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France Marolt's Research, Artistic and Educational Work as Reflected on Sound Recordings

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The article examines a less researched aspect of France Marolt's work: his sound recordings on direct cut 78 rpm gramophone discs. Using the Gailtal Wedding (*ziljska ohcet*) recordings as a case study, it analyses the context of the recordings, presents the metadata collected and discusses the recording technique used. It places the recordings in the history of Slovenian folk music research and in Marolt's broader work and shows the interweaving of his artistic, research and pedagogical activities.

▪ **Keywords**: France Marolt, sound documents, gramophone records, folk music research, Gailtal Wedding (*ziljska ohcet*)

Članek obravnava manj raziskani vidik dela Franceta Marolta – njegove zvočne posnetke na direktno rezanih gramofonskih ploščah z 78 vrtljaji na minuto. Avtor v članku analizira kontekst Maroltovih posnetkov *ziljske ohceti*, predstavlja zbrane metapodatke in obravnava uporabljeno tehniko snemanja. Posnetke umešča v zgodovinski okvir raziskovanja ljudske glasbe na Slovenskem in v širše Maroltovo delo ter prikazuje preplet njegovih umetniških, raziskovalnih in pedagoških dejavnosti.

▪ **Ključne besede**: France Marolt, zvočni dokumenti, gramofonske plošče, raziskovanje ljudske glasbe, *ziljska ohcet*

Introduction

Shortly after their invention, sound recording devices were quickly adopted by ethnomusicologists and folklorists who recognised their methodological advantages over manual transcription. Scholars emphasised their objectivity, precision, and ability for repeated playback, which allowed for more accurate analysis and documentation – especially of musical forms that were considered "untranscribable" with Western notation. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, Carl Stumpf and Ludvik Kuba pointed out the essential role of the phonograph in capturing the soundscapes of non-European and oral music traditions, marking a turning point in the scientific study of music (Stumpf, 2000 [1908]: 67; Kuba, 1909: 273). A little later, Béla Bartók emphasised the extent to which the development of ethnomusicology depended on Edison's invention of the phonograph (Sárosi, 1981), while Jaap Kunst argued that ethnomusicology would not have emerged as an independent scientific discipline without this technology (Kunst, 1955: 19).

The establishment of early sound archives in the late 19th and early 20th centuries further advanced folk music research. These collections, created explicitly for scholarly purposes, aimed to document folk music through phonographic recordings to support various comparative studies. Often referred to as storehouses of tradition (Seeger, 1986: 262)

and compared in importance to libraries in other academic disciplines (Nettl, 1964: 17), sound archives were intended to preserve endangered or "authentic" musical forms for future generations. In Slovenia, this archival task was institutionalised with the founding of the Folklore Institute in 1934, where France Marolt and his successors attempted to compile the most comprehensive collection of Slovenian musical folklore – an endeavour in which sound recordings played a crucial role.

However, sound recordings cannot be considered reliable scholarly sources without accompanying metadata and a thorough understanding of the context of their creation. They are significantly shaped by various methodological and technical factors and reflect the perspectives and intentions of the researchers who produced them. This article focuses precisely on these issues and examines how France Marolt's research, creative, and pedagogical intentions – often intertwined with his national ideas and aspirations – manifest themselves in his gramophone recordings.

France Marolt (1891-1951) was a versatile artist, researcher and teacher and a personality who was active in many areas of Slovenian culture and science in the first half of the 20th century. He was the founder, conductor and choirmaster of the Academic Choir, i.e. the University of Ljubljana's student choir (1926), and the founder of the folk dance ensemble (1948), which was later renamed to the France Marolt Academic Folk Dance Ensemble in his honour and is one of the most renowned folk dance ensembles in Slovenia today. The founding of the Folklore Institute (today's Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU) by the Music Society (Glasbena Matica) in 1934 and the preparation of the institute's work plan and research guidelines make him the pioneer of institution-based folk music research in Slovenia. As some researchers emphasise, Marolt is undoubtedly still regarded today as "an icon of Slovenian music and folk culture" (Arko Klemenc, 2004: 49).

France Marolt was also "a unique and strong personality" and "a person who took a critical look at all aspects of life" (Vodušek, 1951: 2), which was reflected in his work. Zmaga Kumer, who was one of Marolt's first students and later also his associate, had the following to say about him:

> He was an extraordinary personality, full of artistic and creative impulses, a person with a rich imagination, rashly infatuated with everything Slovenian, more intuitive than rational, more emotionally fired than intellectually cool. (Kumer, 1991: 13)

Marolt's artistic and research work has been the subject of many discussions, studies and reviews, and is relatively well known in professional circles in Slovenia.[1]

[1] Most historical overviews of music in Slovenia mention Marolt's work as a choirmaster and composer (e. g. Cvetko, 1960; Misson, 2018), several of them appraise his Academic Choir-related work (Špindler, 1968; Moličnik, 2006), and many also highlight his research work and the role he played in the establishment

Some of these studies include critical reflections on Marolt's research and work, i.e. the authors identified some constructions of the scientific sources used to prove the imagined theoretical framework (cf. Kumer, 1991), they pointed out the ways Marolt interfered with the dance tradition and influenced the development of folklorism and amateur folklore activities (Kunej R., 2004, 2017), as well as explored Marolt's folk song arrangements in the context of musical nationalism and his orientation toward the search for "everything Slovenian" in them (Arko Klemenc, 2004). In doing so, they also wondered how much of Marolt's research work amounted to hypothetical claims and even hasty unproven conclusions, and whether some of his explanations may have been the result of him being first an artist and second a scientist (Orel, 1951: 389).

The focus of this paper is on a less researched area of Marolt's work, i.e. the work related to the recorded sound materials that were created as part of his artistic, educational, and research activities. The recordings have been preserved in the sound archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU and constitute the first sound collection assembled by the institute. The recordings on unique gramophone records, made with special direct cut technology, provide resounding proof of Marolt's work. For a long time, researchers were unable to use these recordings as they could not be played due to the obsolete mechanical sound carriers and the lack of suitable playback equipment. A few years ago, this collection of gramophone records was digitised, however, the material was accompanied only with the very basic and often inadequate metadata, which did not allow it to be used as a good scientific source, and was thus not particularly interesting and useful to researchers.

