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Music Publication Catalogues and Music Journals in Russia in the Second Half of the 19th and the Early 20th Century: Features of Advertising and Marketing Interaction

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Abstract. The article continues the research on the music publishing business in Russia of the second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries, related to its formation and development in historical and cultural dynamics and perspective. The intensity of economic transformations, the growth of production capacities and new technologies significantly influenced the emergence and formation of the advertising and marketing sphere, which is reflected in an integrated approach to the production of music catalogues and periodicals: a modern view of their content and concept, strategies and sales algorithms. The revival of integration processes within individual commercial structures has been directly linked to the flourishing of art and education, the expansion of professional interests and creative relationships. As a result, the “documentary” environment allows us to assess the scale of the ongoing transformations using the example of such large firms as “M. Bernard,” “V. Bessel and Co.,” and others. The activities of other industry representatives have great scholarly potential, among them: “P. K. Seliverstov,” who initiated original constructive solutions in advertising his trading company and became one of the creators of an individual business style. The materials appearing in the research literature for the first time are intended to expand the intellectual base and emphasize the exceptional cultural status of the Russian music publishing business, to identify its individual semantic facets.

Keywords: music magazines, catalogs, domestic music publishing, advertising, marketing, “M. Bernard”, “V. Bessel and Co.”, “P. K. Seliverstov”, “B. V. Reschke”

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Introduction

Music publishing is a little-studied area of scholarly research that reveals interesting aspects of the business and creative life of large and small enterprises that form the basis of Russian music printing. Trade literature provides great opportunities for such studies, allowing significant results to be achieved in defining the diverse vectors of commercial practices along with their associated artistic interests. Such publications contain a significant amount of technical information on the history of musical production, as well as its capacity and the quantity of products manufactured. This resource provides a demonstration of the procedures and rules of the Russian market and professional style in terms of its specific recognisability.

The dynamics of industry achievements during the period from the second half of the 19th century to the early 20th century were associated with the individual advertising and marketing [1]¹ strategies of a number of well-known music publishing companies. The structure, design and content of the catalogues “P. Jurgenson,” “A. Gutheil,” “J. H. Zimmermann” and others formed technical standards that had developed within the industry, as well as displaying unique features that reflected the originality of their various approaches, techniques and methods of work. Thus, the auxiliary literature “M. P. Belaieff in Leipzig” exemplified the highest standards of printing art, having no serious competitors in terms of paper quality, technical execution and illustrative material, and leaving far behind similar publications of other publishing houses, which very often

resembled simple newspaper sheets in their appearance.

This economic approach was followed by many other firms, whether based in the capital or provincial cities. Some of them, for example A. L. Bernardi, did not classify their range of musical notation products at all. In such cases, all publications, whether comprising educational and pedagogical materials, “serious” or “light” repertoire, could be listed in simple alphabetical order, without any division into themes, genres, etc. For others, such as “Boleslav Korejwo” or “Leon Idzikowski,” work with catalogues was one of the main priorities. The question, as always, reflected the company’s brand development strategy and tactics, its business image, etc. An important aspect was the display of awards received at domestic and foreign exhibitions, which were prominently placed on the title pages of all technical publications along with warrants of appointment such as Supplier to the Court of His Imperial Majesty, Commissioner of the Imperial Russian Musical Society, etc. From such evidence, it can be clearly seen that music publishing catalogues had already become a powerful tool of information policy for the promotion and distribution of musical products.

Musical Magazines and Music Publishing Catalogues as a Single Advertising and Marketing Space

The search for new advertising and marketing mechanisms led a number of large manufacturers to the idea of synthesising the magazine and catalogue periodical forms. A special printing style created here over

