

### *The Lindström AG between world economic crises and her merger in EMI Electrola*

More than all other countries in Europe Germany was after World War I in extremely bad economic circumstances, mainly because of the reparations

1922/23 the German currency Mark and the economy in Germany collapsed which resulted in a hyperinflation.

By 1928 German government nearly stabilized the situation but soon later on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1929 the famous stock exchange crash happened in USA with world wide sequences.

The „black Friday“ (next day, the 25<sup>th</sup> October) is one of many reasons for the growing influence of the Nazi Party in Germany in the light of rapidly growing unemployment (from 1,4 Million in 1930 to 6 Million in 1932). As there was little international help, the Nazi Government was easily accepted by the average people as the government has been able to diminish the unemployment by a massive arming and large infrastructure projects.

This is the background for the economic difficulties for LINDSTRÖM in this period resulting in the takeover by Columbia Graphophone 1926.

But the world economic crises harmed UK as well and so the two competition companies Columbia Graphophone and The Gramophone Co. were united in 1931 into EMI Ltd. which meant that in Germany Lindström and Electrola became sister companies.

Shares of Lindström AG had early in 1930 the highest value ever with 20% profit, but the New York crash resulted in terrible problems. The management tried to save the company with the help of budget releases, with sales exploitation of other products then records, selling of properties and so on.

The main shareholder Columbia tried to help with pressing orders from abroad. The rapid acceptance of radio posed not only in Germany additional problems for the music industry. The Government dictated for many industry products reduced prices. ODEON 10inch records for RM 3,50 had to be sold for RM 2,50 and the budget releases on GLORIA were offered for RM 1,50 not covering the overheads

30 Mill. records were sold in 1929 in Germany but only 8 Mill records in 1933. In addition Lindström as the main manufacturer of (acoustic) record equipments was harmed by the rapid introduction of electric machines.

### *The Nazis taking over the power*

The ban to work for all Jewish people, in our context for artists and composers, not to mentioned the unbelievable harm to all this human beings resulted in a ban to sell records of Jewish artists as well as works by Jewish composers. Lindström was the home for so many Jewish artists that this meant to cut the catalogue nearly by half.

The superstars of this time Joseph Schmidt, Richard Tauber, Lotte Lehmann, Meta Seinemeyer, Instrumentalists as well as Conductors like Emanuel Feuerman, Bronislaw Huberman etc.

Composers like Gustav Mahler, Felix Mendelssohn, Jacques Offenbach etc. had to be deleted. This ban started by 1933 but came fully in effect immediately after the Olympic games 1936..

Out of the blue the sound film helped Lindström to survive with new stars like Zarah Leander, Willi Forst, Pola Negri, Hans Albers, Heinz Rühmann, Martha Eggert and Jan Kiepura.

In the classic repertoire Lindström tried to continue recordings next to orchestral music mainly with singers like Maria Cebotari and the international little known Herbert Ernst Groh. Early Fonotipia and Parlophone recordings where re-released in a historical series called “*Meister des Gesanges*” featuring Francisco d’Andrade, Giuseppe Anselmi, Alessandro Bonci, Lilli Lehmann, Emmy Destinn and others. Also some complete Operas like *Turandot* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* from the Parlophone-Cetra catalogue have been re-released.

A similar series was created for instrumental music called “*Meister des Instrumentes*” based on transfers of Welte-Rolls, played by Busoni, Glazounow, Granados, Grieg and others. Originally they should have been released much earlier on BEKA but it happened only 1937 on the ODEON label. The transfers are not first class because the piano used was not the best as well as the recording acoustic by Lindström has always been somewhat weak and the decision to release only on 10inch records limited the repertoire selection.

Lindström was much better in the light music, especially dance music played by Harry Roy, Nat Gonella, Victor Silvester, Barnabas von Geczy, Dajos Bela and others.

### *Jazz in the Lindström- catalogue*

Since the 1920s a jazz repertoire was built up on Odeon and Parlophone, especially with the series *Lindström American Record* with the slogan: „*Recorded in USA – Pressed in Germany*“. Next to recordings with King Oliver there have been releases with Frankie Trumbauer, Bix Beiderbecke, Joe Venuti, Louis Armstrong and many more.

After 1929 more and more Swing-Repertoire came along with i.e. the Casa Loma Orchestra, but as mentioned, many recordings with dance music i.e. by Harry Roy.

The Nazi ideology damned music performed or created by black people and so it became more and more difficult to offer Jazz in Germany. One sound was somewhat tolerated: the Swing-Music. Here was Lindström famous with its „*Odeon Swing Music Series*“ but secretly offering not only Swing. Here you can find next to Louis Armstrong Duke Ellington, Bix Beiderbecke and others. There have been also modern jazz repertoire including Ted Wilson, Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, as well as old Armstrong Hot Five's. Officially Swing and Jazz recordings were made for Export but have been available by clever shops also in Germany.

