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Music Score Publishing Companies in the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries: The Price Lists of the "P. Jurgenson" Music Sales Company (From the Collection of the Russian State Library)

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Abstract: This article is a continuation of research related to the activities of Russian music score publishing companies from the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries in the field of the production and sale of musical instruments. This particular segment of industry demonstrates a number of features which are most clearly reflected in the price lists of the leading manufacturers, as well as a number of official commercial representatives. The advertising mechanisms and technologies are connected with the design of print copies, thematic publications, as well as structural and organisational features. Each of these embodies a marketing policy by way of commercial tool designed to demonstrate the best and highest quality aspects of a given enterprise designed significantly to increase cash turnover of the profiled range of goods. One of the most significant market players was "P. Jurgenson," a company which operated in conditions of fierce rivalry while searching for its own individual business image. The facets of this image consisted of an objective complex of features formed by the development of capitalist relations and personal qualities, as well as the totality of cultural notions and possibilities. In each case, this was a demonstration of both general and specific aspects, the latter of which reveal the inimitable features of entrepreneurship, its system and potential. The opportunity to comprehend and assess the scale arose thanks to materials in the collection of the Russian State Library, which now for the first time have been introduced into academic studies.

Keywords: catalogue, price lists, Piotr Ivanovich Jurgenson, musical instruments, advertising, trade

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Introduction

Music score publishing in the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries was a most vivid cultural phenomenon. It was a reflection of the commercial strategies of its time, the trends and directions of contemporary art, the combining of tradition and innovation as a synthesis of the material and spiritual, the moral principles inherent in the system of industrial relations, as well as tried and tested algorithms of sales, all of which contributed to the intensive and effective sale of manufactured and sold products.

The success of a given enterprise depended directly on the personality of the owner and manager, his individual qualities, acumen and intuition. There were many examples of this. “Just in the same way in which A. F. Smirdin, the owner of a commercial publishing company began to print Pushkin and derived considerable income from this, so Bessel ‘took a surefire risk’, and his personal taste helped him to correctly identify and maintain the best in new Russian music. It is this best that has always been in great demand,” wrote Mikhail Kunin.¹

The sphere of interests of the largest manufacturers was not only limited to the

production and sale of scores, educational and methodological literature. A significant volume of earned income derived from the sales of musical instruments and accessories which was the main content of the *price lists* on offer to buyers. It was not only manufacturers who occupied leading positions in this process, but also intermediaries who were direct representatives of a number of domestic Russian and foreign firms. These included Piotr Ivanovich Jurgenson who was one of the first to organise a distinct advertising campaign for a musical performance range, successfully combined with “a sincere desire to serve the cause of distributing good, real music in Russia.”²

Pricelists of the P. Jurgenson Music Score Company: Sales and Product Range

This particular trend can be established by an examination of special sources dedicated to Piotr Jurgenson. The works of Sergei Belov³ [1], Boris Volman, Mikhail Kunin, Natalia Logacheva⁴ [2] and others, describe matters related to his *commercial* activities, without always examining them in detail.⁵ Such matters include sales technologies, organisational and material aspects.

¹ Kunin M. E. *Iz istorii notopечатaniya. Kratkii ocherk* [From the History of Music Score Printing. A Brief Sketch]. Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1963. P. 48.

² Tchaikovsky M. I. *Zhizn' Petra Il'icha Chaikovskogo: po dokumentam, khranyashchimsya v Arkhive imeni pokoinogo kompozitora v Klinu: v 3-kh t.: s prilozheniem portretov, snimkov i faksimile, ispolnennykh fototsinkograficheskim sposobom* [The Life of Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: Based on Documents from the Archive of the Late Composer in Klin: In 3 Vols: with Addendum of Portraits, Photographs and Photo-zinc Plate Facsimiles]. Moscow; Leipzig, 1896. Vol. 1, pp. 215–216.