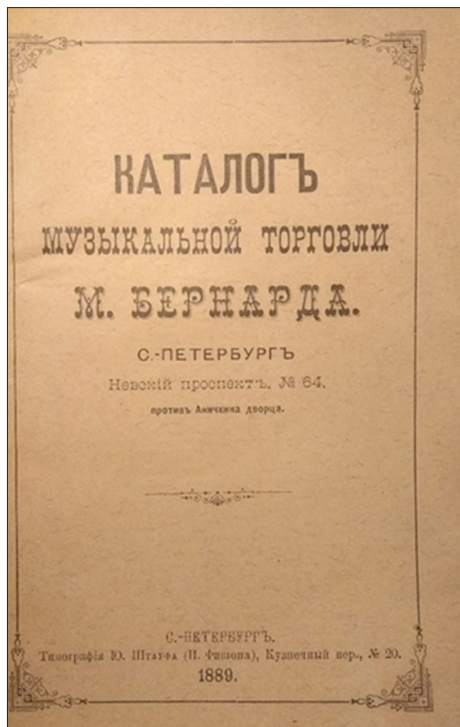
¹ In a work by Philip Kotler we read that “Advertising is an impersonal form of communication carried out through paid media, with a clearly stated source of funding.” [1, p. 429] “Marketing is a human activity aimed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange.” [Ibid., p. 21] Advertising is a part of marketing, having the common functionality of ensuring continuous sales of manufactured products.

the course of many decades was aimed at popularising the works of Russian composers, etc. This practice was successfully tested and widely distributed among Russian music publishers. Strong business skills, commercial acumen and entrepreneurial intuition contributed greatly to the success of the enterprises that published their magazine products. The undisputed veteran of this scene was *Nuvelist* founded by Matvey Ivanovich Bernard, which by the middle of the 19th century was the leader in the market of printing structures together with *Musical Russia* and its manuscript supplement *Musical Light*. The issues of *Nuvelist* distributed throughout the capital and provincial cities alike, representing a ramified system of retail space for attracting potential clients, including through catalogues, as well as containing information about upcoming magazine issues.

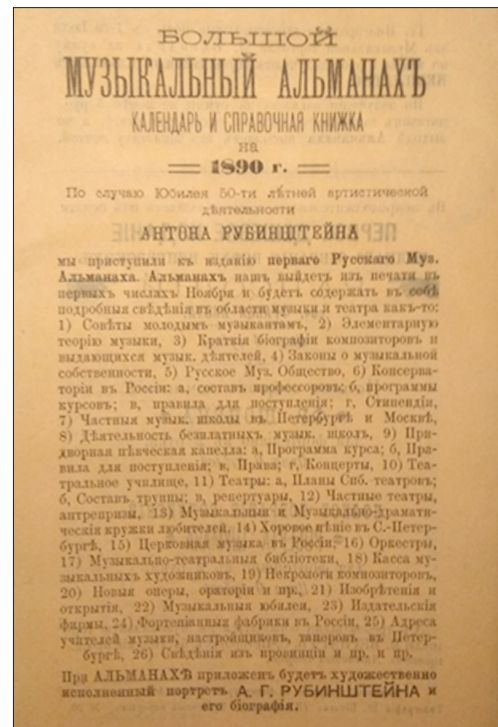
The thus-established system reflected the processes of financial integration and partnership that tended towards the creation

of large industrial associations. As an example, we will cite the “book, music and instrument store Eastern Lyre of the Commission Agent of the Supplier to the Court of His Imperial Majesty Matvey Bernard and the Kazan Circle of music lovers,” [2, p. 137] which successfully marketed its existing assortment “through private subscriptions, thanks to annual/monthly catalogues,” as well as “through a contractual system with specialised partner organisations...” [3, p. 297] In this respect, the catalogues of the firm M. Bernard (Il. 1) developed great information potential. In one of them, for 1889, we find a notice of the release of the *Russian Musical Almanac*, a calendar and reference book for 1890 (Il. 2) dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Anton Rubinstein’s artistic career, which featured a detailed indication of the headings and rewards: “an artistically executed portrait” [4, p. 1] of the pianist and his biography.

It was communicated that out-of-town citizens who subscribe to “sheet music [...]

