

MUSIC FROM NEW ORLEANS AND WARSAW Records from the Harry Orvomaa Collection

The record industry was born in the 1890s. For almost half a century, the 78 rpm shellac record was the principal format of recorded music. By the end of the shellac era in the mid-1950s, the industry had issued almost a million titles, featuring many different categories of music. Commercially published recordings can be said to constitute the world's greatest music archive, although it is a "virtual" archive, as many of them cannot be found in any public collection (Gronow 2014). During the past decades, scholars have increasingly begun using commercial recordings as sources for musicological and ethnomusicological research (Philip 2004; Yampolsky 2014).

The rapid expansion of the record industry at the beginning of the 20th century was made possible by of the industry's ability to adapt its products to many different markets. Record companies soon learned how to find the artists and repertoire which would be most successful in each market, and consequently researchers have been able to use recordings as documents of musical traditions at specific historical periods. Originally, only a small part of the recorded repertoire was marketed across national borders. (Gronow & Englund 2006.)

However, 78 rpm records were industrial products which were manufactured in large numbers. Once a record had been published, copies could be distributed almost anywhere. Recorded music made it easy for expatriates and immigrants

to stay in touch with the music of their homelands. Recorded music also offered curious individuals the opportunity to become familiar with new types of music. Suvi Raj Grubb (1917–1999) was trained in Madras, India as a broadcasting technician and became familiar with Western classical music only through the medium of recordings. He recounts in his memoirs how he moved to England and became a successful producer of classical music at EMI Records on the strength of his knowledge of the classical repertoire (Grubb 1986). The Finnish composer Toivo Kärki claimed that hearing a Louis Armstrong record in a café in 1928 made him decide on his career (Niiniluoto 1982: 37). Other musicians have presented similar accounts. The role of recorded music should thus also be studied from the viewpoint of the listeners. What records do people actually own, how do they use them, how have they acquired them? Have recordings helped individuals to become familiar with musical traditions which are not normally heard in their own local surroundings?

So far there seems to be little documentation of private record collections. Few people keep catalogues of their collections. Even the records of the most dedicated collector are usually dispersed after his or her death. The largest collection of 78 rpm records in Finland, consisting of several hundred records, which has survived intact from the 1950s belonged to the jazz collector and record producer Harry Orvomaa, who had a very successful career in the Finnish music business. The collection is deposited in Suomen äänitearkisto (Finnish Institute of Recorded Sound). This paper is an attempt to reconstruct the musical world of a record collector and at the same time study the ways in which records were circulated in the 1950s.¹

Emanuel Zwi Harry Orvomaa (until 1944 Orscholik) (1927–1990) started collecting records as a teenager. The production of 78rpm records ended in the late 1950s. His interest in collecting seems to have waned after he became personally involved in the record business in 1955, when he became co-owner of Scandia-Musiikki Oy. Orvomaa was also a founding member of Suomen äänitearkisto. Before his death, he donated his collection of 78 rpm records to the archive. As far as we know, Orvomaa never sold records from his private collection, so the collection represents his “musical world” circa 1945–1955.

¹ This research has been supported by the Kone Foundation.



Picture 1. The successful record producer. Harry Orvomaan proudly presents his first three gold records in the late 1950s at the offices of Scandia-Musiikki Oy. (Source: JAPA Music Archives/ Orvomaan collection.)

After 1955, Orvomaan became a record producer and music publisher. His career in the music industry is well documented (see Kukkonen & Gronow 2011). Together with his business partner Paavo Einiö he modernized record production in Finland and created a large number of best-selling records which influenced Finnish popular music from the 1950s to the 1970s. In the 1960s Scandia was the second largest record company in Finland. In 1972 it was sold to Fazer Music. Today the catalogue is owned by Warner Music.

The collection shows that Orvomaan's personal tastes were far from the mainstream. The largest part of the collection consists of traditional New Orleans jazz, which was the music of a small but active group in Europe at the time. A smaller part consists of Jewish music, reflecting Orvomaan's family traditions. He came from Finland's small Jewish community and his parents were clothing merchants

