

Edison Bell in Hungary

Eternola Mechanikai Rt.¹



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Despite the fact that there was a prosperous gramophone industry in Hungary before 1918 (including an independent Hungarian recording firm, Első Magyar Hanglemezgyár), after the First World War, the Hungarian gramophone industry virtually disappeared. Some international recording companies – mostly Favorite and Columbia – made recordings in Hungary during the last years of the Great War; however, the country's financial and territorial losses, as well as internal political tensions, made it very difficult to relaunch the cultural life after 1918. After a few years of stagnation, the gramophone trade began to revive in 1923.² However, new Hungarian recordings were made mostly abroad. The international companies only began to make recordings in Hungary again in 1926 (HMV, Columbia, Homocord) and 1927 (Odeon).

This was the situation in which Eternola Mechanikai Rt. was founded, by a merge of the gramophone factory of György Gábor and the precision mechanical factory of Gyula [Julius] Liedl.³ Since the 1980s, Eternola has been attracting the attention of researchers of Hungarian recording history,⁴ although some misinformation has also been published about them.⁵ In my article I will present the history of the record company based on contemporary sources.⁶

Eternola Mechanikai Rt.

The inaugural general assembly of Eternola Mechanikai Rt. took place on 4 July 1927 in Budapest.⁷ The company was registered in October 1927, the object of the company being „manufacture and sale of ordinary and flexible discs and gramophones.”⁸ The board consisted of four people: dr. Dezső Pap (director), Bertalan Gábor, György Gábor and Gyula Liedl.⁹

Initially, the company was mainly involved in the manufacture of players, a business that was present throughout the company's history. They were proud of the fact that they manufactured all gramophones in their factory (Budapest, V., Váci út 6.), with the exception of one imported component, and even exported their own gramophone components abroad.¹⁰ In 1932, they looked back on this activity as follows: the company produced an average of 4000 talking machines a year and exported mainly to the Balkan states.¹¹

All kinds of players were made: portable, table, stand, spring and electrically powered.¹² Radio gramophones and sound amplifiers were also advertised.¹³ Two- and three-disc non-synchronous gramophones were made for cinemas,¹⁴ and an Eternola two-disc gramophone was used in the studio of the Hungarian Radio during gramophone concerts (See Fig. 9).¹⁵ Eternola-Rayflex, one of the earlier Eternola models, appeared at an exhibition in April 1928.¹⁶ Around Christmas 1931 five models were on the market: the small and cheap Eternolette, Eternola Portable, and Eternola Tablofon,¹⁷ and as new models, Eternolette Super, and Eternofon.¹⁸

Commercial sound recording was also planned from the beginning, but started only later, obviously due to the lack of material and equipment. Eternola first started experimenting with an unbreakable record. We can read about this in an article published in December 1927; although the name Eternola Mechanikai Rt. does not appear in the long article, it is striking that it mentions two of the managers of the then already existing company, György Gábor and Gyula Liedl. According to the article, Gábor and Liedl „perfected the experiments of the German Baron Wimmersberg on the material of the gramophone record so the gramophone record they produced is perfectly flexible and unbreakable.”¹⁹ A recording studio had already been set up, with plans to start recording after Christmas.²⁰ It is not quite clear what this unbreakable gramophone record was, and, up to now, no recordings of Eternola appeared from the first half of 1928. However, later experiments with new recording materials continued, and in 1929–1930, according to the company's archive documents, successful experiments were carried out with the pressing of cellophane discs.²¹

Eternola's first recording session took place between 16 and 30 October 1928 in Budapest, in collaboration between Eternola and Edison Bell, and the recordings were made by Edison Bell's sound engineer, Paul Voigt.²² Apparently related to the start of the sound recordings, the company's share capital was increased from 150,000 Pengő to 300,000 Pengő at the extraordinary general assembly of 27 October 1928.²³ About 200 recordings were made in two weeks, with matrix numbers 201 to 415.²⁴ The diameter of the matrices was marked in the

prefix of the matrix and catalogue numbers: MH for 15 cm, SH for 20 cm, H for 25 cm and VH for 30 cm. Matrix numbers were in three digits and catalogue numbers in four. The records were pressed very likely in London by Edison Bell, and the first records were announced for release in early December 1928.²⁵ Shortly before, in late November 1928, Eternola opened a shop at Kossuth Lajos utca 15. (See Fig. 10).²⁶

The repertoire of the first session is truly comprehensive. From spoken records to popular music, and vocal and instrumental classical music, it includes every genre of the Hungarian musical culture of the time. This wide repertoire shows the competence of the artistic director of Eternola, Endre Hajós, a conductor and composer.²⁷ The interpreters were the most outstanding – mostly young – Hungarian performers of the period. Several Hungarian artists, including, for example, Louis Kentner (cat. no. SH 1049, H 1050, VH 1051, VH 1052) and Alexander Svéd (cat. no. SH 1022) made their first gramophone recordings at Eternola. The orchestra of the Budapest Operetta Theatre was conducted by the 36 years old Pál Ábrahám.

Very little is known about the circumstances of the recordings. The small Hungarian company obviously could not compete with international record companies. According to press reports, the recordings were being made in a „storage room” on Váci út.²⁸ This studio must have been at least medium sized, as the choir of 32 members sang on the recordings of the Budapest University Choirs (cat. no. SH 1026–1030).²⁹ Surprisingly, a few years after the recordings were made, the then world-famous Louis Kentner, with several excellent Columbia recordings behind him, wrote a somewhat disparaging retrospective of Eternola’s first Budapest recordings in *The Gramophone*.³⁰ However, Kentner’s words were answered by the sound engineer, Paul Voigt himself, in a warmly-worded open letter to the editor, assuring the pianist that the Budapest recordings were indeed excellent.³¹

The second recording session of Eternola took place in September 1929.³² That time *Budapesti Hírlap* made a report during the recording process of *Valami van magában* (matr. H 538, see Fig. 17).³³ The journalist listened to the rehearsal and the recording of the song in the studio room, as well as the sound check from the technical room. The short article reveals the novelty of the electrical recording process, that is, the experience that Miklós Sebő, who hums softly into the microphone, is drowned out by the orchestra during the live performance, but his voice can still be heard on the recording. Unfortunately, the journalist did not note the name of the sound engineer, only that he was an Englishman.

