

The Emergence of a National Choral Style

From the death of Bortniansky in 1825 to the early 1880s, Russian musicians gradually mastered and internalized the Western European musical language, moving from imitation towards autonomous musical creativity that drew upon indigenous Russian musical material. The base of support for music and other arts, which had previously consisted almost exclusively of aristocratic court circles, gradually broadened to include a growing middle class of merchants and city dwellers. Musical institutions—including orchestras, opera theaters, and public concert societies—arose, catering to the aesthetic demands of this new audience, and conservatories opened to staff these organizations. In short, Russian musical life was developing a close resemblance to that of other European nations.

As Russia's musical culture became increasingly Europeanized, however, the choral culture suffered a concomitant loss of prominence. Whereas in the eighteenth century choral music had been the prime vehicle by which new and "progressive" foreign musical elements entered Russia, throughout most of the nineteenth century choral music played only a small and rather insignificant role in the emergence of a Russian national style. Church music in particular remained segregated from the vital developments that were occurring in other branches of Russian music.

As mentioned in chapter 2, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the field of choral and vocal ensemble singing had split into two distinct and rarely interacting streams. One stream, by far the weaker of the two, was a continuation of the age-old, native Russian vocal genres—liturgical chant and the folk song. Although these genres were not cultivated in artistic performances, to the extent they were practiced in churches and social gatherings, they preserved the melodies as well as the rhythms, textures, sonorities, and methods of performance that were distinctively Russian. The other stream consisted of the technically polished but musically superficial style of choral part-singing in imitation of the Western manner. Even after a century and a half this style remained alien despite its widespread presence: both the literature and the function of choral part-singing were derived from

foreign forms, fostering equally foreign performance techniques. A national school of choral performance could not emerge until Russian musicians, both composers and performers, came to recognize—either through instinct or through scholarly investigation—the unique characteristics of original Russian vocal forms and to develop a choral literature that embodied these forms.

The greater portion of the nineteenth century witnessed efforts in this direction in both church and secular choral music. Results appeared earlier in the secular field, since the secular folk song fortuitously entered art music by way of the developing Russian opera. The path of liturgical chant was more circuitous and thorny. The gulf between the aesthetic principles of chant and Western choral polyphony had become as immense as the differences between the theocentric world of Medieval Muscovy and the secularized, Europeanized Russian Empire of the nineteenth century. Merely to penetrate the neumatic notation of *znamennyi* chant required considerable effort, to say nothing of rediscovering the chant's structure and underlying aesthetic principles. Moreover, entirely new approaches had to be sought out for adapting this ancient melos to contemporary choral forms. Some efforts in this direction, such as attempts to apply the "strict style" of Palestrinian counterpoint to the chants, proved to be based upon faulty premises and led into artistic dead ends. Lastly, before newly fashioned artistic forms could become the basis for a living performance tradition, the technical side of choral performance had to be mastered more fully. The stylistic evolution of Russian sacred choral music during the nineteenth century has been discussed extensively elsewhere¹ and thus will not be described in detail here. Instead, the discussion will focus on the effects of these developments upon the area of choral performance.

The Imperial Court Chapel under Fyodor L'vov

After Bortniansky's death the directorship of the Imperial Court Chapel was assumed by Fyodor L'vov (1766–1836), who occupied the post until his death. In the late 1820s the excellence of the Imperial Chapel still inspired emulation not only in Russia, but abroad as well. In 1829 the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III, wishing to pattern the reorganization of his own regimental choirs and the Berlin Dom-Chor after the Russian Chapel, dispatched to St. Petersburg one Captain Einbeck to observe and report on the Chapel's musical and administrative programs. Einbeck attended choir rehearsals, music lessons, and church services, and gave very high marks to the Chapel's activities. According to his report, the excellence of the Chapel was attributable to the following factors:

1. All singers had exceptionally fine voices
2. All voices were trained according to the best Italian method
3. All sections and soloists had a superb knowledge of their parts
4. The Imperial Chapel, as a special government-supported church choir, constituted a single artistic entity not affected by external circumstances, with the singers not having to devote their time to outside activities.²

Although Bortniansky had been dead for four years, Einbeck correctly attributed these qualities to the late Director's legacy.

