

## 8. Gramophones and Modernity in the North

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The social and aesthetic implications of modernity in northern Europe were not restricted to exclusive circles of writers, painters, sculptors, or composers, but closely entangled with technological change and patterns of popular consumption. When the first gramophones appeared in Russian, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish shopping arcades, fun fairs, or private drawing rooms during the final years of the nineteenth century, they were immediately a commodity with multifaceted connotations that raised pertinent questions.<sup>1</sup> The technological novelty of sound recordings ensured that the gramophone became an emblem of mechanical innovation. Simultaneously, the pressing process by which thousands of copies of one recording were forged and the ability of a disc to reproduce one performance countless times epitomized modern forms of production and reproduction. Moreover, the constant stream of new discs on offer situated recordings within a commercial culture that was transforming the consumption patterns and social relations of Europeans.<sup>2</sup>

At first sight, the gramophone – and hence this essay – relates to a different facet of

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<sup>1</sup> On the early history of the gramophone in Russia and Scandinavia see Pekka Gronow, *The Recording Industry: An Ethnomusicological Approach* (Tampere, 1996); Pekka Gronow and Ilpo Saunio, *An International History of the Recording Industry* (London and New York, 1998); P. N. Griunberg and V. L. Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii: Katalog vokal' nykh zapisei rossiiskogo otdeleniia kompanii 'Grammofon'* (Moscow, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> There is a significant literature on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century consumption and its impact on societal attitudes. See, for example, W. Hamish Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914* (London, 1981); William R. Leach, 'Transformation of a Culture of Consumption: Women and Department Stores, 1890-1925', *Journal of American History*, 17 (1984), 319–42; and Peter Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire* (London, 2001).

modernity than the artistic breakthrough discussed in other chapters: its focus is on industrialized economies, technological innovations, new forms of communication, expanding markets, and administrative rationalization rather than aesthetic or philosophical debates of the kinds explored elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> In short, the gramophone was part of popular consumption and – it would seem – featured in situations in which those operating it cared little about its larger social, political, or artistic implications. Yet the external aspects of modernity, i.e. technological innovation, industrialization, migration, and market capitalism, were themselves engendered by, and in turn shaped, an intellectual rationalism that lay at the base of artistic realism and informed later modernism. Two of the pressing issues which representatives of the Nordic breakthrough engaged with passionately – the role of women and the plight of workers – were brought about by the social upheavals that enlightenment rationalism and its political and economic legacies – the French Revolution and industrialization – had engendered.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, external economic and technological developments were closely entangled with artistic forays into inner, irrational worlds of the human mind during the *fin de siècle*. Scholars of early film, for example, have pointed out that Russian symbolist Aleksander Blok viewed the cinema as a ‘city mystery’. The poet greeted the new medium of the film as ‘phantasmagorical moonlit visions which conveyed

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<sup>3</sup> On different definitions of modernity, see for example Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York, 1988); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*. (Cambridge, 1991); Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Carol Gluck, Mark Roseman, Dorothy Ross, Carol Symes, Lynn M. Thomas, and Richard Wolin. ‘AHR Roundtable: Historians and the Question of “Modernity”’, *American Historical Review* 116:3, (2011), 631–750; Anthony Giddens. *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1991); Mary Gluck, ‘Review Essay of Anthony Giddens’ *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Modernity in the Late Modern Age*, *History and Theory* 32:2 (1993), 214–20.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Stites, *The Women’s Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism and Bolshevism, 1860-1930* (Princeton, 1978), p. 17.

the Symbolist sense of a veiled and occult reality of which the visible world was merely a shadow.<sup>5</sup>

In a much cited passage, French poet Charles Baudelaire defined modernity as ‘the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.’<sup>6</sup> Although Baudelaire does not mention the gramophone explicitly, sound recordings raised pertinent questions about the possibility of fixing fleeting moments. For Walter Benjamin, mass reproduction of artworks destroyed their essence.<sup>7</sup> Twentieth-century musicologists, in turn, have asked whether the immutable presence and permanent accessibility of recorded music undermined artistic spontaneity, standardized performances, and stifled creativity.<sup>8</sup> Yet while the gramophone recorded fleeting moments for posterity, nineteenth-century witnesses of social and technological change described constant transformation as one defining feature of modernity. ‘Persistent revolution of production, the constant shaking of all social relations, eternal insecurity and transformation define the bourgeois age’, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in 1848.<sup>9</sup> Gramophones stood for technological revolution and innovative production, yet at the same time they fixed and

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<sup>5</sup> Yurii Tsivian, *Early Russian Cinema and its Cultural Reception*, trans. Alan Bodger (London and New York, 1994), p. xix.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Baudelaire, ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, in Jonathan Mayne (ed.), *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (New York, 1964), 1–40, at p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt, 1977).

<sup>8</sup> Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Kulturindustrie: Aufklärung als Massenbetrug* (Stuttgart, 2015); Michael Chanan, *Repeated Takes: A Short History of Recording and its Effects on Music* (London, 1995); Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music. Listening to Musical History* (New Haven, 2000); Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven, 2004); Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley, 2010); Paul Théberge, *Any Sound You Can Imagine: Making Music, Consuming Technology* (London, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der kommunistischen Partei* (Berlin, 1982), p. 17.

standardized fleeting sounds. By conserving evanescent moments and simultaneously representing evolving technological innovation, they epitomized one more side of modernity: its paradoxes.

One consequence of the transformation of life at the turn of the century was that ‘the spaces of art changed.’<sup>10</sup> The gramophone played a significant part in this readjustment. Initially, contemporaries did not agree on the setting in which the gramophone should be most appropriately used. The machine was displayed on purpose-built stages for gramophone concerts, used in lecture halls and class-rooms, displayed in department stores, and placed in bourgeois living rooms. Gramophones could also be admired at fun-fairs, and they provided musical entertainment in restaurants and in shabby bars. A similar ambiguity existed about the repertoire that contemporaries associated with it. Depending on the occasion, phonographs played serious classical music, popular songs, dance music, jokes, and dialogues in regional dialects or foreign languages.

From the very beginning of its commercial success in the late 1890s, the gramophone was also an international commodity. Mechanical contraptions that played music had been around since the beginning of the nineteenth century, but only with the inventions of Thomas Edison and Emil Berliner in the United States during the late 1870s and 1880s did recording and playing sound become comparatively straightforward operations. Fred Gaisberg, who worked first for the Columbia recording company and later for Berliner’s Gramophone Company as a jack of all trades, described in his memoirs the sense of exhilaration that young sound pioneers like him experienced in the 1890s as they developed a new product.<sup>11</sup> Not all of these inventors, who often lacked formal training and fitted into no pre-existing profession, were based in the new world. Carl Lindström, for example, grew up in the vicinity of

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<sup>10</sup> Karl Schlögel, *Petersburg: Das Laboratorium der Moderne, 1909–1921* (Munich and Vienna, 2002), p. 445.