The 1929 recording session featured some new performers, including the company’s own dance orchestra, conducted by Dezső Losonczy (cat. no. SH 1159–1169),³⁴ the Szabó Schrammel Orchestra (cat. no. SH 1140–1042) and the Balalaika Orchestra of the Russian immigrant Eugen Stepat (cat. no. SH 1150–1152).³⁵ The repertoire was similar to that of the first session, except that much more Hungarian folk-inspired art songs (*magyarnóta*) were recorded in 1929 than before. Some new instrumental recordings were made with saxophone player Árpád Lakatos (cat. no. H 1158) and cellist Jenő Kerpely (cat. no. H 1157), and the former recordings of Ernő Dohnányi were remade at that time (matr. no. H 372–

373 and H 455–456).³⁶

The matrix sequence of the second recording session began with matrix number 416, and the highest known Eternola matrix number is H 547. The last two recordings (H 546–547) are excerpts from the operetta *Sisters* by Lajos Lajtai, premiered on 4 January 1930. It is questionable whether these recordings were made four months before the premiere and were withheld until January 1930, or if there was a third recording session at the end of 1929 or early 1930. While the recordings of Miklós Sebő (matr. H 539–541), which were made still in September 1929, were broadcast in December 1929,³⁷ the subsequent recording of the violoncellist Jenő Kerpely (H 542) appeared in the radio program for the first time on 3 February 1930.³⁸ H 547 (*Jaj valahol messze*) was first broadcast on 4 February 1930.³⁹ Nevertheless, both the H 539–541 and H 546–547 recordings appeared in the same Hungarian catalogue in 1930, under the title Eternola Edison Bell.

International relations: Edison Bell, Edison Bell Penkala, Eternola Edison Bell

Eternola Mechanikai Rt. continuously tried to build international relations. Based on the company’s surviving documents, it can be assumed that these efforts accounted for a significant part of the management’s activities, as they hoped to achieve financial security in the difficult economic situation both in Hungary and internationally. Two important contacts should be mentioned: Edison Bell in London and Edison Bell Penkala in Zagreb. Eternola Mechanikai Rt.’s records bear the brand name Eternola Edison Bell, and the first recording session was conducted by Paul Voigt, Edison Bell’s sound engineer. However, Eternola’s first Hungarian-language catalogue was published in 1929, under the title *Edison Bell Penkala magyar hanglemezek főjegyzéke* [General Catalogue of Edison Bell Penkala Hungarian Records]. The record labels of Eternola (with a logo of a Hungarian hussar blowing a trumpet) tell us almost nothing about these connections: there is no reference to Zagreb or London and there is no text on the edge of the labels. Eternola’s papers do not give us all the details of these two important international contacts, but the Budapest and Zagreb documents do tell us a lot about the Central European record industry of the late 1920s.

The start date of Eternola’s Hungarian recordings coincides with a significant event in Hungarian recording history: the so-called gramophone action of the Hungarian Ministry of Culture.⁴⁰ In May 1928, the Ministry announced the gramophone action, in the framework of which a series of records of Hungarian music was to be produced and distributed with a gramophone to Hungarian towns, villages and Hungarian territories beyond the post-1920 border of Hungary. According to sources, a tender was launched for the production of the recordings and the gramophones, which was won by His Master’s Voice. Unfortunately, no documentation of the tender has survived and there is no mention of it in Eternola’s documents, but later the Hungarian press sharply criticised the Ministry of Culture for not having the Hungarian record company make the gramophone action.⁴¹ It is a fact that it would have been absolutely vital for the newly started Hungarian company to win a state order, but it is also a fact that at the time of the announcement of the gramophone action, Eternola was only

producing gramophones, it had no recording activities. It cannot be ruled out that it was precisely in order to participate in the ministry's gramophone action that Eternola's expansion in the summer or autumn of 1928 became urgent, and that it had to find an external partner for the production of sound recordings. And as there was neither a permanent studio suitable for gramophone recording in Hungary at the time (the first large studio of the Hungarian Radio suitable for music recordings was inaugurated in October 1928),⁴² nor a company producing records, a foreign partner had to be found.

It can be assumed that Eternola contacted Edison Bell, which was already present in Central Europe, or its international subsidiary (Edison Bell International),⁴³ and that Edison Bell could have directed the Hungarian company to Edison Bell's Zagreb subsidiary Edison Bell Penkala. At the same time, in accordance with the principles previously established with Edison Bell Penkala,⁴⁴ Edison Bell placed its own sound engineer and recording equipment at the Hungarian company's disposal. Eternola Mechanikai Rt. probably wanted to acquire at least partial representation rights for Edison Bell (or Edison Bell International) and found it inconvenient to communicate through the Zagreb company,⁴⁵ but negotiations with the London company were delayed. It is possible that Edison Bell deliberately stalled because of its previously established relations with Edison Bell Penkala in Zagreb. In any case, it is clear that Edison Bell was negotiating with Eternola in Budapest and with Edison Bell Penkala in Zagreb at the same time, presumably in order to secure better terms for its business in Central Europe. Since Edison Bell Penkala had been in contact with the British company earlier than Eternola, Penkala was understandably at an advantage in the negotiations. However, reading the documents, it seems that Edison Bell's people even played the two Central European companies off against each other when business needs dictated it.

