

REVIEWS

Various artists. *Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America*. 3-disc set. Disc 1: Hoyer Trio. Disc 2: Anton Schubel. Disc 3: Mary Udovich and Josephine Lausche. London: JSP Records, 2010. \$29.99. JSP2306.

The release of the three-CD set *Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America* has come at exactly the right time. Sound recordings that were completely unknown until recently have gained interest for both listeners and researchers. Various academic disciplines are studying the music industry with increasing frequency and in greater detail, and are also studying music that was recorded on phonograph records for commercial sale. There are increasingly more collections, accompanying data studies, and discographies of individual music genres and performers.

In the era of 78-rpm records, various recordings were issued by the thousands aimed at immigrants; often European subsidiaries of American phonograph companies also purchased the recordings for production and sale in Europe. A surprisingly large number of these contained recordings of folk music from Europe. During this time in Europe almost no folk music was recorded on records, and such recordings are therefore all the more valuable. These also include recordings of folk music that was recorded nowhere else, neither as commercial recordings nor as field recordings made by collectors and researchers. These recordings were created primarily in response to demand from immigrants that had settled in the United States from rural parts of Europe and wanted to use records to help stay in touch with their homeland and their culture.

The Slovenes also have a relatively large number of commercial 78-rpm phonograph records that documented Slovene folk music. Many of

these were recorded among Slovene immigrants to North America, primarily in the 1920s and 1930s (cf. Spottswood 1990). Many of these recordings were also reissued in England and sold in Europe, especially on the Slovene market (cf. *Glavni katalog Columbia 1932*). Some discs that were recorded in various places in Europe were also sold in Slovenia. Similar to immigrants from other countries, large record companies also produced Slovene-language catalogues of records with Slovene performers for Slovenes. In doing so they largely counted on immigrants' nostalgia for their homeland and hoped that this would increase record and phonograph sales. For example, the 1925 catalogue *Victorjevi Recordi v Slovenščini* (Victor Records in Slovene) starts out by stating:

With the help of Victor, you can hear the music of your native land and enjoy the best and most beautiful sounds of the land where you were born. Refresh your memories of the distant days of your youth in a far-off homeland. The songs that you sang and the music that you danced to is sung and played here by the best and most popular artists, your fellow countrymen. (*Victorjevi Recordi v Slovenščini* 1925: 1)

78-rpm phonograph records stopped being produced soon after the Second World War, and the obsolescence of the audio format (the carrier) and the preponderance of modern audio formats means that not only is the audio content of old records difficult to access, but people are often no longer even aware of it. This is why commercial phonograph records of musical folk culture were almost unknown to the Slovene public and among folk-music researchers; it has been impossible to find any publications, analyses, or studies that included such recordings. Phonograph recordings of Slovene folk music have not yet been studied from the ethnomusicological and ethnochoreological perspective even though they represent an important source for the study of Slovene folk music and dance. Likewise, Slovenes still do not have a detailed discography of commercially recorded material from the early period of phonograph records, let alone having documented, collected, copied, and digitized this material. Although these recordings were once openly sold and widespread among the public because many owners of early phonograph devices had them to listen to, today it is very difficult to find individual copies of these records. Only a few individuals in Slovenia, and a few antique collectors, may have an old record, perhaps with Slovene folk music on it, among other items at home. Some records of this type are stored in the music collection of the National and University Library and at the Technical Museum of Slovenia and the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, and a few records are also in the archives of Radio Slovenija and the ZRC SAZU Institute of Ethnomusicology in Ljubljana.

Studies in ethnomusicology, folklore, and anthropology in Slovenia and abroad have begun to develop the awareness that such audio material represents an exceptional resource for various studies. For example, the ZRC SAZU Institute of Ethnomusicology in Ljubljana has launched a research project titled “Sound Material from Phonograph Records as a Source for Ethnomusicology and Folklore Research” with the basic goal of collecting audio recordings of Slovene folk material from old 78-rpm phonograph records, documenting, protecting, digitizing, and archiving it, and studying it from the perspectives of historical ethnomusicology and acoustic technology. Public interest in the music and audio recordings from the period represented by *Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America* is continually growing. This is also demonstrated by the responses to public presentations and other events that have featured such music.

