

Overall, *Diskografia slovenských historických zvukových nahrávok* is a significant step towards documenting and preserving Slovakia's sound recording heritage. A potential area for improvement could be the inclusion of a bilingual format, offering text in both Slovak and English. This would enhance accessibility for international scholars and enthusiasts, aiming to bridge linguistic gaps in the academic discourse on historical sound recordings. However, it offers an overview of gramophone records and recording companies with Slovak repertoire. *Reviewed by Filip Šír*

***Audiovisuella Arkiv: En Svensk Mediehistoria 1930 – 1990.*** By Pelle Snickars. Lund: Mediehistoria, Lunds Universitet, 2025. 746 pp (softcover). Illustrations, Bibliography. ISBN 978-91-985802-8-0.

Pelle Snickars (b. 1971) is professor of digital culture at the University of Lund, Sweden, and co-author of the book *Spotify Teardown*, which analyzes the operations of one of the most influential audiovisual media of our time in *Audiovisuella Arkiv: En Svensk Mediehistoria 1930 – 1990* (*Audiovisual Archives: A History of Media in Sweden 1930 – 1990*). He has previously been the head of research at the National Library of Sweden (Kungliga Biblioteket), but his first recollections of the media are from 1976, when he was five years old and his favorite program was *Trazan Apansson*, a parody of Tarzan of the Apes. Trazan was the most popular children's program in the history of Swedish television, but after the company announced a rerun of the series in 1979, it was found that someone in the archives had deleted it. Instead, a million Swedish children had to watch a program about a little tugboat. The loss of Trazan came after a series of similar scandals, where television programs with celebrated authors had been deleted, and the ensuing debate led to the introduction of a law on legal deposit of radio and television programs in 1979 and the founding of *Arkivet för ljud och bild* (ALB), a national archive of sound and images – too late to save Trazan.

At that time Sweden was an affluent welfare state which believed in public institutions. It became one of the first countries in the world to introduce legal deposit of radio and television and to create a national archive of all audio and audiovisual media, records, films, radio, and television. Like most European countries, Sweden followed “the BBC model,” which meant that a single public broadcasting company financed by taxpayers had monopoly status. Around 1930 (the exact year is debated) the Swedish Broadcasting Company started *Grammofonarkivet*, a record library which eventually grew to one of the largest of its kind in the world with a collection of 1.5 million records. Originally all broadcasts were live, but as soon as recording radio (and soon also) television programs became standard practice, the company also founded a tape library to archive selected programs.

These archives were only intended for internal use. However in 1968, Claes Cnattingius, the innovative head of the gramophone library (who later became one of the founders of IASA), and Uno Willers, the director of *Kungliga biblioteket* (the national library), cooked up “operation stenkaka”, an operation to save old shellac records. At a time when most Swedes had switched to 33 and 45 rpm discs, Cnattingius and Willers urged citizens to donate their old 78 rpm records to their institutions instead of throwing them to the trash bin. The operation was effectively promoted on the radio. The donations, eventually amounting to more than 40,000 records, were divided between

*Grammofonarkivet* and the national library, resulting in one of the most complete collections of historical 78 rpm records in the world.

By this time, the national library had also founded a record department, *Nationalfonoteket*, in 1958. It acquired new Swedish records on a voluntary basis from record companies. After the shellac operation, its size increased rapidly. Originally the number of record companies in Sweden was so small that it was possible to maintain contact with all of them, but by 1979, the market had grown so much that legal deposit was considered necessary to obtain all new releases.

Another tributary of audiovisual archiving starts from *Filmhistoriska samlingarna* (The National Archive of Film History), founded in 1933. The task of the archive was to save and preserve all Swedish films created since the invention of the medium, including collecting related ephemera such as manuscripts, reviews, and posters. In 1963, *Filmhistoriska samlingarna* became part of the Swedish Film Institute, whose principal task was supporting new film production. When ALB was founded in 1979, there was a debate about the film collection. In the end, it was decided to leave the original master copies to the Film Institute, while ALB would receive viewing-quality copies which could be used by researchers. ALB also inherited the record department of the national library, and started receiving all new radio and television programs. However, older programs still remained in the broadcasting company's internal archives.