The Budapest documents contain little information about the international negotiations, except that these negotiations were held and they were unsuccessful. However, the "Minutes", which was a witness to a phase of discussions held in Zagreb in 1929, illustrates the relationship between the three companies and complements the Budapest documents. In mid-November 1929, representatives of Edison Bell International Ltd. held negotiations first in Zagreb and then in Budapest under the leadership of Harry Hesford, but while Hesford spent several days in Zagreb, he only spent one day (19 November) in the Hungarian capital.⁴⁶ Behind the polite and impersonal sentences of the Minutes, the conflict between Edison Bell and Penkala, caused by the presence of the Hungarian company, is almost palpable. In the following sentence Hesford almost blackmails Abraham Goodman (Edison Bell Penkala), who is losing his temper because of the financial entanglements of the London headquarters, with the option of a possible special deal in Budapest: „[Mr. Hesford] states that nevertheless he will go to Budapest in order to see the business of the Eternola and to form his own opinion.”⁴⁷

Even if it is not much, the Budapest documents tell us more about the relationship between Eternola and Edison Bell Penkala. The documents of Eternola's first ordinary general assembly, held in February 1930, show that, at the initiative

of Edison Bell Penkala, negotiations had been held in 1929 with Edison Bell's Zagreb affiliate „for the enlargement of the company and the addition of a record factory”, and that these negotiations had not yet been concluded.⁴⁸ In Eternola's second business year, from 1 January 1929 to 31 March 1930, the unsuccessful negotiations with Edison Bell continued. However, Eternola was awarded a contract to supply machine parts for the company's Yugoslavian plant (Edison Bell Penkala).⁴⁹ The Hungarian Edison Bell Penkala catalogue, published in 1929, may be a witness to this relationship.

It is very useful to compare the content of the different Central European (Penkala and Eternola) catalogues of Edison Bell.⁵⁰ The most remarkable difference between the two Hungarian catalogues (1929 and 1930) is that the recordings of the orchestra of the Budapest Operetta Theatre disappeared and were replaced by recordings of Eternola's own Dance Orchestra. We do not know whether there was any administrative reason behind that; it is possible that only the quickly changing popularity of operettas needed a new repertoire and paying their own studio orchestra was cheaper than paying the orchestra of a theatre. Some not too popular recordings also disappeared from the catalogue, as well as catalogue number H 1050, which contained Dohnányi's *March* op. 17/1 and an abridged version of Kodály's *Marosszék Dances*, performed by Louis Kentner. This was perhaps replaced by Ernő Dohnányi's own interpretation of his *March* and Beethoven's *Für Elise* (cat. no. H 1156).⁵¹ The most important difference between the Yugoslavian and Hungarian catalogues is that while the Yugoslavian catalogues also included international Edison Bell recordings with new catalogue numbers, for example, recordings of the pianist Anderson Tyrer,⁵² the catalogues of Eternola only included Hungarian recordings. Furthermore, while Eternola did not issue any Edison Bell Penkala recordings, Eternola recordings were reissued by Edison Bell Penkala, usually with modified catalogue numbers.

While the 1929 Edison Bell Penkala catalogue (*Edison Bell Penkala. II. Nastavak Glavnog Kataloga Domaćih i Stranih Ploča*, 1929) contains 14 Hungarian recordings from the first (1928) Budapest recording session, the 1931 Edison Bell Penkala catalogue (*Edison Bell Penkala. II. Nastavak Glavnog Kataloga Domaćih i Stranih Ploča*, 1931) contains one recording from the first and 30 recordings from the second (1929) Budapest recording session. Surprisingly, there is not any overlaps between the Hungarian repertoire of the 1929 and 1931 Edison Bell Penkala catalogues. The Hungarian repertoire of the 1929 Edison Bell Penkala catalogue consists of mainly instrumental music: four military band recordings, four instrumental recordings of Imre Magyari's gypsy orchestra, and all of the four discs of Louis Kentner. All that can be heard in Hungarian are a few operetta excerpts and dance songs, recorded by Hungarian singers and the orchestra of the Budapest Operetta Theatre. By contrast, the Hungarian repertoire of the 1931 Edison Bell Penkala catalogue includes, among others, 13 discs of Imre Magyari's gypsy orchestra, playing folk-inspired Hungarian art songs (*magyarnóta*) mostly with Hungarian singers, 4 discs of Miklós Sebő singing Hungarian dance songs with the Eternola Dance Orchestra, two Hungarian cabaret records, and even a disc containing old Hungarian songs in the arrangement of Aurél Kern for voice and piano. This catalogue also includes instrumental pieces from

the Eternola repertoire, the pianist Renée Sándor's disc from the 1928 recording session and violinist László Neumann's and cellist Jenő Kerpely's discs from the 1929 recording session. Furthermore, three records of the Szabó Schrammel Orchestra and two records of the Balalaika Orchestra of Eugen Stepat were also reissued by Edison Bell Penkala.

Eternola finally gave up the possibility of a direct contract with Edison Bell in 1930–1931 and instead signed an agency contract with the Decca gramophone factory.⁵³ We do not know exactly what Decca representation meant;⁵⁴ in any case, by February 1931, Eternola was advertising an „Original Decca Gramophone” (See Fig. 7).⁵⁵

Termination of Eternola

Eternola's existence coincides almost exactly with The Great Depression. The company chose different strategies to stay ahead of the financial problems. In the Hungarian trade press they tried to build up the image of the only Hungarian gramophone company (which was true at the time).⁵⁶ In the autumn of 1929, record and gramophone rentals were advertised at a daily rate.⁵⁷ In the second, increasingly difficult period of the company's history, gramophones were also delivered to customers' homes for demonstration purposes.⁵⁸ On two occasions, a poetry competition was held to advertise the company in a comic magazine: in 1930 the word Eternola and in 1931 the word Eternolette had to be written in verse.⁵⁹

