songs which is continually performed, recorded and published up until today, when it is still one of the most prominent religious songs in the Kajkavian region.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it is the most frequently recorded and published Kajkavian song on shellac records as stated by Mirnik et al.<sup>16</sup> Although our online database which is developing in parallel with the project is regularly updated, we are still unable to confirm this claim.<sup>17</sup> It is, however, evident that both EBP (Z-1229, Z-1230) and Elektroton (E-1002a) recorded it, the same not being the case with Jugoton, which is understandable if we take into account the complex relations between the politics and religious content of that time. The prominence of the song is further attested by foreign record companies' releases, such as Parlophon (B-68068) and Columbia (D-8059).<sup>18</sup>

As evidenced by just a minor example, the gathered data on record production and distribution of three Zagreb-based record companies – as well as on the share of Kajkavian in the overall repertoire – are far from unambiguous and complete. However, it is apparent that Kajkavian was represented on the records throughout the whole period encompassed by this project. Considering their proactivity in such a repertoire, EBP seems to be at the forefront, with Elektroton at the other end and Jugoton in the middle. Presumably, one of the reasons is that the Kajkavian – characteristic of northwestern Croatia in which Zagreb as capital is located – had a specific status in the politically intricate interwar period: besides being an expression of the local and regional, it was a distinct marker of national character and identity. Together with the previously stated, this demonstrates the importance of localization strategies as well as the role of the record industry in the formation of repertoire standards. Due to limited space, but also the most comprehensive insights into the EBP's activity, I shall focus in the subsequent sections on the period covered by its operation.

### *Kajkavian on Edison Bell Penkala releases: foundation for further standardization of the recorded repertoire?*

Initially, EBP produced gramophone records under license from individual English companies, and soon afterwards, in 1927, began recording domestic artists and repertoire in the Croatian language. The selection of artists and repertoire for

<sup>15</sup> M. LONČARIĆ: *Kajkaviana & Alia. Ogledi o kajkavskim i drugim hrvatskim govorima*, 120.

<sup>16</sup> Ivan MIRNIK – Eduard ČAPKA – Velimir KRAKER – Veljko LIPOVŠČAK – Branko POLIĆ: *Zvučni zapisi kajkavske riječi i pjesme na tvrdim gramofonskim pločama*, in: Alojz Jembrih (ed.): *Kajkaviana croatica: Hrvatska kajkavska riječ*, Zagreb: Družba Braća hrvatskoga zmaja – Muzej za umjetnost i obrt; Donja Stubica: *Kajkaviana*, 1996, 493-494.

<sup>17</sup> *Croatian e-discography* database is available at <<https://repozitorij.dief.eu/a/?pc=i&id=108929>>.

<sup>18</sup> Digitized recordings are available at <<https://digitalna.nsk.hr/pb/?object=list&filter=14016&mrf%5B10197%5D%5B549207%5D=a&grid=y&ps=40>> (access 17 December 2021).

recording was, it appears, largely influenced by their perception and acceptance in the local setting. According to current findings, there were approximately forty records with Kajkavian material in the EBP production, with an almost equal ratio among music and theatrical speech content, both prominent categories in the record production of the time. A limited number of these recordings is available for listening, therefore a thorough analysis is not always possible and some of the presumptions are so far based solely on the already addressed sources, in particular recording item labels, catalogues, and scarce literature. I will start my discussion with the first-mentioned category: music.

Assessing the musical repertoire according to its linguistic or locational features expectedly reveals that it consists almost entirely of vocal or vocal-instrumental music with lyrics indicating its dialectal affiliation, and to a much lesser degree instrumental music with a suggestive title and/or musical features.<sup>19</sup> The most represented are folk songs from various parts of Kajkavian Croatia, mostly Hrvatsko zagorje, followed by the military-themed compositions, a few parodies and couplets. These were performed in various combinations of a few interpreting bodies: vocal soloists, singing societies and instrumental ensembles (in most cases tamburitza and military ensembles). Both local artists and those originating from regions other than Kajkavian were engaged and, even though not much is known about their working conditions, it is apparent that the ones recorded were largely educated singers and actors who were employed in the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb. They additionally performed in cabaret shows, before the last screening in the cinema as well as on other occasions, and from the second half of the 1930s – thanks to the agreement of the Theatre with the radio station – on Radio Zagreb.<sup>20</sup> Clearly, they were not focused on a single type of repertoire. Given that the majority of musicians had experience primarily in performing classical music, it is to be expected that both aesthetics and arrangements of music belonging to other domains often followed its rules.<sup>21</sup> This is all the more significant if we take into account that the recorded Kajkavian musical repertoire mostly consisted of compositions that can, despite their folk origin, be attributed to the domain of popular music, to a much lesser extent traditional or folk music, and lastly classical music which is almost insignificant in this group.