This is all the more reason to welcome the new release of Slovene-American music from the early 1900s on *Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America*, featuring three of the best-known recording ensembles or artists from this era. The collection is a result of the efforts of Richard A. Terselic and Charles F. Debevec, who determined some time ago that the earliest Slovene music recorded in America could easily be lost due to the fragile nature of the discs, changing musical tastes, and the increasing age of the generations that had originally purchased the records. They started a collaborative effort to expand their personal collections of the oldest records and preserve them in digital format (cf. Terselic & Debevec 2009). In such form, recordings could easily be shared with institutions and made available to those interested.

This collection presents fifty-nine recordings from the 1920s, available to the public for the first time on CD. The visual presentation of the collection is well thought out and neatly executed with photos that appropriately complement the audio material. The liner notes for each CD briefly present biographical details of the performers and basic information about the place and time the recordings were made, offering listeners better insight into the period when the recordings were created and facilitating understanding of the content of the recordings.

The first CD contains twenty selections recorded by the Hoyer Trio featuring Matt Hoyer on the accordion, Ed Simms on the accordion and guitar, and Frank Simms on the banjo. The Hoyer Trio popularized a lively “Americanized” polka style based on arrangements of traditional melodies brought to America from Slovenia.

The founder and leader of the Hoyer Trio was Matt Hoyer, born Matija Arko in Sodražica, Slovenia in 1891, who immigrated to America in 1904. He was one of the first well-known accordion players in the United States. He adapted and composed many songs, arranged in his own

pioneering style. The playing style and the popularity of the Hoyer Trio had a direct or indirect influence on almost all musicians performing Slovene Cleveland-Style polka music.

Matt Hoyer and his trio, or sometimes Matt playing solo or together with singers or other musicians, recorded a great deal of material. From 1924 to 1929 he recorded for the Victor Talking Machine Company, the Columbia Gramophone Company, and Okeh Records. The discography for Matt Hoyer and the Hoyer Trio comprises about seventy independent recordings of the trio and twenty recordings in cooperation with other musicians and singers, or ninety altogether. The trio also released ten records with translated titles or with different titles, probably in an effort to market them to immigrants of other nationalities as well. Apparently the Hoyer Trio also reissued many records in Europe (cf. Kunej 2008: 193–207).

The second CD contains nineteen selections sung by the virtuoso Anton Schubel. Schubel acquired classical music training in Europe and sang with the Metropolitan Opera in America. His love for Slovene folk music also prompted his participation in singing groups in Cleveland and the recordings featured on the CD.

The liner notes to the CD inform us, among other things, that Schubel had a strong wish to visit the United States and, through a set of lucky circumstances, he succeeded in gathering enough money for the trip, which represented a great turning-point in his life:

He arrived in early 1928 and within a month began a series of very successful concerts in New York and other cities across the country. He recorded numerous selections in 1928 and 1929, after when he went back to Slovenia. He returned to America in July 1930, this time to stay. His final recordings were done in 1930. From 1931 to 1945 he sang with the Metropolitan Opera and from 1946 to 1949 worked as a talent scout for Carnegie Hall. . . . In addition he served as director of the International Ballet in New York and as music director of many Slovenian and other singing societies, including Glasbena Matica of Cleveland.

The third CD contains twenty selections sung by the duet of Josephine Lausche and Mary Udovich. Both lived in Cleveland but recorded all of the selections on the CD in New York City with accompaniment by a full recording studio orchestra. Many of their songs were arranged and accompanied by Miss Lausche's brother, William Lausche.

Among other things, the liner notes to the CD say the following about this well-known vocal duet:

Blessed with a great talent and encouraged by her mother, she [Josephine Lausche] took up singing at an early age. In 1913 she met Mary Udovich and they began to sing together. With Josephine as soprano lead and Mary on alto they harmonized beautifully.