Very shortly after Bortniansky's death, however, the situation changed for the worse. Fyodor L'vov repeatedly complained to the Emperor that "there are insufficient funds to give the young singers a decent education. The children are only taught to sing, without any other education. The [financial] situation of the singers is difficult, and the salaries are too small."³ Even the musical training of the singers showed signs of deterioration. When in 1837 Mikhail Glinka, already a renowned composer, was appointed "*Kapellmeister* to the Chapel,"⁴ he found that many singers could not read music. He writes in his notes,

Shortly after my appointment I undertook to teach them music [i.e., sight-singing] and to correct their intonation. . . . When I arrived for the first time, chalk in hand, there were few volunteers; the majority of the adult singers stood at a distance with a skeptical air, and some even snickered. Ignoring this, I went to work with such energy and, I must say, such cleverness, that after a few lessons almost all the adult singers, even those who took other private lessons, came to my lectures.⁵

Thus, Bortniansky, despite his remarkable tenure, did not impart to his successor any firm pedagogical and methodological foundations that would have ensured the Chapel's continued excellence. After Bortniansky's death, which coincided with the end of Alexander I's reign, not only did the musical quality of the Chapel deteriorate, but Russian church music embarked upon a different artistic course, reflecting ideas expressed by Fyodor L'vov in his book entitled *O penii v Rossii* [Singing in Russia]:

Italian singing . . . by its array of sounds leads a sensitive person to sweet self-oblivion. . . . [But] no learned complexity of voices and instruments will remind me why I am standing in God's temple. . . . Any honest thought is simple [and], therefore, convincing. . . . Sacred melodies must be, without exception, short and fixed invariably, so that they would become rooted in the memory and not distract one's attention with either novelty or variety; they must be simple and inspired by heart-warming fire, inflaming the heart and elevating the spirit!⁶

In criticizing the artfulness of the Italian concert style L'vov advocated a return to the ostensible "pious simplicity" of native Russian chant, thereby steering choral church singing away from continued artistic development. As Preobrazhensky points out, the fact that a strong condemnation of the Italian style occurred within the Imperial Court Chapel, the very institution that had nurtured that style, would prove to be a significant factor in the future direction of Russian sacred music.⁷ For while the Imperial Chapel rejected its own artistic accomplishments, no other musical institution in Russia could provide an alternative artistic direction. The only other tradition of choral performance of the time—the musically unsophisticated chanting of rank-and-file chanters (*diachki*) in improvised harmony—had been allowed to deteriorate for so long that it could not be the source of a well-ordered national tradition of church singing. Despite Bortniansky's accomplishments at the Imperial Chapel, it essentially became necessary to begin at the beginning: to establish Russian traditions of choral performance by developing an indigenous Russian choral literature, and by training ranks of Russian preceptors and choral conductors. The burden of these formidable tasks fell largely upon Aleksei Fyodorovich L'vov (1798–1870), Fyodor's son, who in 1837 became Director of the Imperial Court Chapel.

The Imperial Court Chapel under Aleksei L'vov

The younger L'vov attained his high office not because he had any special expertise or interest in church music, but more as a result of his personal closeness to Emperor Nicholas I. An engineer and military officer by training, he had entered the Tsar's service as an aide in charge of travel and communications, and in 1833 won Nicholas's special favor by composing the hymn "God Save the Tsar," which became the Russian national anthem. Trained in music by private German tutors, L'vov became a highly accomplished amateur violinist. In the course of his travels with the Emperor he met the leading European musicians of his time, including Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Spontini, and Fétis, and received numerous awards and honorary memberships from various Western European musical academies. Predictably, his musical orientation and taste were totally Western European, with a strong predilection for German Romanticism; throughout his life he remained totally estranged from the concerns and achievements of the emerging nationalist movement in Russian music.