But this did not solve the difficulties. The minutes of the annual general assemblies show that Eternola's products – despite the minutes claiming that they were widely acknowledged – were not financially successful.⁶⁰ As it was mentioned above, Eternola also made multi-disc gramophones for cinemas. By the early 1930s, it had become clear that the sound film industry was not going to continue to develop technically in this direction, so the company's business did not become profitable. In early 1932, the factory was closed down and in October the sales department was discontinued.⁶¹ Finally, at an ordinary general assembly held on 30 June 1933, the company's liquidation was decided.⁶² The company's stock was sold off in several phases at substantially reduced prices,⁶³ and on 18 April 1935, the dissolution of the company was registered.⁶⁴ Different types of contemporary sources have listed the causes in different ways. In addition to the declining private buying power, obviously influenced by the Great Depression, the company cited a lack of government orders and even the rise of radio, but most often blamed the government for the late arrival of customs protection.⁶⁵ Due to the low customs duty, almost anyone could import gramophones into Hungary, and the big international companies (HMV, Columbia, etc.) made use of this opportunity. And although Eternola had the possibility to export to the Balkan countries, it had to pay a high customs duty. This is evidenced by the Board of Directors' report for the business year 1929–1930, which pointed out that “Exports to the Balkans are hampered by heavy customs duty increases in some Balkan states, while we are almost completely without customs protection and the Hungarian market is flooded with products from foreign gramophone factories.”⁶⁶ Eternola fought hard for customs protection, but it was only in November 1931 that the Hungarian government introduced a higher duty on imports of gramophones.⁶⁷

Although Eternola proved to be a very short-lived business, it is still important for the history of Hungarian recorded music. On the one hand, thanks to its careful repertoire policy, it was almost the only one to record the art of Hungarian classical music performers of the late 1920s. On the other hand, it convinced Hungarian gramophone owners of the importance of supporting the domestic gramophone trade, thus paving the way for the new Hungarian record companies that were set up in the first half of the 1930s: it was certainly thanks in part to Eternola that Durium-Patria and Radiola were able to survive on the Hungarian market for longer.

Endnotes

¹ At the time of the research, the author is a research fellow at the Institute of Musicology, HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, and a holder of the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He offers his thanks to Prof. Naila Ceribašić, Dora Dunatov and Jelka Vukobratović, participants of the Project „The record industry in Croatia from 1927 to the end of the 1950s” (<https://www.ief.hr/en/research/projects/project-diskograf/>) and to Ágnes Lux for her help in the English text.

² István Deményi: „A gramofonkereskedelemtől,” *Varrógép- és Kerékpárújság* 8/11 (1 November 1926), 13.

³ –r. –f.: „Az »Eternola«, a vámemelés és a »kényszer«.” *Varrógép – kerékpár – gramofon* 14/5 (May 1932), 3. – Liedl was a mechanic and inventor in the sound recording and film business. His main business between 1927 and 1932 was Eternola, and he also took a position on the board of the National Association of Hungarian Gramophone Dealers. He had several patents related to sound recording and moving image. His pieces of sound equipment were used not only in Hungary but also at the Phonogram Archives of the Romanian Composers' Association. Liedl died on 25 September 1944.

⁴ See, for example, Enikő Veöreös: *A magyar hangfelmegőrtés története. Második rész (1920–1945)*. (Unpublished typescript, Budapest, 1995, located at the Archives for 20th and 21st Century Hungarian Music, Institute for Musicology, RCH), 33.; Géza Gábor Simon: *Magyar hangfelmegőrtés* (Budapest: JOKA, 2008), 45–46. Most recently, Klára Bajnai published a short summary of the history of Eternola: Géza Gábor Simon – Klára Bajnai: *Hangzó gyöngyszemek új köntösben. Műfajokon átívelő hangdokumentumok 20–21. századi visszaadása* (Budapest: JOKA, 2021), 14.

⁵ According to the renowned Hungarian recording historian Gábor Oldal, Eternola was the successor company of the Györfly and Wolf metal goods factory. He also claimed that the Radiola record factory of Pál Székely was founded as the successor of Eternola. These are not supported by contemporary sources. Gábor Oldal: „Kis magyar gramofonológia. 6. Rádió, gramofon, hangosfilm – a nagy triumvirátus.” *Gramofon* 2/9 (September 1997), 8–9. 8.; Gábor Oldal: „Kis magyar gramofonológia. 8. Új műfajok, bővülő repertoár.” *Gramofon* 2/11 (November 1997), 10–11. 10.

⁶ The archival documents of Eternola Mechanikai Rt are preserved at the Budapest City Archives, under the signature XV.20.48 VII.2.e. Cg. 28101. It contains the statutes of the company, the minutes of the annual general assemblies, the reports of the Board of Directors and of the supervisory board, the annual balance sheet, and several further official documents related to the registration and the bankruptcy proceedings of Eternola. I am very grateful to Klára Bajnai for sharing her research in these documents with me. In my article I will refer to these documents by their type and date, and with the abbreviation „Eternola Papers”.

⁷ *Központi Értesítő* 52/42 (20 October 1927), 907.

⁸ *Központi Értesítő* 52/42 (20 October 1927), 907.

⁹ *Központi Értesítő* 52/42 (20 October 1927), 907.

¹⁰ „Támadás a magyar gramofongyártás ellen.” *Honi Ipar* 25/1 (1 January 1932), 38.

¹¹ „Az Eternola grammofongyár beszüntette fizetéseit.” *Magyar Hírlap* 42/133 (16 June 1932), 9.

¹² „Van-e magyar gramofon?” *Honi Ipar* 22/21–22 (15 November 1929), 34.

¹³„A némafilmet is hangosítja a mozi új vetítő berendezése.” *Kecskeméti Közlöny* 12/275 (3 December 1930), 1–2.

¹⁴Eternola Papers, Report of the Board of Directors, 23 June 1931, 2.