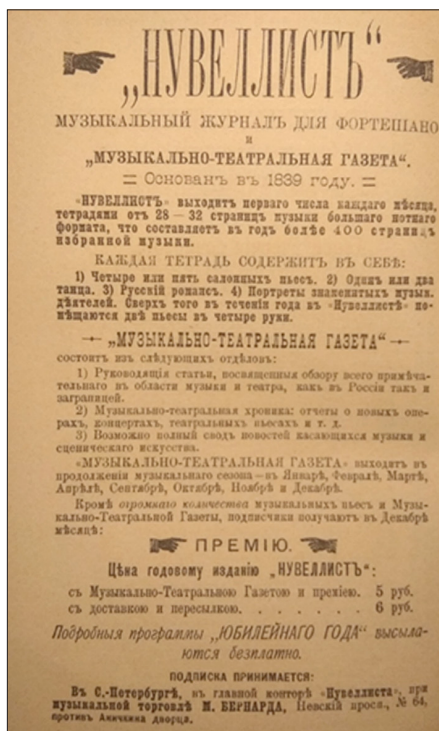


Il. 1. Catalogue of the Music Trade by M. Bernard, 1889.
Title page



Il. 2. Catalogue of the Music Trade by M. Bernard, 1889.
Announcement of the Publication of the *Russian Musical Almanac*

for a sum of at least 5 rubles will receive the *Musical Almanac* FREE OF CHARGE.” [Ibid., p. 2] Here was also information about the genres and number of works for piano published in the *Nuvelist* and the *Musical-Theatrical Newspaper*, which consisted of the following sections: “1) Leading articles devoted to an overview of everything noteworthy in the field of music and theatre, both in Russia and abroad; 2) Musical-theatrical chronicle: reports on new operas, concerts, theatre plays, etc.; 3) Possibly a complete collection of news concerning music and the performing arts” [Ibid., p. 20] (Il. 3). Subscribers were entitled to an additional bonus: the purchase price of both titles was five rubles. With delivery and postage, six rubles.



Il. 3. Catalogue of the Music Trade by M. Bernard, 1889.

Announcement of the Publication of the Music Magazine *Nuvelist*

Boris Lvovich Volman writes: “Many complaints can be made against Bernard as the editor of *Nuvelist* regarding the integrity of the published works and the littering of the magazine’s pages with low-quality crafts. Let us, however, be fair and take into account the era of his publishing activity and the demands made by the subscribers of Bernard’s journal.” [5, p. 86] This was essentially aimed at a wide consumer audience and a democratic style that worked successfully until the beginning of the 20th century. The purchase of the M. Bernard publishing house by Pyotr Ivanovich Jurgenson in 1889, despite being a momentous event in the company’s history, did not alter this trajectory.

In the essay written for the fiftieth anniversary of the magazine, Mikhail Mikhailovich Ivanov notes: “We do not know what fate awaits *Nuvelist* in the future, but to date, developing gradually, it has acquired more than 3,000 subscribers, a respectable figure for any music magazine, no matter what country it is published in.” [6, p. 31]

In both structural and economic terms, the policy of Matvey Bernard was also followed by other music publishing giants — these included “A. Gutheil,” which published the *Muzykal'nyi zhurnal* [Musical Journal] monthly from 1870 to 1872, and “V. Bessel and Co.,”² whose *Muzykal'nyi Listok* [Musical Leaflet] (1872–1877) and *Musical Review* (1885–1888) were published weekly and monthly, respectively.³ According to Boris Lvovich Volman, *Muzykal'nyi Listok* could be considered as “a musical and literary newspaper that set itself the task of covering the events of musical life as objectively as

² The company opened in 1869. Vasily Vasilyevich’s brother Ivan also played an important role in it, being in charge of most commercial issues.

³ Just like Bernard, Bessel was a professional musician, having graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in the viola class of Ieronim Andreyevich Weikman.

possible.” [5, p. 122] This publication actively contributed to the popularisation of the music of Anton Rubinstein and Pyotr Tchaikovsky. The editorial board was headed by Herman Laroche. It also “included A. Famintsyn, N. Soloviev, M. Ivanov, P. Zinoviev and V. Chechott,” with whom Vasily Vasilyevich Bessel, who was oriented toward the work of the composers of the “Mighty Handful,” subsequently developed irreconcilable ideological contradictions. [Ibid.]