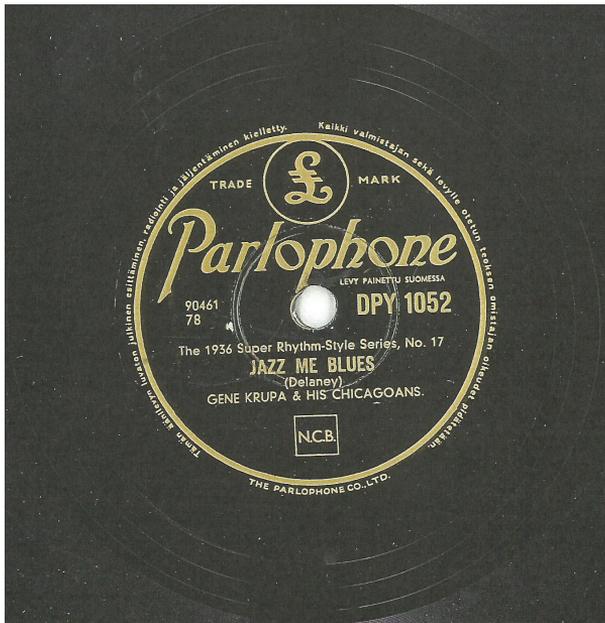
in Helsinki. Mainstream popular and classical music are absent. Orvomaa was a jazz enthusiast and amateur drummer. In the early 1950s he was a regular contributor to the magazine *Rytmi*. As the collection has not been completely catalogued, it is not yet possible to present detailed statistics of the contents, but it was limited almost exclusively to jazz and Jewish music. I shall illustrate it the by way of examples, discuss the origins of the collection and its eventual influence on Orvomaa's professional career.

Jazz records and the New Orleans revival

As far as recordings are considered, jazz is one of the best documented genres of music. Practically all jazz records ever made can be found in discographies covering various periods, artists, and labels. If we wish to study a collection of jazz records, it is easy to find out when the recordings were made and where they were published. Jazz periodicals have published reviews of new recordings since the 1930s, so it is also possible to study the contemporary reception of the recordings. All jazz recordings in the Orvomaa collection are listed in Brian Rust's *Jazz Records 1897–1942* (1978) or Jorgen Grunnet Jepsen's *Jazz Records 1943–1962/1969* (1963–1970). Many books on jazz which were available in the 1940s contained detailed lists of recommended records (Blesh 1944, Häme 1949). Jazz records were reviewed regularly in the Swedish *Orkester Journalen*, which also circulated in Finland, and the Finnish publication *Rytmi*.

A quick scan of the collection reveals that Orvomaa was a "traditionalist". According to his own testimony (Orvomaa 1989), bebop and modern jazz were of no interest to him. His tastes ran to jazz of the 1920s and 1930s, and especially original New Orleans jazz and post-war recreations of the idiom. The traditional jazz movement (also known as the New Orleans revival) was born in the United States in the late 1930s, encouraged by writers such as Frederick Ramsay (1939) and Rudy Blesh (1944) who advocated the "purity" of early jazz. The movement spread spontaneously to Europe and Australia in the 1940s, fuelled first by reissues of historical recordings, and later also by amateur bands attempting to emulate the style of the jazz pioneers (Gronow 2006). Jazz magazines of the period show that jazz enthusiasts in many countries were divided into two camps,

“traditionalists” and “modernist”, which both saw their own music as the only real jazz. Allmo (2000) and Nylöf (2006) have discussed the development of the traditionalist movement in Sweden. A similar movement existed on a smaller scale also in Finland, where traditional jazz was usually known as “Dixieland” (Haavisto 1991: 131–141).



Example 1.² *Jazz me blues* (Delaney). Parlophone (Finland) DPY 1052. Original issue Parlophone R 2268. Gene Krupa and his Chicagoans. Chicago 1935.

Jazz me blues belongs to the standard jazz tunes of the 1920s. Brian Rust lists 32 recordings of this composition made before 1943 (1974: 1913); the best known is probably by the *Original Dixieland Jazz Band* (1921). This record from the Orvomoa collection was made by a small group led by Gene Krupa, which includes Benny Goodman on clarinet. It illustrates the revived interest in early jazz, which was becoming apparent in the mid-1930s. The original issue was in the British Parlophone *Rhythm Style Series*, indicating that there was more demand for this type of music in Europe than in the United States.

Goodman and Krupa were members of one of the best-known swing bands of the decade, but on this recording they recreate the jazz style of the previous decade.

After the war, Finland suffered from a shortage of foreign currencies and imports were restricted. Most records sold in Finland were local pressings; only a small amount of imports were available. In 1950, about 300 000 records were sold in Finland; of these, only about 16000 were imports (Gronow 1992: 429). However, in addition to their domestic repertoire, Finnish companies pressed

² All the examples are audible at <http://www.etnomusikologia.fi/p/av2015.html>.

foreign recordings for the local market from masters licensed from international companies. The list of recommended records in Häme (1949) indicates that imported jazz records were available to Finland in limited quantities. However, this copy of *Jazz me blues* was pressed in Finland in the early 1950s. Pohjoismainen Sähkö Oy, which represented the Parlophon label in Finland, issued a considerable number of historical jazz records for the Finnish market, including recordings by Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Benny Goodman, etc. This suggests that there was a steady (although probably limited) interest in traditional jazz in Finland.