The study is primarily based on the analysis of audio and other archival material,[2] as well as on the study of various sources and literature on Marolt's work in relation to sound recordings and on his research and artistic activities in a broader context. In this respect, it serves as a continuation, supplement and extension of the existing study on Marolt's efforts to document folk music through sound (Kunej D. 2020), which was one of the first more detailed studies on the subject.

Based on a case study of the Gailtal Wedding (*ziljska ohcet*) recordings, the paper explores the circumstances in which sound recordings on gramophone records were made, presents various collected metadata that shed light on and explain the recorded material, and describes the basic technical characteristics of the used recording technology. Several research questions were raised in relation to this sound collection. Could the recordings have been made as part of Marolt's field research or are these

of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU (cf. Kumer, 1991; Cigoj Krstulović, 2014; Barbo, 2019), as well as his life and work in general (e.g. Vodušek, 1951; Gobec, 1965; Mrak, 2015).

[2] Archival sources from the Institute of Ethnomusicology, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (GNI ZRC SAZU), are cited in the text as A-GNI; those from the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology, Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ISN ZRC SAZU), as A-ISN; and those from the Music Section of the National and University Library (NUK) as A-NUK.

studio recordings and his arrangements and reconstructions of folk music? Can the preserved sound recordings, the metadata and various other recording-related materials be used to determine when, where and how exactly these recordings were made as no such data is provided on the records? It also remains to be researched how familiar he was with the sometimes fruitful, sometimes problematic interrelation of scholarship and art, which was repeatedly observed in folk music researchers and collectors (cf. Morgenstern, 2020). Placing the recordings in a historical context of the Slovenian folk music research and the relationship with France Marolt's other work serves the purpose of finding out how Marolt viewed the Gailtal Wedding recordings, and whether they reflect the characteristic intertwining of his artistic, research, and educational work.

Artistic work interwoven with research

France Marolt's musical journey began in childhood under the guidance of his father, who introduced him to music theory and harmony. He learnt to play the violin, taught himself to play the piano and helped his father transcribe music for choirs. He showed initiative early on and founded and conducted a male-voice octet in 1909, while he was only a sixth-grade student, although his dedication to music affected his school performance. After graduating from grammar school, Marolt was drafted into the First World War and served on the Galician and Isonzo fronts, where he was seriously wounded. After the war, he briefly took up further studies, but soon abandoned them to devote himself entirely to music as a profession.

From 1919 to 1924, Marolt was choirmaster of the Primorska Quartet, which later became known as the Slovenian Quartet. The years 1924–1926 were particularly formative: as deputy choirmaster of the prestigious choir of the Music Society (Glasbena Matica) he gained invaluable experience and developed a clear vision for his future cultural contributions. He also taught piano and singing at the newly founded Ljubljana Conservatory and wrote a textbook for his students, the *Singing Exercise Book*, in 1925. Driven by a desire to explore new approaches to choral performance, particularly focussing on the interpretation of folk songs, Marolt founded the Academic Choir in 1926. The choir, made up of students from the University of Ljubljana, marked the beginning of his highly successful artistic career and his commitment to the integration of folk music into the choral tradition.

During this time, Marolt worked as a music critic for the *Ljubljanski Zvon* newspaper, where he met art historian and curator of the Ethnographic Museum, Stanko Vurnik.[3]

[3] An art historian by education, Dr Stanko Vurnik (1898-1932) also worked as an ethnologist and musicologist. He grew up in a musical environment and authored numerous newspaper articles, which polemicized cultural events and happenings. He published a number of musical and fine art reviews and advocated for a new conception of art and for contemporary trends. He applied ideas from the field of art history in the field

Their shared interest in folk music strengthened Marolt's already deep connection to folk culture and prompted him to take a more active role in research and collecting. The Ethnographic Museum, founded in 1923, had begun to acquire and organise large folk song collections. Vurnik, who was responsible for these materials until his death in 1932, worked with Marolt in organising the collections. Influenced by this partnership, Marolt began to resume the pre-war folk song collection work that had been interrupted by the First World War.

The founding of the Academic Choir, Marolt's highly successful choral work[4] and his passionate work with folk music laid the foundations for the establishment of the Folklore Institute in 1934, a specialised department of the Music Society that focused on researching the folk music heritage and was headed by France Marolt himself. An important milestone was the themed concert by the Academic Choir, Slovenian Folk Song Korotan, Bela Krajina, which took place on 7 May 1934. At this performance, the audience was introduced to newly arranged folk songs from Carinthia and Bela Krajina – many of which had previously been unfamiliar to both experts and the general public. Marolt wrote the detailed programme, which included a historical commentary, a stylistic analysis, and a scholarly essay on the significance of folk song in national art. The concert, which was met with great enthusiasm by both the audience and musicologists, introduced a new wave of folk song arrangements by Marolt, Oskar Dev, and Matija Tomc, which differed significantly from those of the older generation (for more see Arko Klemenc, 2004; Cigoj Krstulović, 2014).

A few months later already, in August 1934, members of the Music Society committee pointed out there was a need to systematically collect folk songs and organise the previously collected materials. They believed Marolt was just the person for the task: "Without doubt, the leading expert on folk songs in Slovenia is Mr France Marolt, the choirmaster of the Academic Choir" (A-NUK, 31.8.1934). The chief secretary of the Music Society then held several talks with Marolt to discuss its activities, which resulted in a charter describing the institute's organisation, aims and work, as well as the duties and rights of the head of the institute. Zmaga Kumer believed that "the author

of music. Although his lack of proper professional musical education sometimes led to dubious conclusions, he contributed to the foundations of Slovenian music science thanks to his zeal and principles. From 1924 onwards, he was employed at the Ethnographic Museum and started acquainting himself with ethnological themes with great enthusiasm. Apart from arranging collections, designing exhibitions and preparing comprehensive thematic publications, he also pursued his own scientific work. He published fundamental ethnological studies on Slovenian costumes, beehive panels, Slovenian homesteads on the south-eastern slopes of the Alps, and on the folk music. His approach to the material, based on comparisons with related European materials and on the study of forms and styles, indicates that he used the methodology of an art historian. (cf. Rogelj Škafar, 1998; Novak et al., 2013)

[4] It did not take long for Marolt to create a very good choir, which was revealed at the choir's first performance in January 1927 and, even more so, at its first concert in Maribor in July of the same year, when it presented itself to the general public for the first time. The newspapers were full of praise and predicted a bright future for the choir. They also pointed out that Marolt systematically educated his singers through a special vocal school, and required complete discipline and dedication from them.

of the agreement was undoubtedly Marolt himself" and called Marolt "the institute's conceptual founder" (Kumer, 2000: 12). Marolt was supposed to start working and take up the post of the institute's head on 15 October 1934, which is considered the start of the institute's work (cf. Cigoj Krstulović, 2014: 225).

