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**From the History of the Publication of the Opera**  
***The Woman with the Dagger:***  
**Vladimir Rebikov — Boris Jurgenson — Arthur Schnitzler**

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**Abstract.** The article elucidates the history of the publication of Vladimir Ivanovich Rebikov's opera *The Woman with the Dagger* in the Moscow-based publishing house *P. Jurgenson*, spanning the years 1910–1912. The context is disclosed of the creation of the work occurring at the beginning of the late period of the composer's creativity, and a short characterization is given of the opera's dramatic source — a play with the same title by outstanding Austrian dramaturgist and writer of the modern period of the early 20th century. The vicissitudes of the signing of the contract between the composer and the dramaturgist for the right of making use of the play leading to the two men's resulting agreement with the publishing house are set forth in detail. Special attention is drawn to the new Russian copyright law of that time, created in 1911 with the influence of European legislation,

Translated by Anton A. Rovner

and the rules are described that had to be followed by composers who set their music to already published texts when their works were performed outside of the Russian Empire. Light is shed on the circumstances of the creation of a new Russian libretto for the opera that simultaneously met the requirements of the law, Schnitzler's wishes and Rebikov's already written text (an adaptation of Lina Esbeer), the picture for the cover of the piano-vocal score (drawn by Czech artist Rudolf Adamek), as well as the details of the publication of the piano-vocal score and the brochure with the libretto by Jurgenson's publishing house.

The materials of the article are based on the correspondence of Vladimir Ivanovich Rebikov, the publisher at that time, Boris Petrovich Jurgenson and Arthur Schnitzler, the manuscripts of the opera *The Woman with the Dagger* (the piano-vocal score and the full orchestral score), as well as Rebikov's biography, all of which are preserved in the archives of the Russian National Museum of Music. The epistolary is brought into scholarly use for the first time in that capacity; Schnitzler's letters are published for the first time.

**Keywords:** Vladimir Rebikov, Boris Jurgenson, Arthur Schnitzler, opera, *The Woman with the Dagger* (*Die Frau mit dem Dolche*), copyright

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*История музыки  
в письмах и документах*

Научная статья

**Из истории публикации  
оперы «Женщина с кинжалом»:  
В. И. Ребиков — Б. П. Юргенсон — А. Шницлер**

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**Аннотация.** Статья освещает историю публикации оперы Владимира Ивановича Ребикова «Женщина с кинжалом» в московском издательстве «П. Юргенсон», охватывающую 1910–1912 годы. Раскрыт контекст создания произведения, приходящийся на начало позднего периода творчества композитора, дана краткая характеристика драматической основы оперы — одноименной пьесы выдающегося австрийского драматурга и писателя эпохи модерна Артура Шницлера. Подробно изложены перипетии заключения договора между композитором и драматургом на право использования пьесы, ведущие к итоговому контракту авторов с издательством. Особое внимание уделено новому российскому закону об авторском праве (1911), созданному под влиянием европейского законодательства, описаны правила, которым должны были следовать композиторы, обращающиеся к уже опубликованным текстам в случае исполнения их произведений за пределами Российской империи. Прояснены обстоятельства создания нового русского либретто оперы, отвечающего одновременно требованиям закона, желаниям Шницлера и уже написанному тексту Ребикова (адаптация Лины Эсбир), рисунка для обложки клавира (автор — чешский художник Рудольф Адамек), а также детали издания клавира и брошюры с либретто фирмой Юргенсона.

Материалы статьи базируются на переписке Владимира Ивановича Ребикова, тогдашнего главы издательства Бориса Петровича Юргенсона и Артура Шницлера, рукописях оперы «Женщина с кинжалом» (клавире и партитуре), а также автобиографии Ребикова, содержащихся в фондах Российского национального музея музыки. Эпистолярная впервые в таком объеме вводится в научный оборот; письма Шницлера публикуются впервые.

