

## THE LINDSTRÖM PROJECT – WHERE ARE WE NOW

(2009-02-16 - a first draft – additions and corrections welcome !)

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When the Lindström project was started at the Immenstadt meeting of GHT in May 2008, the participants decided on the following goals:

1. A business history of Carl Lindström AG
2. A discography of Lindström 78 rpm issues
3. Production: management, planning of repertoire at central and local level, recording practice
4. Technology
5. Recorded repertoire and artists
6. Lindström in Berlin

It was agreed that the full plan would take many years and require the cooperation of several researchers. Nevertheless, it has been encouraging that a great deal of progress has already been made. The project has been able to coordinate existing research and initiate new projects. The following is a brief summary of our current knowledge of the Lindström concern.

### 1. Primary sources

#### 1.1. Lindström company files in Germany

Many collectors have been aware that some original Lindström recording books (handwritten lists of recording sessions) have survived at EMI Germany, but until now, there has been no complete inventory of them. Thanks to the work of Herfried Kier, we now have a full inventory of surviving recordings books, and there is an initiative to deposit them at Deutsches Musikarchiv and make them more widely available.

#### 1.2. Lindström files at EMI (UK) and elsewhere

Thanks to the work of Peter Martland, we now know that Lindström material (duplicates, reports etc) have also been preserved at the EMI Music Archives at Hayes (UK). Some of this material will be made available in Peter Martland's forthcoming book. Unfortunately the current status of the EMI archives makes research difficult. Similar material may possibly also survive in other countries where Lindström / EMI has been active, but no inventory has been made yet.

#### 1.3. Catalogues

During its years of activity, Lindström and associated companies published a very large number of printed catalogues, supplements, newsletters, official magazines etc. In some countries (e.g. Sweden), the national libraries have good collections. In other countries the material is scattered in private collections, or lost. An inventory is needed, but it will be a big task. A selection of catalogues and documents has already been published on the GHT website.

#### 1.4. Public documents

A great deal of information on Lindström exists in official registers such as company, patent and trade mark registers, stock exchange registers, city address books, etc, but these sources remain largely untouched. Recent work by Hugo Strötbaum and Pekka Gronow uncovered interesting documents on Transoceanic Trading Co. the Lindström concern's international arm, at the Amsterdam chamber of commerce (to be reported separately).

#### 1.5. Lindström discs in public and private collections

Thanks to the internet, there is now a possibility to seek information on surviving records from many public collections, such as British Library, Swedish national sound archives, Deutsches Musikarchiv, the Dismarc catalogue etc.

### 2. "Pre-Lindström companies"

The original Carl Lindström company produced gramophones, not records. It entered the record business 1910-1913 by purchasing a number of existing record companies, and "inherited" their record factories, back catalogues, trademarks, artist contracts and representatives organization around the world. In the history of the Lindström company, the activities of these companies constitute an important chapter.

#### 2.1. Beka

No company history exists? Some catalogue series documented?

#### 2.2. International Talking Machine Co (Odeon, Fonotipia)

There are several discographies and histories of the Fonotipia label, which also discuss some aspects of ITMC. See, for instance, Frank Andrews: A Fonotipia Fragmentia, a history of the Societa Italiana di Fonotipia – Milano 1903-1948 (1977, Historic Singers Trust), and Michael Henstock, Fonotipia.

All Scandinavian Odeon series are documented (Englund, Vanberg, Strömmer).

#### 2.3. Favorite

The history of the Favorite company, especially its activities in the Orient, are discussed in several articles by Hugo Strötbaum. Scandinavian series listed by Vanberg, Liliedahl, Strömmer.

#### 2.4. Lyrophon

No company history exists? Swedish series discography (Liliedahl)

#### 2.5. Dacapo

No company history or discography?

### 3. Carl Lindström AG

There are several books and articles which cover some aspects of the company's history (Wahl, Kier, Lotz, company Festschrifte). A recent Swedish publication is a history of the Lindström family in Sweden (Inge Bergqvist: Industrifamiljen Lindström. Strängnäs 2008).