<sup>11</sup> Fred W. Gaisberg, *Music on Record* (London, 1947), pp. 9–26.

Stockholm in a family of engineers and entrepreneurs. He lacked the formal technical education of his brothers and led a restless life that brought him to Berlin, where he founded the Mechanische Werkstätten für Musik und Sprache (Mechanical Workshops for Music and Language) in 1896. His company—which later acquired the name Lindström A.G.—was to become one of the major players of the industry.<sup>12</sup>

Edison, Berliner, Gaisberg, and Lindström not only developed new technologies that improved sound recordings, they were also shrewd businessmen who seized opportunities and aimed to expand their enterprises on a global scale. Indeed, Emil Berliner's American-British-German Gramophone Company very explicitly set out to conquer Europe, while Lindström's German-based firm expanded vigorously not only into Scandinavia, Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, but also into Persian, East Asian, and South American markets.<sup>13</sup> Other German, French, and Italian firms equally made inroads into Northern and Eastern Europe. The French Pathé firm, for example, made the first 15 Russian-language recordings in Paris in 1896. Worried by the success of his competitors, the Gramophone Company dispatched Gaisberg to England in 1898 with a 'complete recording outfit' in his luggage. From London, Gaisberg travelled on to Leipzig, Vienna, Budapest, Milan, and Madrid, recording in each of these cities 'a few hundred titles as a start for trading operations.'<sup>14</sup> Simultaneously, the Gramophone Company set up its European headquarters in London, and built a large pressing plant in Hanover. Gaisberg's first European venture was so successful that his company soon dispatched him 'to that Eldorado of traders, Russia.'<sup>15</sup>

The Russian empire attracted businessmen because it appeared to offer fantastic

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<sup>12</sup> Pekka Gronow and Christiane Hofer (eds), *The Lindström Project: Contributions to the History of the Record Industry* (5 vols, Vienna, 2009-2013), vol. 1, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

opportunities for growth and a huge potential market. In particular, technology firms such as Siemens or AEG from Germany, as well as traders of luxury articles, had few Russian competitors and opened highly profitable branches in St Petersburg.<sup>16</sup> Within northern Europe, St Petersburg was the most significant commercial and cultural hub, attracting numerous engineers and adventurous businessmen in search of riches. Russian business culture, in which connections played a significant role by providing a way around constraining regulations, promised unusually high profits for charismatic and resourceful entrepreneurs.<sup>17</sup> Immanuel Nobel, who moved from Sweden to St Petersburg, where his family would earn a fortune through diesel engines and dynamite, is one illustration of the pull that the Russian empire exerted. Similarly, the Ericsson company made such fantastic gains in Russia that the firm decided to display its products in the Russian rather than the Swedish pavilion at the 1900 World Exhibition and even contemplated moving its headquarters from Stockholm to the banks of the River Neva.<sup>18</sup>

In the case of the emerging recording industry, the Russian empire attracted entrepreneurs thanks to the size of its domestic market, and the fact that Russia had not signed up to international patent and copyright agreements. Furthermore, the domestic copyright rules that did exist were treated in a relaxed fashion, all of which offered unusually high profits.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the multi-ethnic population of the tsarist empire meant that

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<sup>16</sup> Walther Kirchner, 'Siemens and AEG and the Electrification of Russia', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 30:3 (1982), 399–428; Schlögel, *Petersburg*, pp. 213–37.

<sup>17</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, pp. 30–32.

<sup>18</sup> Bengt Jangfeldt, *Svenska vägar till S:t Petersburg: Kapitel ur historien om svenskarna vid Nevans stränder* (Stockholm, 1998), pp.182–93 and 236.

<sup>19</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, pp. 30–32. See also Peter Martland, 'The Okhrana: Guardians of Recorded Culture', *Intelligence and National Security*, 6:3 (1991), 627–8; Griunberg and Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*, pp. 162–5.

gramophone firms could record Armenian, Cherkass, Georgian, Tatar, and Yiddish songs, which in turn offered access to neighbouring markets to the South and East, and to a sizable audience of immigrants in the Americas. Indeed, by the 1910s, Russian-made products made up the majority of all gramophone-related imports to Persia, and almost 30% of those to China.<sup>20</sup>

Russia, then, became an important centre of the gramophone industry from about 1899. In the early years of the century, numerous international firms—among them the German Beka, Lyrophon, and Odeon labels, and the Italian Fonitipia (all part of the Lindström conglomerate), the American Columbia, the American International Zonophone Company, and the French Pathé company—were active in the Russian empire.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Russian activities were so profitable that the Gramophone Company, whose administrative headquarters for the Russian market were located in St Petersburg, opened an additional European pressing plant in Riga in January 1906. Riga, apart from its advantageous geographical position close to Petersburg and to northern Europe via the Baltic Sea, was an attractive location thanks to special customs and taxation rules. In 1907, this pressing plant employed 118 workers; by 1914 this number had grown to around 500, indicating the substantial growth of the industry. Before the outbreak of the First World War, the Riga plant produced around 5 million discs a year.<sup>22</sup> This factory, whose merchandise was ‘the equal to any in Europe for price and finish’ was able to supply the Gramophone Company’s entire

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<sup>20</sup> Gronow, *The Recording Industry*, p. 86; Andreas Steen, *Zwischen Unterhaltung und Revolution: Grammophone, Schallplatten und die Anfänge der Musikindustrie in Shanghai, 1878-1937* (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 483.

<sup>21</sup> Griunberg and Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*, pp. 117–61.

<sup>22</sup> Latvian State Archives (LNA), F. 2765, op. 1, d. 544; LNA, F. 104, op. 1, d. 62. Unfortunately, there are no figures for the number of workers in 1906 in the Latvian National Archives.

Russian operations.<sup>23</sup> It also shipped 10% of its wares abroad.<sup>24</sup> Alongside St Petersburg and Riga, the Gramophone Company, set up further branches in Omsk, Tiflis (Tbilisi), Kharkov (Kharkiv), Rostov-na-Donu, Kiev (Kyiv), Vilnius, and Warsaw among others.<sup>25</sup> The French Pathé firm followed suit by opening a pressing plant in Moscow in 1910.<sup>26</sup> In the early years of the twentieth century, then, gramophones in Russia were big business. Estimates about the volume vary from 15 million to 24 million discs sold annually in the empire during early 1910s. Yet irrespective of which of these figures are closer to the truth, the significance of the sales was beyond doubt.<sup>27</sup>

The Scandinavian market was much smaller, and therefore figured less prominently in the business operations of the big recording firms. In the 1910s, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark imported around 500 000 discs annually, and there was no Scandinavian production centre.<sup>28</sup> However, companies did make extensive recording of songs in the Scandinavian languages.<sup>29</sup> Yet instead of travelling to Stockholm, Copenhagen, or Kristiania (Oslo) himself, Gaisberg sent his brother Will to the Scandinavian capitals. Nonetheless, the Scandinavian market was also closely integrated into the global operations of the firm. In particular, the Nordic countries were well connected to business operations in Russia. The

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<sup>23</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> LNA, F. 2765, op. 1, d. 544.