¹⁵„Látogatás Schertz bácsi munkahelyén, a szőnyegpadlós, márványfalas Stúdióban.” *Kecskeméti Közlöny* 12/232 (12 October 1930), 7.

¹⁶„Az Eternola mechanikai r.-t.”, 8 *Órai Újság* 14/98 (29 April 1928), 10.

¹⁷[Advertisement], *Magyar Hírlap* 41/273 (1 December 1931), 3.

¹⁸„Vámemelés egy fillérnyi áremelés nélkül.” *Magyarság* 12/272 (29 November 1931), 17.

¹⁹„Feltalálták a törhetetlen gramofonlemezt.” *Nemzeti Újság* 9/281 (11 December 1927), 4.

²⁰„Feltalálták a törhetetlen gramofonlemezt.” *Nemzeti Újság* 9/281 (11 December 1927), 4.

²¹Eternola Papers, Minutes of the General Assembly on 30 June 1930, 4.

²²See the Budapest notebooks of Paul Voigt (Library and Archives Canada, Paul Voigt Fonds, MUS 142 1982–13, Vols 1–2). I am very grateful to Florin Caloianu and Richard Green for sharing the contents of these documents with me.

²³*Központi Értéstitő* 54/1 (3 January 1929), 6.

²⁴In 1927, Paul Voigt, the sound engineer of the Budapest sound recordings, still used parallel numbering sequences for the different sizes of matrices (Z, VZ, MZ prefixes). However, from 1928 – perhaps in connection with the establishment of Edison Bell International, or the start of the Hungarian and possibly other recording series – a new numbering system was introduced. The number sequence for Hungarian recordings starts with 201, and the different sizes of matrices (i.e. matrix numbers with different prefixes) are placed in a continuous sequence of numbers. About the matrix system of 1927 see the Zagreb notebooks of Paul Voigt. Library and Archives Canada, Paul Voigt Fonds. MUS 142 1982–13, Volume 1–2. I am very grateful to Naila Ceribašić for sharing these documents with me.

²⁵[Advertisement], *Nemzeti Újság* 10/267 (24 November 1928), 11.

²⁶[Advertisement], *Budapesti Hírlap* 48/267 (24 November 1928), 5.

²⁷*Edison Bell Penkala magyar hanglemezek főjegyzéke. 1929.* (Zagreb: Edison Bell Penkala, 1929), 2. – The biography of Endre Hajós is not fully explored. He was born in 1900 and studied with Leó Weiner. Until 1925 he worked as a conductor in France, Switzerland and Italy, and between 1926 and 1928 he was choirmaster in Hungary. During the Second World War he emigrated to Turkey and then to Israel. See: „Hajós Endre.” In: Imre Molnár (ed.): *A magyar muzsika könyve* (Budapest: Havas Ödön, 1936), 390.; „Hajós Endre.” In: László Dormándi – Vilmos Juhász (eds.): *Új Lexikon*. Vol. 3 (Budapest: Dante – Pantheon, 1936), 1624.; „Zene.” *Demokrácia* 5/24 (16 June 1946), 8.; László Pataki: „Három fiatal zeneszerző.” *Új Kelet*, Vol. 36, Nr. 2088 (17 June 1955), 10.

²⁸„Hogyan készül a gramofonszláger?” *Esti Kurir* 6/248 (31 October 1928), 9.

²⁹„Budapesti Egyetemi Énekkarok.” *Technika* 10/12 (December 1929), 4.

³⁰W. S. Meadmore: „Louis Kentner.” *The Gramophone* Vol. 16, No. 199 (December 1939), 246–247.

³¹[aul]. G. A. H. Voigt: „Louis Kentner. To the Editor of The Gramophone.” *The Gramophone* Vol. 17, No. 201 (February 1940), 339.

³²„Az Eternola új lemezei.” *Magyarország* 36/250 (2 November 1929), 25.

³³M. I.: „Amig a piros lámpa ég, a legteljesebb csöndet kérjük. Egy óra a gramofonlemezek boszorkányműveiben.” *Budapesti Hírlap* 49/221 (29 September 1929), 21.

³⁴Dezső Losonczy (1891 – cca1950) studied humanities and lived for some years in Dresden. From 1911 to 1916 he studied at the Music Academy with Zoltán Kodály and Viktor Herzfeld. From 1917 he worked as a conductor in Budapest, Nagyszeben (today: Sibiu, Romania) and Vienna. He conducted the world premiere of the first version of *Székelyfőnő* by Zoltán Kodály in 1924. He composed both popular and classical music. „Losonczy Dezső.” In: Aladár Schöpflin (ed.): *Magyar Színművészeti Lexikon*. Vol. 3 (Budapest: Országos Színészegyesület és Nyugdíjintézete, 1930), 145.

³⁵Eugen Stepat (1907–1984) lived in Hungary from the early 1920s; his orchestra appeared regularly on the program of the Hungarian Radio. Vig: „Eugen Stepat.” *Rádió Újság* 8/6 (1 February 1931), 4.

³⁶About the repeated Dohnányi recordings see my article: „Ernő Dohnányi: A Discography of the Performer.” *Studia Musicologica* LXIII/1–2 (2022), 17–85. 49–50.

³⁷See, for example, the program of the Radio for 2 December 1929, *Magyar Hírlap* 39/272 (29 November 1929), 15.

³⁸Radio program for 3 February 1930, *Magyar Hírlap* 40/25 (31 January 1930), 15.

³⁹Radio program, *Magyar Hírlap* 40/28 (4 February 1930), 9.

⁴⁰About the gramophone action of the Hungarian Ministry of Culture see my monograph: *His Master's Voice, 1928. A Vallás- és Közkultúrásügyi Minisztérium gramofonakciója.* (= Anna Dalos [ed.]: *Musicologia Hungarica* 6). (Budapest: HUN-REN BTK Zenetudományi Intézet, 2024).