³ Sergei Belov, in particular, notes that “Jurgenson’s company as also an intermediary for the sale of musical instruments in Russia and had a large warehouse of them.” [1, p. 86]

⁴ Natalia Logacheva refers to the *Russkaya muzykal'naya gazeta* [Russian Musical Gazette] (1864–1901) and the work *Muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo P. Yurgensona v Moskve: 1861–1911* [P. Jurgenson’s Musical Publishing House in Moscow: 1861–1911], which mentions the sale of musical instruments.

⁵ An important document related to the establishment in the 1880s of the “Tovarishchestvo muzykal'noi trgovli i notopечатni P. Yurgensona” [“Partnership for Musical Trade and Music Score of P. Jurgenson”] is also quoted by Sergei Belov. A memorandum of the Minister of Finance to the Minister of Internal Affairs of August 27, 1884 lists

The fact that price lists for trading in musical instruments and accessories exist indicates a serious volume of cash transactions which require appropriate content and design. These examples in themselves are very different from the “eponymous” catalogues, primarily in terms of their appearance. They show a range of marketing mechanisms which make effective use of the potential resources of the enterprise itself, also indicating the high quality of the products on sale. In essence, the aim of establishing the advertising image is to implement a clear plan of action. This is akin to a creative process constrained within the rigid framework of commercial technologies.

The company’s price lists represent an information system aimed at actively advertising the company’s products and outstanding achievements. They are fundamentally different from its catalogues of music scores, and the availability and price of commercially available literature. The only exceptions are the last pages and the cover where a variety of announcements are printed.

In his price lists, Jurgenson pays particular attention to the history of the company and its awards. They also contain illustrative material indicating its leading status. To one degree or another similar marketing ploys were used by almost all the closest rivals in the music score publishing sector. The process was methodical and persistent.

The 1887 pricelist begins with a preface reminding⁶ customers of the leading role

of the publisher in the printing services market and its primary professional achievements: reduced prices of the music scores, publication of the complete collections of works by Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, among others, as well as works by Russian domestic composers.

Special attention is also given to the warehouses which provided customers with the ability to purchase “all publications in general, both Russian and foreign, in order to be able to meet all the requirements of music lovers.”⁷ This is also reported in the Jurgenson catalogues. The last pages offer information about strings, metronomes, tuning forks produced by the best manufactories, as well as various types of score sheets lined in their own electrical publishing facility, among others. The question of their location, storage and existing volume still remains unanswered. A specific answer can be found in the same price list which sets out that “together with sales of music scores, on the second floor of the same premises⁸ there was an extensive warehouse of various instruments at all prices. As a result of their relations with the best Russian and foreign factories, the sales department is able to guarantee the high quality of the goods on offer and set reasonable prices.”⁹

The same publication also provides many interesting facts concerning, in particular, the range of goods on sale, including traditional names: symphony orchestra instruments (string and wind), pianos and grand pianos,

the main assets of the company related to “1) wholesale and retail trade in music scores, 2) *warehouse for musical instruments* [mine italics. — O. R.], 3) steam-powered music score printing, metallography, lithography, printing and binding...” See: Russian State History Archive. Fund 1287. List 7. Portfolio 1799.

⁶ The text of the preface is duplicated in other advertising brochures of the company.

⁷ *Illyustrirovannyi preiskurant sklada instrumentov muzykal'noi trgovli P. Yurgensona* [*Illustrated Price List of the P. Jurgenson Warehouse of Musical Instruments*]. Moscow: Parovaya skoropechatnya not P. Yurgensona [Steam-Powered High-Speed Score Printing of P. Jurgenson], 1887. P. 2.

⁸ Neglinny proezd, dom 10.