In the addressed spectrum, some compositions are particularly interesting: despite being newly composed, they are categorized as folk music on recording

<sup>19</sup> For example, »Zagorje March«, since Hrvatsko zagorje is a region in which Kajkavian is spoken (SZ-1369).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Igor MRDULJAŠ: *Zagrebački kabaret: slika jednog rubnog kazališta*, Zagreb: Znanje, 1984, 108-109.

<sup>21</sup> Drago KUNEJ: Intertwinement of Croatian and Slovenian Musical Heritage on the Oldest Gramophone Records, *Narodna umjetnost*, 51 (2014) 1, 148.

item labels and in sales catalogues.<sup>22</sup> Here I am particularly referring to the examples of a locally specific genre formed at the time, nowadays known as Kajkavian song (*kajkavska popevka*). The observed output contains two compositions regarded as such: »Vu plavem trnaci« and »Peharček moj«. They were both written and composed by Đuro Prejac,<sup>23</sup> a versatile artist who started his career as an actor and finished it as a composer. In the meantime, he worked as the manager in the Croatian National Theatre in Osijek, and as a director at the theatre in Zagreb. In addition to these positions, he was active as a teacher, singer, choirmaster, librettist, and writer. Somewhat neglected, but significant in this context, is the fact that Prejac recorded various solo scenes, couplets, Croatian and Slovenian songs for foreign companies at the beginning of the twentieth century,<sup>24</sup> as evidenced by the Drucker Sokol Record catalogue from 1910 (43-44).<sup>25</sup> In EBP releases he was not so much represented as a performer but as a composer. This coincided with the time of his recognition as one of the main representatives of light musical theatre, with musical-dramatic productions occupying a central position in his opus.<sup>26</sup> Regardless, two previously mentioned songs recorded for EBP remained not only the main identifiers of his work, but also of Kajkavian song as a genre. It would be uninformed to claim that it was Prejac who shaped the poetics of Kajkavian song in general, but it is justified to consider him its paramount representative. Therefore, I will examine his two Kajkavian songs in more detail below.

The Kajkavian songs »Vu plavem trnaci« and »Peharček moj« were released by EBP on the same record in 1931 (Z-2038). While this was the only EBP and shellac release in general for the latter song,<sup>27</sup> the oldest known record release of »Vu plavem trnaci« dates to two years earlier when, presumably, the same matrix later used was created (Z-1443, matrix No. Z 784). Significantly, this song was also included in the production of all relevant record companies active in the region: Odeon (OH-3), Elektroton (E-489), His Master's Voice (AM 1779), and Jugoton (J-6046b, C-6294b). Since both songs' digitized versions are available for listening online, I engaged in their musical analysis to single out some of the specifics of the

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, EBP catalogue from 1931, 19 (available at <[https://digitalna.nb.rs/wb/NBS/Zvucni\\_zapisi/Katalozi\\_gramofonskih\\_ploca/VC\\_431\\_1931#page/0/mode/1up](https://digitalna.nb.rs/wb/NBS/Zvucni_zapisi/Katalozi_gramofonskih_ploca/VC_431_1931#page/0/mode/1up)>), but also the array of others (available at <<https://www.ief.hr/en/research/projects/project-diskograf/selected-material/>>).