**Ключевые слова:** Владимир Ребиков, Борис Юргенсон, Артур Шницлер, опера, «Женщина с кинжалом», авторское право

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### *Introduction*

The figure of the Russian musician of the modern period of the early 20th century Vladimir Ivanovich Rebikov has remained underestimated up to the present — in terms of both performance and music scholarship. Rebikov's musical legacy has been insufficiently researched: besides Olga Mikhaylovna Tompakova's monograph about the composer's life and work, which has already become a classic [1], as well as Valentina Alexandrovna Loginova's textbook endowed with a tutorial-methodological directedness [2], among the large-scale works devoted particularly to the composer's oeuvres, only Angelina Alexandrovna Rybina's dissertation for the degree of Candidate of the Arts can be named<sup>1</sup>.

Rebikov was not only an intriguing composer, but also an outstanding teacher and a well-known public figure. He boldly transformed traditional musical genres, created new ones, his quest in the realm of modes and harmony have made a significant contribution to the development of the art of music. But, as Loginova mentions on it “many [critics] strongly disapproved of the composer for the extreme limitations of his arsenal of musical-expressive means, the static quality of the composition when contrasted to its outward fluidity, the affectingly sentimental intonational sphere of the compositions, the excessive avocation for the popular genres of domestic music-making (i.e., the programmatic miniatures for piano and lyrical vernacular romance)” [2, p. 24]. Rebikov's oeuvres aroused mixed emotions among his contemporaries. While in other countries his music was well-known and, on the whole, accepted [3], in Russia more often than not it aroused skepticism. Polarly contrasting evaluations were bestowed upon the composer: from “the woe-flower and the barren flower of Russian modernism”

<sup>1</sup> Rybina, A. A. (2016). V. I. Rebikov: Lichnost', tvorchestvo, èstetika, stil' [Vladimir Rebikov: Personality, Creativity, Aesthetics, Style]. [Unpublished Cand. Sci. dissertation]. Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory.



Illustration 1. Vladimir Rebikov  
Photo studio A. M. Ivanitsky, Kharkov (no date).  
Dedication inscription: *To dear friend Boris  
Petrovich Yurgenson in fond memory from  
Kuka.*  
Available at:  
[http://pjurgenson.ru/vladimir-ivanovich-  
rebikov-1866-1920-g/](http://pjurgenson.ru/vladimir-ivanovich-rebikov-1866-1920-g/) (accessed 20.08.2024)

Rebikov's work presents a rare example in the Russian opera theater of impressionist musical drama, the drama of moods. In both the rendition of the images and the musical style, we can observe the traces of the so-called "musical

(Asafiev)<sup>2</sup> to "an interesting, talented, assiduous inventor" (Kashkin).<sup>3</sup>

Rebikov's operas stand out, most particularly, among his extensive musical legacy. With the exception of the first — *The Christmas Tree*, and the last — *A Nest of Nobles*, they were practically unknown to his contemporaries. Nonetheless, Rebikov's operatic works are diverse and multifarious. Notwithstanding all of their individuality and inimitable qualities (which the composer especially insisted on), in one way or other, they reflected the artistic and aesthetic quests of the modern epoch in Russian art and that of other countries.

#### *The Materials*

The opera *The Woman with the Dagger* was written based on a one-act play with the same title by Arthur Schnitzler. Despite the fact that Schnitzler's works were very popular in Russia, opera composers turned to them extremely seldom. In particular, the play *The Woman with the Dagger* attracted attention to itself only on the part of Mikhail Andreyevich Ostroglazov (1907; the opera has remained in manuscript form) and Vladimir Rebikov, who turned to it slightly after, in 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Asafiev, B. V. (1915). Vladimir Rebikov. Ritmodeklamatsii [Vladimir Rebikov. Rhythmic Recitations]. Muzyka, 238, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Kashkin, N. D. (1908). Ocherk istorii russkoy muzyki [An Outline of the History of Russian Music]. P. Jurgenson, p. 58.

psychography,” which the composer himself considered to be determinative for this artistic method. The writing is discerned for its chamber qualities, its attention toward details, and the intricacy of the harmonic and timbral nuances. The orchestra plays the leading role in the creation of images and moods. The logically and compactly elaborated construction of the opera is perceived very well: its three scenes are symmetrical in their scenic and musical aspects; the through development is provided by the leitmotif technique.