<sup>25</sup> Griunberg and Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*, p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> Gronow, *The Recording Industry*, p. 94.

<sup>27</sup> Gronow gives more conservative figures, while Griunberg claims even larger sales. Gronow and Saunio, *An International History*, p. 19; P. N. Griunberg, 'Ranniaia russkaia gramzapis i ee rol v sozdanii pervichnogo informatsionnogo prostranstva', *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, 6 (2008), 16–23.

<sup>28</sup> Gronow, *The Recording Industry*, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup> Karleric Liliedahl, *The Gramophone Co.: Acoustic recordings in Scandinavia and for the Scandinavian market* (Helsinki, 1977).

Gramophone Company's pressing plant in Riga shipped a significant proportion of its products across the Baltic Sea to Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.<sup>30</sup>

Demand for recorded music throughout the North was so strong that despite the vigorous expansion of large foreign firms, native enterprises operating in a more artisanal fashion emerged. In Copenhagen, Norwegian hairdresser and actor Adolf Østbye acquired recording equipment as early as 1889 and sold recordings on cylinder.<sup>31</sup> In Copenhagen the un-named owner of Dansk Fotograf Magasin and the music publisher Robert Kleinert each entered the gramophone market in 1901.<sup>32</sup> Further east, music store owner Per Recén founded the Stockholm Musik och Talmaskindepot (Stockholm Music and Speaking Machine Depot) in 1914 and eventually even established the first Swedish pressing plant in 1920.<sup>33</sup> In the Russian empire, Ekstrafon and Ekstrearekord produced discs in Kiev, while Richard Jakob and Vasily Rebikov established firms in Moscow. Most of these small enterprises did not live for very long, however: Jakob and Rebikov did not survive the revolutionary upheavals of 1905-07, while their small Scandinavian competitors either went bankrupt or were bought by larger multinationals. Nonetheless, the books of the Saratov-based 'American Company Fonton', which seems to have been American in name only, illustrate that producing and selling gramophones was a profitable business even for a small company right until the very last days of the Russian empire.<sup>34</sup>

Large and small companies had a close network of trade and sold merchandise throughout the Russian empire and the Nordic countries. The 'American Company Fonton' sold its gramophones to merchants in Baku, Orenburg, Ekaterinburg, Tsaritsyn, Voronezh,

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<sup>30</sup> LNA, F. 2765, op. 1, d. 544; Gronow, *The Recording Industry*, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup> Vidar Vanberg, 'Lindström in Norway', in Gronow and Hofer (eds), *The Lindström Project*, vol. 1, p. 83.

<sup>32</sup> Morten Hein, 'Kleinert and Lindström: the Danish Connection', in *ibid.*: vol. 2, p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> Björn Englund, 'The Skania Label', in *ibid.*: vol. 4, p. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Gosudarstvenny arkhiv saratovskoi oblasti (GASO), F. 344, op. 1, d.14.

Nizhnyi Novgorod, St Petersburg, Kazan', Vologda, and Tula, and also shipped to smaller towns such as Novo Nikolaevsk, Orlov, and Rybinsk.<sup>35</sup> The Gramophone Company, in turn, sent its Norwegian agent on a tour throughout the country.<sup>36</sup> By so doing, gramophone firms not only established international networks and patterns of global consumption, but also linked provinces to the cultural and political centres. The success of gramophone recordings in the Russian empire can also be gauged by the fact that piracy became a profitable undertaking as early as 1901.<sup>37</sup> The 'Amerikanskaia kompaniia grammofonov' (American Gramophone Company) and 'Amerikanskoe anonymnoe tovarishchestvo Melodifon' (American Anonymous Melodifon Company – they too were 'American' for marketing purposes only – used commercially available discs to create metal masters, which then allowed them to press forged records. Melodifon was one of Lindström's Russian partners, and it seems clear that the Swede was at least aware of the dubious activities of his collaborator. Pirating too, then, tied the Russian gramophone industry to international business networks. The pirated discs which 'Melodifon' produced have survived in large number to this very day, attesting to their huge numbers and commercial success.<sup>38</sup> Equally, the repertoire represented in early Russian recordings points towards a substantial industry, consisting of about 150 000 different titles.<sup>39</sup> Enthusiasm for the new medium was so widespread that ten journals exclusively dedicated to the gramophone were published in the empire before 1914.<sup>40</sup>

The repertoire also linked the world of Russian and Nordic musical entertainment. In

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<sup>35</sup> 'Ucheta fabriki Fonton 1911-1912g', GASO, F. 344, op. 1, d. 3 (1912).

<sup>36</sup> Vanberg, 'Lindström in Norway', p. 83.

<sup>37</sup> Martland, 'The Okhrana'; Griunberg and Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*, 163–5.

<sup>38</sup> Griunberg and Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*, 165–6.

<sup>39</sup> Griunberg, 'Ranniaia russkaia gramzapis', pp. 21–2.

<sup>40</sup> V.M. Barashenkov (ed.), *Bibliografiia periodicheskikh izdaniï Rossii 1901-1916* (Leningrad, 1961).

1904, for example, the Gramophone Company recorded for its cheaper and more popular Zonophone label, Russian, Swedish, and Finnish songs with the Finnish bass Hjalmar Frey in St Petersburg. Among other titles, the artist of the Imperial opera sang Chaikovsky's 'Podvig' (Feat), Sheremet'ev's 'Ja vas liubil' ('I loved you), Karl Valentin's 'Landsknechts visa' (The Landsknecht's Song), and patriotic Finnish tunes such as 'Isänmaa' ('My Fatherland').<sup>41</sup> Scholarly work on early sound recording has largely bypassed the connections between different national traditions. Indeed, Karleric Liliedahl's inventory of Scandinavian recordings meticulously lists all the Swedish, Finnish, and even German-language songs which Frey recorded in St. Petersburg in 1903 and 1904, but does not include his Russian repertoire.<sup>42</sup> John Bennett in turn expunged the Finnish and Baltic tunes from his list of *Vocal Recordings from the Russian Catalogue of the Gramophone Company*, allegedly because they lacked artistic merit.<sup>43</sup> This later (re-)ordering of the repertoire implied that turn-of-the-century consumer culture was organized along the lines of late twentieth-century national and regional identities. Such neat description does not, however, reflect the transnational and international character of the recording industry at the time.<sup>44</sup>

A second conspicuous characteristic in the existing scholarship about the early recording industry is the absence of Russia. Research into the history of recorded sound has largely been occupied with tracing the roots of the post-Second-World-War boom in recorded music, and has often focused on the big brands that dominated the mid twentieth-century

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<sup>41</sup> Griunberg and Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*, p. 489.