Snickars' book ends in 1990, when the media landscape was beginning to change. TV4, Sweden's largest commercial television channel, started operations in that year, and there were already several private local radio channels in operation. The duties of ALB then expanded rapidly, and perhaps this explains why some things are still waiting to be done today. Although public broadcasters are formally financed by taxpayers, their archives are not open to the public. Governments have – perhaps wisely – wanted to erect a firewall between the needs of journalism and the preservation of cultural heritage. *Trazan Apansson* had been a milestone of children's television, but journalists at Swedish television saw no need to preserve the program for historians. For them, it was more important to recycle the tapes and create new programs.

A similar conflict of interest between journalism and research appears when Snickars writes about the problems he encountered in checking certain facts from old news programs. He only knew the year the events had occurred, but not the exact dates. ALB did indeed have 365 news broadcasts from that year, but their database contained no searchable metadata on the contents of these programs and the persons involved. After browsing through dozens of programs, Snickars eventually found the right ones, but I am certain that the internal database of the original television company would have this information. ALB never had sufficient resources to catalogue these programs properly, and although it would have been technically easy to migrate it to ALB's database, the original information stayed behind.

Throughout 746 pages of text, Snickars goes through an overwhelming amount of data. The book discusses copyright, accessibility, technology, and many other questions. Over the years, I have visited many of the institutions and met persons discussed by Snickars and can vouch for the accuracy of the text. At times, the book reveals the writer's background in film history, and I was disappointed that the impressive work of ALB in creating a national discography is not mentioned at all. The discographies of Björn Englund and Karleric Liliedahl, originally on paper, were groundbreaking; they were not just

catalogues of records in the ALB collection, but also covered records still missing from ALB, thus creating a “wants list” for the institution (see, for instance, Liliedahl 1987).

Parts of the book require at least a basic knowledge of Swedish language, history, culture, and politics. Without this background, events such as the National Library’s desperate search for the voice of August Strindberg (1849 – 1912) may appear incomprehensible. However, the digital version of this book is freely available on the web, and with Google translate or a similar program, anyone interested in the history of audiovisual archiving will find it useful. There are not that many books on the history of audiovisual archiving, and this work could serve as a model for other similar national studies. Still, I hope that the author will produce a condensed version of his text in English for a wider audience.

In 2001, the name of ALB was changed to *Statens ljud- och bildarkiv* (SLBA; the State Archive of Sound and Images). In 2009 it became a department of the National Library. It would have been interesting to read about the background of this move and the author’s thoughts on the reorganization, but that would obviously be beyond the timeline of this work. I have seen how audiovisual archives can become neglected when they are merged with larger institutions with a centuries-old tradition of collecting books. Cataloguing audiovisual media with the same rules as print media does not always produce happy results. In Sweden, however, the decision was fortunate. By 2009, it must already have been obvious that the internet would eventually overshadow most other media. A situation where one institution would have the task of archiving linear radio and television and another to collect the same materials from the internet can hardly be ideal, but perhaps we should wait until Snickars produces a second volume covering the years 1990 – 2025. *Reviewed by Pekka Gronow.*

***The WLS Silver Dollar Surveys Vol 9. 1960 – 1963: Chicago Authentic Radio Record Survey.*** By Rich Gardner. Independently published. 332 pp. (softcover). Illustrations, lists. ISBN 979-8282005974. \$38.75

***The WLS Silver Dollar Surveys Vol 7. 1967 – 1969: WLS’ Official Play List.*** By Rich Gardner. Independently published. 286 pp. (softcover). Illustrations, lists. ISBN 979-8281938365. \$39.98

Once upon a time, before there was satellite radio, file sharing, YouTube, streaming services, and other ways to build a personal music bubble, there existed a communal listening experience called AM radio. Listeners in the 50,000-watt broadcast range of Chicago AM station WLS, which in the evenings meant a significant swath of the United States, were exposed to a variety of popular music styles. It was a daily pop music appreciation class that offered everything from rock ‘n’ roll to easy listening. Even in the AM era, listeners satisfied their appetite for Black music, ethnic music, classical music, or country by tuning into stations that specialized in these genres. Nevertheless, WLS was such a powerhouse that even if you were a hardcore fan of another station, it was unavoidable. Its trebly sounds, bookended by catchy station IDs, blared from car radios and transistor radios. It was, as WLS execs declared, “Mid-America’s bright new sound.”

To market its bright new sound, WLS printed weekly Top 40 music charts, called Silver Dollar Surveys, and distributed them for free at record stores throughout