The role of William Lausche is described as follows:

The team was completed by Josephine's brother William, who provided accompaniment on piano as well as compositions and arrangements for the duet's repertoire. His arrangements included elements of classical music and contemporary jazz, which modernized the tunes and broadened their appeal. . . . He is considered the father of the "Cleveland style" of polka music.

The selection of audio material presented in the collection *Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America* was made with reflection and is chronologically arranged on the CD, offering a good insight into the performers' repertoire. The logical arrangement of the three CDs into a single release offers listeners the three best-known groups performing Slovene-American music from early 1900s, and the diversity of the performers (men's signing, women's duet, and instrumental trio) outstandingly present the musical activity of Slovene performers from this era. Most of the Slovene folk music heard in these recordings has been adapted and presented in a different, unique manner, bringing it closer to the tastes of its listeners. At the same time, one can also hear recordings of Slovene folk music in a more or less original form. Thus, certain dance melodies (e.g., the *mazulinka*, *pošter tanc*, and *empajriš* on the Hoyer Trio CD) represent priceless ethnomusicological and ethnochoreographic material because they are the oldest sound recordings of Slovene instrumental folkdance music. The oldest field recordings of Slovene instrumental folk music were made approximately thirty years later, after 1955, when the Institute of Ethnomusicology in Ljubljana acquired its first tape recorder and started making systematic field recordings.

More demanding listeners (and readers) may feel a lack of even more information about the performers in this release, especially regarding their musical paths connected with making these recordings, as well as information about audio material that was not released. It would also perhaps be interesting to know something more about the discographies of the individual performers and the principles that guided the individual selection of recordings for this release. Listeners that are also interested in the technical aspects of the playback, re-recording, and restoration of old recordings will probably also miss a description and explanation of the process for digitizing and restoring audio material, with the opportunities this offers for authenticating and evaluating the audio material presented.

Also welcome would be additional illustrations of some examples of old phonograph discs and their labels and record sleeves, which would have aided the presentation of the recorded material, especially for those less familiar with 78-rpm discs. In addition, such illustrations could have provided additional visual enrichment for the release.

While listening to the CDs, it is necessary to highlight the sound character of the recordings, which reveals a very careful, attentive, and even loving relationship toward the material presented. Great attention was dedicated to preparing and processing the material because on these recordings one can hardly hear any of the characteristic scratches and various clicks and pops that are frequent in audio material from this period. At the same time, the original sound of the recorded material is largely preserved. This therefore brings the material closer to listeners that are not accustomed to hearing older audio recordings and considerably facilitates the listening process. This is especially true for younger listeners that, due to modern digital recordings, are accustomed to listening to sound without the presence of the noise and other shortcomings of analog technology.

Slovenia, USA: Slovenian Music Made in America is a welcome new release for various users; not only for music lovers, but also for those that would like to study Slovene folk music of the 1920s in greater detail. This music, which was hitherto accessible to only a very small circle of people due to its antiquated recording format, can now be heard not only by older generations of listeners that still remember such music from the “old days” and may find nostalgic memories reawakened, but also younger generations of listeners that can discover it for the first time with the help of modern technology. In doing so, they can learn about the music, culture, and life of an important period for Slovene emigrants and Slovene history, and enjoy interesting performances at the same time. It is sincerely hoped that these publications will soon be followed by others that will present the performers and music that it was not possible to feature in this collection.

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Marina Lukšič-Hacin and Jernej Mlekuž, eds. *Go Girls! When Slovenian Women Left Home*. Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2009. €13.00 [= \$17.85] (paper). ISBN: 978-961-254-170-5.

Go Girls! When Slovenian Women Left Home is a collection of four extended scholarly essays on the topic of the emigration of Slovenian women that helps to fill a void in scholarship. The sum of the essays' parts creates a larger picture by creating a kind of mosaic with small gaps in between. That is to say, the chapters function as units rarely referencing one another directly, although they are clearly related in theme and together provide a much clearer picture of women's migration.

