

# Music Documentation in Libraries, Scholarship, and Practice



June 4-6, 2012

## About RISM's Russian Committee Work over the Last Ten Years

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### Abstract

Russian libraries have been participating in RISM since 1973. At that time, the S. I. Taneev Research Music Library began sending information about its rare printed sources to RISM. Through the joint efforts of the Taneev Library and the RSL, we were then able to contribute data to RISM's volumes in the course of creating and publishing the bibliographic index of printed music in Russia from the first half of the nineteenth century. This project took into consideration data from the ten most important collections in the country.

At the end of the 1990s, work on the union catalog of Russian printed music sources was started, carried out by the National Library of Russia. This catalog consists of data from the holdings of more than fifty libraries and institutions. Through this process, a resource about printed music sources from eighteenth-century Russia was completed, and the volumes with these records were sent to RISM. Therefore, RISM currently has an almost complete presentation of music printed in Russia before 1850.

The S. I. Taneev Research Music Library, being the largest library in Russia in the area of classical music, houses about 4,000 manuscripts, including works of different periods, styles, genres, and composers. Recently, bibliographic descriptions of manuscripts of works by foreign composers from the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth centuries have been sent to RISM. During this period, information about almost 2,000 sources was sent to RISM. In 2010–2011, a special program was created which will allow in the near future the electronic bibliographic descriptions of manuscripts to be transferred to RISM's database.

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The Taneev Research Music Library of the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory has been a participant in IAML since 1969. In a library collection totaling nearly 1.5 million items, there are about 4,000 handwritten manuscripts and nearly 20,000 rare editions. This collection contains works of different eras, styles, genres, and composers. The period presented is from the end of fifteenth century to today (manuscripts). Thus among these manuscripts, a wide range of musical notations can be found – from “hooked” notation (in old Russian manuscripts) and neumatic (in Western European) to contemporary (works at the end of the twentieth to the beginning of the twenty-first centuries).

One of the mainstays of the Taneev Library was and still remains participation in the international bibliographic projects RILM, RISM, and RIPM. Since as early as 1969, information has been sent to RILM, and since 1973, to RISM. More active participation in RISM is due to the creation and publication of a bibliographic guide called “Russian Printed Music of the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” written by the Taneev Library and the

Russian State Library. This guide considered data from the holdings of the ten largest institutions in Russia. A copy of this guide was given to RISM.

At the end of the 1990s, work on the union catalogue of Russian printed music was begun by the Russian State Library (St. Petersburg). This catalogue presented data from the holdings of more than 50 libraries and other institutions since the eighteenth century. Therefore, this resource on Russian printed music of the eighteenth century was complete and also given to RISM for publication.

Thus, today nearly all of Russian printed music up to the year 1850 is represented in RISM. Unfortunately, information on the foreign printed music of the same period stored in the Taneev Library and other Russian libraries was given to RISM only in small numbers.

In the last decades, the Taneev Library has been sending to RISM the descriptions of manuscripts, namely compositions by foreign composers from the sixteenth to the first half of the nineteenth centuries. Nearly 2,000 manuscripts were sent during these years. The handwritten Santini-Skariatin collection formed the base of descriptions of documents stored in the Taneev Library that were given to RISM. The collection consists of unique manuscripts, containing works by Western European composers of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, some of them were never published. Manuscripts were left to the library by Alexander Skariatin, a Russian ambassador in Rome. While working in Rome, Skariatin got acquainted with Fortunato Santini, whose name is well-known in Europe.

The collection consists of 90 volumes, containing works by 250 composers, about 1,600 works total. Particular manuscripts can be dated between 1845 and 1850. It is reasonable to suppose that Santini continued work on copying manuscripts until the year 1858. In this collection everything attracts your attention: from the binding to the unique composition of each particular volume. Santini was not working on the copies alone. He used the help of some copyists. Two principles for arranging the volumes were used: alphabetical ordering and arrangement according to the genres.

Last year, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of Fortunato Santini, G. Malinina presented a detailed report on this collection at a conference in Munster. It should be pointed out that in the Santini collection in the Taneev Library, there is the only copy in the world of his composition, "Domine exaudi me," a motet dated 02.04.1847.

All the descriptions of manuscripts in the Taneev Library are put in the electronic database. In 2011, the program to record manuscripts electronically, created in the library, was considerably improved: now it allows the employees to stop using typewritten descriptions on paper cards, which previously had been sent to RISM, in favor of electronic descriptions. Starting in 2012, the entire transfer of descriptions of handwritten manuscripts from the library to RISM will be performed electronically.

The program has everything according to RISM standards. It is possible to add an image with incipit, facsimile reproduction, digital copies, or web references to the description.

Paper description cards, made for RISM, are being scanned, and will be united with the electronic catalogue of the library. The electronic description can be viewed as text (if you need, for example, to make a list).

The program makes it possible to collect, keep together (with descriptions), and look through search results for any media files or images, including music incipits, covers, separate pages or fragments, full printed music, audio fragments, and video fragments. The program also allows one to collect and keep together references within the search results to web resources, to open them, and to look them through directly within the program. The program enables searching for all special musical data (tonality, genres, character, voice range, etc).

One of the most important parts of our library automation system (LAS) is the Rare Editions Cataloguing Unit (RECU).

It is common knowledge that each rare edition is unique, and therefore the set of fields in the automation system needed to be accommodating. Fields for complete bibliographical descriptions of rare editions are much more numerous than for modern editions, and can vary significantly from one document to another. That means that when

working on RECU it was much more complicated for us to meet the main requirements that we established for our LAS: optimal user interface and high quality data structure. We wanted to avoid both weak points of many LASs, namely: 1) too many fields on the screen, and most of them prove to be superfluous when cataloguing each concrete document; and 2) too much parameterization left for the user (here, meaning the user of the RECU, meaning the cataloger), which actually means leaving a complicated interface problem for the user to resolve, though it is an IT problem.

To achieve this goal, we tried to find the optimal combination of: 1) the fixed number of fields which are always present on the screen; and 2) the fixed number of fields which are fixed in the interface, but hidden on the screen and appear either when the user presses a hot key or screen button, or automatically, depending on the user's identifier; 3) the user-defined part of the interface, where the user can create additional fields right when cataloguing, so that when encountering the need for that field, it is not necessary to foresee this and configure the system beforehand; the specificity of that feature in our LAS is the authority file for user-added fields, which provides correct data structuring.

Obviously, it is impossible to achieve optimal results before catalogers started real work with the RECU. So the preliminary working version of the RECU was elaborated. And during the year it has been in use, it has been worked on and improved by the Automation Department, Cataloging Department, and Rare Editions Department of our library. As a result, we've got the RECU optimally adjusted for our needs. However, it is still open for patching in the future, if needed, if cataloguing rules are changed, or if other objective reasons appear.

As it has been mentioned already, one of the most important tasks for us was to achieve high-quality data structuring. This task is connected with the importance of a high-quality data exchange with partners in the Rare Editions Department of our library. The correct data structure in our LAS allows us to provide high-quality MARC records for data exchange and, if needed, to adjust it easily to any specificity of MARC format versions used by our partners.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that we have provided in our LAS the instruments for knowledge-base generation, looking forward to future duties of the libraries; for example, the possibility to form authority files for real historical events, or to establish links to short text definitions between documents, events and personalities. Those instruments will surely tend to find the most helpful and interesting applications in the work of the Rare Editions Department in the future.

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S. I. Taneev Research Music Library