In selecting L'vov to be the new Director of the Imperial Chapel, Nicholas I was undoubtedly motivated by his own close personal ties with him and by L'vov's international reputation as a musician. Having a penchant for discipline and order in all things, Nicholas desired to establish a uniform standard of church singing throughout his realm (patterned, of course, after

his own Imperial Chapel). He knew L'vov to be a faithful courtier and a reliable administrator to whom he could entrust this formidable task. The Tsar's personal support increased still further the vast influence, in the form of censorship powers, that L'vov possessed as Director of the Chapel.

In his monograph on Aleksei L'vov, Johann von Gardner identifies eight major points upon which L'vov focused his attention in the course of his directorship:

1. To raise the level of general musical education among the singers of the Imperial Court Chapel
2. To develop a systematic program for teaching the precentor's trade to capable singers of the Imperial Court Chapel as well as to candidates from regimental and diocesan choirs
3. To establish a strict and thorough control over the repertoire and quality of church choirs
4. To exercise strict censorship over all new music being composed for Russian church choirs
5. To bring all plain church singing [i.e., the daily chant propers] into uniformity, using the [harmonized] renditions of the Imperial Court Chapel as a model
6. To set in four-part harmony [for mixed voices] the entire yearly cycle of liturgical chants [as sung at the Imperial Court]
7. To set in four-part harmony the entire contents of the square-note chant books, making these settings mandatory and exclusive for all church choirs in Russia
8. To set down in musical notation chants still sung according to oral tradition in certain ancient monasteries and cathedrals, preserving them from being lost and corrupted.⁸

As Director of the Imperial Chapel, L'vov had the resources and the administrative power to carry out the gargantuan task of harmonizing the full yearly cycle of liturgical chants and disseminating the harmonizations. The actual work was executed by three of the Chapel's assistants—Ivan Belikov, Pavel Vorotnikov, and Gavriil Lomakin—following guidelines set down by L'vov. In his memoirs L'vov describes the limitations he imposed upon the artistic process: "Herein [there is] nothing of my own composition and, indeed, should not be anything besides the preserved chants and the correct application to them of four-part harmony."⁹

The hundreds of chant harmonizations poured from the same mold by L'vov and his assistants were, predictably, colorless and dull (see ex. 3.1). Moreover, the chants were not always rendered accurately or clearly, a point that raised the objections of some leading churchmen. The factor that

Example 3.1. Harmonized Court Chant—Vesper Psalm “*Gospodi, vozzvakh*”

[Lord, I call] in Tone 3.

Source: *Obikhod prostogo tserkovnogo penya, pri Vysochaishem Dvore upotrebliaemogo* [The Common Chants of plain church singing used at the Imperial Court]

(St. Petersburg: Pridvornaia Pevcheskaia Kapella, 1914).

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

Gos - po - di, voz - zvakh k Te - be, u - sly - shi mia. U - sly - shi mia.

Gos - po - di. Gos - po - di, voz - zvakh k Te - be, u - sly - shi mia.

von - mi gla - su mo - le - ni - ia mo - e - go. vne - gda voz - zva -

ti mi k Te - be. U - sly - shi mia, Gos - po - di.

*(Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me. Hear me, O Lord.**Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me.**Receive the voice of my prayer, when I cry unto Thee.**Hear me, O Lord.)*

ultimately determined the acceptance of L'vov's work, however, was the opinion of Nicholas I. At a performance of the Imperial Chapel that included some of L'vov's harmonizations the Emperor inquired, "Is this the unison singing to which you are applying harmony?" "Exactly so," answered L'vov. The Emperor took L'vov by the hand and said, "Here is the unity that I desire. Thank you, thank you," to which L'vov replied, "I am your disciple. Your approval is everything to me."¹⁰

L'vov's *Obikhod*¹¹ *prostogo tserkovnogo peniia, pri Vysochaishem Dvore upotrebliaemogo* [The common chants of plain church singing used at

the Imperial Court] was published in 1848, and by Imperial decree was sent to all dioceses with the instruction that, whenever any member of the Royal Family happened to be present, it was to be used exclusively. Presumably, if a member of the royalty were not in attendance, the *Obikhod* did not have to be followed; however, L'vov aggressively promulgated the adoption of it and the rest of the Chapel's repertoire throughout Russia by a series of other measures. Most effective in this regard was the Chapel's program of training and certifying church precentors (which will be discussed in detail in chapter 5).