When the institute was founded, Marolt was already planning to use sound recordings for collecting and researching folk music. In the charter (agreement) describing the institute's organisation, aims and work, the sound documentation of folk material was planned as an important part of the institute's field research. In order to achieve the institute's main objective, which was "to compile the most comprehensive collection of Slovenian musical folklore, i.e. to collect all the existing song-related materials that were available in written form […] and continuously add new ones", the charter listed the institute's work tasks in detail, in particular "documenting and phonographing folklore material" (A-NUK, 14.9.1934). Marolt intended to begin recording as soon as possible (cf. A-GNI, Zn. dps. 1/1(1), 1934), but was unable to realise this goal. Throughout his professional career, he sought to acquire a recording device for research and artistic work. Initially, he had hoped to use a simple Edison phonograph but later realised the superiority of more advanced technologies such as gramophone records, sound film, or magnetic tape. Unfortunately, the Institute was unable to acquire such equipment during his lifetime due to the high costs involved. It was only posthumously that the Institute received the necessary recording equipment to realise his vision (for more see Kunej D., 2017, 2020).

Gramophone records: "The key evidence of Slovenian sound folklore"

While artistic and research work formed a major part of Marolt's efforts, he also dedicated significant time to public lectures and presentations, aiming to generate broader interest in folk music heritage.[5] His goal was to engage collaborators – particularly teachers, clergy, and students – in "folkloristic work" (*folklorno delo*), and to revive the collecting of materials among the people, similar to earlier campaigns by the Commission for Collecting Slovenian Folk Songs and Their Tunes.[6] His lectures often included photo

[5] Marolt gave various public "ethnographic" lectures: in the winter semester of 1935/36, he lectured for conservatorium students, as well as in the Gailtal Valley/Ziljska Dolina (1935) and in the Bela Krajina region (1936), with the aim of arousing the interest of local people in folk heritage. He also made teachers aware of the importance of folk songs for "national education" and inspired them to collect songs (Domžale 1937, Ljubljana 1940). He prepared a series of radio lectures for Radio Ljubljana (1936–1937) and lectured to the general public on "modern views and newer principles of ethnographic science", as well as on the music and characteristics of Slovenian folk dances (1937). Moreover, he planned a two-week ethnographic course in Ljubljana (1938) (cf. A-NUK, 22.5.1939).

[6] The Odbor za Nabiranje Slovenskih Narodnih Pesmi z Napevi (OSNP) – translated as the Commission for Collecting Slovenian Folk Songs and Their Tunes – was a specialist body that operated as part of a broader ethnographic and cultural documentation initiative within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, under the collection campaign titled *Volkslieder in Österreich* (Folk Songs in Austria).

slides and musical demonstrations performed on the piano and by small vocal ensembles. Marolt repeatedly mentioned that his lectures aroused a great deal of interest.

These presentations also marked the beginning of his involvement in sound recording. The first sound recordings Marolt participated in were made during a series of 15 lectures titled Slovenian Folk Songs, broadcast from autumn 1936 to spring 1937 on the Ljubljana Radio Broadcasting Station. Marolt often played piano to illustrate musical examples; other performers who participated in the lectures were "the Sloga orchestra, a small mixed choir, the Music Society youth choir, and the Academic Choir octet" (A-GNI, Urd. dps. 55/2, 1937; A-NUK, 22.5.1939). Some of the songs from these lectures – particularly those performed by the Music Society youth choir and the Academic Choir octet – were recorded on gramophone records by Radio Ljubljana, likely starting in November 1936. These recordings garnered attention and proved valuable for other researchers. Already by 1936–1937, it was agreed that copies of these records would be made for the Folklore Institute (for more see Kunej D., 2020).

However, it took several more years for the institute to actually acquire the collection of gramophone records and no documentation has been preserved to explain in detail when and how individual records came into the institute's possession. Also, the gramophone records are not dated, which is a general problem when it comes to older records (cf. Kunej D., 2014). It was not until after the Second World War that the archival documents and reports included information about the institute being in possession of a collection of gramophone records. In the spring of 1945 (first such report is dated 24 May 1945), i.e. immediately following the liberation, the collection consisted of 50 records, and at the end of 1945 it contained as many as 59 records. According to later reports, the number of records was even larger, however, despite some concrete plans for further recordings mentioned in archival reports and documents from that period, no detailed information exists of any such recordings, nor is it clear whether they actually took place. Thus, there are no preserved archival documents revealing when and how the recordings were made and when the institute included them in its gramophone record collection.

The preserved records in the collection confirm archival evidence suggesting that they were produced using direct cut recording technology, also known as instantaneous disc recording. This method, which was widely used from the 1930s to the late 1950s, was essential for both professional and semi-professional sound recordings. In direct cut recording, the sound signal is engraved directly onto the surface of a record using a cutting stylus. Unlike commercial records, which required galvanoplastic processing and pressing from a master, direct cut discs allowed for instant playback, bypassing these time-consuming steps. The discs were usually coated with lacquer or acetate and mounted on an aluminium or glass core. This construction made the surface soft enough to be cut into during recording, yet durable enough to withstand multiple plays without significant degradation.

These discs were particularly practical for radio broadcasts and archival documentation due to their ability to instantly produce a physical sound carrier.[7] Their distinctive appearance – often accompanied by handwritten or typed labels – still serves as a primary means of identifying direct cut records today. Though they were produced in very limited numbers using relatively simple cutting machines, they were nonetheless invaluable tools for capturing ephemeral performances and spoken word in real time.

Initially restricted to professional settings like radio stations, disc recorders for amateur use began appearing around 1940, though their adoption was limited due to high cost. The Second World War soon halted their production. However, in the post-war years, the popularity of these machines grew significantly until the rise of magnetic tape recording in the 1950s, which offered improved fidelity, easier editing, and more efficient storage.