<sup>42</sup> Liliedahl, *The Gramophone Co.*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>43</sup> John R. Bennett, *A Catalogue of Vocal Recordings from The Russian Catalogues of the Gramophone Company Limited Obshchestvo Grammofon c OGR. OTV. 1899-1915* (Blandford, 1977), p. iii.

<sup>44</sup> As Philip Ross Bullock has shown, the importance of Russian cultural connections was equally downplayed when scholars described the work of Sibelius. See 'Sibelius and the Russian Traditions', in Daniel M. Grimley (ed.), *Jean Sibelius and His World* (Princeton and Oxford, 2011), pp. 3–57.

market. Because the Bolshevik government nationalized the gramophone industry after the Revolution and forced international recording firms to end their activities in the Soviet Union, research into the origins of later operations has ignored the importance of Russian contributions during the early days of the industry. The five volumes of the *Lindström Project*, for example, enlighten readers about the firm's activities in Austria, Burma, Hungary, Indonesia, Persia, Serbia, Slovenia, and other countries, but is silent about its Russian operation.<sup>45</sup> Yet it was not just business practices which connected the Russian empire closely to international developments; so too does the repertoire of early recorded music illustrate that listeners in Russia, the Nordic countries, and further afield also shared musical tastes.

To some extent, the international similarity of early sound collections was conditioned by technological limitations at the time. Before the invention of electronic recording, the frequency range of the human voice and the ease with which singers could direct their tones towards a recording cone made song particularly suitable to mechanical reproduction. Additionally, early discs could only play recordings that were no longer than two minutes. These restrictions explain the prominence of short songs in early recordings. Yet we also find multiple recording of wind bands, accordions, and a significant amount of recorded speech in the early repertoire. Despite technological restrictions, early recordings offered a wide variety of various genres. The way in which recording firms responded to consumers' preferences indicates that tastes were not restricted to national identities. International fashions in musical tastes were most visible in cases in which global operatic stars, whose art had previously been promoted through reviews in printed newspapers, magazines, or journals – such as the Italian tenor Enrico Caruso or the Russian bass Fedor

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<sup>45</sup> Gronow and Hofer (eds), *The Lindström Project*. The only scholar who has included the Russian empire in his scholarship is Gronow, *The Recording Industry*; Gronow and Saunio, *An International History*.

Shaliapin (Chaliapin – now became stars of the recording industry.<sup>46</sup>

Yet it was not just classical music that was international before the arrival of the gramophone. Popular forms of entertainment, such as variety shows, comical sketches and humorous songs were appreciated throughout Europe and further afield. It is thus no coincidence that the first Norwegian demonstration of sound recording took place at Kristiania's Tivoli, and that comedians figured prominently in Norwegian recordings.<sup>47</sup> Even if the language in which jokes were told differed from country to country, the genre was surprisingly homogeneous. As Pekka Gronow has observed, Russian record-buyers 'laughed at the antics of the comedy team Bim and Bom, while the Swedes loved the dialect songs of *bondekomiker* [the peasant comedian].' Despite 'references to local happenings, the manner of execution is remarkably similar.' Not only operatic arias and humorous sketches united the tastes of record buyers. Popular melodies too migrated across borders – frequently without any credit to the original composer.<sup>48</sup> The international popularity of entertaining tunes had been visible in other respects before the invention of recorded music. Since the introduction of high-volume lithography significantly brought down the price of published sheet music in the middle of the nineteenth century, music publishers had engaged in international business networks in order to respond to European-wide demand for certain pieces.<sup>49</sup> The new

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<sup>46</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*; Anna Fishzon, *Fandom, Authenticity, and Opera: Mad Acts and Letter Scenes in Fin-de-Siècle Russia* (Basingstoke, 2013). See also Nicolai Nadejdin, 'Gramophone Celebrities: V. - Fyodor Ivanovitch Chaliapin', *Gramophone*, August (1924), 83–5.

<sup>47</sup> Vanberg, 'Lindström in Norway', 83.

<sup>48</sup> Gronow and Saunio, *An International History*: 26.

<sup>49</sup> I disagree with Gronow here, in whose view popular music was more local than its classical counterpart (Gronow, *The Recording Industry*). On the international activities of music publishers before the advent of the gramophone, see for example B. Volman, *Russkie notnye izdaniia xix nachala xx veka* (Leningrad, 1970), pp. 22 and 160–81.

gramophone continued this trend in a different medium.

In particular, gramophone recordings mirrored the repertoire of salon music. Domestic music-making had been the main occasions at which men and women enjoyed music before recordings became widely available.<sup>50</sup> In the nineteenth century, the ritual of amateurs gathering in private and taking pleasure in music was closely entangled with contemporary ideas of bourgeois aspiration, cultural sophistication, and gender ideals. Musicians would usually gather in the salon, the representative room of the family and which was the domestic space most appropriate for entertaining guests. Contemporaries adorned salons with expensive wallpaper and fine drapery, they hung up pictures in elaborate frames, and equipped the space with expensive furniture. A particularly important item in this setting would be the piano – or in some cases, a harmonium or a harp – whose conspicuous presence signalled both economic success and cultural sophistication.<sup>51</sup> Contemporaries regarded the ability to play a keyboard instrument as a particularly feminine accomplishment. Unlike wind or string instruments, which were thought of as male past-times, operating a piano or harmonium allowed women to look elegant – indeed these instruments figured prominently as props in fashion plates. As well as showcasing dresses, hairstyles, and lady-like

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<sup>50</sup> Other regular instances during which music would be heard were during liturgy and public celebrations. On the history of domestic music see for example Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History* (New York, 1954); Eva Öhrström, *Borgerliga kvinnors musicerande i 1800-talets Sverige* (Göteborg, 1987); Andreas Ballstaedt and Tobias Widmaier, *Salonmusik: Zur Geschichte und Funktion einer bürgerlichen Musikpraxis* (Stuttgart, 1989); Thomas Christensen, 'Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera', in Kate van Orden (ed.), *Music and the Cultures of Print* (New York and London, 2000); Marie Sumner Lott, *The Social Worlds of Nineteenth-Century Chamber Music: Composers, Consumers, Communities* (Urbana, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> For a description of a Russian mid-century salon see for example I. Ia. Slavin, *Minuvshee - perezhitoe: vospominaniia* (Saratov, 2013), p. 27. Interior decorations and their functions are discussed in Ballstaedt and Widmaier, *Salonmusik*, pp. 145–62.

comportment, playing the piano permitted women to express sentimentality in a disciplined fashion and in a safe setting. Moreover, a piano-playing daughter underlined her family's artistic tastes and their financial ability to provide her with lessons.