Besides establishing strict control over the musical training and creative activity of church precentors, L'vov sought to control the repertoire of church choirs by actively exercising his powers of censorship. Under Bortniansky and Fyodor L'vov, enforcement of the Decree of 1816 had been largely left to diocesan bishops and individual parish priests. The prohibition against freely composed concerto-style works was evidently not too successful, for in 1850 the Holy Synod issued yet another decree prohibiting "the singing during Divine Liturgy of musical compositions [composed] in recent times, either printed or in manuscript, known as concertos, instead of the appointed Communion Verse."¹² But the most forceful legal statement of the official policy concerning church repertoire was written into the Imperial Codex of Laws, issued in 1846, which read: "New church musical compositions shall not be introduced anywhere in Orthodox churches without the prior approval of the Director of the Imperial Court Chapel, while those approved shall be used only in printed form and with the permission of the Holy Synod."¹³

With the same diligence and tenacity that characterized all his other undertakings, Aleksei L'vov assumed surveillance over the repertoire of church choirs in Russia, issuing "injunctions of the utmost strictness" and, at times, calling upon the police to enforce them. During his twenty-four years as Director, the only compositions added to those already approved under Bortniansky were his own.¹⁴ The full consequences of the Chapel's censorship may be seen from a list of approved works published in 1871 (ten years after L'vov's retirement) which contains the works of only six composers—Bortniansky, L'vov, Maksim Berezovsky (one title), Makarov (one title), Gribovich (three titles), and Vorotnikov (thirteen titles).¹⁵ The censorship process was so intimidating that individuals not connected directly with the Chapel did not even bother to submit works for consideration.

The tyranny of censorship, which continued under L'vov's successor, Nikolai Bakhmetev (1807–91, director from 1861 to 1883), was clearly a major factor that discouraged composers such as Dargomyzhsky, Serov, Borodin, and Musorgsky from writing anything for the Orthodox Church.¹⁶

The prevailing conservatism in the area of church repertoire extended to the Chapel's concert performances as well. Six concerts of Orthodox sacred

music given privately at the court in the years 1847 and 1848 featured only the works of Bortniansky, Galuppi, Sarti, Makarov, L'vov, and Vorotnikov. The same composers appeared on programs in the 1870s, with the addition of a few selections from the *Obikhod*.¹⁷

Outside the sphere of Russian liturgical music, the Choir of the Imperial Chapel continued to participate in performances of Western European cantatas and oratorios put on by the Philharmonic Society. In 1850 L'vov established an independent Concert Association within the Chapel for the purpose of "performing classical works to the highest possible perfection, directing the proceeds to [musical] artists' widows and orphans and to the furtherance of art." The programs included the finest examples of Western European music, both symphonic and choral-orchestral.¹⁸

The technical side of the Imperial Chapel's performances under L'vov was marked by a high degree of excellence, as evidenced by accolades from visiting foreign musicians. After hearing the Chapel in 1838, Adolphe Charles Adan called it "a wondrous vocal orchestra! . . . The doubling of the fundamental [by the octavists] . . . gives the ensemble a type of mellowness that is unknown in our vocal groups, [and] makes this choir resemble a grandiose organ, the magnificence and effect of which upon an impressionable listener's nervous system is beyond description."¹⁹ Hector Berlioz, who visited Russia in 1847, was even more effusive:

In our time we have no doubt that the Choir of Court Singers in Russia surpasses all choirs that exist at this moment in the entire world. The Chapel . . . performs works in four, six, and eight parts, sometimes in a rather fast tempo complicated by the difficulties of the figured style, at other times, in an extremely slow [tempo], with calm and divine expression that demands an assuredness and endurance of voices such as one does not often encounter, and which, in my opinion, surpasses everything that we have in Europe of this nature. . . . To compare the choral performance in the Sistine Chapel in Rome with these wondrous singers is the same as comparing a miserable little troupe of fiddlers in a third-rate Italian theater with the orchestra of the Paris Conservatoire. The effect of the music performed by this choir upon nervous people is irresistible. At those incredible accents you feel that you are being overwhelmed, almost to the point of pain, by a nervous state that you don't know how to control. Several times I attempted in these circumstances to remain calm, straining my will power, but I could never succeed.²⁰