⁹ *Illyustrirovannyi preiskurant...* [*Illustrated Price List...*]. Op. cit.

as well as “special ones,” which over the passage of time have become known as “self-playing music boxes,” “English concertino,” “organs (harmoniums) made by the Mason and Hemlin factory,” “American Tournaphones and Aurophones.” A separate section is devoted to the latter containing statistics about their extreme popularity, of which approximately about 30,000 units were in use. Piotr Jurgenson wrote: “The Tournaphone is a musical instrument capable of reproducing all musical compositions as majestically as an organ. The name of the instrument comes from the French ‘tourner’ — to turn and the Greek ‘phone’ — sound. Its appearance is beautiful and its finish is elegant...”¹⁰ Hence the price: 23 roubles, which, of course, was a serious obstacle to their purchase by representatives of the lower social strata.

It would be quite an overstatement to claim that the company held a leading position in this sector. For comparison, Julius Heinrich Zimmermann offered its customers such a large volume of similar products that some of Jurgenson’s items were simply not stated in this publication. This is more likely to be a matter of “commercial strategies in the formation of the product range.” [3, p. 196] Jurgenson offered practically no mechanical musical instruments while in the 1901 Zimmermann catalogue, they took up 39 pages. Denis Lomtev emphasises that “most of the models on offer were supplied from Leipzig. Since the 1880s, enterprises specialised in the production of automatophones of various types began to spring up here one after another.” [4, p. 49] The catalogue also features examples by American manufacturers. Thus, in 1887, Jurgenson was selling products made by overseas manufacturers without particularly intersecting the goods offered by his direct competitors.

Whether this was intentional or accidental is an unanswered question. It may possibly have been a matter of certain contractual obligations.

This edition also retains the practice of including articles of an advertising character in such publications. However, they relate to a completely different topic. Jurgenson’s music score catalogues offer no mention of the history of the company, or the history of its establishment, as set out in the 1911 biographical brochure, created for the 50th anniversary. A similar approach is also characteristic of Jurgenson’s 1887 and 1890 price lists. Zimmermann, on the other hand, restrict themselves to illustrative material depicting the process of making musical instruments. From edition to edition, the drawings remain the same and they are occasionally even transferred to the catalogues of printed products in the form of inserts, along with information about individual commercial offers.

In the 1887 price list, it cannot be said that Jurgenson was beginning actively to illustrate his exceptional historical mission. It is more likely that he was adopting “a more pragmatic function.” [5, p. 128] Here he demonstrates the most striking industrial achievements or “Innovation in the music score printing business in Russia”: “1) Steam-powered machinery. 2) A lathe cutter for metal plates. 3) Stone grinder machine. 4) Brochure binding machine. 5) Reducing apparatus. 6) Double paper Hollander (paper pulper). 7) Improved engraving, printing and paper. 8) Price reduction of scores from 50 to 60%. 9) Everything was produced in their own print shop with their own resources, ranging from the forming of plates to artistic title drawings in 10 or more colours. In 1886, the printing house produced music scores and title pages totalling 9 million or more than (2,500,000) sheets of music.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 50.

A further 5500 metal score plates were cast and engraved.”¹¹ The study entitled *P. Jurgenson Music Publishing House in Moscow. 1861–1911* indicates the following: “The annual production of music scores: 18 engravers produce about 8,000 plates every year. The company prints: 12 million prints by the lithographic method. Typographically — 6.”¹²

The structure of the price list is not only limited to such announcements. Jurgenson goes further. He accompanies them with detailed illustrations where “visual images prevail.” [6, p. 60] They depict the following: a high speed printing machine for potassium printing (six, three of which are double); a high speed printing machine for printing from a typeset plate or stereotype; a steam-powered stone grinder with dual movement; a double steam Hollander for glazing sheet paper; a steam-powered lathe cutter machine for cutting metal engraving plates; a steam-powered binding machine for brochure binding using steel wire; a cutting table; a cutting machine; a machine for manual stone printing (five); a press for finished music scores; a intaglio machine for printing from metal plates (two).¹³