The technological developments in the field of instrument making that occurred throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allowed owners to showcase a piano not only as an impressive piece of furniture, but also as technological innovation.<sup>52</sup> Women's journals, which discussed fashion alongside cultural news and aspects relating to the successful running of a household, also reported novelties, which associated musical interest with domestic accomplishment and mechanical innovation. In 1855, for example, the Russian journal *Vaza (The Vase)*, informed its readers about a new apparatus that was truly astonishing. This was 'a musical bed' which started playing operatic arias as soon as someone lay on it. With the help of a timer, it could even be used as an alarm clock, in which case it woke its user with Verdi.<sup>53</sup> Three years later, the same journal reported about a new instrument that was a mixture between a string instrument and a piano. The keyboard of this instrument, which operated small bows, was arranged in a half circle, so as not to tire out the player. Other advantages of this item were that its sound was pleasant and soft, that it never went out of tune, and that it took up little space at home.<sup>54</sup>

Gramophones with their lavish wooden cases and glittering metal horns fitted seamlessly into this domestic setting of luxury, technological innovation, and aesthetic appeal. Yet for all their evident commercial success, phonographs remained expensive and potentially extravagant items. In 1897, a gramophone in the Russian empire cost between 80

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<sup>52</sup> On technological developments in relation to pianos, see Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (Oxford, 1990).

<sup>53</sup> 'Krovat□ s muzykoi', *Vaza*, 4 (1855), 32.

<sup>54</sup> 'Smes□', *Vaza*, 35 (1858), 279.

and 600 roubles.<sup>55</sup> This was less than a cabinet piano, which could be acquired for 450 roubles, while a concert grand cost 1,200 roubles, but it was still a substantial sum for a worker or low-ranking official.<sup>56</sup> With the growth of the industry, however, the price for a gramophone went down considerably. In 1902, the journal *Grammofon i fonograf* (*The Gramophone and Phonograph*) claimed that a phonograph could be obtained at the same price as a sewing machine. This comparison implied that the musical apparatus had become a necessity which was within the financial reach of the working population. And indeed, the firm of Piotr Aleksandrovich Rozmyslov priced gramophones between 25 and 55 roubles in 1903.<sup>57</sup> Records, however, remained relatively expensive, costing around 4 roubles in 1901 (or 2 roubles for a pirated disc). In comparison, the sheet music of a popular song could be obtained for as little as 30 kopecks.<sup>58</sup> While the gramophone came into the reach of more and more customers, it remained a costly investment.

Not only the machine itself, but also the sounds which its records produced linked the gramophone to the affluent salon. The sales brochures of records are, with the exception of speech recordings, very similar to the catalogues of sheet music with which commercially successful publishers advertised their items. Even if later researchers stressed the importance of serious artistic recordings, early sound catalogues were dominated by light entertainment. Operatic arias, Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, and Jewish folk songs, short piano pieces, comical sketches, and lots of ‘Gypsy’ music made up the overwhelming majority of the repertoire on Russian discs.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Bennett, *The Russian Catalogue*, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Anne Swartz, *Piano Makers in Russia in the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, 2014), p. 100.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96 and 100.

<sup>58</sup> *Katalog deshevogo izdaniia v tomakh P. Iurgensona v Moskve* (Moscow, 1906).

<sup>59</sup> Bennett, *The Russian Catalogue*. Griunberg tries very hard to foreground the more serious recordings of the operatic stars Shaliapin and Sobinov. Griunberg and Ianin, *Istoriia nachala gramzapisi v Rossii*.

The categories of company catalogues further underline the predominance of light entertainment. Fonotipia listed the following 22 categories in its Russian catalogue, of which at least 10 explicitly covered light entertainment:

1. classical music
2. salon music
3. Gypsy romance
4. military music
5. folksong
6. folk instruments (balalaika)
7. choir music
8. Old Believer song
9. dance music
10. light entertainment, (chansonettes and humorous sketches)
11. theatrical recordings
- 12 literary recordings
- 13 political speeches
- 14 language courses
- 15 bird song
- 16 Central Asian and Caucasian recordings
- 17 Ukrainian music
- 18 Polish music
- 19 Jewish music
- 20 Jubilee editions
- 21 Revolutionary recordings

22 imported recordings.<sup>60</sup>

Other catalogues did not divide their recordings into neat categories, but instead listed tracks according to the inventory numbers of the respective gramophone company. In these catalogues, a folk song about Stenka Razin was mentioned next to Schubert's 'Der Lindenbaum,' Armenian songs, a sketch entitled 'The Talmudist is leaving for the Army', and 'O du mein holder Abendstern' from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*.<sup>61</sup>

This mix of genres in which light entertainment predominated was by no means restricted to the Russian repertoire of recorded music. The Scandinavian catalogue of early recorded music exhibits a similar variety. Swedish and Finnish folksongs, operatic arias, and Danish *folkelige* songs sit next to the comical chansonette 'Visa om smörgåsbordet' ('Song about the smorgasbord') by the popular singer August Svensson, which in turn was followed by 'Psalm 124' and the Swedish national song 'Du gamla du fria'.<sup>62</sup> One noteworthy aspect of this musical bricolage is the popularity of the exotic that all recording catalogues exhibited. In the Russian empire, the oriental came in the guise of Armenian, Chechen, Dagestani, Georgian, Ingush, Jewish, Kalmyk, Ossetian, or Tatar recordings, while Ukrainian or Polish tunes together with Frey's Swedish and Finnish songs offered Western or Northern 'otherness'. Recording firms intended to sell some of these melodies in the Ottoman and Persian empires, or to Jewish or Ukrainian immigrants in the Americas.<sup>63</sup> However, the topic

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<sup>60</sup> P. N. Griunberg, 'Ranniaia gramzapis v Rossii: Konets xix – nachalo xx v.', *Voprosy istorii*, 12 (2010), 47–9.

<sup>61</sup> Bennett, *The Russian Catalogue*, p. 11.

<sup>62</sup> Knud Hegermann-Lindencrone, *Titelförteckning över vissa äldre skandinaviska vokala grammofonupptagningar: Genomsedd och i någon mån kompletterad av Carl L. Bruun och Gunnar Westerlund* (Stockholm, 1945), p. 24.

<sup>63</sup> Gronow and Saunio, *An International History*, p. 94.

of ethnic music also features prominently in Russian gramophone journals at the time, suggesting that exotic tunes were also appealing to listeners in the cities of European Russia, where they most likely fostered pride in the diversity and the scale of the empire.<sup>64</sup> This demand for the exotic was not a new development. Non-Russian music had equally been a prominent genre in sheet music for the salon setting. Demand for the exotic – this time among Western audiences – led Gaisberg to travel to Kazan in 1901, with the intention ‘to make a few hundred Tartar [sic] records.’<sup>65</sup> The venture ended in disappointment, because the music that the recording team heard on the Volga proved to be less distinct and more European than expected.<sup>66</sup> Much more successful, because of its distinctiveness and seeming exoticism, was ‘Gypsy’ music. This music, with its frequent syncopations, augmented seconds, sudden pauses, and numerous changes of rhythm, had also featured prominently in the printed music intended for amateur pianists and singers. Musically, it sounded a little oriental to European ears, yet thematically it diverged more dramatically from the norms of contemporary bourgeois society by celebrating passionate love and an unquenchable thirst for personal freedom.<sup>67</sup> Musically and thematically, this music had little to do with authentic Romani culture, but was a reflection of how Europeans audiences expected Oriental music to sound. Nonetheless, it offered some ‘Gypsy’ musicians an attractive source of ready income.