The musicological interest towards this opera is connected not only with the literary source and the musical text, but also with the dramatic story of its creation and publication. Composed during the course of a few weeks, in one breath, it waited more than a year for its publication, although Boris Petrovich Jurgenson (*Illustration 2*)<sup>4</sup> was ready to publish the composition immediately, as soon as he received the musical score from the composer.

It has become possible to reveal the reasons for the delay of the publication by means of three letters of Arthur Schnitzler (one original letter and two copies) discovered at the *Russian National Museum of Music (RNMM)*. To give a complete picture, it has also turned out to be expedient to study Rebikov’s extensive correspondence by letters with Jurgenson. They had a warm friendly relationship with each other, and Rebikov signed his letter with the facetious name of Kuka, while Jurgenson signed his name in a more reserved manner, as Borya. Their letters shed light on the circumstances of the creation and publication of many of Rebikov’s works, including the opera *The Woman with the Dagger*. Another substantial support was also provided by other materials preserved at the *RNMM*: the contracts between Schnitzler and Rebikov and those between Rebikov and the Jurgenson publishing house — for elucidating the legal nuances; the manuscripts (the full score and the piano vocal score), on which the dates of the beginning and the completion of the work on the composition



*Illustration 2.* Boris Jurgenson.  
Photo studio Cherer, Nabholz & C.,  
Moscow (no date).

Available at:

<http://pjurgenson.ru/boris-petrovich-yurgenson-1868-1935g-6/>

(accessed 20.08.2024)

<sup>4</sup> Together with his brother Grigoriy Petrovich, he inherited the firm of his father Piotr Ivanovich Jurgenson, the founder of one of the best musical publishing houses in Russia.

are induced, and the composer's autobiography *From My Life*<sup>5</sup> — for recreating the chronology of the composition's emergence.

The problem range that opens as a result of studying these documents, is not limited only by the process of compositional creativity — although, undoubtedly, this is also very important. The focus of the researcher's attention includes the questions of the publishers' contracts and copyright. In the jurisprudence of the Russian Empire, the latter passed their own peculiarities, not entirely fitting the European process, stimulated by the Bern Convention of 1886. The most part of the Russian composers, with only very few exceptions (such as, in particular, Anton Grigoryevich Rubinstein, who had experience in corresponding with publishing houses outside of Russia, see: [4]), contented themselves with "frame" contracts with publishing houses made up in a not very precise way, from the position of the legal rules, without looking back at the practical nuances of performance and publication, especially outside the country. But gradually the situation changed, the culture in the domain

of copyright rapidly grew, exchanges were organized between the Russian and the European publishers [5], most people, including the composers, gradually realized the difference between the practice of law application in Russia and in other countries and, as a consequence to this, the necessity to coordinate the right to make use of texts by authors from other countries. At times, this occurred as the result of serious peripetiae, as in the case of Rebikov's opera *The Woman with the Dagger*.

#### *The History of the Opera's Creation*

Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931, *Illustration 3*) was an outstanding Austrian writer and dramaturgist, a member of the literary alliance *Jung-Wien* [*Young Vienna*] (1891–1897), a brilliant representative of the Viennese modern style. His worldview was in many ways influenced by the philosophical aesthetic positions of one of the leaders of this circle, Hermann Bahr, who in his turn was attracted to the ideas of the book *Analyse der Empfindungen* [*Analysis of Sensations*] by physicist and philosopher Ernest Mach [6]. Bahr's



*Illustration 3.* Arthur Schnitzler.  
Photo studio E. Bieber, Berlin. [1905].  
Available at: <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/biografie/arthur-schnitzler>  
(accessed 20.08.2024)

<sup>5</sup> Rebikov, V. I. *Iz moyey zhizni* [*From My Life*]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov V. I.). No. 78.

theory was dubbed by critics as “inner,” “psychic” or “psychological” impressionism. For the writer the main goal turns out to be “the study of complex subconscious processes of the human psyche” [7, p. 181].