<sup>23</sup> Đuro Prejac (1870-1936) was born in Desinić near Pregrada, in the Hrvatsko zagorje region. He studied singing with the Croatian composer, conductor, and pedagogue Ivan Zajc, and graduated from the State Actors School in Zagreb where he spent most of his life and career. See \*\*\*: Prejac, Gjuro, *Hrvatska enciklopedija online edition*, <<https://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=50112>> (access 13 January 2022).

<sup>24</sup> Gramophone Co. certainly, according to Drago KUNEJ: Leto 1908 – začetak diskografije slovenske glasbe, *Traditiones*, 43 (2014) 2, 70.

<sup>25</sup> Drucker Sokol Record, owned by Mavro Drucker, was a music store which sold gramophones and gramophone records.

<sup>26</sup> Andrija TOMAŠEK: *Vu plavem trnaci. Opera artificionsa Gjuro Prejca*, Pregrada: Matis, 2006, 27.

<sup>27</sup> It was reissued by the Jugoton's successor Croatia Records in 1993 (LP-6 2042566).

genre in question.<sup>28</sup> In addition to recordings, I consulted the composer's manuscripts kept in his hometown.<sup>29</sup>

»Vu plavem trnaci« was, most likely, composed in 1916.<sup>30</sup> There are two preserved manuscripts, both composed as a strophic song for baritone and piano with minor dissimilarities in lyrics. The initial G major modulates into the close tonalities of E minor and B major, while the musical phrases are of regular form (usually eight bars in the form of a sentence or period). Prejac achieves thematic unity with a dactyl rhythm supported by a clear piano accompaniment which betrays the possible influence of German composers of the time. The recording, however, brings some disparities in relation to the original score. It sounds in B-flat major (which could be a result of adjustments to the ensemble, as well as acoustical and technical reasons), and the tenor Milan Šepec is accompanied by the rather small instrumental ensemble in which, at times, the piano and violin are especially distinct. It is not known whether this accompaniment for a smaller ensemble was written by Prejac himself, but it is clear that it is somewhat simpler than in the piano version. Milan Šepec was a prominent Zagreb Opera singer which is evident in his vocal technique when singing Prejac's lyrics about the homeland and its beauties, but also the difficult social position of the peasants which gives the whole song a nostalgic character. His expressiveness particularly comes to the fore in the last period where he makes a significant *ritardando*, all the more in the second strophe which results in the orchestra trying to catch up with him. Likewise, »Peharček moj« was composed for baritone and piano, most likely in 1922 or 1923, yet there is also a manuscript version for instrumental ensemble and choir which Prejac later included in his operetta »Miss Eva«. <sup>31</sup> The song is composed in B-flat major and in a more complex form than the previous one; several thematic blocks are clearly separated by changes in tempo and tonality, but achieve thematic unity. In his lyrics, Prejac honours the Dionysian element of living by celebrating togetherness, tradition, and patriotism joined with local heroes and language, once again coloured by nostalgia. In the recording in question, the song is interpreted by the lesser-known singer Milan Verin and Zagreb Opera's small choir and orchestra. Verin's clear diction and affective interpretation nuanced in each section emphasize even more the close connection between music and lyrics, as is the case in the previous song.

<sup>28</sup> They are available at <<http://mz.nsk.hr/zbirka78/vu-plavem-trnaci-gjuro-prejac/>> and <<http://mz.nsk.hr/zbirka78/peharcek-moj-gjuro-prejac/>> (access 17 December 2021).

<sup>29</sup> I thank the chief of Desinić municipality, Zvonko Škreblin, for providing access to the materials which are part of the Andrija Tomašek's bequest. This Croatian musicologist, music critic and writer was, amongst others, dedicated to documenting life of Đuro Prejac.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. A. TOMAŠEK: *Vu plavem trnaci. Opera artificionsa Gjuro Prejca*, 94.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. A. TOMAŠEK: *Vu plavem trnaci. Opera artificionsa Gjuro Prejca*, 93.