Robert Schumann in 1844 noted in his diary: "The Chapel is the most wonderful choir that we have ever had the occasion of hearing: the basses at times remind one of the low notes of an organ, while the descants have a magical sound, better than any women's voices. The subtlest nuances and shadings are mastered to the limit, at times even with too much refinement and detail. . . ." ²¹

What clearly impressed these Western European musicians was the sonority of the Chapel's choir. However, to conclude that the Chapel at that

time cultivated performance techniques that were peculiarly Russian would be mere speculation. As mentioned above, the works performed in the 1830s and 1840s were none other than the Italianate compositions of Sarti, Galuppi, and Bortniansky and the German Romantic works of L'vov. These, by their texture and musical structure, demanded performance techniques no different from those applicable to any other works in the Western European style of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. In fact, the Chapel pointedly eschewed works of the nascent Russian school; it required great effort on the part of Dmitri and Vladimir Stasov to arrange a performance of the "Persian Chorus" from Glinka's *Ruslan and Liudmila* in one of the Chapel's concerts.²²

Yet it was the Imperial Chapel that once again proved to be the model for the formation and training of Russian church choirs in the mid-nineteenth century, just as it had been during the reign of Catherine the Great. In 1853 L'vov published a monograph entitled *O tserkovnykh khorakh* [Concerning church choirs], in which he outlined, for the first time in Russia, the theoretical principles and requirements that should be followed by church choirs: "The fact that the liturgy of the Orthodox Church does not allow instrumental accompaniment is the reason that there are more church choirs in Russia than in any other country. There are a great many church choirs [and] their number is constantly increasing; all have the desire to sing, but very few know the direction in which to go to achieve the desired perfection. . . ." ²³ Indeed, beyond the Imperial Chapel, the status of Russia's choral culture in the mid-nineteenth century was very ambiguous. L'vov's observations regarding the number of choirs notwithstanding, choral singing in Russia did not enjoy the widespread popularity among various classes of society as it did in, say, Germany or England. Singing was usually not included in school curricula, and there was an almost total absence of qualified teachers and pedagogical materials.

Categories of Choirs in Nineteenth-Century Russia

Before the social reforms and the resulting cultural ferment of the 1860s, the only two types of choirs found in Russia were church choirs and theatrical choirs. The latter were either state-supported or, in the case of private theatrical enterprises, were among the performing forces engaged for specific productions. Despite the popularity of opera in Russia, operatic choirs were not always first-rate: in 1873, Tchaikovsky described the chorus of the Bolshoi Theater in the following terms: "The choruses [in Dargomyzhsky's *Rusalka*] could not be heard at all, and even when the hoarse sounds that emanated from them reached the ear, they only aggravated the auditory nerves. . . . Total disorder reigned in the ensembles; the orchestra played drably and poorly, while the choruses, as usual, sang with unmerciful discord. . . ." ²⁴

Because the nature and activity of operatic choirs were narrowly circumscribed, they will be considered in this study only as an exception.

Choirs whose primary function was to perform at church services fell into several categories according to their economic status. The Court Chapel, which sang in the numerous court churches of St. Petersburg and its environs, was in a separate category both artistically and economically. The Moscow Synodal Choir (which sang in the Moscow Cathedral of the Dormition, the principal cathedral of the Russian Orthodox Church) also enjoyed state-supported status, but until 1886 its artistic importance was distinctly secondary.

On the next level were choirs attached to diocesan cathedrals, staffed and supported by diocesan treasuries. Monasteries and convents sometimes had organized choirs, although, with very few exceptions, monastic singing was on a very low level in the nineteenth century. Completing the category of "official," government or church-supported choirs were the choirs of various theological academies and seminaries, and the choirs of military regiments.