The one-act play *Die Frau mit dem Dolche* (*The Woman with the Dagger*) is part of Schnitzler’s trilogy *Die Momente im Leben* [*The Moments of Life*] (1901). At the center of the drama is a painting by an unknown artist depicting a woman with a raised hand with a dagger. The plotline unfolds around this artefact: first, in a contemporary gallery, then in an artistic studio in the Renaissance period. In both cases, the same protagonists are presented, which seem to be transferred in time: Pauline (Paola), her beloved Leonhard (Leonardo), as well as the heroine’s husband (in the contemporary space – a certain dramaturgist; in the past – the artist Remiggio, the creator of the painting). During the course of the action it becomes known that the impulse for creating the painting was the murder by Paola of her lover.

Rebikov, a devoted admirer of the Viennese and Berlin modern style, nurtured the ideas of writing an opera to Schnitzler’s text even earlier, at the beginning of his tour abroad (1906–1907) [1, p. 50]. However at that time, Rebikov focused his attention on another literary source – Leonid Andreyev’s short-story *The Chasm* (1901), written in an expressionistic vein (op. 40, 1907). The same style is to a certain extent intrinsic to *The Woman with the Dagger* (1910), which may be considered to be the “deferred” realization of the opera based on Schnitzler. Hereinafter, Rebikov turned rather to generalized philosophical themes – in his operas *Alpha and Omega* (1911), *Narcissus* (1911–1912), and *Arachne* (1915). The lyrical, more balanced, albeit, emotionally saturated tone of utterance would return in his final opera *The Nest of Nobles* (1916).

In Rebikov’s compositional career, the year 1910 marks the beginning of the late period of his musical creativity. After his European tours (1906–1909), which granted him numerous impressions and had brought him public recognition, the composer hoped for a similarly successful realization of his conceptions in his native country. With this aim, he had a series of his articles published in the *Rossiyskaya muzykal’naya gazeta* [*Russian Musical Newspaper*], where he elaborated his compositional principles and achieved his goals, having aroused intensive arguments between eminent Russian critics. Boris Popov, Evgeny Petrovsky, Vyacheslav Karatygin, and Grigoriy Prokofiev discussed his musical compositions, but more often than not, they criticized them, rather than providing a welcome. The public perceived Rebikov’s compositions and the manner of their performance as being “decadent” (it is well-known that he frequently played from inside the curtain and in total darkness).<sup>6</sup> Similarly unsuccessful was his experience of making a presentation in an elite circle in a closed evening session of the *Society for Free Aesthetics* on February 10, 1910 at the request of Valeriy Yakovlevich Bryusov.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The composer himself writes about this: “The appellation of ‘decadent’ was impaled and closed the door for concert venues. ‘A decadent opera!’ After all, this frightened everybody. Indeed, this epithet closed all the doors.” Rebikov V.I. *Iz moyey zhizni* [From my Life]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov). No. 78. P. 58.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262 back side – 263.



In the autumn of the same year, Rebikov, after passing through an illness and having been disillusioned with his life in the capital cities, moves to Crimea — first to Feodosia, then to Yalta, where he would pass the greater part of the final decade of his life. The circle of his communication is comprised of the Chekhov family and its guests, the artistic and scientific intelligentsia of Yalta. The first large-scale composition created by the composer in Yalta was the opera *The Woman with the Dagger*. In the composer's memoirs, this is stated extremely laconically: "On November 18 [1910], I took a room at Andreyeva's country house on the embankment [in Yalta], and there during the course of one month I composed *The Woman with the Dagger*. The text was taken from Schnitzler."<sup>8</sup> Also at our disposal is the precise indication of the dates of the beginning and the completion of the work on the opera as written on the autograph scores of the piano-vocal and the full score: 18.XI 1910 – 18.XII 1910; the completion of the orchestration — 31.XII 1910.<sup>9</sup> In his letters to Jurgenson, Rebikov indicated that he wrote the piano-vocal score in 25 days, and the orchestral score — in 14 days; however, parallel to this, he also reported that he worked for only six weeks.<sup>10</sup> Apparently, upon the interpretation of the discrepancies in the dates, we must still be guided by the dates written down in the autographs of the scores. But, be that as it may, the work was really carried on at a fantastic speed!