Bessel’s passion for journalism allowed him to leave his job in the theatre orchestra in 1878 — on the recommendation of Franz Liszt, he became “the St. Petersburg correspondent for the Leipzig music newspaper *Neue Musikzeitung*.” In the 1872 catalogue [7], it was possible to find the first mention of the publication of the *Muzykal'nyi Listok* (in contrast to another, from 1875, which reported that the first issues were published in September 1874).

These catalogues typically contain the programme, information about the editor-in-chief and members of the editorial board, and descriptions of the composers whose works are included in the published list. At three rubles without delivery and an additional 60 kopecks with delivery and postage, the cost of the subscription is already significantly less than the equivalent publication from Matvey Ivanovich Bernard. Associate firms accepting subscriptions in other cities are indicated, including: “A. Gutheil” in Moscow, “Gebetener and Co.” in Warsaw, as well as in Orel (Genchel), Kyiv (Kleybel), Tiflis (Lanko), etc. At this point, the catalogues began to acquire some resemblance to the magazine format characterising the later period when

the publication of the *Muzykal'noe obozrenie* [Musical Review] began. [8]

Presenting Madame Henriette Nissen-Saloman’s “School of Singing,” Bessel, for advertising purposes, publishes a digest of critical reviews from various metropolitan newspapers: from *Novoye Vremya* [New Time] (8 April 1881 No. 1846), *Golos* [Voice] (6 May 1881 No. 124), *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* [Petersburg Newspaper] (6 May 1881 No. 124), and finally from the German-language *St. Petersburger Herold* (28 April 1881 No. 118) and the Leipzig *Signale für die Musikalische* (November 1881 No. 67). However, nothing similar could be found in later editions.

Julius Heinrich Zimmermann works in the same style, including in the Catalogue of Musical Works for 1889 a voluminous collection of “Press Reviews of the Famous Newest Work for Piano by Professor Carl Reinecke, *From the Cradle to the Grave*.” In the published excerpt from the magazine *Gartenlaube*, No. 8 for 1889, it is noted: “And so in his new work Reinecke also tries to make music accessible to middle-of-the-road audiences, if only they are able to understand and feel all the poetry expressed by the fusion of harmonious sounds; in this way, he has made a contribution to piano literature for which many will remain grateful.” [9, S. VI]

Other Russian businessmen used similar marketing moves. The trading practices of Pyotr Klementyevich Seliverstov⁴ in St. Petersburg had a long development path. At 22 Sadovaya Street, opposite Gostinyj Dvor, there was a book and music shop, whose catalogue in 1893 represented a collection of works on spiritual topics, textbooks, works

⁴ G. Riemann’s *Musical Dictionary* reports: “Seliverstov, Pyotr Klementyevich — born 1854 in St. Petersburg, received his musical education at the Court Chapel (choirmaster); in 1887 he opened a music trade and publishing house in St. Petersburg; since 1894, he has been the editor and publisher of the magazine *Music and Singing*.” [10, p. 1172] Including the publication *Nashe Vremya* [Our Time].

on philosophy, logic, medicine, law, etc., including theatrical plays, an affordable library for the military, schools, the general public, and more (Il. 4).



Il. 4. Catalogue of the Book and Music Store of P. K. Seliverstov, 1893.
Title Page

Although musical works were located only at the very end of its contents, they are directly mentioned in the preface, which compensates for this “disadvantageous” location: “In the music department of the store there are schools for all instruments and singing, etudes and pieces accepted by all conservatories, romances of Russian and foreign composers, a large selection of plays and dances. Cheap editions from Russian and foreign publishers. Complete collections of cheap editions Carl

Friedrich Peters and Henry Litolff. Theoretical works, spiritual and musical works by Russian and foreign composers. Strings, metronomes, music stands, and other musical accoutrements.” [11, p. 3]