Lindström started of course also to exploit the COLUMBIA catalogue in Germany and the two new sister-companies Lindström/Electrola where from 1932 onwards able to offer nearly all treasures of the Swing-area from Artie Shaw to Lionel Hampton and from Duke Ellington to Benny Goodman.

Companies like Lindström used sometimes tricks to avoid the ban of the Reichsmusikkammer printing on the label „*Jean's Orchestra*“ instead of Jean Goldkette or using a pseudonym, at least initials on the label like G. T. for Richard Tauber recordings.

Since 1933 the PARLOPHON label was not any longer used for new releases. The economic difficulties forced Lindström to concentrate their activities. Of course the budget label GLORIA offered light music, even using for a short time (up to June 1931) Deutsche Grammophon Repertoire based on an intercompany agreement. From 1935 not only 10inch

also 12 inch releases happened on the Gloria-Label. At the beginning Gloria exploited existing repertoire but from 1931 onwards until 1939 special recordings were produced. Otto Dobrindt busy for all Lindström repertoire recorded also for Gloria under the pseudonym Eric Harden, a name used also for other bandleaders.

Quiet a number of executives in the German record industry have been Jewish. Many emigrated in time like Richard Seligsohn, Lindström board member and IFPI president. Max Straus, who formed Lindström from the beginning believed to be save as Manager in a British Company but was finally forced out through an intrigue by an Nazi employee (Dr. Kepler) of certain influence. Straus survived in UK.

### **Lindström and the Second World War**

Heavy cuts happened during the wartime. Qualified employees were forced to the army, raw material became short. Customers had to give two or three records for recycling when buying a new one. This happened by the way till 1949.

The Lindström AG as well as Electrola have been taken as enemies property under a German trusteeship and the factory was misused for manufacturing parts for aircrafts.

Officially the German administration ordered in October 1943 that only war-important material was allowed to be fabricated and new recordings had to be made in Vienna, Prag or Bruxelles.

The last recordings in Berlin happened in January 1945 with Herbert Ernst Groh and violinist Kurt Stieler, short before the Lindström Concert hall, actually the recording studio was bombed on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945 and also other parts of Lindström in Berlin Schlesische Straße have been hardly damaged.

A lot of shells were destroyed during the bombing, many have been transferred to save places outside Berlin but were lost in the chaos after the end of the war.

Soviet soldiers conquered Berlin in April 1945 and controlled the ruined city at first alone. The factory and offices have been stormed. All files, recording books, shells etc. have been thrown out of the windows; a fire destroyed still used parts of the property. Only after some time employees saved as much as possible what was found on the streets.

### **New start in Berlin 1945**

Most of the recording files were saved, even some in bad condition but most of the shells were completely lost.

In a cellar in Berlin, normally used for posters and decoration material some thousands of pressings survived and in selling these records off this resulted in the starting capital (RM 30.000) to reanimate the few not damaged parts of the factory. So Lindström was the first operating record factory after the war and by spring 1946 a tiny Odeon catalogue was available.

The first post-war recording took place in June and October 1946: The "Trout"-Quintett by Schubert with members of the Berlin Philharmonic and in November 1946 the first songs were recorded with Heinz Huppertz „*Hör mein Lied, Violetta*“ and „*Wenn der Mond steht über den Bergen*“.

The first pressings after the war had white labels, partly hand-coloured under the license of the Military Government: „*Hergestellt unter Zulassung Nr. B – 503 der Nachrichtenkontrolle der Militärregierung*“.

### **The Berlin-Blockade**

It was difficult in Berlin; no fresh money, no investments for reconstructions, difficulties with raw material, the city an island and soon later blocked by the Soviets. Lindström transferred the pressings to the Pallas factory in Diepholz. The British parent company didn't help very much and was waiting what will happen in and around Berlin. Even the fact that Lindström has secretly shipped copy-shells until 1941 via Switzerland or Norway to EMI at Hayes, nobody there helped now with copy-shells or other adequate material. For this reason the business based only on existing shells and new recordings.

It was mainly light music what has been recorded in the first years 1946 21, 1947 65, but during the blockade only 30 new recordings took place. 1949 there was a real start up with 198.

The first Pop-Stars have been Bully Buhlan and Gerhard Wendland, the Heinz Huppertz Orchestra, Kurt Widmann and others but soon Zarah Leander again and Tenor Herbert Ernst Groh. The famous Chansonette Claire Waldorff, during the wartime declared „unwanted“, recorded 1951 seven new titles for Odeon.

Electrola as well as Odeon recorded still on wax. Tape was used as test material in November 1946, but according to recording books not before January 1949

Early in 1949 a subsidiary factory was established in Nürnberg, Äußere Bayreuthstraße 310 and was in use until 1953

The general meeting of the Carl Lindström AG decided on November 26<sup>th</sup> 1951 to transform the firm in to a Limited liability company. MD became Adam Kaferstein, Berlin.