⁴¹„Magyar dal – külföldi beszélőgépen.” *Honi Ipar* XXI/20–21 (15 November 1928): 15–16.

⁴²László Ujházy: „Kilencvenéves a Magyar Rádió 1-es stúdiója. 2. rész.” *Gramofon* 24/1 (Spring 2019): 12–15. 12.

⁴³Edison Bell International Ltd. was established in October 1928 in London. See: Frank Hoffmann (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound. Second Edition*. Vol. 1 (New York – London: Routledge, 2005), 353.; Bill Dean-Myatt: „Edison Bell Record Company.” In: Pekka Gronow – Christiane Hofer – Mathias Böhm (eds.): *Contributions to the History of the Record Industry. Vol. 9* (Wien: Gesellschaft für Historische Tonträger, 2017), 33–44. 39.

⁴⁴According to the contract between Edison Bell Ltd. and Penkala Works, drafted on 12 June 1926. See: Naila Ceribašić: „Music as Recording, Music in Culture, and the Study of Early Recording Industry in Ethnomusicology.” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 52/2 (December 2021), 323–354., 329.

⁴⁵Eternola management asked Harry Hesford to come to Budapest more often, because the Zagreb manager, Abraham Goodman, is difficult to work with. *Minutes of the session of the Board of the Directors of the Edison Bell (International) Limited, held on the 14th, 18th and concluded the 19th of November, 1929, in the office of the First Croatian Savings Bank at Zagreb.* Typescript. 12. I am very grateful to Naila Ceribašić for sharing the contents of this document with me. (Hereinafter: „Minutes, Zagreb”).

⁴⁶Minutes, Zagreb, 13.

⁴⁷Minutes, Zagreb, 11.

⁴⁸Eternola Papers, Minutes of the General Assembly on 19 February 1930, 2.

⁴⁹Eternola Papers, Minutes of the General Assembly on 30 June 1930, 3–4. – Penkala products have been on the market in Hungary before. See, for example, the news about the Penkala fountain pen factory: „Penkala-újdonságok.” *Autó V/24* (15 December 1926), 57.

⁵⁰Several catalogues of Edison Bell Penkala are available on the Projekt Diskograf website: <https://www.ief.hr/en/research/projects/project-diskograf/selected-material/>

⁵¹The former recordings of Ernő Dohnányi (H 372–373) are missing from both printed Hungarian catalogues.

⁵²See, for example, Edison Bell Penkala Z 1595, which contains Anderson Tyrer's recordings of the finale of Weber's Piano Sonata no. 1 and the second Arabesque by Debussy. The original recordings were made in 1924 in London and were published as Edison Bell Velvet Face 544.

⁵³Eternola Papers, Report of the Board of Directors, 23 June 1931, 1.

⁵⁴Since Sternberg Musical Instrument Factory had been representing Decca records in Budapest for some time, it is possible that Eternola was only contracted to represent the gramophones commercially. See the advertisement in *Sporthírlap* 20/54 (13 May 1929), 3. According to other sources, however, József Schlesinger was the main Hungarian representative of Decca Gramophone Co. Ltd. *Budapest és környékének távbeszélő berürendes- és szaknévsora. 1929. május hó*, 562.

⁵⁵[Advertisement], *Képes Krónika* 13/5 (1 February 1931), 30.

⁵⁶See, for example, the news and articles about Eternola in the journal *Honi Ipar*.

⁵⁷[Advertisement], *Pesti Hírlap* 51/250 (3 November 1929), 7.

⁵⁸[Advertisement], *Magyarság* 11/280 (10 December 1930), 14.

⁵⁹„Tavaszi gramofonköltészet és egyben verspályázat.” *Az Ojság* 11/16 (20 April 1930), 8. and „Kánikulai versenyművészet – Eternolett futam.” *Az Ojság* 12/29 (19 July 1931), 4.

⁶⁰Eternola Papers, Minutes of the General Assembly on 30 June 1930, 3.

⁶¹Eternola Papers, Report of the Board of Directors, 20 June 1933, 1.

⁶²Eternola Papers, Minutes of the General Assembly on 30 June 1933, 5.

⁶³[Advertisement], *Friss Újság* 38/141 (24 June 1933), 10.; [Advertisement], *Az Est* 24/171 (30 July 1933), 14.; [Advertisement], *Friss Újság* 38/187 (19 August 1933), 9.; [Advertisement], *Pesti Napló* 85/102 (6 May 1934), 29.

⁶⁴*Központi Értéktető* 60/20 (16 May 1935), 318.

⁶⁵„Miért nem tud a magyar gyáros propagandát csinálni gyártmányának?” *Honi Ipar* 22/20 (15 October 1929), 22.; „Elhalasztották az Eternola Rt. fizetésektelenségi tárgyalását.” *Az Est* 23/161 (21 July 1932), 7.; Eternola Papers, Report of the Board of the Directors, 20 June 1933, 2.

⁶⁶Eternola Papers, Report of the Board of the Directors, 30 June 1930, 3–4.

⁶⁷„A gramofon”. *Esti Kurir* 9/275 (3 December 1931): 11.

Eternola-
PORTABLE
GRAMOFON
a legtökéletesebb hordozható
beszélő gép

Szebb,
jobb,
olcsóbb
bármely külföldi gépnél!

Ára: 160— P.

Gyártja az
Eternola Mechanikai r.-t.
BUDAPEST
V. VÁCI-UT 6. Telefon: T. 120-35
Kapható minden gramofonüzletben.

Fig. 1. Eternola advertisement, *Technika*, April 1928

ETERNOLA
GRAMOFON
tökéletes és - magyar!

A legjobb—
a legszebb—
a legolcsóbb!

RÉSZLETOSZTÁLYUNK
az Eternola gramofonokat
és az összes hanglemezeket
előleg nélkül, 12 havi
részletre árúsítja.