Recording firms quickly picked up the fashionable genre and advertised it prominently in their catalogues. The Gramophone Company recorded Russian Gypsy music with Romani singers such as Tamara and Varvara Panina and the latter’s Gypsy choir; but

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<sup>64</sup> See for example ‘Khronika’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 4 (1903), 55.

<sup>65</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, p. 38.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> On the European-wide fashion for Gypsy music in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century see for example Anna G. Piotrowska, ‘“Gypsy music” as music of the Other in European culture’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 47 (2013), 395–408.

also with artists who themselves were not of Romani background such as Nadezhda Plevitskaia. The firm landed their biggest hit when they finally managed to sign ‘that sweetest and dearest of all Russian romance singers, Vial□tseva, an artist [...] who flutters over the border-line between angels and human beings.’<sup>68</sup> As a businesswoman, Anastasiia Vial□tseva was anything but a heavenly associate. She demanded the astronomical sum of £2,000 for providing ten songs to the Gramophone Company. All in all she recorded at least 90 titles for the firm from 1902, and received tens of thousands of roubles for her efforts. But she also readily sang for other firms and sold the exclusive rights to some of her songs to more than one company. Not surprisingly, she was quickly embroiled in a copyright dispute that lasted until her untimely death in 1913.<sup>69</sup> Despite the legal strife, the Gramophone Company’s investment in Vial□tseva’s songs was well placed. Her recording of the ‘Gypsy’-song ‘Gai-da Troika’ became a global hit and a big moneymaker for the firm.<sup>70</sup> As late as 1935, the song – although now no longer in Vial□tseva’s rendering – was reviewed in the most enthusiastic terms in English publications.<sup>71</sup>

As Russian ‘Gypsy’ music became a popular export article, it merged with Russian folksong in the perception of Western consumers, who appreciated Eastern European exoticism in both. Western critics discussed songs such as ‘Gai-da Troika’, or ‘Ochi chernye’ (Black Eyes) alongside more traditional Russian folk tunes about Stenka Razin, the Caucasus

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<sup>68</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, p. 35.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Delo g-zhi Vial□tsevoi’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 1 (1902), 8.

<sup>70</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, p. 35. The composer of the song, Mikhail Shteinberg, was the son of a Rabbi from Vilnius. Yet the song was marketed as Gypsy music by numerous publishers. See for example M. Shteinberg, *Gai-da troika! Sneg pushistii! Tsyganskii romans* (St. Petersburg, n.d.).

<sup>71</sup> Compton Mackenzie, ‘The BBC: By the Editor’, *Gramophone* (February 1927), 359–62; ‘Some Records of the Year’, *Gramophone*, (December 1935), 271; ‘Star Records from the New February List’, *Gramophone*, (February 1935), viii.

mountains, the Volga, and even Hungarian or Romanian airs.<sup>72</sup> Russian artists actively took part in selling the image of an exotic Russian culture abroad.<sup>73</sup> Star bass Shaliapin, for example, recorded not only Russian operatic arias, but also agreeable songs such as ‘Ochi chernye’ (‘Black eyes’) and the ‘Song of the Volga Boatmen’. The latter was a new version of a Russian folk tune specifically arranged – and exoticized – for Western audiences. Gaisberg, who had been deeply impressed by the songs of Russian workers on his unsuccessful trip to Kazan, asked Shaliapin to record such a song. Shaliapin initially refused, as Gaisberg’s ideas about a Volga boat hauler song were too far removed from actual Russian singing practice. Eventually, however, Shaliapin gave in: the two men adapted an existing song, produced two additional stanzas and hired a Petersburg composer to provide an arrangement for solo voice. Shaliapin earned nearly £3,000 in royalties for this song, making it ‘one of his best paying investments.’<sup>74</sup> Exotic Russian song was popular among Nordic, as well as British audiences. In April 1906, Elis Olsson recorded a ‘Rysk dans’ (Russian dance) in Stockholm, and in September 1911 the Helsinki Horn Orchestra put a ‘Rysk zigenersång’ (‘Russian Gypsy Song’) on wax.<sup>75</sup> The fashion for (allegedly) Russian music intensified after the Revolution, when Richard Tauber landed his ‘Wolga Lied’, Dajos Bela (born Leon Holtzmann in Kiev) performed Gypsy music with his Berlin ensemble and acted as Carl Lindström’s musical director for the production of popular records. Aleksandr Vertinsky recorded his ‘Dorogoi dlinnuiu’, and Petr Lashchenko entertained European audiences with

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<sup>72</sup> Rupert Croft-Cooke, ‘Hungary–Its Gypsies and their Music’, *Gramophone* (November 1927), 223; Mackenzie, ‘The BBC: By the Editor’.

<sup>73</sup> On a similar process in the *Ballets russes* productions in Paris see Marina Frolova-Walker, ‘Music of the Soul?’, in Simon Franklin, Emma Widdis (eds), *National Identity in Russian Culture* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 116–31.

<sup>74</sup> Gaisberg, *Music on Record*, pp. 68–9.

<sup>75</sup> Liliedahl, *The Gramophone Co.*, pp. 53 and 149.

‘Gypsy’ songs in a foxtrot style.<sup>76</sup>

Recorded music, however, not only opened up the possibilities of fame, and financial success. In the eyes of contemporaries, the new technology also posed potential dangers. Shady activities such as piracy were one of these possible crimes, but there were also more subtle but no less worrying moral transgressions to which the new device enticed. These included the unsettling of gender norms, and unseemly lower-class behaviour. As we have seen, early gramophone catalogues with their focus on short entertaining songs and its potpourri of genres, largely mirrored the repertoire of amateur musicians. Contemporary journalists and music critics associated salon music with the shallowness of women’s artistic activities. Gramophone enthusiasts – despite the overwhelmingly light repertoire of their loved machine – worked hard to confer a more serious connotation onto the device. Gramophone journals equated the musical apparatus with technological progress and described it as ‘a great creation of the genius of our twentieth century.’<sup>77</sup> These periodicals also extolled the skills of the gramophone operator. The expert operator understood the workings of all the parts of his machine and was only slightly challenged by his junior partner, the sophisticated record collector. Such connoisseurs directed gramophone concerts, which followed the rituals of high-brow performances: a phonograph would be placed on a stage, operated by specialists and perform its feats to a well-dressed and attentive audience, seated beneath exquisite chandeliers and allegorical statues of classical design.<sup>78</sup> A century later, such a scene seems bizarre. Yet the setting of the gramophone concert illustrates the extent to which the use of the new device was in flux and its appropriate place still needed to be established.