This logically gives rise to the following question: why would Jurgenson include seven pages of information about his technical capabilities in his price list? The answer is obvious: the commercial capacity of his company with regards to sales of musical instruments and accessories would have constituted a serious competition to the largest players in this market segment.¹⁴ Hence the idea of “consolidating” it in this way, thus relying on the substantial interest of the potential consumer. Further to this, the price list created an additional image of Jurgenson as the owner of Russia’s largest music score publishing house and contributed to the promotion of available goods. For added volume, a short list of *Teaching Books for a Range of Instruments* was also included here, as well as *Special Catalogues* for all branches of music for sale only. The most expensive catalogue was that of works for a single piano, priced at 80 kopecks. The cheapest was the catalogue of Russian songs, choirs, spiritual works, among others priced at 10 kopecks. Only the catalogues of Jurgenson’s cheap publications were free of charge. Publication of these began in 1884.¹⁵ For comparison,

¹¹ Ibid. P. 55.

¹² Here we also find detailed information about the technical facilities of the music score publishing house, formed over 50 years of its history, as well as about achievements in the field of rationalisation. See: *Muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo P. Yurgensona v Moskve. 1861–1911: Kratkii obzor deyatel'nosti firmy: Obzor deyatel'nosti notopechatni P. Yurgensona* [*Music Publishers P. Jurgenson in Moscow. 1861–1911: Short Overview of Company's Activities: Overview of the Activities of P. Jurgenson Music Score Printing*]. Moscow: Notopechatnya Yurgensona v Moskve, 1911. P. 22.

¹³ Note that some of the machines bear the trademark LIPSIA, R. H. Swiderski, Leipzig. The technical facilities of “P. I. Jurgenson” were equipped with the best modern examples of printing equipment. In the 1911 jubilee edition, the drawings were replaced with photographs of the industrial facility itself, as well as its workshops. See: *Illyustrirovannyi preiskurant... [Illustrated Price List...]*, pp. 56–62.

¹⁴ At that time, they included the company “Julius Heinrich Zimmerman.”

¹⁵ This is reported by the jubilee brochure: “In 1884, the first list of ‘Cheap Edition in Volumes’ was published, edited by the best musical authorities. These editions compete in terms of price and quality with the well-known German cheap editions by Peters, Litolf, and others.” See: *Muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo P. Yurgensona v Moskve. 1861–1911... [Music Publishers P. Jurgenson in Moscow. 1861–1911...]*. P. 12. It should be noted that the 1887 and 1890 price lists were also distributed free of charge.

of the French National Academy. Furthermore, the Grand Prix Gold Medal of the French National Academy for Engraving and Printing

(1883) is completely absent from the list of the 1911 anniversary edition. There are also discrepancies in the 1872 awards (II. 2).

Награды, полученные фирмой П. Юргенсона.

- 1872 г. *Московская Политехническая выставка:*
1. Большая золотая медаль „За особые труды по выставкѣ“.
 2. „ „ „ „За изданіе печатныхъ нотъ, отличающихся изяществомъ и тщательностью печатанія“.
 3. Большая серебряная медаль „За весьма хорошее исполненіе нотнаго печатанія“.
- 1873 г. *Вѣнская всемірная выставка:*
4. Почетный дипломъ.
- 1878 г. *Парижская всемірная выставка:*
5. Почетный дипломъ.
- 1881 г. *Всемірная выставка въ Миланѣ:*
6. Большая серебряная медаль за „Edizione veramente magnifiche“.
- 1882 г. *Всероссійская выставка въ Москвѣ:*
7. Орденъ св. Станислава 3-й степени „За полезную дѣятельность на поприщѣ отечественной промышленности и особыя заслуги по выставкѣ 1882 г.“
- 1889 г. *Всемірная выставка въ Парижѣ:*
8. Большая серебряная медаль.
- 1893 г. *Всемірная выставка въ Чикаго:*
9. Медаль и дипломъ „for an important musical publication of scores and methods for all kinds of instruments and with all the orchestral parts, and for printing of the most perfect style“.