As follows from the above, both compositions could be interpreted within the framework of the *Lied* on account of certain features. For example, melodies in the top part, with carefully declaimed words in well-articulated phrases, are wrought in the often chordal texture, further underlined by the implementation of *bel canto* singing with the accompaniment of piano or smaller instrumental ensemble. On the other hand, a combination of formal framework with the Kajkavian dialect is close to today's understanding of the distinct category of Kajkavian song. Despite the difficulty of unambiguously defining and singling out specific features present in each of these songs, it can – even in a larger sample than the one presented – be argued that they show a certain stylistic consistency in instrumentation, thus creating a recognizable sound that accompanies Kajkavian lyrics, which is in turn achieved by shaping the music in accordance with the accent of language. This, in a way, demonstrates how these songs foster synthesis, stylistic borrowing, and localization – usage of a dialect additionally strengthened by a locally specific thematic largely imbued with topographic motifs.

Consequently, it seems legitimate to presume that Kajkavian song was corresponding to the discographic imperative inasmuch that it combined some of the widely present musical forms (such as strophic or even through-composed) with local particularities in terms of language, instrumentation, and musicians, which was certainly even better demonstrated by its development in the later periods. To this repertoire's excellent reception testify songs that have been continuously published, recorded and performed until today, as for instance the already mentioned »Vu plavem trnaci« and »Peharček moj«, together with »Pozdrav Zagorju« by the same author, and »Fala«, »Kaj«, and »Popevke sem slagal« by the poet Dragutin Domjanić and composer Vlaho Paljetak.<sup>32</sup> This is additionally evidenced by the frequent radio broadcasts, as well as the publication of sheet music, an important part of the music industry at the time.<sup>33</sup> For instance, the bookstore St. Kugli had already in 1922 published »Vu plavem trnaci«, while »Peharček moj« was published by Edition Šidak in 1933.<sup>34</sup> The fact that the former was published before it was released on record supports the argument that EBP did not take much risk when choosing the repertoire. Ultimately, the persistence these songs maintain to this day undoubtedly speaks to the issue of local market demand but also ascertains the fact that the formative period of the Kajkavian repertoire dates back to the very beginning of the Croatian record industry.

<sup>32</sup> In the case of »Vu plavem trnaci«, this is also evidenced by articles in weekly magazines, as for example Vjekoslav MUTAK: Najpopularnija zagorska popievka, *Zagorski list*, 2 (1935), 22.

<sup>33</sup> Radio Zagreb, founded in 1926, made the records more accessible through their broadcasts. Information on these, together with sales catalogues, daily and weekly press, provide significant sources on the early history of the record industry and are thus invaluable for consideration within the current scholarly project.

<sup>34</sup> A. TOMAŠEK: *Vu plavem trnaci. Opera artificiosa Gjura Prejca*, 94.

In addition to this, I argue that, by using the Kajkavian, composing texts about everyday life and environment of Kajkavians as well as assimilating the hybrid musical features, the specific form of local, regional, and even national identity was communicated. The process of localization itself, however, goes narrower and deeper than the national one and can be realized at the local as well as regional level.<sup>35</sup> Besides the already discussed practices, the most prominent in this sense was the use of local language in the popular music adaptations, a general trend at the time. Still, they were scarcely present in the recorded Kajkavian repertoire and only two examples in the EBP production can be found: parodies on the songs »Ramona« (SZ-1568) and »Heidelberg« (SZ-1568) sung by Branko Vojvodić, known precisely for his parody performances in cabaret where this was an established practice.<sup>36</sup> These were second-hand adaptations of the ones sung in Štokavian by Vlaho Paljetak.<sup>37</sup>

This pertains considerably to the previously indicated second category in the EBP production: theatrical speech programmes in which parody and humour are among several common denominators. Its strong representation, approximately half of the total Kajkavian repertoire in the EBP production, is symptomatic if we take into account that it is almost non-existent in the production of the succeeding record companies, thus showing an inseparable connection with cabaret theatre. The most numerous are recordings of humorous cabaret couplets or recited verses in Kajkavian performed by Zagreb comedians. Significantly, Kajkavian is often attributed to the mischievous characters depicting their dramatic inferiority to the highly respectable ones in society who speak Štokavian. The question is why was the function of the comedigraphic ascribed to Kajkavian, and its semantic dramatic means devalued?<sup>38</sup> Strong arguments addressing it can be found in the writings of literary theorists. For instance, as Ivanjek explains, the comic effect is easier to achieve in some languages and many authors believe Kajkavian is well suited to humour. It contains a specific humoristic aspect difficult to translate into other languages and those who produce such humour show certain typical char-