One of the results of the “New Orleans revival” in Europe was the emergence of amateur or semi-professional bands which tried to emulate the music of the New Orleans bands of the 1920s. Many of them survived only a few years, while a few

had longer professional careers. As records had been essential to the diffusion of jazz, amateur bands were eager to have their own performances documented on records and listed in jazz discographies. This encouraged the growth of small specialist labels devoted to recording traditional jazz for idealist reasons. Major record companies at first considered the amateur bands commercially uninteresting, although they later changed their minds as the style grew more popular, especially in Britain (Gronow 2009).

The Orvomaa collection contains a broad selection of European revivalist bands from the 1940s and 1950s: *George Webb’s Dixielanders* on Decca, *Humphrey Lyttelton’s Jazz Band* on Parlophone, *Mick Mulligan’s Magnolia Jazz Band* on Eclipse,



Example 2. *Bogalusa Strut*. Gazell 1001. *Bunta’s Storyville Jazz Band*. Stockholm 1949.

the *Yorkshire Jazz Band* on Tempo, the *Dutch Swing College Band* on Philips, *Claude Luter et son Lorientais* on Blue Star and Swing, *Grav-Olles Hot Five* and *Bunta's Storyville Jazz Band* on Gazell. There is even *Graeme Bell's Australian Jazz Band* on the Czechoslovakian Supraphon label, recorded in Prague when the Australians travelled to Europe to participate in the first International Youth Festival in 1948. Some of these may have been available in record shops in Finland, but Orvomaa must have acquired many of them abroad, as we cannot find any evidence that they were marketed in Finland or even mentioned in the Finnish music press.

Bunta's Storyville Jazz Band was typical of the Swedish traditionalist movement. The band was founded in 1948 by high school students in Stocksund, a wealthy suburb of Stockholm. The Gazell label was operated by John Engelbrekt, the founder of the Gazell Jazz Club (Allmo 2000: 14). The band recorded many compositions which belonged to the standard repertoire of European revival bands, but the choice of *Bogalusa strut* (actually *Bogalousa strut*) is interesting. The original recording, by *Sam Morgan's Jazz Band* (1927), is discussed in detail in Rudi Blesh's *Shining trumpets* (1944: 189–191), but there had been no European reissues of the recording (Rust 1978: 196). *Bunta's Storyville Jazz Band* follows the original fairly closely. To acquire a copy of the Sam Morgan recording in immediate post-war Sweden was quite a feat.



Example 3. *In Gloryland*. Bunk's Brass Band. American Music 534. New Orleans 1945.

Although the Orvomaa collection must have been the largest of its type in Finland, it lacks the real “gems” of a New Orleans jazz collection. There are no American first editions of *King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band*, *Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five*, *Jelly Roll Morton’s Red Hot Peppers*, and other famous bands of the 1920s. Orvomaa had these recordings as later, European reissues. By the 1940s, the original editions had become expensive collectors’ items even in the United States. The direct import of records from the USA, new or used, was quite difficult because of currency and customs regulations.

Yet the Orvomaa collection contains an impressive selection of contemporary American “revivalist” bands which were not distributed in Europe as 78 rpm pressings. Bunk Johnson (1879–1949) was one of the heroes of the revivalist movement. Frederick Ramsay Jr. and Charles Edward Smith, the authors of *Jazzmen* (1939), had found the former New Orleans musician working in the rice fields in Louisiana. According to the legend, Johnson had known Buddy Bolden, the “founding father” of New Orleans jazz, and was able to recreate early New Orleans jazz in its purest form. *Bunk’s Brass Band* was recorded in New Orleans in 1945 by the American Music label. *Gloryland* is a religious song which belonged to the repertoire of marching bands in New Orleans. This recording is an attempt to recreate the style of such bands, circa 1900, which were believed to have influenced the birth of jazz (Blesh 1944: 166–172).