The inventory of the Lindström system of matrix numbers (Lotz, Englund) can be considered the first significant result of the Lindström project. It is published on the GHT and Lotz websites. A partial list of the Lindström catalogue series can be found in Vernon, but it needs to be completed.

Numerical listings of several Odeon, Parlophon and Beka catalogue series have been published by Sieben and others. Artist discographies of several artists who recorded for these labels can be found in Lotz, Deutsche Nationaldiskographie and other publications. The final goal of the project is to publish a full on-line database of all Lindström recordings; some samples can already be found on the GHT website.

Principal task: a more complete company history

Full inventory of catalogue series

Numerical discographies of all series, leading to a complete discographical Lindström database

### 4. The Lindström company's international organization and mergers with other companies

From the International Talking Machine Co and other companies purchased in 1910-1913, Lindström "inherited" an international organization which covered most continents. This organization will be documented in greater detail in national studies (see below).

In 1919, the Lindström company founded the Transoceanic Trading Company, a Dutch company based in Amsterdam. Transoceanic did not produce any records, but it functioned as a holding company which owned (at least some of) Lindström's regional companies and functioned as a channels of payments between them. This company needs to be documented separately.

In 1925, Lindström was purchased by the Columbia Graphophone Co. of UK. In 1931, both companies merged with the Gramophone Co to form EMI. However, Lindström and its international network continued to function independently, and nominally they even competed with their sister companies. The merger, as seen from the British side, will be covered in Peter Martland's forthcoming book. However, the relative independence of the Lindström branch makes it essential that we continue to study the history of Lindström and its various representatives around the world after 1925 from the Bwerlin perspective.

The study of post-1925 Lindström should also include the study of the various other companies which were purchased by the company and eventually merged with the Lindström organization. These include at least Homochord, Pathe, Kristall and possibly Nipponophone and OKeh.

### 5. Regional companies and agents

The study of the international history of the Lindström organization must begin with an inventory of the various companies which belonged to his concern. At the moment, we only have a list of agents in the late 1930s, which is included as an appendix.

## 5.1. North America

The Otto Heineman(n) Phonograph Supply Company was founded in 1915, as a manufacturer of gramophones and parts. In 1918, it also started producing records, and in 1919, the name was changed to General Phonograph Corporation. For a short period in 1921, a separate American Odeon Corporation also existed.

General was never formally owned by Lindström, but as the result of an agreement made in 1921, the company was closely tied to the Lindström concern and acted as the representative of Lindström in the USA, Canada, Mexico and Cuba. After U.K. Columbia has obtained Lindström and U.S. Columbia, General became a subsidiary of Columbia and the name was changed to the Okeh Phonograph Co. Okeh continued to function as the US outlet for Lindström recordings, and outside the USA, Okeh material appeared on Odeon, Parlophon(e) and other Lindström labels.

There are good company histories and discographies of Okeh record, although a complete label listing of all catalogue series is not yet available (Laird-Rust, Discography of Okeh records, 1918-1934, Wright, The Okeh 8000 race series.) On Okeh in Canada, see also Ed Moogk, Roll back the years.

## 5.2. South America

Lindström had factories in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, and representatives in (almost) all countries on the continent. No histories available, but a listing of Brazilian Odeon records may be included in the Brazilian national 78 rpm discography which has not been available for study yet.

## 5.3. Asia and Africa

Lindström was active in almost all Asian and African countries and territories; for a list of agents in the 1930s see appendix. Michael Kinnear's book "The 78 r.p.m. record labels of India" (Heidelberg, Australia 2003) contains a description of Lindström agencies and catalogue series in India and adjoining countries (Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Dutch East India, Iraq etc), but no discographies. There exist possibly also books/articles on the record industry in Thailand and China, with information on Lindström, but detailed information is not yet available.