VÁROSI ÜZLETÜNK HOLNAP MEGNYILIK:
ETERNOLA
MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG
BUDAPEST, IV., KOSSUTH LAJOS-UTCA 15.
Magyarország területén bárhol vételkötelezettség nélkül bemutatjuk gépeinket.

TELEFON:
AUT.
851-01.

(S Ó) T. ETERNOLA
MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG
BUDAPEST, IV., KOSSUTH LAJOS-UTCA 15.
Kérem saját gyártású ETERNOLA utazó portahírt, asztali, szekrényes* beszélőgépek díjazás bemutatásai.
Név: _____
Lakhely: _____
*) A bemutatni kívánt gép alkatrészű.

Fig. 2. Eternola advertisement, *8 Órai Újság*, 24 November 1928

88 SZÍNHÁZI ÉLET

Tökéletes és - magyar!

ETERNOLA
GRAMOFON

Hatalmas választék-
bangyártja az Eternola
mechanikai részvény-
társaság a világ legjobb,
legszebb és legolcsóbb
beszélő gépeit

RÉSZLETOSZTÁLYUNK
gramofonjainkat és
az összes gyártmányu
hanglemezeket elő-
leg nélkül, 12 egyen-
lő havi részletre
árúsítja.

VÁROSI ÜZLETÜNK MEGNYILT:
ETERNOLA
MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG
BUDAPEST, IV., KOSSUTH LAJOS-UTCA 15 SZ.
Magyarország területén bárhol vételkötelezettség nélkül bemutatjuk gépeinket.

TELEFON
AUT.
851-01

Sz. E. T. ETERNOLA
MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG
BUDAPEST, IV., KOSSUTH LAJOS-UTCA 15.
Kérem saját gyártású ETERNOLA utazó portahírt, asztali, szekrényes* beszélőgépek díjazás bemutatásai.
Név: _____
Lakhely: _____
*) A bemutatni kívánt gép alkatrészű.

Fig. 3. Eternola advertisement, *Színházi Élet*, 9 December 1928

ETERNOLA GRAMOFÓN
főkéletes és magyar!
A legjobb – a legszebb
– a legolcsóbb!

RÉSZLETOSZTÁLYUNK
az Eternola gramofonokat és az összes
hanglemezeket előleg nélkül
12 havi részletre árusítja
VÁROSI ÜZLETÜNK MEGNYÍLT:

ETERNOLA
MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG
BUDAPEST, IV., KOSSUTH LAJOS U. 15

Magyarország területén bárhol vételköz-
telezetség nélkül bemutatjuk gépeinket

Kérjük, töltsd ki
ezt a szelvényt
és küldje be hoz-
záink levelező-
lapra ragasztva
vagy borítékban

(T. V.) **T. ETERNOLA MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG BUDAPEST.**
Kérem sajátgyártású ETERNOLA utazó (portable), asztali, szek-
rényes*) beszélőgépűk díjtalan bemutatását.
Név:
Lakhely:
*) A bemutatni kívánt gép aláhuzandó.

TEL.
AUT.
851-01.

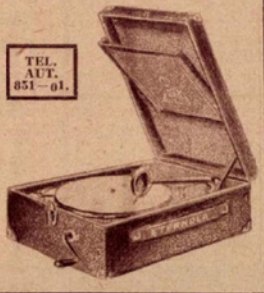


Fig. 4. Eternola advertisement,
Tolnai Világlapja, 12 December 1928

ETERNOLA MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG
BUDAPEST,
Gyár: V., VÁCI-UT 6. SZÁM
Telefon: Aut. 120-35.
Eladási és részletosztály:
IV., Kossuth Lajos-utca 15. szám
Telefon: Aut. 851 01.

EGYEDÜLI
magyar gramofon gyár

Gyárt elsőrendű gramofonokat művészi ki-
vitelben minden típusban. Portable
(táska-alaku) asztali és állványos gramofonok,
rugós és elektromos szerkezetű. Rádió-gra-
mofonok, hangereősítők, hangszórók egy- és
többtányéros gramofonleadó készülékek mozgó-
színházak, vendéglők stb. részére. Háromrugós
iskolai gramofonok.

Neves magyar művészek közreműködésével
saját stúdiójában felvett kitéző

**ETERNOLA EDISON
BELL-HANGLEMEZEK**

Gramofon- és hangmez-árjegyzékkel
illetve költségvetéssel szolgál.

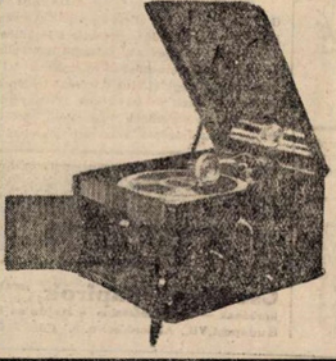


Fig. 6. Eternola advertisement,
Magyar Kereskedők Lapja, 25 January 1930

ETERNOLA
MECHANIKAI RÉSZVÉNYTÁRSASÁG
≡ BUDAPEST ≡

Gyár: V., VÁCI ÚT 6. SZ. Telefon: Aut. 120-35
Eladási osztály: IV., KOSSUTH LAJOS-U. 15. Tel.: Aut. 851-01

Egyedüli magyar gramofongyár

Gyárt: elsőrendű gramofonokat mű-
vészi kivitelben, minden típusban.
Portable (táska alakú) asztali és áll-
ványos gramofonok, rugós és elek-
tromos szerkezettel. Rádió-gramo-
fonok, hangerősítők, hangszórók,
egy és több tányéros gramofonleadó
készülékek mozgósínházak, vendég-
lők stb. részére. Háromrugós iskolai
gramofonok.

Neves magyar művészek közreműködésével saját stúdiójában felvett kitéző.