Following the liberation in May 1945, activities at the Institute experienced renewed vigour, as evidenced by numerous preserved archival documents. In 1947, France Marolt resumed closer collaboration with Radio Ljubljana, where he frequently encountered a variety of earlier gramophone recordings featuring arrangements of Slovenian folk songs, predominantly performed by choirs and vocal ensembles. During this period, he also prepared a new series of radio lectures dedicated to Slovenian folk music.

Today, the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU holds a collection of 69 double-sided 78 rpm gramophone records, of which 55 contain Slovenian material, while the remaining 14 feature foreign content, primarily arrangements of Russian and Ukrainian folk songs. A significant portion of the collection consists of instantaneous discs, recorded using direct cut recording technology.

Various archive documents also show that Radio Ljubljana was responsible for the production of most of these recordings. These are unique sound documents, usually preserved in a single copy, a fact emphasised in a letter from the Institute in 1953 (A-GNI, Strok. k. 31/4-53), which further enhances their documentary value. The recordings show a variety of folk song performances, often arranged by France Marolt and performed by his Academic Choir under his artistic direction. These recordings are of particular importance within the collection, as Marolt was not only the arranger of the songs, but also played a central role in shaping both the intended performance style and the overall sound of the recordings through his artistic direction. They serve as an audible manifestation of Marolt's own sonic vision – his ideal of how folk songs should sound. As Marolt himself emphasized, the institute's gramophone archive represents "the key evidence of Slovenian sound folklore"[8] (A-GNI, Strok. k. 63/46-esc).

[7] In the first half of the 20th century, the direct-to-disc recording technique was also used by some ethnologists, folk music researchers and folklorists to record and preserve traditional music, oral traditions and cultural forms of expression. Among the pioneers of direct cut field recordings were Alan Lomax and his father John A. Lomax, who recorded American folk traditions with portable disc cutters for the Library of Congress.

[8] Using the term "sound folklore" (*zvočni folklor*), Marolt most likely referred to the part of folklore that is expressed by means of sound, such as folk music.

Sound recordings of the Gailtal Wedding: "Reconstructed folk culture rituals"

The case study of the Gailtal Wedding (*ziljska ohcet*) recordings aims to present the circumstances under which the sound recordings were made and, through various metadata and other recording-related sources, to examine how the recordings reflect the characteristic intertwining of Marolt's artistic, research, and educational work.

The Gailtal Wedding is an example of "reconstructed folk culture rituals", the rituals which Marolt started studying during his first field work before the Folklore Institute was even founded. He used these collected field research materials (musical notations of folksongs, field notes) to prepare the aforementioned highly successful concert of the Academic Choir, Slovenian Folk Song: Korotan, Bela Krajina (*Slovenska Narodna Pesem: Korotan, Bela Krajina*), which was held in May 1934. Moreover, Marolt's earliest field studies, as part of which he researched various "rituals", provided a basis for the Folklore Festivals, which he organised as part of his "restorations of Slovenian music-folkloristic attractions" (*restavracije slovenskih glasbeno-folklornih znamenitosti*), namely the Carinthian Day in Ljubljana in 1935, the Bela Krajina Day in Ljubljana in 1936, and the Folklore Festivals in Črnomelj and Maribor in 1939 (for more information, see Kunej R., 2004).

As part of his field research in Gailtal,[9] Marolt documented 72 songs, which are included in the archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU as the "Gailtail records" (A-GNI, Korzps I, Korzps II), and he also collected various other ethnomusicological materials. In line with the Folklore Institute's plans, i.e. to take a critical approach to publishing the researched folkloric material, he published the results of his field research in a series titled *Slovenian Ethnological Studies* (*Slovenske Narodoslovne Študije*). In the first volume of this series, titled *Three Rituals from Gailtal* (*Tri Obredja iz Zilje*), he presented the rituals from Carinthia (Marolt, 1935). This volume was published in time to complement the aforementioned Carinthian Day, which took place in early October 1935. Both the publication and the event itself presented three rituals from Gailtal: the Štehvanje tournament (*štehvanje*), the Rej dance under a linden tree (*visoki rej pod lipo*), and the Gailtal Wedding (*ziljska ohcet*). According to Marolt, these were without doubt the oldest remnants of Slovenian rituals, which had been partially preserved and showed the "mystical character" of the common people (Marolt, 1935: 3). All three rituals have been sound-documented on 78 rpm gramophone records, and the recordings of the Gailtal Wedding will be analysed as an example below.

The entire Gailtal Wedding sound recording is presented on three double-sided 78 rpm records: one part on each side, i.e. a total of six parts (a tabular comparison is

[9] The Gailtal (Slovenian: Zilja) is a valley in the south of Austria, located in the province of Carinthia. Although it is considered as culturally and linguistically part of the "Slovenian ethnic area", it was not incorporated into the borders of Slovenia (then part of Yugoslavia) after the First World War and remained part of Austria. The region is known for its Slovenian-speaking minority.

provided in Figure 1). A detailed comparison of the recorded materials and the text of the Gailtal Wedding rituals in the book *Three Rituals from Gailtal* further reveals that the recording follows the published description and text quite faithfully.[10] According to an analysis of the recorded content, the records feature several wedding rituals related to the groom's and wedding guests' arrival at the bride's house, i.e. they call for the bride to come out – there is some good-natured banter and the groom is offered "fake" brides, the bride says goodbye to her family and receives a blessing, which ends with the wedding guests leaving for the wedding ceremony. All of this is described in two chapters of the book *Three Rituals from Gailtal,* namely 'Guests on the Way to the Bride's Home' ('Po Nevesto Gredo') and 'The Bride is Accompanied from Her Home' ('Nevesto Odpeljejo').[11] The sound recordings often include verbatim parts spoken in dialect, which are also transcribed in the book. All the songs are listed in the book and presented with a monophonic melody and a text in dialect. Furthermore, an instrumental ensemble playing a tune is also featured on the recording twice. Its tune is described in the book as a "lively mazur-polka" and is written down in a monophonic musical notation as part of the description of the Štehvanje tournament ritual.