## 5.4. Australia

Ross Laird's book "Sound beginnings" is a history of the recording industry in Australia which also contains a detailed history of Parlophone in Australia. The Parlophone and Odeon labels in Australia only existed during the Columbia/EMI period of these labels, but Laird's information shows that Australian Parlophone operated under the leadership of the Lindström branch in Berlin.

## 5.5. Europe (outside Germany)

### 5.5.1. Scandinavia

There are full histories and discographies of Lindström in Sweden, Norway and Finland (Englund, Vanberg, Gronow, national discography databases). There is also a history of Lindström in Denmark (Morten Hein, Musik till salg), and a catalogue of Danish Lindström records in the national library can be found online, but not a full numerical listing.

### 5.5.2. The Baltic states

A (partial) listing is in the Estonian national discography (Pedusaar). For Latvia and Lithuania, no details

#### 5.5.3. Czechoslovakia

Work in progress (Gössel)

#### 5.5.4. Hungary

Work in progress (Simon)

#### 5.5.5. Yugoslavia (Serbia)

Work in progress; a company history of Lindström in Serbia published by project (Milovanovich)

#### 5.5.6. Greece

A numerical listing of Greek Lindström series (Odeon, Parlophon, Lyrophon, etc) is in the new Greek 78 rpm discography by Dim. Maniatis, I ek peraton diskografia grammofonoi. Erya laikon mas kallitekhnon. Athina 2006. The listings before 1925 are quite cursory, but later listings seem to be complete.

#### 5.5.7. Turkey

A history of Lindström labels in Turkey can be found in Cemal Ünlü, Git zaman gel zaman. Fonograf – gramofon – tas plak. Istanbul 2004 . Numerical listings not yet available?

#### 5.5.8. United Kingdom

Carl Lindström (London) Ltd was formed on 26 March 1913. During the war, British Lindström and Fonotipia were confiscated by the government and sold to the Hertford record Co, which was controlled by UK Columbia.

After the war, Lindström again entered U.K., when Transoceanic Trading Co. established a firm named Parlophone Co Ltd on 30 Aug 1923. UK Parlophone made original recordings and issued material originally issued on the Odeon and Okeh labels abroad. In 1925, after Columbia had purchased Lindström, Parlophone became part of the Columbia (later EMI) concern. It is not known what was the relationship of British Parlophone and the Lindström head office in Berlin after 1925.

#### 5.5.9. Switzerland

For a history of Lindström in Switzerland, see Frank Erzinger & Hanspeter Woessner, Geschichte der schweizerischen Schallplattenaufnahmen, Zürcher Taschenbuch, 199?

#### 5.5.10. Austria

The various pre-Lindström labels were already well established in Austro-Hungarian empire before World War One, and later Lindström had special Austrian numerical series . Detailed information not yet available?

#### 5.5.11. Bulgaria

The history of the Lindström labels in Bulgaria is briefly discussed in Vencislav Dimov's article "Studies of recorded music in Bulgaria during the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century", *Blgarskogo muzikoznanie* 1/20005 (in Bulgarian)

#### 5.5.12. Russia

For an account of pre-Lindström labels in imperial Russia, see P.N. Gryunberg: *Istoriya nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*. Moscow 2002.

#### 5.5.13. France, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Romania, Russia etc

Some work exists, but an inventory is not yet available.

### 6. Technical history

An inventory of Lindström technicians and their signs (found in wax on pressed records) is under progress

### 7. Production and repertoire

No comprehensive study of Lindström's production and repertoire policy exists, but there are specific studies on various artists and repertoires (etc. Seil)

### 8. Lindström in Berlin

No details yet. This section concerns the important role of the Lindström concern in the industrial and cultural history of Berlin.

### 9. Conclusions

The most remarkable achievements of the project so far are the publication of the inventory of the complete Lindström matrix series system, and the initiative to move the remaining Lindström recording books from EMI to a public archive. The project has also created a network of researchers working on related topics in various countries, and both helped to initiate new research and get existing research published. Work will continue independently in many countries, with an annual inventory of progress at the GHT conferences. Quicker progress would require more financial support and the possibility to engage researchers full-time.