The next major category included choirs supported by private individuals—either wealthy nobility and aristocrats for their own household churches, or "choral entrepreneurs" (*khorosoderzhateli*), whose choirs were primarily commercial enterprises: the entrepreneur hired the singers (or, in the case of boys, housed, clothed, and fed them) and then entered into contracts with wardens of individual parish churches to supply the singing for church services and the private offices or needs (*treby*)—baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc.

Another category, which arose at the end of the eighteenth century but became widespread only towards the end of the nineteenth century, comprised "amateur" choirs at various parish churches. These sang Sunday services and certain major feast-day services, usually receiving some remuneration from the parish. Initially such choirs were found only in the major cities and included members of the middle-class bourgeoisie. After the emancipation of the serfs and the growth of city industry, however, similar choirs were organized in villages and factory towns, often as part of efforts to bring culture and musical education to the masses. Because the members were commoners from the worker or peasant class, the choirs were called "folk choirs" (*narodnye khory*), although they performed the same sacred repertoire as the other types of choirs described above. Folk choirs often functioned in conjunction with choirs at the local elementary or secondary school, particularly if the teacher of singing at the school was also the church precentor.

Aside from the Imperial Chapel and Count Sheremetev's private chapel, none of the above choirs was on a high artistic level in the first part of the nineteenth century. A Synod report dating 1835 states that the greater part of

churches in Russia could not use the new four-part harmonizations issued by the Imperial Chapel because they did not have enough singers to cover four parts.²⁵

In Moscow the Synodal Choir continued its meager and neglected existence after almost being eliminated in the early 1800s. The Choir's singing during this period is described exclusively in negative terms: out of tune, unbalanced, and containing noticeable blunders.²⁶ Metallov suggests that the main reason for the Synodal Choir's troubles was the forced introduction of compositions by Bortniansky, Degtiarev, and other Italianate composers, as well as L'vov's harmonizations written in a style totally unfamiliar to the Choir: "The Synodal Choir was, of course, not prepared [for these works], and in fact there was hardly a choir in Russia at that time capable of performing the 'concertos' of the Imperial Chapel's directors satisfactorily except the Chapel itself, which had all the necessary means and personnel for such singing."²⁷ Ironically these works were introduced in Moscow by preceptors summoned from the Imperial Chapel to improve the Synodal Choir's quality. To achieve this end they were instructed specifically to learn no fewer than three of Bortniansky's concertos every four months.

Factors That Contributed to the Growth of the New Russian Choral School

The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 contributed greatly to the growth of choral singing in Russia. As idealists among the upper class turned their attention to educating the masses, they came to regard music as an important means of aesthetic education. Through church singing and the choral folk song, the two types of music closest to the populace, they felt they could help the Russian people establish an independent cultural identity. The nationalistic "choral movement" that began in the 1860s is an interesting and still largely unexplored chapter in the social history of Russian music. Though the nationwide achievements of this movement were not unequivocally successful by 1917 (when the Bolshevik Revolution radically reoriented all cultural and educational currents), within a few institutions headed by far-sighted and inspired individuals, a tremendous growth occurred in both the choral repertoire and the quality of choral performance, generating pride at home and envy in Western European capitals.

The growth of the "new Russian choral school" was aided by several important events in the area of sacred music:

1. The publication in the years 1867-69 of Reverend Dmitri Razumovsky's three-volume work, *Tserkovnoe penie v Rossii* [Church singing in Russia], the first major scholarly investigation into the essence and history of Russian liturgical singing

2. The gradual growth of public concerts of sacred music, beginning in the year 1864
3. The breaking of the Imperial Chapel's stranglehold on new liturgical choral composition—the result of Director Nikolai Bakhmetev's unsuccessful attempt in 1880 to block the publication of Tchaikovsky's *Liturgy*, Opus 41
4. The establishment in 1880 of Arkhangel'sky's Choir, the first independent professional choir in Russia, which several years later came to include women's voices
5. The appointment in 1883 of Mily Balakirev and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov to head the Imperial Chapel
6. The reform in 1886 of the Moscow Synodal School of Church Singing, together with the appointment of Vasily Orlov as the chief conductor of the Synodal Choir, and the appointment three years later of Stepan Smolensky as the School's director.