An analysis of the correspondence between Rebikov and Jurgenson makes it possible to assert that *The Woman with the Dagger* became the first step in overcoming a moral and physical crisis suffered by the composer, and that the impulse for the creation of the opera was connected with some sort of love story.<sup>11</sup> The composer was very pleased with his new composition and proposed having it staged in Germany, where he planned to move during the subsequent year 1911. For this end, Rebikov asked Lina Esbeer, a translator, who during the 1900s and 1910s cooperated with a set of musical publishing houses, including Jurgenson's firm, to translate the text into German.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>9</sup> Rebikov V. I. Zhenshchina s kinzhalom [The Woman with the Dagger] op. 41. Piano-vocal score. Autograph score. RNMM. F. 68. No. 86-back side. P. 1; Rebikov V.I. Zhenshchina s kinzhalom [The Woman with the Dagger] op. 41. Orchestral score. Autograph score and copy. RNMM. F. 68. No. 859. P. 1, 206.

<sup>10</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 16 dekabrya 1910 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from December 16, 1910]. RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1580; Re-bikov V.I. Pis'mo k B. P. Yurgensonu ot 3 yanvarya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from January 3, 1911]. RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1588. Every-where, where it is not indicated otherwise, the dating of Rebikov's letters to Jurgenson is provided according to the date of receipt on the basis of the stamp of the Jurgenson firm on the letter itself. This explains why several of the letters are marked with identical date indications: it is possible that they had been sent on different days, but they were received on the same day. The date indication of Jurgenson's letters to Rebikov is given according to the date the letter was written, as indicated by Boris Petrovich himself.

<sup>11</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 26 oktyabrya 1910 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from October 16, 1910]. RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1583; V.I. Rebikov. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 20 dekabrya 1910 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from December 20, 1910] [date of posting, according to the postal stamp по почтовому штемпелю]. RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1691.

<sup>12</sup> Rebikov V.I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 5 yanvarya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from January 5, 1911]. RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1589.

*The Correspondence with Schnitzler*

However, it was particularly in connection with his plans for a production of the opera abroad that Rebikov became unrestful in connection with the copyright laws, and, apparently, wrote a request to Schnitzler to make use of his play, to which on March 11 he received the following reply:

Sehr geehrter Herr!

Ehe ich auf Ihren freundlichen Antrag des näheren eingehe, ersuche ich um Auskunft, ob Sie schon Opernlibretti oder literarische Arbeiten anderer Art verfasst, ferner ob Sie schon mit einem Komponisten über die Sache geredet haben.

Hochachtungsvoll

Arthur Schnitzler

Most Honorable Sir!

Before I dwell on your gracious request in greater detail, I wish to know whether you have written librettos for operas or other literary works prior to this, and have you already spoken about this matter to the composer.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Schnitzler.<sup>13</sup>

It was obvious that the Austrian dramaturgist not only did not know Rebikov's name, but did not even know that the latter is the composer of the opera. Rebikov also came up with the question in regards to the publication of the piano-vocal score in Russia. He asked a lawyer of his acquaintance for advice and became convinced that he did not have any rights for publication or production of the opera abroad. He was also wary of publishing the piano-vocal score in Russia, apprehending that Schnitzler may assert his claims<sup>14</sup> and sent Jurgenson the provisions for publication, which he left unsigned.<sup>15</sup>

What was it that caused such a sudden and persistent concern about the problem of copyright?