<sup>35</sup> For more comprehensive deliberation on the notions of local, regional and national in interwar Croatia, especially in relation to popular music, see Kristina LUČIĆ ANDRIJANIĆ: *Kozmopolitizam, regionalizam i popularna glazba u Hrvatskoj 1918.-1941.*, Master's thesis, Academy of Music, University of Zagreb, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. I. MRDULJAŠ: *Zagrebački kabaret: slika jednog rubnog kazališta*, 125. Vojvodić also recorded for EBP folk songs from Zagorje »Zbogom sele« and »V Krapini« (SZ-1365).

<sup>37</sup> The adaptation of »Ramona«, originally composed by Mabel Wayne, was first released by EBP in the interpretation of Vlaho Paljetak and Schild-Vlahović salon orchestra (SZ-1357). The same was with the original »Ich hab' mein Herz in Heidelberg verloren« by Fred Raymond which EBP released as »U Heidelbergu srce ja izgubih« (SZ-1302).

<sup>38</sup> Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, humorous articles in Kajkavian were present in plenty of magazines. This was notably the case for the time of the Independent State of Croatia when the influence of Kajkavian was strengthening. Since their representation was directly related to the political and ideological circumstances, they were considerably less represented after World War II.

acteristics.<sup>39</sup> To explain why Kajkavian is humorous, Vončina points to linguistic features, thereby the most efficient being the ones of literary Kajkavian.<sup>40</sup> Linguistic, as well as stylistic features, are likewise used to distinguish the type of character through the most common approach of naming it by his/her occupation, as well as introducing certain linguistic characteristics into his/her speech. Adding to that, Skok argues that the inclusion of dialectal features is a path to livelier stage language. Kajkavian thus appears in dramatic creativity in two forms: as a dialectal infiltrate into the dominant matrix standard, and as an independent language.<sup>41</sup> Both are present in the recorded material, but mostly in the first form whereas in addition to sociolinguistic factors, the psychological ones – whereby any deviation from the norm is identified with humour – also contribute to the comic potential. Furthermore, a great deal of humour is attained by the deliberate production of ambiguous contexts which offers the possibility of various interpretations, one of them usually being vulgar.<sup>42</sup>

These are all significant factors contributing to specific attitudes towards particular dialects we foster until today, which is in the observed data endorsed by the recorded theatrical speech, but also occasionally musical repertoire. In this sense, a connection with cabaret, a form of folk theatre active in the 1920s and 1930s, is evident. As many artists were active in various folk and national theatres, the influences of different dramatic and musical areas intertwined, while at the same time, with the growth of the mass media, they were exposed to diverse domestic and foreign recordings. Such exposure led to changes in (recorded) repertoire, best demonstrated in operetta and cabaret forms which repose on humour, regional elements, and local dialects while utilizing globally present patterns.<sup>43</sup> Composers who used these elements were mostly natives of the area, as Đuro Prejac, or worked in the area, as Nikola Toth, but mostly these were the composers of the Zagreb circle, some of whom were not born there – as already mentioned, Vlaho Paljetak and Ivo Tijardović. As Mrduljaš reveals, some of the Kajkavian songs by Đuro Prejac started their lives precisely on the cabaret stage.<sup>44</sup> The relationship between the presence of humour and the Kajkavian legacy of cabaret remains a the subject for further research.

<sup>39</sup> Mirko IVANJEK: Duhovitost kajkavske riječi, in: Alojz Jembrih (ed.): *Kajkaviana croatica: Hrvatska kajkavska riječ*, Zagreb: Družba Braća hrvatskoga zmaja – Muzej za umjetnost i obrt; Donja Stubica: Kajkaviana, 388.

<sup>40</sup> Josip VONČINA: Jezični izraz kajkavske komediografije, *Dani Hvarškoga kazališta*, 5 (1978) 1, 418.