Jewish music

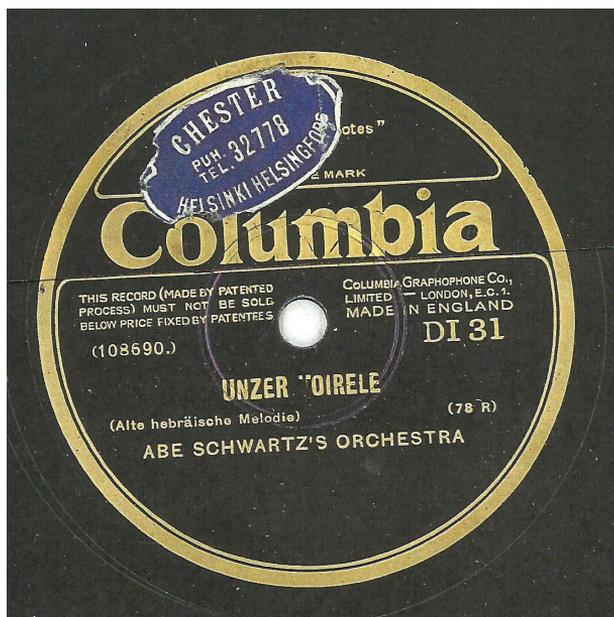
A smaller part of the Orvomaa collection consists of 78 rpm recordings of Jewish music. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as “Jewish music”. Persons of Jewish ancestry have had successful careers in many fields of music, including Western art music and jazz. In Finland, Simon Pergament-Parment was a well-known classical conductor. Herbert Katz had a career as jazz guitarist, Johnny Liebkind helped to launch the beat music boom, and Marion Rung was Finland’s representative in the Eurovision Song Contest in 1973. These names illustrate the wide contribution of Jewish musicians to Finnish musical life. However, certain musical genres have been closely associated with Jews in Europe. At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a thriving Yiddish-language theatrical scene in many Eastern and Cen-

tral European countries, with a large original repertoire. There is also a tradition of Jewish religious music in Hebrew. Aylward (2003) has shown that there was an extensive production of Jewish recordings in Europe before the Second World War; according to Aylward, the most typical genres were “Yiddish theatre music”, “Yiddish songs” and “Cantorial songs”. Jewish recordings were also produced in the United States for immigrants (Spottswood 1990; Gronow 1991). If a recording contains songs in Yiddish or Hebrew, and/or the labels are printed in either of these languages, it seems fair to describe them as “Jewish music”.

The small Jewish community in Finland (between 1000 and 2000 individuals) was too small to support domestic record production. Yet there seems to have been a lively interest in Yiddish song; Muir (2004, 2006, 2011) has documented Yiddish revues, visits by foreign artists, and a regular Jewish choir in Helsinki. It would be natural to expect that some members of the community would also have been interested in acquiring recordings of “Jewish” music. But what recordings of Jewish music were available in Finland? Where they were originally made,

and how were they distributed in Finland? The Orvomaa collection gives some answers to this question.

Abe Schwartz (1881–1963) was a well-known Jewish-American musician who made several hundred recordings in New York between 1917 and 1938 both as bandleader and accompanist to various singers (Spottswood 1990, 1497–1503). His compositions influenced the “klezmer revival”, the attempts by young American musicians to recreate in the 1970s the dance music of East European and American Jews. Most of his recordings



Example 4. *Unzer Toirele* (Alte hebräische Melodie). Abe Schwartz's Orchestra. Columbia DI 31. Original issue Columbia 8160-F. New York 1928.

were made for Columbia's Jewish series, but the repertoire and labels indicate that many were also aimed at Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Finnish and other eastern European immigrants.

Unzer Toirele is an instrumental dance tune in the style which has later been described as "klezmer music". According to Spottswood (1990: 1502), the group includes the well-known clarinetist Dave Tarras (1897–1989). It was recorded in New York in January 1928 and originally issued as Columbia 8160-F. The catalogue number indicates that it was issued in a series especially aimed at Jewish customers (Gronow 1991: 22–23).

The American Columbia Phonograph Company was owned by the British Columbia Graphophone Company Ltd. Consequently, it was easy for the companies to exchange material, so that European recordings could also be pressed in the USA, and American recordings in Europe (Gronow 1991). *Unzer Toirele* was also pressed in the United Kingdom with the catalogue number D1 31. The D1 series was used for pressings of American recordings, beginning in 1931. The record in the Orvomaa collection is particularly interesting as it has a sticker indicating that it was sold in Finland by Chester Oy, a company which was also the Finnish representative for Columbia in 1929–1933. It indicates that at least some American Jewish records were regularly available in record shops in Helsinki as European pressings. Unfortunately, we do not know how widely other Columbia Jewish records were circulated in Finland.

Syrena was the leading record company in Poland between 1908 and 1939. Until 1914, it was also active on the



Example 5. *Der Rebe und Gabe*. Wiera Kaniewska & Pawel Brajtman. Syrena-Electro 19956. Warsaw early 1930s.

Russian market, as Warsaw and large parts of Poland belonged to the Russian empire. During its existence, the company produced nearly twenty thousand records, including Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, German and Jewish music.³

The history of Syrena illustrates the role of the Jewish middle class in creating the European music industry. Juliusz (Jehoszija) Feigenbaum was born in Warsaw in 1872. In 1897 he became the owner of a music shop, and in 1902 the local representative of the Russian branch of the Gramophone Company. As the business grew, Feigenbaum became the representative of the German Homophone company. This move may be connected with the opening of Feigenbaum's first record factory, which produced records on the Ideal label (Lerski 2004: 10–13).