	COMPOSER	TITLE	PERFORMER[12]	RECORD CODE
1	/	Gailtal Wedding – Part I Gailtal Wedding – Part IV	Marolt's mixed choir	Dea 767 768
2	/	Gailtal Wedding – Part II Gailtal Wedding – Part V	Marolt's mixed choir	Dea 769 770
3	/	Gailtal Wedding – Part III Gailtal Wedding – Part VI	Marolt's mixed choir	Dea 771 772
4	/	Gailtal Wedding – Part I Gailtal Wedding – Part IV	Marolt's mixed choir	Gevaphone 1029 1030
5	/	Gailtal Wedding – Part II Gailtal Wedding – Part V	Marolt's mixed choir	Gevaphone 1031 1032

[10] Marolt presented the Gailtal Wedding in detail on 25 pages and divided his presentation into six chapters, i.e. six rituals that are temporally separated, yet chronologically connected into a whole. The six rituals are: Matchmaking and Courting (*snubljenje*), Wedding Guests on the Way to the Bride's Home (*po nevesto gredo*), The Bride is Accompanied from Her Home (*nevesto odpeljejo*), The Wedding Tollgate (*zapenjalca* or *šranga*), The Wedding Ceremony and The Wedding Party (*poroka in ohcet (nevesto vpeljejo)*). Marolt's presentation contains detailed descriptions of individual rituals with various local expressions, verbatim excerpts from speeches and established phrases, as well as some monophonic musical notation of typical songs sung during individual ritual stages, a few examples of dance tunes (The Wedding *Rej* Dance) and photos.

[11] Marolt reported that only two scenes were shown at the Carinthian Day event as part of the Gailtal Wedding ritual, i.e. Guests on the Way to the Bride's Home and The Bride is Accompanied from Her Home (A-NUK, 22.5.1939).

[12] Information on the composer, title, and performers is presented as it appears on the disc labels.

6	/	Gailtal Wedding – Part III Gailtal Wedding – Part VI	Marolt's mixed choir	Gevaphone 1033 1034
7	France Marolt	Gailtal Wedding – Part I Gailtal Wedding – Part IV	Marolt's male-voice choir and local speakers	Dea 31/15a 32/15č
8	France Marolt	Gailtal Wedding – Part II Gailtal Wedding – Part V	Marolt's male-voice and local speakers	Dea 33/15b 34/15d
9	France Marolt	Gailtal Wedding – Part III Gailtal Wedding – Part VI	Marolt's male-voice and local speakers	Dea 35/15c 36/15e

Figure 1: A tabular presentation of the Gailtal Wedding recordings in the archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU.

The collection of 78 rpm gramophone records at the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU contains as many as three preserved versions of the entire Gailtal Wedding recording; each version is on a different record label and has different record codes. The handwritten inscriptions on the labels are also slightly different and include the recording title, the performers, the composer, and the alphanumeric record codes (see Figure 2). All the labels also state that the record contains a recording of "a folk custom from Gailtal – the Gailtal Wedding" (on the Dea label, the recording has a slightly different title: *Gailtal Nuptials*), performed by "Marolt's mixed choir", and only the Gevaphone label also mentions Marolt as the composer. The Dea label (No. 31/15a) lists "Marolt's male-voice choir and local speakers" as the performers. A comparison of the recordings on all the preserved record copies has revealed that all three versions feature the same Gailtal Wedding recording, i.e. different records are different copies of the same recording. The label that provides the most accurate information regarding the performers is the Dea label (No. 31/15a), which lists Marolt's male-voice choir and local speakers. In fact, all the songs featured on the recording are polyphonic songs performed by male singers and the spoken part includes both male and female voices speaking in a pronounced local dialect, which proves that this was a male-voice choir and most likely speakers who were originally from Carinthia.[13]

None of the record labels include information on when and where exactly the recording was made, which makes it difficult to work out the recording date and place from looking at the records. When listening to them, however, it seems at first that this may be a recording of what is happening in the field, as various sounds accompanying the rituals can be heard, e.g. boys' shouts of joy, knocking on doors, footsteps, gunshots, carts rumbling down the road, horses' trotting, the wedding guests' laughter etc. The fact that the recording process was complicated and that specific equipment was needed for recording on gramophone records at the time, as well as the inscriptions on the record

[13] Marolt adopted a similar approach to wedding ritual presentations as part of the Carinthian Day in 1935 in Ljubljana, where the performers included the Ljubljana-based emigrants from Carinthia, singers from the Music Society's conservatorium and the Academic Choir, as well as the instrumental sextet Sloga.

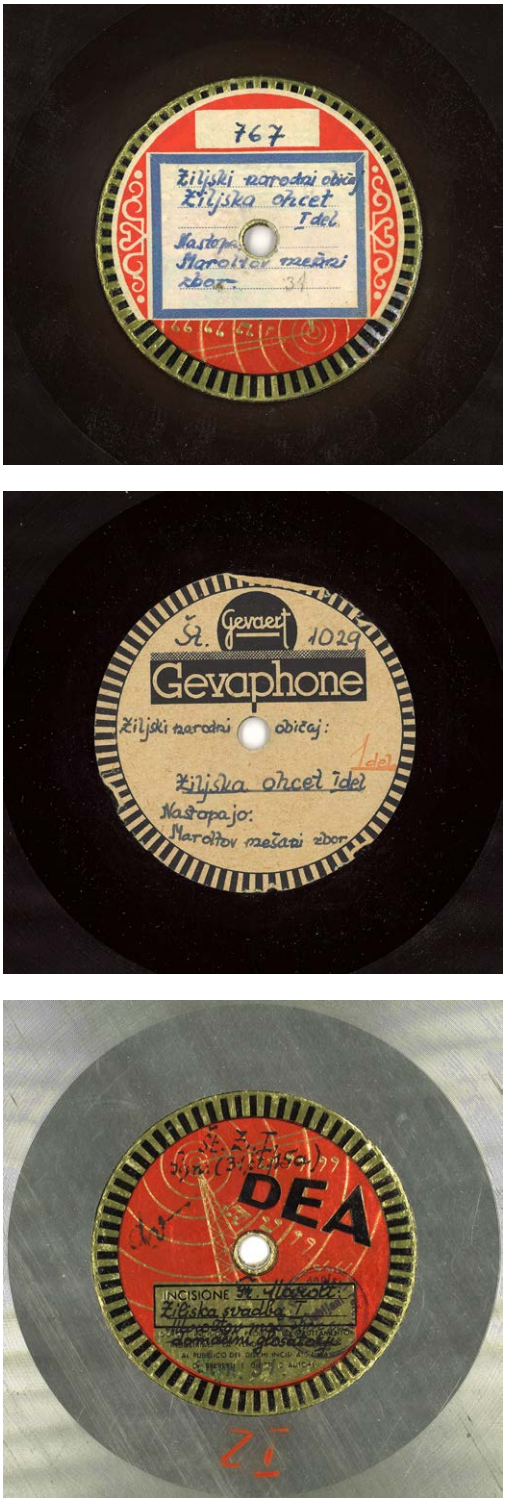

Figure 2: Three different copies of the Gailtal Wedding recording (Part I), which have been preserved in the collection of 78 rpm gramophone records in the archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU.