There are a number of references to the work of this enterprise in various sources: “The publishing house of the book and music store of Pyotr Klementyevich Seliverstov operated in St. Petersburg from 1888 to 1910. <...> During this period, P. K. Seliverstov was the only publisher of the works of provincial composer-choirmasters (as a rule, in the supplement to his magazine *Muzyka i penie* [Music and Singing] (my italics. — O. R.)).”⁵ Antonina Lebedeva-Emelina and Marina Sidorova indicate that P. K. Seliverstov’s publishing house published choral concerts by Stepan Anikeyevich Degtyarev: *Blazheni vsi* [Blessed are All], *Velichit dusha moya Gospoda* [My Soul Magnifies the Lord], *Voskliknite Bogovi* [Cry Out to the Gods], etc. [12, p. 83]

However, the company’s marketing strategies operated according to a different coordinate system. In addition to spiritual literature, many publications represented light genres. Taking into account the interests of the consumer, music for light entertainment was published first and foremost. As an example, the compositions performed “with great success in Pavlovsk under the direction of R. Eulenberg” [11, p. 219] or “by the court orchestra,” which made an indelible impression on the public. [Ibid.]

The sales technology was supported by short annotated indexes, for example, to the ballet *Les Pilules magiques* [The Magic Pills] by Ludwig Minkus.⁶ Objectively, dance numbers

⁵ Publishing houses and publications of sacred music. URL: <http://religiocivilis.ru/hristianstvo/christ-i/12356-izdtelstv-i-izdniya-.html?start=3> (accessed: 02.04.2025).

⁶ Similar mechanisms were demonstrated by the firm Yu. H. Zimmerman in the sections dedicated to popular singers of the second half of the 19th century, in particular to Medea Figner.

turned out to be preferable to various “schools of play” and other specialised literature. By 1911, and possibly even earlier,⁷ Seliverstov’s output had become solely musical. This proved the undoubted commercial benefit of this subject under the conditions of tough industry competition. Following the example of major players in the domestic market, the publisher regularly informed consumers about the cost, quantity and quality of the assortment produced.

Similar advertisements were placed on city shop windows and on the front pages of catalogues. An important condition for successful marketing was the correct placement of published material. Along with traditional operetta vocal scores, which were placed in the “best” printing spaces, a large volume of works on the theory and history of music by domestic and foreign authors, spiritual compositions, etc. were presented.⁸

In fact, Seliverstov followed the important marketing principle of selling what “people will certainly buy.” [13, p. 43] And, judging by the catalogues, this practice was in line with the “current trends” of his time. The change of course towards the sale of sheet music products⁹ implied its great market potential, as reflected in the almost thirty-year history of the enterprise. A comparison of catalogues published in 1893 and 1911 revealed a significant increase in turnover and its numerical

indicators. The close proximity of the trading location to the Petersburg Passazh, the famous commercial center of the capital, was also of great importance.

The company’s music periodicals — in particular, the magazine *Muzyka i penie* [Music and Singing], which was edited and published by Pyotr Seliverstov from 1894 to 1905 — had an indisputable value for determining universal marketing strategies.¹⁰ Along with works by Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Gounod, the first issue also featured secondary literature. Among the stated goals: “...to give every amateur, as well as those beginning to study music and singing, for the most modest fee, a large number of the best musical works. <...> Given the awakening desire for music in our society, the benefit of such a publication is obvious, especially in view of the high cost of sheet music available for sale separately...” [14, p. 1]

In addition, the magazine included a *catalogue* of products published by Seliverstov, from spiritual literature to poetry collections and home reference books, which formed an important part of the enterprise’s economic strategy and marketing operations. For the information volume, it is necessary to note other parameters: “...characteristics of product sales regions; assessment of the market commodity niche,” [15, p. 181] etc., leading

⁷ 1911 saw the publication of the *Katalog not deshevykh izdaniy muzykal'nogo magazina P. K. Seliverstova* [Catalogue of Cheap Music Editions from P. K. Seliverstov’s Music Shop], which is stored in the Russian State Library.