In 1908 the company's name was changed to Syrena Record, and Feigenbaum opened a gramophone factory and a recording studio in Warsaw. A Moscow branch was opened in 1910. In the next year, annual production was over a million records, and a new larger factory was built on Chmielna Street in Warsaw. Syrena soon acquired a considerable share of the Russian market. The company made recordings of Polish, Russian, Jewish and German music.

The war, the Russian revolution and the independence of Poland disrupted the business. The activities of Syrena in the early 1920s are poorly documented, and the production seems to have consisted mainly of reissues of pre-war recordings. By the end of the 1920s the business was again operating on a considerable scale, and the recordings show that the company was using modern electrical recording technology. Although the focus of the business was in Poland, Syrena exported records into many countries, and in 1930 even pressed records for a Finnish record company, Columbus. After the German occupation of Poland in 1939 the company was forced to close down. Juliusz Feigenbaum died in exile in Zurich in 1944 (Lerski 2004: 16–24).

Lerski (2004: 9) has estimated that out of the 14000 known Syrena recordings, about 1200 were aimed the Jewish market. They include many types of music, but the most prominent are theatrical songs in Yiddish and cantorial songs in Hebrew. *Der Rebe und Gabe* (Syrena 19956, by Wiera Kaniewska and Pawel Brajtman) is in many ways typical. In the 1920s and 1930s, many Eastern European cities had Jewish theatres presenting plays, revues and musical comedies in Yiddish. On the label, Kaniewska and Brajtman are billed as artists of the Jewish theatres

³ For a history of the company, see Lerski (2004).

of Vienna and Bucharest. *Der Rebe und Gabe* (also known as *Gabe vos vil der Rebe*) is a Yiddish traditional song which has also been documented in folk tradition in Western Ukraine and Belarus (see the website: *The Yiddish Song of the Week*). It is a comic song mocking a rabbi who collects gifts of food from his parishioners. It has not been possible to determine the exact date of recording, but Lerski estimates that it was recorded between 1929 and 1935. It is not known how the record was distributed in Finland, but in addition to this item, the Orvomaa collection includes eleven more recordings on the Syrena label, with dates between 1910 and 1935.

Millions of Jews were killed in the Holocaust, and Yiddish culture was to a large extent decimated in Eastern Europe. The new state of Israel adopted Hebrew as its official language. However, there were exceptions. In Paris, there was still a lively Yiddish music scene after the war. Michael Aylward (2015) has characterized the French Elesdisc company as “the last of the Jewish record companies in Europe”.

Elesdisc records were issued by the record shop owned by Leon Speiser in the Marais district of Paris, the centre of the Jewish population in the city. The location had previously housed a Jewish book shop owned by his father. Elesdisc produced at least 138 78 rpm recordings and some LPs of mostly Jewish content (Aylward 2015). The Orvomaa collection includes eleven Elesdisc records and a few others with stickers showing they were sold by Speiser’s shop. These include three by Cantor Mordechai Hershman: religious Hebrew songs and Yiddish folk



Example 6. *Nouveau pot-pourri*. Bernard Potock et son Orchestre. Elesdisc LS-4. Paris, early 1950s.

songs originally issued on Columbia in the USA and reissued on the Columbia label in France. It is no longer possible to establish how these records found their way into Finland, but evidently Jewish records from many sources were available in the Jewish community.

Most Elesdisc recordings are by artists who appeared in Jewish cabarets in Paris in the post-war years. Most are sung in Yiddish. The repertoire consists mainly of older Yiddish popular and theatre songs, but there are also Yiddish versions of recent American popular songs, which suggests that they may have been aimed at American Jewish servicemen stationed in Europe. *Nouveau pot-pourri* is an instrumental medley of popular Jewish melodies, and the orchestra is billed as *Bernard Potock et son Orchestre de Cabaret La Riviera*.

From collector to producer

In the immediate post-war years it was very difficult for Finns to travel abroad. The few who were able to travel usually brought back coffee, butter, chocolates and other goods which were in short supply in Finland. Harry Orvomaa had suffered polio as a child, and for medical reasons he was allowed after the war to visit relatives in Denmark. He later recollected in a radio interview (Orvomaa 1989) how he spent his meagre travel budget on a copy of Charles Delaney's *Discographie hot* (1943), printed in Paris during the occupation, and a box of rare jazz records.