labels and Marolt's documented cooperation with Radio Ljubljana, as part of which he also recorded records, give reason to believe that the recordings were not made in the field, but in a Radio Ljubljana studio. This is further confirmed by a preserved typescript titled *The Gailtal Wedding* (A-ISN, 1945). It is immediately clear that the document is a written recording template, a script with a detailed text to be read in dialect, a chronological description of the scene, the listed singing and instrumental parts, as well as notes on their performance. A comparison of this typescript and the recordings on the gramophone records reveals that the recorded content follows the written script faithfully, both in terms of the chronological order of the recorded events and the presented musical acts, as well as all dialectal peculiarities of the oral presentation. Therefore, there is no doubt that the typescript is the base of the recorded content on the record in question. In addition, the handwritten notes next to typed text indicate what is recorded on each side of the record. The typescript also reveals the date of the recording, i.e. the following handwritten note is at the top of the document: "Recording 4 Apr 1945 at 13:00".

All the songs on the recordings from the gramophone records in question are polyphonic and the recorded instrumental tune is performed by instrumental ensembles. The archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU hold many preserved arrangements of folk songs by France Marolt, including several different copies of *Wedding Choirs* (*Ohcetni Zbori*) and *Wedding Folk Songs from Gailtal* (*Svadbene Narodne iz Zilje*), which contain songs recorded on gramophone records. The handwritten musical notation thus includes a four-part male-voice arrangement titled *The Wedding Song* (*The Bride's Mother Bidding Farewell to the Bride*) (*Svadbena* (*Slovo matere od neveste*)), dated 26 Feb 1945. The archives also contain several printed examples of the arrangement of this song, which differ only in some minor details (e.g. the way individual dialectal words are written down, the expected tempo, individual dynamics etc.). The printed versions are not dated and it is therefore not clear when they were created. The only exception is the version published in the booklet *Wedding Folk Songs from Gailtal* (*Svadbene Narodne iz Zilje*), as the booklet was published in 1947.[14] In this particular booklet, this song is included in the Wedding content unit and is titled 'The Wedding Rej Dance' ('Svatski Rej'). This suggests that it was not until early 1945 when Marolt made the polyphonic arrangements of this song for the male-voice choir, and perhaps he made them precisely for the purposes of sound

[14] The booklet presents seven songs, each belonging to its own wedding ritual content unit, which follow one another in chronological order. Each song (unit) has its own title: 'Collecting the Bride from Her Home' ('Po Nevesto Gredo'), 'The Groom and the Wedding Guests Calling for the Bride to Come Out' ('Nevesto Pozivajo'), 'The Bride Bidding Farewell to Her Mother' ('Slovo Od Matere'), 'The Wedding – the Wedding Rej Dance' ('Poroka – Svatski Rej'), 'Bidding Farewell to Home' ('Slovo Od Doma'), 'The Bride Being Taken Away' ('Nevesto Odvedejo') and 'The Bridesmaids Bidding Farewell to the Bride' ('Slovo Družic Od Neveste'). Combined with a short content explanation, the title clarifies in what way the song is connected to the wedding ritual. The content units are slightly different than in the book *Three Rituals from Gailtal* and, for the most part, represent the part of the wedding rituals that are presented on the records, which feature all the songs from the booklet except for the last one ('The Bridesmaids Bidding Farewell to the Bride').

recording. This is further suggested by the fact that the only song of the "ritual songs from Gailtal" performed at the 1934 concert, which was dedicated to the folk songs from Carinthia and Bela Krajina, was the 'Visoki Rej Dance' ('Visoki Rej'). The song was performed for the first time and later at many other concerts. Arrangements of wedding ritual songs, however, were most likely not made until later, as they are not found on any concert programmes at the time.

Marolt repeatedly pointed out that his research findings, folk culture reconstructions and works of art were based on his field research, thus ensuring the "authenticity" of the material. Some researchers even believe that the fact that he often referenced his field notes and highlighted the faithfulness to folk practices is one of the key elements that contributed to his recognition and success in arranging and performing folk songs, as well as in creating new directions in Slovenian folk song arrangements, which are recognised and acknowledged by many contemporary Slovenian choral composers even today (cf. Arko Klemenc, 2004). Also, in his introduction to the book *Three Rituals from Gailtal*, Marolt pointed out that his research into the rites in question was for the most part based on his own observations, music notes and information collected over time in Gailtal (Marolt, 1935: 3). However, the preserved field notes from the archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU reveal that, when it came to publications and "authentically reconstructed" stage performances, Marolt did not follow the collected field material faithfully. For instance, in all musical notations of songs and instrumental tunes in Marolt's field notes and in the book they are performed monophonic, whereas at concerts and on the recordings from the gramophone records the songs are polyphonic or performed by various musical instruments. According to Kumer, the tunes Marolt listened to in the field and wrote down by ear were mostly monophonic, later, however, he created polyphonic versions based on memory and his own interpretation (cf. Kumer, 1991). The instrumental ensemble featured on the records likewise does not correspond to the ensemble mentioned in the book *Three Rituals from Gailtal*, i.e. according to Marolt, "in the past" the "local villagers' ensembles" consisted of a fiddle, a clarinet, a hammered dulcimer, and a double bass, whereas today there are mainly wind bands as evidenced by the data collected by Marolt during field research in Gailtal. The recording features an ensemble with the accordion playing the central part, joined by the violin, the clarinet, and the double bass.

Another problem with Marolt's field notes from Gailtal and the accompanying data, which often lack information or are contradictory, is the fact that it is difficult to verify the authenticity of the written materials and the sources of the data obtained, as these data are often missing or likely inaccurate.[15] Similar observations have been made by

[15] For instance, some of Marolt's fieldwork material from Gailtal contains no information about the place and date it was created, for the most part only the year or the place is stated. Few field notes state the exact date and place. A full date is connected mainly with September 1933, which was the first time it was actually attested that Marolt had done field research in Gailtal, as noted by Kumer (1991: 12). According to

other researchers who find that Marolt occasionally distorted and even falsified field data to make sure his arrangements and public presentations of folk culture would be considered credible and authentic (cf. Kumer, 1991; Arko Klemenc, 2004).