### **Köln – the new home of Lindström**

In 1952 a new place was found in the centre of West Germany. It was a former rubber plant, heavily destroyed in wartime but large enough for a complete new start in Cologne – Braunsfeld, Maarweg 149.

The Cologne subsidiary was registered on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1952 with 1 Mill DM capital. MD's have been Werner Schiele and Dr. Rudi Thalheim, both registered in Berlin.

Soon later, in September 1953 the Berlin headquarter was given up, and the company moved entirely to Cologne.

The real reconstruction of Lindström and Electrola started with the new MD for both companies Dr. Ladislaus Veder, appointed in December 1953 who remained in this position till 1969.

His deputy became Max Ittenbach, who has been manager of the Odeon Musikhaus in Berlin during and before the war.

The factory buildings in Berlin where used for many years by the Berlin authorities to store food for difficult times like the blockade in 1948/49. EMI sold the facilities finally some time in the 1980ies.

Some thousands of shells, which had survived the wartime, have unfortunately been given by order of an EMI executive to second-hand dealers not anticipating the wealth of this material, just to save the costs for the move to Cologne. Soon later the growing interest in historical

material forced the German company to ask record collectors for good pressings to copy their own property. Also at Hayes many material was during the 1950s wasted and is lost for ever.

First a brand-new factory has been build up 1953/54 together with an electroplating and with stores and shipping department to deliver records to twelve outlets in West Germany. The start at Cologne was difficult and only by 1955/56 black figures were reached. The working structure: LINDSTRÖM for the technical side and ELECTROLA for A&R and Sales remained.

The division of labour of the both German companies worked more smoothly than at the headquarter, were personalities influenced the climate and old competition rules remained alive. The early Beatles recordings i.e. were released in UK on Parlophone and Electrola had to release them on Odeon. An other example is the long lasting A&R competition between COLUMBIA with Walter Legge, who recorded i.e. Herbert von Karajan, Maria Callas and HMV with Victor Olof who recorded i.e. Yehudi Menuhin and Edwin Fischer. It was not before the 1970ies that Columbia became an entire Pop-Label and classical music was exclusively released on HMV/Electrola.

The main Lindström Label ODEON has been used with rare exceptions until about 1953 for light music and Jazz, later mainly for folk music and for export in countries where the trademarks COLUMBIA or HMV haven't been registered for EMI. The Initials EMI have been later (from 1991 onwards) used as Trademark to avoid such problems.

After the war it was easy to start up again in Lindström's traditional field of Jazz. Already end 1946 a number of recordings from the former „*Odeon-Swing-Music-Series*“ has been released, i.e. with Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington. People were eager to get hold of these recordings, most of them officially forbidden in the Nazi-Area. Shellac was still short and customers had to bring some old pressings to get a brand-new one.

1949 the Jazz repertoire was enlarged with the British „*Parlophone Super-Rhythm-Style-Series*“, offering modern recordings by Gillespie, Woody Herman, Count Basie and others. Already around 1952/53 no other company in Germany was able to present such a wide ranch. Old

„collector pieces“ on Columbia have been available since 1954 again. EMI's Jazz activities, at least in Germany diminished slowly after the 1950s and only around 1990 new efforts has been made.

The Lindström factory in Cologne made shellac pressings till 1957; PVC pressings came along since 1953; first 7inch singles and EPs and from 1954 onwards 10inch and 12 inch LPs have been introduced.

From 1958 onwards stereo recordings and pressings have been available. Lindström manufactured some years mono and stereo versions parallel but was the first company in the world to give up mono pressings declaring their pressings with the Symbol S/M meaning Stereo also on mono equipment playable.

A modern recording Studio was build up 1956 at Cologne with all necessary technical rooms. This was the place were Fred Bertelmann, Conny Froboess, Gitte Haenning and Marlene Dietrich – to name just a few – recorded their songs and this studio was fully booked up until Herbert Grönemeier started his carrier. From this time onwards artists more and more used their own studios or preferred quiet places somewhere in the country.

Classical music recordings have been made before the Berlin Wall mainly in Berlin, using the best musicians from East and West – preferably at the Grunewald church, at the Siemens-Villa or later the Philharmonie at Berlin. After the Wall more and more recordings took place in Munich and chamber music has been recorded at Neumarkt, in the Nederland's or in Switzerland.

When the MC was introduced 1965 a year later Lindström's last big investment was made to set up a small MC factory on the Cologne properties. On 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1972 the Lindström G.m.b.H merged in EMI Electrola GmbH. 1993 all factory buildings were pulled down and finally the company gave up the properties at Maarweg and moved 2000 to Mediapark Cologne because the world wide music industry crises forced EMI Music to cut down heavily staff and activities.

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