Orvomaa's jazz collection was built systematically over a decade. Although some of the records were available in record shops in Finland at the time, most were acquired from abroad through personal contacts. With the aid of books and periodicals and a network of like-minded enthusiasts, he created an imaginary musical world of New Orleans in the 1920s (for an elaboration of the concept, see Gronow 2009: 61–63). At the time, it would have gained the respect of any jazz enthusiast. The Jewish collection is smaller and its provenience is more difficult to ascertain. It does not suggest a similar systematic approach to collecting as the jazz records, and it is possible that some of the records were the legacy of his parents. In any case it proves that by the 1930s at least some Jewish records were marketed in Finland, and it was also possible to obtain Jewish records from other sources.

As Orvomaa later became a record producer, we should ask whether his collection also influenced his professional work. The answer is yes, but the influences were both direct and indirect. Orvomaa's first personal contacts with recording took place in 1950, when he played drums with *Rolle Lindström Dixieland Band*. The group recorded *Jazz me blues* for the Finnish Rhythm Clubs Federation label (Haavisto 1991: 135–141). The label proudly declares that the session was “Supervised by Harry Orvomaa”. Otherwise his career as a musician did not go far. In 1955, on the first (and for a long time, only) LP record of traditional jazz produced in Finland, he played the bass drum on a recording of *High Society* by *Fenno Jazz Band* (*Finnish Dixieland Jazz*, Scandia SLP 3), an attempt to recreate the style of New Orleans marching bands such as *Bunk's Brass Band*.

Although Orvomaa did not become a professional musician, he became a very successful record producer. In 1955, Orvomaa acquired a 49 % share of Scandia-Musiikki Oy. At the time, the company was in financial difficulty, as their first thirty releases had not been sold as expected. Orvomaa is credited with saving the company, but the record that turned its fortunes would have been anathema to any jazz lover. It was a sentimental waltz song, *Muistatko Monrepos'n*, by Annikki Tähti (Scandia ks 238), which sold more than 30000 copies in 1955–1956 (Gronow 1992: 425). More such recordings followed, as Scandia produced music for mainstream Finnish consumers, and by the end of the 1950s it was the second largest record company in Finland.⁴

⁴ For a more detailed account of the development of Scandia-Musiikki and its role in the Finnish record industry, see Gronow (1995), Muikku (2006) and Kukkonen and Gronow (2011).



Example 7. *Jazz me blues* (Delaney). Finnish Rhythm Clubs Federation FRCF 1. Rolle Lindström Dixieland Band. Helsinki 1950. “Supervised by Harry Orvomaa”.

Later in the 1960s, the company also played a major role in promoting the tango boom in Finland. However, a large part of the success of Scandia was due to the introduction of a new type of jazz-influenced popular song in Finland, female vocalists accompanied by a small jazz group. A typical example of this genre is *Suklaasydän* by Brita Koivunen (Scandia ks 247, 1956). It was a Finnish cover version of the American hit *Mama's Pearls* and sold over 28000 copies (Gronow 1992: 426). Some of the tunes Scandia recorded were actually well known jazz standards with new Finnish lyrics, such as *Musta Pekka* (*Sing, sing, sing*, Scandia ks 285), and *Trumpetin tanssiinkutsu* (*That's a plenty*, Scandia ks 278). It is clear that Orvomaa's productions were often influenced by his love of jazz. Direct influences of older New Orleans jazz are more difficult to find, and there is an economic explanation for this. The few Dixieland records that Scandia produced were commercial disasters. *Dippermouth blues*, a King Oliver composition recorded by *Fenno Jazz Band* (ks 263, 1956), only sold 170 copies (Gronow 1992: 426).



Example 8. *Käy tanssimaan*, Scandia ks-341, Brita Koivunen, *Jaakko Salon yhtye* 1960 (from the collection of Suomen äänitearkisto).

It is more questionable how much Orvomaa's interest in Jewish music influenced his productions. Over the years, many Jewish tunes have entered the repertoire of Finnish popular song, and they have been recorded by various companies, including Scandia. Pennanen (1989) lists several such examples, some going back to the 1930s. For instance, in 1969, Scandia issued a recording by the Hazamir chorus, the choir of the Jewish community in Helsinki. Their record *Balalajikka* (Scandia ks 796) reached the number ten spot on the chart of best-selling singles in Fin-

land (Nyman 2002: 124). The original version the song (*Tumbalalaika*) had long belonged to the choir's repertoire (Muir 2006: 35), but it is unlikely that any other record producer besides Orvomaa would have considered the idea of commissioning a Finnish translation of an old Yiddish song and recording a choir which had so far been little known outside the Jewish community.