"Rashly infatuated with everything Slovenian"

Marolt's aim was to research, understand and get to the roots of folk music, as well as to "reconstruct" it and present it in its "real" and "authentic" form, the way he had envisioned and created it. His endeavours were influenced by various circumstances.

According to Orel, he delved into the ancient past and into the ancient Slovenian folk "movement and sound traditions [*gibno-zvočna izročila*]" with the aim of discovering the most original meaning and the most authentic forms of folk culture. His interpretation of folk rituals was based on Wilhelm Mannhardts's animistic theories about the cults of the fields and woods[16] and on James Frazer's findings on magical acts,[17] while also using Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's theories to explain the basics of simple folk way of thinking and views.[18] Marolt did not regard "primitive" cultural forms

information on many of his notes, they were written as early as 1931, and some also in 1934. Similar lack of information and inaccuracies are found in relation to the informants. According to information in the field notes, most of the material was written by Marolt himself, he did, however, obtain some of it from the informants in handwritten form (A-GNI, Korzps I, Korzps II).

[16] Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831-1880) was a pioneering German folklorist and mythologist whose research significantly advanced the study of pre-Christian European religions and folk traditions. He is best known for developing early animistic theories, arguing that many European seasonal customs and fertility rites originated from ancient beliefs in vegetation spirits inhabiting nature. Through works like *Wald- und Feldkulte* (Mannhardt, 1875–1877), Mannhardt traced how tree worship, harvest rituals, and personified plant deities reflected an earlier animistic worldview that gradually evolved into anthropomorphic religion. His comparative and historical approach laid the foundation for folklore and mythological studies and profoundly influenced later scholars such as James George Frazer, who expanded on Mannhardt's ideas in *The Golden Bough*.

[17] Sir James George Frazer (1854-1941) was a foundational figure in anthropology and comparative religion, best known for his work *The Golden Bough* (first published in 1890; most expanded version the 3rd edition from 1906–1915), where he proposed a groundbreaking theory on the evolution of human belief systems – from magic, to religion, to science. His detailed analysis of sympathetic magic, particularly the laws of similarity and contact, offered a systematic framework for understanding how early societies sought to influence the natural world through ritual. Frazer's comparative method, drawing on myths, folklore, and rituals from diverse cultures, laid the groundwork for modern studies in mythology, anthropology, and psychology, influencing thinkers such as Freud, Jung, and Joseph Campbell. Despite later critiques of his generalizations, Frazer's work remains a seminal contribution to the understanding of cultural and religious development.

[18] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939) shaped the early anthropological and philosophical understanding of cultural cognition by proposing that traditional or indigenous societies function according to a particular way of thinking, which he termed "pre-logical" or "mystical" thinking (e.g. in publications such as *How Natives Think* (1926 [1910]); *Primitive Mentality* (1923 [1922]), *The "Soul" of the Primitive* (1928 [1927]). At the centre of his theory was the concept of "participation", in which the individual sees himself as spiritually connected to nature, objects and living beings, leading to beliefs that contradict Western notions of logic and causality. Although his work was later criticised for its ethnocentric and binary orientation, Lévy-Bruhl's insights into collective representations and symbolic thinking laid an important foundation for the study of myths, religion and non-Western epistemologies. They influenced later thinkers such as Lévi-Strauss and contributed to the development of cultural relativism in anthropology.

as inferior, but rather as fundamentally different. However, his preoccupation with the oldest folk rituals reveals more than a dispassionate recognition of cultural differences. His scientific and ethnographic work reflects a vision of the nation that is essentially rooted in ancient ritual forms. This idea seems to have driven him in his reconstructions – not just for the sake of documentation, but to provide the nation with an artistically mediated and symbolically controlled expression of its identity through its most archaic cultural elements.

Marolt was also displeased with the attitude many educated musicians in Slovenia had to folk songs. As pointed out by Kumer (1991: 15), in Marolt's time folk songs were neglected and it was not until artistic arrangements in accordance with the taste of the time were made that these songs gained enough validity to be allowed to be performed on stage. Therefore, Marolt tried even harder to prove the merits and importance of folk songs, however, this required further research and substantiation. During the turbulent period, including WWI and WWII, characterised by political changes and Nazism, which coincided with Marolt's life, "the Slovenian national consciousness, which was one of the fundamental elements of Marolt's personality, grew into the glorification and veneration of all things Slovenian, into the search for Slovenian authenticity at all costs" (Kumer, 1991: 16). In his endeavour to preserve the Slovenian nation and its culture, Marolt rejected all foreign elements – particularly German influences – and sought to purify Slovenian culture, especially music and dance, of external characteristics. In doing so, he responded to German assimilation, cultural domination, and purification with his own, at times excessive, form of national purification.

Marolt's deep commitment to Slovenian folk music is clearly reflected in his approach to folk song arrangements. As Zmaga Kumer states, "Marolt intuitively managed to capture something in his arrangements that gives our polyphonic singing the charm that makes it feel Slovenian and moves us" (Kumer, 1991: 15). Arko Klemenc also emphasises that Marolt's innovative arranging style was based on ethnographic experience, noting that he "created a niche for arrangements as an art in their own right, and furthermore defined them as characteristically and authentically Slovenian" (Arko Klemenc, 2004: 48). Central to Marolt's methodology was the accurate representation of regional diversity, careful attention to the provenance and field documentation of each song, and deliberate resistance to the homogenising tendencies that had often characterised earlier arrangements.

Building on this basis, Marolt regarded his reconstructed and artistically adapted representations of folk culture as "authentic representations", although the versions performed often deviated considerably from the actual folk aesthetic and performance practises. This discrepancy is particularly evident in the gramophone recordings, where the sound and vocal performance are more in keeping with the aesthetics of art music and choral performance than traditional folk singing. Although the repertoire and harmonic structures are based on Marolt's extensive fieldwork and ethnomusicological research,

the final performances reflect a stylised and formalised interpretation of the folk material. Similar notions of authenticity were shared by many of Marolt's contemporaries, who also regarded such recordings as genuine representations of Slovenian folk culture.[19] However, the recordings they regarded as "authentic" were in fact often "restored" and arranged musical examples – performed by singers from Marolt's choir – that were presented as staged and orchestrated reconstructions of various customs, rituals and traditions, such as the Gailtal Wedding.