⁸ The 1911 catalogue presented a wide range of musical notation products of various compositions. The first place in the table of contents was occupied by pieces for piano in two and four hands, dances, schools of playing, and then vocal literature, *sacred-musical* works and instrumental repertoire. In total, more than 60 pages of published and marketed titles are listed. Among them we find the *Historical Printing House of Church Singing Edited by Priest M. A. Lisitsyn*, as well as the *Collection of Church Chants of Common Chants for the People Arranged for Two and Three Voices by Priest Nikolai Kurllov*, spiritual and musical works by Dmitry Stepanovich Bortnyansky, etc. These works were accompanied by new gypsy releases, the album *Enchanting Sounds*, etc.

⁹ In the 1911 catalogue there is no longer any mention of the publishing activities of Pyotr K. Seliverstov.

¹⁰ Pyotr K. Seliverstov passed away in 1905. However, the company would continue its operations until 1917.

to a clear structural hierarchy of the production process.

Thus, the magazine's subscription geography included Moscow, Blagoveshchensk, and later Odessa. It was recommended by the "main administration of military educational institutions <...> to cadet corps for acquisition in fundamental libraries." [16, p. 1] Three months later, in the issue of July 15, 1896, is added: "Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Public Education. For 1895, approved for student, middle and senior age libraries, secondary school libraries for male and female students."¹¹ [17, p. 1]

The sale of magazine products most likely created additional material resources for the implementation of priority publishing projects; however, it was spiritual literature that was closest to Seliverstov's professional profile.¹² An important nuance was the stable cost of an annual subscription, which ranged from 4 to 5 rubles, including postage and delivery.

The other side of marketing operations was connected with the synthesis of magazine and catalogue periodicals in publications of an advertising nature: introductory articles, information about the activities

of the publishing house¹³, etc. *Muzyka i penie* [Music and Singing] (Il. 5) was an effective tool for the sale of printed materials, announcing new editions and a variety of secular literature, while Seliverstov's catalogues simultaneously reported on current titles and prices.

The journal covered the activities of various printed sources (Il. 6). Among them can be found *Detskoe Chtenie* [Children's Reading], an illustrated monthly for school-age children, as well as *Russkii nachal'nyi uchitel'* [Russian Primary Teacher], *Narodnoe obrazovanie* [Public Education], *Detskii otdykh* [Children's Leisure], *Iskusstvo i nauka* [Art and Science], the general pedagogical weekly newspaper *Shkol'noe obozrenie* [School Review], etc. This became especially noticeable with the beginning of the publishing house's cooperation with the Educational Committee of the Ministry of Public Education in 1896.¹⁴ Also advertised were the *Lyublinskije gubernskie vedomosti* [Lyublin Provincial Gazette], *Tobol'skie gubernskie vedomosti* [Tobolsk Provincial Gazette], and *Turgaiskaya Gazeta* [Turgai Gazette].¹⁵ Several advertisements were dedicated to the scientific, literary, and political journal "Novoe Slovo."

¹¹ Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Public Education. For 1895, approved for student, middle and senior age libraries, secondary school libraries for male and female students.

¹² Very often, one or another enterprise had its own "specialisation" on the side. Thus, the music publishing house and store of Nikolai Khristianovich Davingof, founded in 1887, which successfully traded in English, Parisian and other fashion magazines, was reported in annual catalogues. [18]

¹³ Following the example of "V. Bessel and Co.," these often coincided with announcements about the release of the next issue of a music newspaper or magazine.

¹⁴ The reasons for this interaction should be sought in the educational system of the Russian Empire. Nina Pavlovna Richter notes: "The period from the 1880s to the beginning of the 20th century was a time of close attention of teachers to the problems of music education, active development of program and methodological materials, as well as the transfer of the subject 'Church Singing' in school to the category of compulsory in church parish schools and higher primary schools." [19, p. 10] In this light, the specificity of the publishing house of P. K. Seliverstov in the production of sacred musical literature and its participation in the activities of the Educational Committee of the Ministry of Public Education acquires a new relevance.

¹⁵ First illustrated newspaper in the East of Russia.



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