There is also at least one case where we can demonstrate a direct connection between Orvomaa's Jewish records and Scandia's productions. Bernard Potock's *Nouveau pot-pourri* (Elesdisc LS-4) includes the Yiddish wedding song *Khosn Kale Mazeltov* (*Good Luck to the Bride and the Groom*) which later appeared as *Käy tanssimaan* on a Scandia record (Scandia KS-341, Brita Koivunen). The arrangement has a strong jazz flavour, which reminds us that musical influences can be mixed.

Conclusions

In the late 1940s, Harry Orvomaa was a teenager with a lively interest in jazz. He played in amateur bands, was active in the rhythm club movement and started systematically collecting jazz records. Like many contemporaries, he had been convinced by authors such as Charles Edward Smith and, Rudi Blesh that traditional New Orleans jazz was the only authentic music of the century, a "miracle of creative synthesis" (Blesh 1944: 3). Over the next decade he acquired an impressive collection of 78 rpm jazz records which he retained almost to the end of his life.

In 1955, he became professionally involved in the music business. He eventually produced a large number of records himself and acted as the representative of several international labels. However, when this writer visited his home during his retirement in the 1980s, it was apparent that he had felt no need to retain copies of his company's best-sellers or his own productions.

Today, large record collections are commonplace. Anyone with an interest in music is likely to have a record collection at home, and those with sufficient funds and a burning interest can accumulate collections which would have been unthinkable in the 1950s. In 2015, the National Library of Finland received a collection of more than 15000 jazz records as the legacy of the painter and collector Lars-Gunnar Nordström (*Helsingin Sanomat* 29.5.2015). Yet there has been little research on the role of record collecting in musical life.

Our study of the Orvomaa collection suggests that at least in some cases, records have had a decisive role in the diffusion of new musical genres. Very few New Orleans musicians ever visited Finland, and the number of followers of traditional jazz has always been relatively small. With the help of records, they were able to surround themselves with the music they loved and stay in contact with likeminded individuals in other countries. Until the late 1950s, when traditional jazz had become commercially successful in the United Kingdom and some other European countries, major record companies showed little interest in promoting New Orleans jazz, so the diffusion of traditional jazz records was more a question of “pull” than “push”. In many cases enthusiasts such as Orvomaa were able to obtain at considerable expense records which were not distributed in Finland through normal commercial channels. It would be interesting to attempt to reconstruct the record collections of the followers of other musical subgenres and see if we could find the same pattern.

The Orvomaa collection also suggests that even the most single-minded follower of a musical genre can also have other musical interests. In his case, it was the music of his parents and ancestors, Yiddish folk songs and songs from the Yiddish stage. As Gronow (1991) has suggested, recordings provide immigrants and diasporic groups with a practical way of keeping in contact with their traditions.

On a more general level, it would be interesting to study the collections of other record producers and professional musicians and find out how records have influenced their work. A study of the Orvomaa collection shows that as a record producer, he was able to use in his work influences both from his Yiddish family traditions and from his interest in jazz. However, the collection also suggests that at least in some cases, people keep their private and professional interests apart. Although Orvomaa must have listened to a large number of pop and rock recordings in the course of his career, he did not add of them to his private collection. Nor did he keep an archive of his own productions at home. They were kept at the office and sold with the company.

References

Archival sources

The Harry Orvomaa collection. Suomen äänitearkisto.

Radio programs (Yleisradio, radio archives).

Orvomaa, Harry (1989) "Traditionaalisen jazzin teemailta. Fenno-jazzin nostalgiaa. Harry Orvomaa muistelee, haastattelijana Pekka Gronow". 22 March 1989, tape AST-50123-0.

Periodicals

Helsingin Sanomat 29.5.2015, "Jättilahjoitus jazzlevyjä valtiolle".

Orkester journalen 1945–1955

Rytmi 1949–1955

Bibliography

Allmo, Per-Ulf et al. (2000) *When the saints go marchin'... Essäer om Stockholms skolbandsjazz 1948–1960*. Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv.

Aylward, Michael (2003) "Early recordings of Jewish music in Poland". *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry*. Vol. 16. Eds Michael C. Steinlauf & Anthony Polonsky. Oxford: The Littman library of Jewish civilization. Pp. 59–69.

Aylward, Michael (2015) "Elesdisc: Last of the Jewish music record labels in Europe". *Der yiddisher gramofon*. <http://www.yidisher-gramofon.org/> (accessed 16.4.2015).

Blesh, Rudi (1944). *Shining trumpets. A history of jazz*. London: Cassell.

Delaunay, Charles (1943) *Discographie hot 1943*. Paris: Hot club de France.

Gronow, Pekka (1991) "Ethnic recordings: an introduction". *Ethnic recordings in America: a neglected heritage*. Washington: Library of Congress. Pp. 1–49.