Eternola Edison Bell hanglemezek

Gramofon- és hangmez-árjegyzékkel, ill. költségvetéssel szolgál

RÉSZLET-OSZTÁLY

Fig. 5. Eternola advertisement,
Honi Ipar, 15 November 1929

ETERNOLA
GRAMOFON- ÉS RÁDIÓGYÁR

Eladási osztálya,
BUDAPEST., IV., KOSSUTH LAJOS-UTCA 5.
(A NEMZETI CASINO palotájában.)

**Gramofonok, hanglemezek és
rádiókészülékek nagy raktára**

RÉSZLETOSZTÁLY:

Eredeti **ETERNOLA** gramofonok 6
tetszés szerint választott tánclemezzel
együtt már napi **70 fillérért.**

Eredeti **DECCA** gramofonok 3
tetszés szerint választott tánclemezzel együtt
már napi **30 fillérért.**

Kérjen még ma **ingyen** képes árjegy-
zőket gramofonokról, lemezekről, rádió-
készülékekről és ismertetést a részletfize-
tési kedvezményről! (6-12-18 havi részlet)

Az ETERNOLA **heti ajándéka** három darab
tetszés szerint választott 20 cm átmérőjű hosszán-
jatszó ETERNOLA EDISON BELL hanglemez.

Fig. 7. Eternola advertisement,
Képes Krónika, 1 February 1931

A vámemelés dacára változatlanul az eddigi csodaolcsó árak!

Minőségben egyenrangú a világhíres külföldi gramofonokkal



ETERNOLA

MECHANIKAI RT.

Budapest

az egyetlen magyar gramofongyár

Eladási osztály:

IV, Kossuth Lajos-utca 5
Tel. A. 85-1-01

Gyár: V, Váci-ut 6. Tel. A. 12-0-35

Gyártja a legszebb, legjobb, legolcsóbb gramofonokat

Karácsonyra új aványörű tölusok

Már **44.50 P** árban tökéletes kis gramofon az **ETERNOLETTE**

54.50 P árban a diszes kivitelű csodás **ETERNOLETTE-SUPER**

110.— P árban a legújabb ideális **ETERNOFON**

185.— P árban a legjobb hordozható beszélőgép, az **ETERNOLA PORTABLE**

265.— P árban kétrugós tölgyfaszekrényes, szilárd szerkezetű **ETERNOLA TABLOFON**

Az összes gramofonlemezek a legolcsóbb árakon.

Kérjen ingyen árjegyzéket vagy díjtalan bemutatást.

Fig. 8. Eternola advertisement, Magyar Hírlap, 1 December 1931

MAGYAR GRAMOFONGYÁR, AMELY KÜLFÖLDRE IS SZÁLLIT GEPEKET ÉS LEMEZEKET

Az Eternola gramofongyár a napokban nyitotta meg minden vonatkozásában stílusos bemutató termét a Kossuth Lajos-utca 15. sz. alatt. Végvárosi fény ragyog ki a művészi elgondolással berendezett üzleti helyiségből és a kirakat előtt állandóan nagy csoportok hallgatják a kizsüremelő zenét. Az európai relációban is monumentális üzleti helyiség berendezését Báthly István tervezte. Az Eternola-gyár mintegy másfél évig kísérletezett az egyes típusokkal, mielőtt forgalomba hozta volna azokat.

Magyar munkások, magyar mérnökök, magyar tisztviselők és magyar művészek produktuma minden. Hogy az Eternola-gyár milyen gramofonokat és lemezeket hoz forgalomba, mutatja az, hogy sok megrendelést kapott külföldről.

Az Eternola-gyár egy pompás találmánnyal is meglepte a gramofon-ipart: 20 cm. átmérőjű lemezt hozott forgalomba, amely ugyanaddig játszik, mint a 25 cm.-es és jóval olcsóbb az eddigi nagy lemeznél.

A bemutatóterem megnyitása igazi eseménye volt a magyar közgazdasági életnek.

A klakk

A rádióban a levelek pótolják a tapsokat. Annak a művésznek van a legnagyobb sikere, akinek szereplése után tömegesen érkeznek a gratuláló levelek.

Az Új földesur előadása után történt, hogy az egyik epizódista büszkén hangzottatta mennyien gratuláltak neki levélben.

— Ugyan kérlek, — jegyezte meg Teleki — hiszen te klakkal dolgozol.

Rádiókészülékek, hangszórók, anódpótlók és alkatrészek

részletfizetésre is fogadják és legjobb minőségben beszerezhetők

WESTEND rádió és csillárház

VI., Vilmos császár-ut 33.

Még ma keresse fel cégünket,

ha olcsón akar csillárt venni

4 lámpa masszív bronzcsillár, komplett 29.— P

6 lámpa masszív bronzcsillár, komplett lakásban felszerelve 61.— P

Rádiócsillár!

„METEOR RT.”

Podmaniczky u. 27 (Teréz körút s.)

Fiók: Vámbérs-körút 11.

Óriási választék. Videóra ábrák!

Fig. 10. Photo of the shop of Eternola, Színházi Élet, 9 December 1928



A Stúdió Eternola gramofónja

Fig. 9. The two-disc gramophone of the Hungarian Radio, Rádióélet, 22 November 1929

Fig. 11.-18. Eternola Edison Bell label and sleeve photos
(National Széchényi Library, Collection of Gyula Marton and Klára Bajnai)



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.

Fig. 19.-20. Eternola recordings on Edison Bell Penkala / Electron discs
(National Széchényi Library, Collection of Gyula Marton and Klára Bajnai)



Fig. 17.



Fig. 18.



Fig. 19.



Fig. 20.



Fig. 21.



Fig. 22.



Fig. 23.

Fig. 21.-23. Eternola recordings on Edison Bell Radio discs
(National Széchényi Library, Collection of Gyula Marton and Klára Bajnai)