It is well known that in the 1900s there were intensive discussions and legal regulations of these questions, including those on an international scale. As Yana Alexeyevna Ferran confers to us, the imposition of the Bern Convention of 1886 about the protection of literary and art works initiated the process of "internationalization of copyright, which resulted in the beginning of the legislative settlement of the given sphere between the Russian and the German sides."<sup>16</sup> In Russia the law concerning copyright was passed only in 1911, while in Germany this happened ten years earlier. Active correspondence between German

<sup>13</sup> Arthur Schnitzler's letter to Vladimir Rebikov in Yalta. 1911, March 11. In German. Authorial typescript. RNMM. F. 68. No. 583. Here and below translated from the German by the author of the article.

<sup>14</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 2 marta 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from March 2, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson) P. I., Jurgenson (B.P.). No. 1600.

<sup>15</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 23 aprelya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from April 23, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1329.

<sup>16</sup> Ferran, Ya. A. (2020). *Fomirovanie sotsial'nogo statusa professii "kompozitor" v dorevolyutsionnoy Rossii* [The Formation of the Social Status of the Profession of a "Composer" in Pre-Revolutionary Russia]. [Unpublished Cand. Sci. dissertation]. State Institute for Art Studies, p. 74.

and Russian publishers took on since 1908, notably in many cases Jurgenson's firm was engaged for this task. It was no wonder, then, that the associates of the publishing house and, possibly, Boris Petrovich, its director at that time, who paid considerable attention to the questions of copyright in his activities, saw to the problem of the use of Schnitzler's play. Jurgenson himself sent a letter to the dramaturgist and notified Rebikov about this. He also dispelled the composer's fears about publishing the opera in Russia:

How can there be any doubts about your right to confer to us the right to publish *The Woman*? In Russia, whatever the case may be, Schnitzler does not have any rights. If our law would come to life and grant copyright privileges to foreign authors, it would only be to those works which have not been published up till now. And *The Woman* has already been published in several translations...<sup>17</sup>

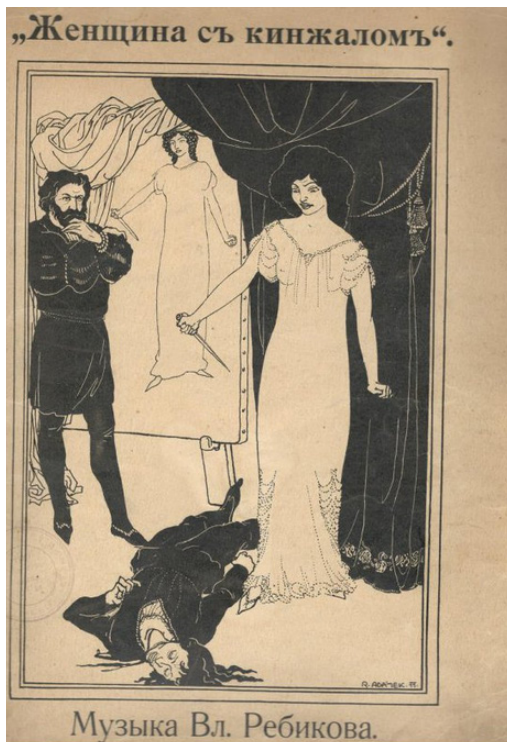


Illustration 4. V. I. Rebikov.  
*Woman with the Dagger*. Moscow;  
Leipzig: P. Jurgenson, 1912. Cover  
of the piano score with a drawing  
by R. Adamek

The letter refers to the Russian law of 1911, which in many ways already adhered to the laws of many different other countries passed on the basis of the Bern Convention. It stated the following on that subject:

Article 45. A composer may make use of a text derived in part or wholly from an already published literary work. The publication of this text is permitted only along with the musical composition or separately from it in a concert program. However, the permission to use of a literary work created particularly for the purpose of serving as the text for a musical composition is granted to the composer none otherwise than with the consent of the author of the literary work.<sup>18</sup>