The collection features the work of four authors, each of whom has a particular literary style and approaches his or her research differently. As a result, the cohesion of the collection suffers as a whole, although the differences in pacing and narrative could also be cited as the collection's greatest achievement. In other words, *Go Girls!* recognizes just how deep the void in scholarship regarding women's migration from Slovenia is, and attempts to fill that void in as many ways as it can: with essays that feature primarily historical research; with an essay that largely features women's own voices about their experiences; and with an essay that chooses patriarchal gender dichotomy as its lens for studying the issue.

The brief introduction by Jernej Mlekuž—a geographer, ethnologist, and cultural anthropologist—entitled “Go-Go Girls & Go, Go Girls!?” begins with a play on words that might have been more humorous in the Slovenian original. The attempt at humor is admirable but unnecessary because the overview in this introduction is compelling enough that the audience does not need to be enticed to keep reading based on a gimmick. As a point of clarification: there are no Slovenian go-go girls on record as migrants, at least as far as the authors of *Go Girls!* know.

Historian Marjan Drnovšek authors the first, and longest, essay, “History and Concealment.” This traces the history of emigration (of both genders) as a subject from medieval times, providing a comprehensive background before launching into the main subject of the article: Slovenian women abroad, but particularly in the United States. Drnovšek's primary

sources include long lists of numbers of migrants and the more humanistic Catholic newsletters from the period after World War I and before World War II. He also makes mention of waves of migration to Egypt, Argentina, Germany, and other parts of Europe. Of particular interest is his analysis of women's liberation in the U.S. compared to Slovenia; of the role of the female migrant in the home and in the Catholic Church; and of language decline in the generation immediately following emigration.

The second essay, "Concealment and Patriarchy," is written by Marina Lukšič-Hacin, a sociologist. She employs what she calls the theory of "patriarchal gender dichotomy" (63) to analyze the lives of Slovenian women abroad, as well as the reasons they left home. She begins by asking what it means to be considered a woman or a man, and continues with a philosophical analysis of power relations between the genders in Slovenia. This leads her to the crux of her argument: that the culture of patriarchy in Slovenia—and, indeed, in Europe as a whole—has prevented women from entering into public discourse, thereby concealing them from society and, consequently, from the history books. She leaves the reader with the provocative assertion that women share responsibility for their own exclusion from the public sphere.

Mlekuž resurfaces with the essay "Patriarchy and Representation." His field of focus is narrow: the model of womanhood established by the Slovenian political emigrant community in Argentina. He looks exclusively at articles in the magazine *Svobodna Slovenija* 'Free Slovenia' from 1948–90. His analysis benefits from this concentration because it provides the deepest literary analysis and most extensive citations from primary sources in the collection. This essay provides a clear image of the idealized Slovenian immigrant to Argentina: the articles do not cite real women's lives, but rather the image of woman as "maternal, consecrated to the family, the nation, and God" (104). It differs from the other essays in that it focuses on the post–World War II period rather than the interwar period.

Sociologist Mirjam Milharčič Hladnik, who lived in New York collecting oral histories from Slovenian immigrants from 2000 to 2004, contributes the essay "Representation and Self-Representation." After giving a brief overview of the biographic method, she lets the women, as she says, "speak for themselves" (109). She makes clear that the life stories she provides are non-political migration narratives, of which she provides many anecdotes, which are often humorous, although the tone of the essay is undoubtedly still serious and scholarly. The construction of gender roles within the context of gender-marked migrations provides a lens through which the snippets of these women's life stories can be analyzed. Throughout the essay, she debates the definition of the life story, the process of constructing such a story, and the reasons they are useful to read.

Go Girls! is published by the University of Nova Gorica and the Slovenian Migration Institute of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana under the *Migrantke* 'Migrant' imprint. This imprint, founded in 2009, has put forth other titles, such as *Krila migracij. Po meri življenjskih zgodb* (Dressed to Go. Women's Stories on Migration). *Go Girls!* was borne out of the cooperation between the institute and the joint master of arts program in migration and intercultural relations, which involves six European universities including the University of Nova Gorica. As such, the intended audience is primarily a general scholarly one, although a reader with a keen interest in the subject—and a tolerance for academic language and lists of facts and figures outside of a narrative context—would also find the essays of interest.

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