Gronow, Pekka (1992) "Miten paljon suomalaisia levyjä myytiin 1950-luvulla?". *Suomalaisten äänilevyjen luettelo 1946–1961*. Eds Rainer Strömmer & Urpo Haapanen. Helsinki: Suomen äänitearkisto. Pp. 423–429.

Gronow, Pekka (1995) "The record industry in Finland, 1945–1960", *Popular Music* 14:1, pp. 33–53.

Gronow, Pekka (2009) "Remaking jazz history". *De-Canonizing music history*. Ed. Vesa Kurkela. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars. Pp. 61–72.

- Gronow, Pekka (2014) "The world's greatest sound archive". *Traditiones* 42:2, pp. 31–50.
- Gronow, Pekka & Englund, Björn (2006) "Inventing recorded music: the recorded repertoire in Scandinavia 1899–1925". *Popular Music* 3/2006, pp. 281–304.
- Grubb, Suvi Raj (1986). *Music Makers on record*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Haavisto, Jukka (1991) *Puuwillapelloilta kaskimaille. Jatsin ja jazzin vaiheita Suomessa*. Helsinki: Otava.
- Häme, Olli (1949) *Rytmin voittokulku. Kirja tanssimusiikista*. Helsinki: Fazer.
- Jepsen, Jorgen Grunnet (1963–1970) *Jazz records 194–196/1969. Vol. 1–11*. Copenhagen: Karl Emil Knudsen.
- Kukkonen, Risto & Gronow, Pekka (2011) "Jazzista jazziskelmiin – Scandia 1950-luvulla". *Suklaasydän, tinakuoret. Jazziskelmä Suomessa 1957–1963*. Eds Ari Poutanen & Risto Kukkonen. Helsinki: Suomen Jazz & Pop Arkisto. Pp. 121–144.
- Lerski, Tomasz (2004) *Syrena Record - pierwsza polska wytwórnia fonograficzna - Poland's first recording company - 1904–1944*. New York, Warszawa: Editions Karin.
- Muikku, Jari (2001) *Musiikkia kaikkiruokaisille. Suomalaisen populaarimusiikin äänitetuotanto 1945–1990*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- Muir, Simo (2004) *Yiddish in Helsinki. Study of a Colonial Yiddish Dialect and Culture. Studia Orientalia 100*. Helsinki: Finnish Oriental Society.
- Muir, Simo (2006) "Vanha juutalainen musiikki Helsingissä – historiallis-lingvistinen katsaus". *Musiikki* 1/2006, pp. 3–41.
- Muir, Simo (2011) "Jac Weinstein 1883–1976 ja jiddišinkielinen revyy Helsingissä". *Både och, sekä että. Om flerspråkighet. Monikielisydestä*. Eds Heidi Grönstrand & Kristina Malmio. Helsingfors: Schildts. Pp. 228–151.
- Niiniluoto, Maarit (1982). *Toivo Kärki. Siks oon mä suruinen*. Helsinki: Tammi.
- Nylöf, Göran (2006) *Kampen om jazzen. Traditionalism mot modernism – en värdekonflikt speglad i svensk jazzpress under efterkrigstiden*. Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv.
- Nyman, Jake (2002) *Suomi soi 4. Suuri suomalainen listakirja*. Helsinki: Tammi.
- Pennanen, Risto (1989) "Klezmer-musiikki". *Vaijeritemppu. Ilpo Saunion juhla-kirja*. Eds Vesa Kurkela & Anu Laakkonen Helsinki: Kansan Sivistystyön Liitto. Pp. 133–146.
- Philip, Robert (2004) *Performing music in the age of recording*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Ramsay, Frederick Jr. & Smith, Charles Edward (1939) *Jazzmen. The story of hot jazz told in the lives of the men who created it*. New York: Harcourt & Brace.
- Rust, Brian (1978) *Jazz records 1897–1942. Vol. 1–2*. New Rochelle: Arlington House.

MUSIC FROM NEW ORLEANS AND WARSAW:
RECORDS FROM THE HARRY ORVOMAA COLLECTION

Spottswood, Richard Keith (1990) *Ethnic Music on Records: A Discography of Ethnic Recordings Produced in the United States, 1893 to 1942*. Evanston: University of Illinois Press.

Yampolsky, Philip (2015) "Commercial 78s: A rediscovered resource for ethnomusicology". *This thing called music: Essays in honor of Bruno Nettl*. Ed. Victoria Lindsay Levine & Philip V. Bohlman. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield / Scarecrow Press. Pp. 302–314.

The Yiddish song of the week. <https://yiddishsong.wordpress.com/2011/09/22/lekoved-yontef-lekoved-shabes-performed-by-zinaida-lyovina-and-dasya-khrapunskaya/> (accessed 16.4.2015).