<sup>41</sup> Joža SKOK: Hrvatsko kajkavsko pjesništvo 20. stoljeća, in: Alojz Jembrih (ed.): *Kajkaviana croatica: Hrvatska kajkavska riječ*, Zagreb: Družba Braća hrvatskoga zmaja – Muzej za umjetnost i obrt; Donja Stubica: Kajkaviana, 1996, 410.

<sup>42</sup> This is evidenced by numerous recordings in EBP production with the remark »only for intimate circles«.

<sup>43</sup> Ivo Tijardović's operetta »Jurek i Štefek« can serve as an example.

<sup>44</sup> I. MRDULJAŠ: *Zagrebački kabaret: slika jednog rubnog kazališta*, 92.

*In conclusion: Pondering on the (un)gathered data*

In the broadest sense, it can be concluded that the establishment of the domestic record industry brought about a new era of distinct focus on local artists and repertoire, as well as the local market. Some of the outlined localization strategies – concerning most of all the recording context and the way genres adapted – confirm their prominence in the business management of EBP. Although at first they do not seem particularly significant in relation to the rest of the repertoire, Kajkavian recordings demonstrate that they were in demand in the local market from the early days. This further ascertains the fact that the formative period of Kajkavian repertoire dates back to the beginning of the record business in Croatia, but also indicates the crucial role it played in the standardization of this repertoire. While some of the locally-conditioned specificities were outlined in the example of Kajkavian song, an analysis focused on questioning the uniformity of the repertoire and its transformations through various recordings and performances would reveal what was considered interpretive and stylistic excellence, and perhaps to what extent the repertoire itself reflected the regional and linguistic heterogeneity of the time. As indicated, many points raised in this paper require further research with more comprehensive primary data on the formative period of the record industry. Needless to say, their elaboration goes far beyond the scope of this paper, but I believe it was, before anything else, of major importance to sketch some of the processes and phenomena weaved into the localization strategies of the early record industry in Croatia.

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### Sažetak

#### MISLITI GLOBALNO I ZVUČATI LOKALNO: SLUČAJ KAJKAVSKOG REPERTOARA U PRODUKCIJI EDISON BELL PENKALE 1920-IH I 1930-IH

Ovaj rad donosi početne nalaze istraživanja o statusu kajkavskog repertoara prije svega u produkciji Edison Bell Penkale, jugoslavenske diskografske kuće koja je djelovala u Zagrebu od 1927. do potkraj 1930-ih i koja označava početak domaće diskografske industrije u Hrvatskoj. U zadanim okvirima rad prikazuje problematiku detektiranja kajkavskog udjela u velikom obimu snimljenog repertoara te u tom smislu donosi preliminarne zaključke na relevantnim primjerima. Iako su prikupljeni podatci o proizvodnji i distribuciji ploča triju istraživanih diskografskih kuća – kao i o udjelu kajkavštine u ukupnom repertoaru – daleko od jednoznačnih i potpunih, vidljivo je da je kajkavština na pločama bila zastupljena u cijelom razdoblju koje se obuhvatilo ovim projektom. Ipak, uzimajući u obzir obim aktivnosti u takvom repertoaru, čini se da je prednjačio EBP. U radu se stoga nastoji pratiti diskografsko profiliranje kajkavskog repertoara u produkciji te kuće razmatranjem pitanja lokalnosti koje se pokazalo relevantnim okvirom za tumačenje glavnih uporišta onodobne diskografske industrije. Za razliku od globalizacije kao noseće značajke današnje diskografske i glazbene industrije, čini se da je njezino formativno razdoblje obilježila implementacija strategija lokalizacije na više razina: osim lokalizacije na razini same diskografske indu-

strije prisutna je i lokalizacija diskografskog proizvoda. One se osobito očituju u poslovnom modelu EBP-a, koji je od samih početaka pristupio snimanju domaćih autora i izvođača. Značajan dio te produkcije zauzima repertoar na kajkavskom podijeljen u dvije krovne kategorije: glazbu i govor. Osim uvida u status dotičnog repertora u cjelokupnoj produkciji tvrtke, u radu se ocrtavaju i njegove reperkusije u formiranju reprezentativnih regionalnih primjera, poput kajkavske popevke kao lokalno specifičnog žanra.