Conclusion

France Marolt's first recordings on gramophone records had actually been made as early as 1936 as part the educational lectures he prepared for Radio Ljubljana. The question, however, is whether any of these early recordings have survived and have been added to the collection of gramophone records of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU, which was mentioned for the first time in a report dated 24 May 1945. The analysis of the Gailtal Wedding recordings and the accompanying archival documents suggest that these were made in early April 1945 in a Radio Ljubljana studio. The performers were Marolt's male-voice choir and some speakers, who were most likely originally from Carinthia. The author of the recorded material was France Marolt, he was also mentioned on one of the labels as the composer. The archival documents also reveal that the recording was made on the basis of a detailed script and song arrangements prepared by France Marolt. In fact, the labels of other gramophone records, which are identical to those that include the Gailtal Wedding recordings, as well as the recorded content, indicate that most of the records from this collection may have been recorded after 1945.

The recorded sound samples of the Gailtal Wedding should primarily be understood as Marolt's interpretation of the Slovenian folk songs and as a representation of the "true character" that he always wanted to express, and not as a faithful reproduction of the songs that actually existed among the Gailtal people at the time of his field research. In his arrangements, Marolt adhered to the principle that regional diversity must be represented, while at the same time identifying elements of "Slovenian-ness" in the songs and rituals and freeing them from Germanic influences. In this context, he often focussed on musical and dance elements of archaic rituals, which he regarded as important values in his research. He tried to recreate these elements for both educational and artistic purposes. The recordings are not the kind of field-recorded sound documents

[19] After Marolt's death, the researchers of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU classified the recordings of folk song arrangements (by Marolt, Švikaršič, Tomc, Kernjak etc.) as "authentic" folk song recordings on gramophone records on the grounds that "typical Slovenian characteristics" had been preserved in these arrangements, which made them almost equivalent to field recordings (cf. A-GNI, Strok. k. 13/1-52).

that are common in ethnomusicological sound archives and make up the majority of the material in the sound archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology ZRC SAZU.

The life and work of France Marolt is characterised by a unique interweaving of art, research, and national identity, which is also reflected in his sound recordings. As a passionate and visionary artist of the interwar and post-war period, Marolt combined his deep-rooted love of folk culture with the endeavour to document, preserve, and interpret Slovenian musical traditions through research methods. The example of the recordings of the Gailtal Wedding clearly shows the complexity of his approach: a mixture of field research, artistic reconstruction, and nationalistic fervour.

With the founding of the Academic Choir and the Folklore Institute, as well as his efforts in field research, folk song arrangements, and public education, he became one of the most important figures in the early institutionalisation of folk music research in Slovenia. His work represented "a revitalisation of everything that is valuable and positive in the Slovenian musical tradition" (Vodušek, 1951: 2). He wanted to show this through everything he did and he worked passionately on validating Slovenian folk music. He was always on the lookout for new archaic remnants of the Slovenian musical tradition, trying to get to where the influence of modern innovations and German culture had not yet been felt. However, on account of his musical talent, artistic soul, and one-of-a-kind personality, his actions were often more intuitive than rational, more emotionally fired than intellectually cool, which is clear also from the presented gramophone records. The preserved recordings on unique 78 rpm gramophone records with all metadata and related documents reveal France Marolt's way of work and his approach to research, which is inextricably linked with artistic creation, and provide resounding proof of his belief on how Slovenian music is supposed to be, and how it is supposed to sound.

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Research data statement

The author states that the article is based on ethnographic research materials that are not classified as research data. All additional information concerning the ethnographic research materials are available on reasonable request with the author. The article is also partly based on archival sources, which are cited in the list of references below.

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Raziskovalno, umetniško in pedagoško delo Franceta Marolta v odsevu zvočnih posnetkov

France Marolt (1891–1951) je bil vsestranski umetnik, raziskovalec in pedagog, ki je pustil neizbrisen pečat na številnih področjih slovenskega znanstvenega in kulturnega življenja prve polovice 20. stoletja. Njegovo umetniško in raziskovalno delo je bilo deležno številnih razprav, analiz in ocen ter je v strokovni javnosti v Sloveniji razmeroma dobro poznano. V ospredju tega prispevka pa je manj raziskano področje Maroltovega dela: zvočni posnetki na direktno rezanih gramofonskih ploščah z 78 vrtljaji na minuto, ki so nastali v okviru njegovih umetniških, raziskovalnih in pedagoških dejavnosti. Ti posnetki so danes shranjeni v zvočnem arhivu Glasbenonarodopisnega inštituta ZRC SAZU in predstavljajo prvo zvočno zbirko, ki jo je inštitut zasnoval.

Prispevek osvetljuje Maroltovo raziskovanje, predstavljanje in ohranjanje slovenske ljudske glasbe ter uresničevanje njegovih umetniških predstav o tem, kakšna naj bi bila slovenska ljudska glasba in kako naj bi zvenela. Analiza ohranjenih zvočnih posnetkov, s posebnim poudarkom na posnetkih *ziljske ohceti* in spremljajoči arhivski dokumentaciji, je pokazala, da posnetki odražajo značilno prepletanje Maroltovega umetniškega, raziskovalnega in pedagoškega delovanja. Čeprav posnetki temeljijo na terenskih raziskavah, jim je Marolt skladno s svojimi raziskovalnimi ugotovitvami, stališči in prepričanji dodal osebni umetniški izraz, jih strokovno utemeljil in javnosti predstavil v rekonstruirani obliki. Tako rekonstruirane in umetniško preoblikovane predstavitve ljudske glasbene kulture je razumel kot »avtentične prikaze«. Menil je namreč, da so v njih ohranjene »značilne slovenske poteze«, čeprav so se izvedbe ljudskih pesmi pogosto precej oddaljile od dejanske ljudske estetike in izvajalske prakse. V nenehnem iskanju arhaičnih ostankov v slovenski glasbeni tradiciji si je prizadeval najti in predstaviti nekaj, v kar vpliv sodobnih sprememb, tujih vplivov in nemške kulture še ni prodrl. Njegovo delo je vodilo prepričanje, da ljudska kultura ni nič manj vredna od t. i. »visoke« kulture.