The Contribution of Liturgical Musicologists

Razumovsky's *Church singing in Russia* was a work of unprecedented scope and depth. Prior to that the only efforts in this field had been short monographs: Hieromonk Evgeny (Bolkhovitinov)'s *Istorichekoe rassuzhdenie voobshche o drevnem khristianskom bogoslužebnom penii i osobenno o penii rossiiskoi tserkvi s nužnymi primečaniiami na onoe* [A historical discourse about ancient Christian liturgical singing], first published in 1799; Fyodor L'vov's *O penii v Rossii* [Singing in Russia] (1834); Vukol Undol'sky's *Zamečaniia dlia istorii tserkovnogo peniia v Rossii* [Comments on the history of church singing in Russia] (1846); and Ivan Sakharov's "Issledovanie o russkom tserkovnom pesnopenii" [An investigation of Russian church singing] (1849).

In 1866 Razumovsky was appointed to the Chair of Russian Church Music History at the newly opened Moscow Conservatory, a post he would occupy for twenty-three years until his death in 1889. Although *Church singing in Russia* contained some factual and methodological inadequacies, it brought the ancient Russian system of liturgical singing—*znamennyi* chant—to the attention of musicians at a time when the Germanophile tendencies of L'vov and Bakhmetev had all but obscured native forms of church singing. Moreover, Razumovsky's scholarship stimulated other researchers—Ioann Voznesensky, Stepan Smolensky, Vasily Metallov, and Antonin Prëobrazhensky, among others—who succeeded in laying the foundations of Russian historical musicology. In Gardner's words, "Razumovsky contributed a great deal to developing the principles that would guide the efforts to reinstate national and canonical elements in church singing, which

so vividly characterize the so-called Moscow school of church singing. . . . Without Razumovsky's contributions this phase [in the history of Russian church singing] could not have occurred."²⁸

The Role of Public Sacred Concerts

Extra-liturgical performances of church music had occurred in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in St. Petersburg, but they were usually given for private audiences. When Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow in 1864 gave his blessing for a public concert of sacred music, to be given jointly by the Moscow Synodal Choir and his own personal Chudov Choir, the event was considered so unprecedented that the Metropolitan received numerous letters of protest. To mollify the critics, no applause was permitted and the audience was required to stand at the singing of the Lord's Prayer. All in all, the concert was a success, opening the door to other public sacred concerts in Moscow. In each case, however, permission had to be obtained from church authorities, usually with some difficulty and only through highly placed connections.²⁹

Despite their newly found popularity, sacred concerts in the 1860s and 1870s vividly demonstrated the malaise that had come to afflict Russian sacred music as a result of the Imperial Chapel's censorship and the lack of contact with the rest of the musical world. As the critic Hermann Larosch wrote in 1870: "Moscow has several fine choirs that give concerts and sing concert-style works in churches on major feasts. Under different circumstances these choirs could be genuine instruments of art: [they have] excellent voices, skillful execution of nuances, . . . and good intonation. . . . But they are extremely limited by their musical environment and by their repertoire, [which] remains on the level of rank amateurism and dilettantism." Noting that in 1870 the Chudov Choir under Fyodor Bagretsov performed Palestrina's motet "*Sicut cervus*," Larosch continues:

Palestrina sums up all that is lacking in our church music. Ignorant critics fail to understand that the [Russian church] music of Sarti and Galuppi and their Russian followers [e.g., Bortniansky, Vedel', Degtiarev, et al.] represents the worst examples of a fallen "Latinism"—external formalism without an inner warming spirit, worldly and secular content covered up with a "churchly exterior." This is what we have inherited and are imitating. . . . The entire style of our church music is in need of reform, but reform can only take place if composers would have freedom from the murderous monopoly of the Court Chapel.³⁰

Within ten years the Chapel's monopoly was indeed broken. The sacred choral repertoire expanded, at first slowly, in the eighties and early nineties, and then in a veritable explosion of sacred choral composition that lasted until the October Revolution of 1917.