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<sup>76</sup> Gronow and Saunio, *An International History*, pp. 53 and 75.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Ot redaktsiia’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 1 (1902), 1.

<sup>78</sup> A. Z., ‘Pervyi v Rossii kontsertnyi grammofonnyi zal’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 3 (1902), pp. 36–7.

The press not only celebrated the genius of inventors or the expertise of collectors, it also extolled the quasi mystical qualities of the gramophone itself. Technology linked the gramophone to science and learning, and in this area, the device was a veritable wonderworking machine. If properly applied, it could allegedly heal an upset nervous system, teach deaf children to talk, cure alcoholism, or figure as an invaluable tool in research.<sup>79</sup> The latter was the case first and foremost when it came to studying and recording folklore, dialects, or facilitating language acquisition.<sup>80</sup> The didactic qualities of the gramophone were also striking, especially for repeating correct phrases and sentences. ‘When it comes to patience and perseverance, this mechanical teacher will hardly find a rival.’<sup>81</sup>

Thanks to these marvellous abilities, gramophones also entered hospitals, schools and university lecture halls. Less obviously, perhaps, the gramophone was also tried out on the military parade ground, and in another experiment was found to increase productivity in animal husbandry.<sup>82</sup> A gramophone could replace the mother bird for chicks hatched in an incubator, who had difficulty in learning how to feed. With the help of recordings these orphaned birds ‘understood immediately [what to do] and as soon as the phonograph sounded they ran towards it and began to peck the chopped eggs that had been placed next to the

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<sup>79</sup> ‘Lechenie p□ianstva pri pomoshchi fonografa’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 2 (1902), 19–20; V. K. (Doktor meditsiny) Panchenko, ‘Vliianie grammofona na nervnuu sistemuu’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 1 (1902), 5–6; Zaitsev, ‘Fonograf i glukhonemota’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 4 (1903), 50–51; A. Zaitsev, ‘Fonogrammy i etnografiia’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 6 (1903), 66–7.

<sup>80</sup> ‘O muzyke rozhechnikov’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 1 (1902), 9–10; ‘Fonograf v kachestve uchitelia iazykov’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 2 (1902), 17–8; ‘Grammofon v derevne’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 3 (1902), 28; Ch. Dorozhinskii, ‘Fonograf i iazykovedenie’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 2 (1902), 15–6.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Fonograf v kachestve uchitelia iazykov’.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Grammofon v voiskakh’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 9 (1903).

device.<sup>83</sup>

Though the contribution of gramophones to medical therapy and farming remained – as far as I know – insignificant, early recordings of folksong provided important inspiration for musical modernism. The ethnographic work of opera singer and choir director Evgeniia Lineva was of particular importance in this respect. Lineva innovated research into folksong by recording rural performers, and her description of rural musical traditions acquired a reputation of accurately representing the tunes, sonorities and atmosphere of rural singing.<sup>84</sup> As Margarita Mazo has shown, Igor Stravinsky valued Lineva's work in particular. In *Les Noces* (*Svadeb' ka*), he employed folkloric musical elements—such as glissandi in laments, rhythmic and melodic ostinato, and simultaneous but seemingly independent melodic layers—to create new forms of musical expression.<sup>85</sup>

Even though Lineva's contributions to the study of folklore and the influence of her work on classical music was significant, popular descriptions of the gramophone showed no appreciation of women in their scenario of technology and wonderworking. Indeed, in the views of its expert propagators, one of the device's achievements was that it brought professional music into private homes, and thereby increased the aesthetic quality of the domestic setting. It was only music produced by 'a real artist' that could have beneficial effect on strained nerves, 'medical doctor' V. K. Panchenko wrote in *Grammofon i fonograf* in 1902. 'Home-grown virtuosi,' many of which would have been women, 'not only fai[ed]l to positively affect the nerves of the neurologically and mentally sick, but rather upset them,

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<sup>83</sup> 'Khronika', 55.

<sup>84</sup> *Trudy muzykal' no-etnograficheskoi komissii, sostoiashchei pri etnograficheskom otdel' imperatorskogo obshchestva liubitelei estestvoznaniia, antropologii i etnografii* (Moscow, 1906).

<sup>85</sup> Margarita Mazo, 'Stravinsky's "Les Noces" and Russian Village Wedding Ritual', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 43: 1 (1990), 99–142.

thereby aggravating states of melancholia and driving maniacs into madness.’<sup>86</sup> The pianistic attempts of daughters and wives, then, were no longer appropriate to offer fathers and husbands reprieve from the stresses of their professional lives.<sup>87</sup> These women pianists were now not only unable compete with the turning table, but even threatened the psychological well-being of the family’s breadwinner. When a father or husband brought a gramophone home, then, he potentially reconfigured the domestic space of femininity and the sentimental into a masculine room of technology, modernity and rational expertise. We do not know whether male gramophone enthusiasts in actual fact jeopardized family harmony by obtaining musical machines, yet it is not entirely impossible that the acquisition of a gramophone foreshadowed similar, better documented conflicts half a century later.<sup>88</sup>

The likelihood that a woman, by contrast, might integrate the new musical machine into her sphere of agreeable domestic entertainment and thereby conquer the world of technology, seemed rather improbable. Even if *Grammofon i fonograf* mentioned in passing that one respectable gramophone concert had been directed by a ‘lady’, this woman unlike her knowledgeable male colleagues remained anonymous and without a life story.<sup>89</sup> She got off lightly, though, as openly disparaging remarks about female gramophone enthusiasts were common. Mrs E-va, wife of an affluent St. Petersburg merchant and enthusiastic buyer of gramophone records, for example, could not be regarded a knowledgeable collector.

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<sup>86</sup> Panchenko, ‘Vliianie grammofona na nervnuiu sistemuu’, 6.

<sup>87</sup> On the nineteenth-century ideal of the wife whose piano playing enables the husband to relax, see Ballstaedt and Widmaier, *Salonmusik*, p. 233. On the negative nervous effects of modern professional life see Susan K. Morrissey, ‘The Economy of Nerves: Health, Commercial Culture, and the Self in Late Imperial Russia’, *Slavic Review*, 69:3 (2010), 645–75.

<sup>88</sup> Keir Keightley, ‘“Turn it down!” she shrieked: Gender, Domestic Space, and High Fidelity, 1948-59’, *Popular Music*, 15:2 (1996), 149–77.

<sup>89</sup> Z. A., ‘Korrespondentsiia’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 1 (1903), 10.