37

- 1895 г. *1-я Всероссийская выставка печатнаго дѣла:*
10. Большая золотая медаль Имп. Техническаго общества за „обширную 25-лѣтнюю издательскую дѣятельность, выразившуюся въ огромномъ количествѣ изданій музыкальных произведеній, въ томъ числѣ полныхъ собраній произведеній иностранныхъ композиторовъ, а также произведеній русскихъ композиторовъ, даже начинающихъ, что поддерживаетъ духъ и энергію послѣднихъ и такимъ образомъ несомнѣнно содѣйствуетъ усиленному творчеству русскихъ, отечественныхъ композиторовъ“.
- 1896 г. *Всероссійская выставка въ Нижн. Новгородѣ:*
11. Государственный гербъ за „обширность и разнообразіе изданій и хорошее исполненіе работъ по нотопечатному дѣлу при долголѣтнемъ существованіи фирмы“.
 12. Орденъ св. Анны 3-й степени „За издательскую дѣятельность“.
- 1900 г. *Всемірная выставка въ Парижѣ:*
13. „Grand Prix“ и Золотая медаль.
 14. Орденъ „Officier de l'instruction publique“.
- 1908 г. *Берлинъ.*
15. Орденъ Прусской Короны 4-й степени (За издательскую дѣятельность).



II. 2. List of Awards Granted to Piotr Jurgenson's Company as Presented in the 1861–1911 Anniversary Edition

Thus, as a result, the illustration used as the basis was transferred in the same form to the price list of 1890. We stress that there is nothing similar to this any of the company's music score catalogues which fulfil completely different functions and collectively occupy "521 pages of 2-column print."¹⁷ Completely different mechanisms were used to advertise price lists. They were vivid and informative, aimed at attracting attention and interest among customers. The question of the standards for the design of similar materials prior to 1887 or after 1890 remains open. During the period under study here, one and the same system is used. There are only insignificant differences in the composition of the range of goods and the numerical sequence. For example, the 1887 price list contains the following brand names: "Steinway¹⁸ and Sons in New York," whose "sole agent" was Jurgenson and the Jacob Becker factory in St. Petersburg. There is absolutely no information about other piano manufacturers. They are simply referred to as "various" and offered for sale at prices ranging from 450 to 600 roubles. In 1890 they began to refer to them as "various Moscow¹⁹ and foreign" manufacturers, again without any specification of their owners.

One other important detail. The company was actively involved in the sale of harmoniums which were incredibly popular among ordinary people and enlightened music lovers. However,

at the same time, there were no harps to be found in these price lists, while "brass instruments of the Tibouville factory in Paris are available in their full range at reasonable prices," but without a detailed description or relevant illustrations.²⁰ There are a great deal of such examples. In general terms, the sales process was of a mixed character. The company not only sold goods available in the warehouse, but also accepted pre-orders, in particular for "oboes, bassoons and all other wind, wooden and copper musical instruments by all Russian and foreign factories not specifically described in the catalogue."²¹ This was most likely in order to avoid the overloading of the warehouse.

Conclusion

In this way, the price lists of the "P. Jurgenson" music score publishers show another facet of this little known and practically unresearched enterprise. In terms of their design, content and advertising mechanisms, they create a new perspective on the perception of cultural traditions, time and era, and in general — production and commercial and monetary relations. In his vision of the process of selling musical instruments, accessories and related products, Piotr Jurgenson demonstrated an outstanding entrepreneurial talent which enabled him to confidently declare his leading positions and compete with powerful players in the domestic Russian market.

¹⁷ *Muzikal'noe izdatel'stvo P. Yurgensona v Moskve...* [*P. Jurgenson Music Publishers in Moscow...*]. P. 13.

¹⁸ The company name retains the 19th century spelling.

¹⁹ Pianos and grand pianos produced in St. Petersburg other than those of the Jacob Becker factory were not indicated in these price lists. This is perhaps due to the absence of an appropriate contract.

²⁰ *Illyustrirovannyi preiskurant...* [*Illustrated Price List...*]. P. 21.

²¹ *Ibid.* P. 23.

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