On the one hand, the play *The Woman with the Dagger* was written not with the aim of serving as a basis for an opera, but as an independent work. But, on the other hand, Schnitzler's text was used not in its original form, but in an altered format, so Rebikov and Jurgenson deemed that it was indispensable to obtain Schnitzler's consent. Even before receiving an answer from the Austrian dramaturgist, the Jurgenson publishing house began actively to prepare the publication of the piano-vocal score, even the cover was created for it with a design by Czech artist Rudolf Adamek (see: *Illustration 4*).<sup>19</sup> The composer also sent Jurgenson

<sup>17</sup> Jurgenson B. P. Pis'mo k V.I. Rebikovu ot 19 aprelya 1911 goda [Letter to Vladimir Rebikov from April 19, 1911]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov V.I.). No. 437.

<sup>18</sup> Ferran, Ya. A. (2020). *omirovanie sotsial'nogo statusa professii "kompozitor" v dorevolyutsionnoy Rossii* [The Formation of the Social Status of the Profession of a "Composer" in Pre-Revolutionary Russia]. [Unpublished Cand. Sci. dissertation]. State Institute for Art Studies, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup> Rebikov V.I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 23 marta 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from March 23, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1602.

the full score: possibly for demonstrating to the Zimin Opera, where there had been discussions of a possible production going on.<sup>20</sup>

On April 26 the response from Schnitzler was finally received, and Jurgenson sent a typescript copy of it to Rebikov:

Sehr geehrter Herr,

Ich danke für Ihre freundliche Verständigung und erteile also nachträglich meine Genehmigung zu der Benutzung meines einaktigen Schauspiels "Die Frau mit dem Dolche" für die von Herrn Wladimir Rebikow verfasste gleichnamige Oper, gegen die von Ihnen vorgeschlagene Teilung der Tantiemen zwischen Herrn Rebikow und mir zu gleichen Hälften\* [Jurgenson's post-script in pencil: This is what I wrote to him on the basis of your letter].

Wenn die Oper ihren Weg nach Deutschland findet, so wird schon ein Modus ersehen den Originaltext der Musik anzupassen. Wollten Sie mir einen ordnungsmässigen Vertrag schicken, so wäre ich Ihnen verbunden. Ich nehme an, dass die Auszahlung der Tantiemen auch an mich durch Ihr Bureau geschehen kann. Wo soll die erste Aufführung stattfinden?

Dass "Die Frau mit dem Dolche" schon vor Jahren von einem russischen Komponisten zu einer Oper verarbeitet wurde, habe ich seinerzeit aus irgend einer Zeitungsnotiz entnommen. Ihre Mitteilung von Jener Aufführung in Tiflis ist die erste Nachricht, die über Jene Oper wieder an mich gelangt.

Ihren weiteren Nachrichten gerne entgegensehend  
Hochachtungsvoll  
Arthur Schnitzler

Most Honorable Sir,

I thank you for the gracious notification and grant my permission hereinafter to use my one-act play *The Woman with the Dagger* for Mr. Vladimir Rebikov's opera with the same title on the condition that I receive one half of all the percentage earned, which would be divided between Mr. Vladimir Rebikov and myself. When the opera arrives to Germany, the possibility would arise to adapt the original text to the music. I would be very much obliged if you would send me the proper contract. I presume that the royalties may also be paid to me through your office. Where is the premiere performance planned to be given?

I have learned from the newspaper article that *The Woman with the Dagger* was reworked several years ago into an opera by a Russian composer.<sup>21</sup> Your message about that performance in Tiflis was the first piece of news that has reached me, once again, about the opera. I am waiting for further news from you.

Sincerely yours,  
Arthur Schnitzler.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Jurgenson B. P. Pis'mo k V. I. Rebikovu ot 14 aprelya 1911 goda [Letter to Vladimir Rebikov from April 14, 1911]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov V. I.). No. 436.