Although she ordered all newly released discs, she had – *Grammofon i fonograf* claimed – only acquired her impressive collection of over 1500 records because she was too engrossed in fashion and socializing to listen attentively to the deliveries and return the unwanted recordings to the trader.<sup>90</sup>

Even the star of gramophone recordings Vial□tseva with her hapless legal battle came across in the press as inapt in the face of modern technology and the business operations that these brought with them. According to an article in *Grammofon i fonograf*, the legal dispute concerning her alleged copyright infringements progressed in an orderly fashion, until Vial□tseva sprang a surprise on her star lawyer N. P. Karabchevsky and gave a spontaneous interview to a Petersburg newspaper. In this interview she quickly engaged in contradictions, denying the charges out right before advancing spurious arguments that confirmed her opponents claims. Ultimately, she came across as both insolent and erratic. Her adversary, the trader Rappof, promptly produced the document, written in her hand, that gave him the “exclusive right” to sell her interpretations of five songs, and argued logically in a his interview.<sup>91</sup> This episode, then, restored traditional gender roles by implying that Vial□tseva had failed to act the role of savvy businesswomen but was in actual fact an impulsive singer who required the rational guidance of her male lawyer, whereas Rappof was reasonable from the start.

Music machines also raised questions of respectability and thereby challenged notions of appropriate class-based behaviour. Self-proclaimed experts were upset when a gramophone sounded in a setting that was not controlled by them. One contributor to *Grammofon i fonograf* despaired on encountering his loved machine at a fairground, bemoaning that ‘some homegrown acrobat, entertained the audience in between silly jokes

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<sup>90</sup> ‘Grammofon in publika’, *Grammofon i fonograf*, 8 (1903), 86.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Delo g-zhi Vial□tsevoi’.

with [a] gramophone. [...] It is a disgrace that he could evoke such a terrible picture of the gramophone, which in his hands was more like an instrument of torture.’<sup>92</sup> State authorities seem to have shared this concern, although for slightly different reasons. In the tsarist empire, officials were mainly worried that gramophones could, in the wrong environments, have negative effects on working-class morality. Bureaucrats were particularly concerned about the presence of gramophones in bars (*pivnye lavki*) and cheap restaurants. Realizing that innkeepers appreciated these devices because they were good for business, regional governors and their aides required landlords to obtain special licenses before installing a phonograph. In Russia’s Perm’ region, requests to play records in bars and restaurants were usually granted in the 1910s, under the proviso that proprietors ‘present songs to be played on the gramophone to the police in advance’, while ‘songs of a religious content [were] not permitted to be played at all.’<sup>93</sup> Officials, it seemed, were particularly concerned that music in combination with alcohol could lead to unruly and blasphemous behaviour. If, however, the establishment in question also had a billiard table, a piece of entertainment that equally necessitated a permit, the most probable outcome of an innkeeper’s application to set up a gramophone was that the use of both of these items would be prohibited. Officials justified their decisions with the fact that such items lured workers to consume ‘more beer’, to ‘gamble, and consequently [resulted] in unavoidable quarrels and fist-fights.’<sup>94</sup> More expensive restaurants, however, were granted permissions to acquire pianos for their premises or even hire choirs with relative ease.<sup>95</sup>

Stockholm’s Överståthållarämbetet (governor’s office) equally regulated the use of

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<sup>92</sup> A., ‘Korrespondentsiia’, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv permskogo kraia (GAPK), F. 65, op. 5, d. 328.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 33, 38.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, l. 47.

musical machines, although in a much less pervasive fashion than their colleagues in the Urals. No records of permissions or prohibitions of the use of gramophones in bars and restaurants exist in Swedish archives, and we can assume that proprietors were free to do as they saw fit. However, in the early years of the twentieth century, only 16 people had been granted the right by the capital's administrators to perform music in public settings and to collect voluntary contributions for their services from their audiences. In 1906, 64-year-old Anton Carl Gustaf Pillig, a former hat maker who was now too ill to ply his trade, applied for permission to play a gramophone in public places so that he could support his frail wife and young child with the donation of his audience. As in the cases of Russian innkeepers and their patrons, Stockholm's officials collected information about the supplicant's moral character. Yet the supportive letters of his previous employer, the police, and a doctor's note confirming his illness were to no avail. Överståhållarämbetet ruled that Pillig's gramophone playing constituted a hidden form of begging, which could not be permitted. The bureaucrats noted that they did also not wish to increase the number of musicians allowed to entertain audiences in public places.<sup>96</sup>

We do not know, of course, how effective Russian and Swedish authorities were in enforcing their decisions. The tsarist empire had a severe shortage of state employees, and many of the bureaucrats on official payrolls had the reputation of turning a blind eye in return for a bribe. It is therefore quite likely that numerous unlicensed or illegal gramophones entertained beer-drinkers with their scratchy sounds in shabby bars. The likelihood that Stockholm's better staffed administration successfully prevented Pillig from playing his gramophone in public is higher. Yet irrespective of the effects of official regulations, these archival records indicate that musical machines were popular with audiences, but that this popularity caused official concern about the moral integrity of working-class subjects whom

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<sup>96</sup> Riksarkivet Stockholm, Civildepartementet I, konseljakter 19060525, nr.28.

gramophones entertained. In the Russian empire, officials were mainly worried about rowdy behaviour that music in combination of alcohol could arouse. In the Swedish case, bureaucrats—informed by Lutheran values of hard work—regarded begging as indecent, but they were also concerned about less clearly expressed negative effects which unregulated musical entertainment could have.

By buying gramophones and listening to recordings, then, northern Europeans in Scandinavia and the Russian empire entered into a shared realm of technological innovation, business operation, consumption, culture and entertainment. This world closely connected the European North and East, but it was also part of global developments, fashions, and trends. The novelty of its technology made the gramophone a commodity of possibility and change, but also of flux and temptation, providing business opportunity to imaginative inventors, shrewd singers, and local traders. It changed the forms of private and public entertainment, and potentially unsettled gender norms. Yet recorded sound also continued previous patterns of technological innovation, instrument manufacturing, and cultural exchange albeit in a new medium. And while the emergence of the gramophone moved the light-hearted repertoire of simple entertainment from the female sphere of dilettante music making into the male realm of technological perfection and connoisseur collection, it also continued the nineteenth-century bourgeois trend of socializing around musical entertainment in a private setting. The music that gramophones played in early-twentieth century homes, bars and streets – the compositions of famous composers and the tunes of those who would later be forgotten – were modern, one could even say postmodern, in one further respect: they were part of a potpourri of opera tunes, gypsy song, Lied, character piece and comical sketch. This patchwork of serious and light-hearted entertainment was common throughout Europe's northern lands, and formed a unique northern, European, and worldwide cultural moment. This multiplicity of voices and styles also inspired artistic modernism. It enticed composers

to combine the sounds and structures of rural song with traditional compositional techniques and to bring both to the symphony hall.