<sup>21</sup> It is referred to the opera composed by Mikhail Ostroglazov. Unfortunately, the information about its production in Tiflis could not be confirmed.

<sup>22</sup> Jurgenson B. P. Pis'mo k V.I. Rebikovu ot 26 aprelya 1911 goda [Letter to Vladimir Rebikov from April 26, 1911]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov V.I.). No. 438. The letter is supplemented by a typescript copy of Arthur Schnitzler's letter attached to it.

It follows from the quoted letter that Schnitzler agreed to receiving half of the royalties in the form of *tantiemes*<sup>23</sup> — and this was the good news. However, there was also some bad news: he granted permission to adapt the original text to the music. This demand upset the composer to a great degree: the opera was initially set to a Russian text, i.e. to a Russian libretto compiled by himself on the basis of Schnitzler's play. Jurgenson then suggested to Rebikov to revise the vocal part to fit the original German text, and then to translate it back into Russian. He calmed Rebikov down in regards to the new law, once again, and suggested him to sign the contract.<sup>24</sup> But Rebikov was extremely disturbed by this problem. He did not want to write music to the unalterable and unabridged text, but was himself not in the condition to make the changes in the German text in a befitting way.<sup>25</sup> As a fallback option, Grigoriy Petrovich Jurgenson's suggestion was considered — to take Schnitzler's name off the title page (Rebikov rejected this out of hand) or to add the following words: “moreover, due to a lack of permission from the author of the plot, Arthur Schnitzler, I decline all responsibility for any prohibitions of either producing the play or publishing the piano-vocal score with the text that may follow from him.”<sup>26</sup> Rebikov, being quite perplexed, did not approve of this either: he did not wish to put at risk himself or the publishing house. Having devastated himself with his doubts for two weeks, he sent the unsigned conditions to Boris Petrovich. “I don't know, what possessed me to write this play,” he exclaimed heatedly.<sup>27</sup>

However, after a few days, the composer changed his mind, after all.<sup>28</sup> It may be surmised that Jurgenson had suggested the selfsame Esbeer to make a German translation of the already existent text, which, naturally, did not fully coincide with Schnitzler's proposal, but concurred in full measure Rebikov's wishes. Nonetheless, the composer proposed postponing the signing of the contract until autumn, since by that time the translation would already be prepared. Indeed, Esbeer was able to complete the translation by the autumn. On September 4, 1911, Rebikov advised Jurgenson to send it to Schnitzler — and if the latter would like it and would agree to the conditions of sharing half the profit earned from the foreign theaters, then to publish the opera.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Tantieme (French: *tantième*, a certain part) — royalties paid as a percentage from the profit made.

<sup>24</sup> Jurgenson B. P. Pis'mo k V.I. Rebikovu ot 26 aprelya 1911 goda [Letter to Vladimir Rebikov from April 26, 1911]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov V.I.). No. 438. The letter is supplemented by a typescript copy of Arthur Schnitzler's letter attached to it.

<sup>25</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 1 maya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from May 1, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1616.

<sup>26</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 3 maya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from May 3, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1330.

<sup>27</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 3 maya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from May 3, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1332.

<sup>28</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 6 maya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from May 6, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1610.

<sup>29</sup> Rebikov V. I. Pis'mo k B.P. Yurgensonu ot 4 sentyabrya 1911 goda [Letter to Boris Jurgenson from September 4, 1911] RNMM. F. 94 (Jurgenson P. I., Jurgenson B. P.). No. 1626.

Schnitzler answered Jurgenson, and the latter forwarded his answer to Rebikov.

Dr. Arthur Schnitzler  
Wien XVIII. Sternwaresstrasse 71  
Herrn P. Jurgenson, Mockau  
Sehr geehrter Herr!

Ich sende Ihnen heute den deutschen Text der "Die Frau mit dem Dolch" mit Dank zurück. Man merkt allerdings sehr stark, dass die Sache aus dem Russischen übersetzt ist, einige Stellen, die ich besonders schwach finde, habe ich mir erlaubt rot anzustreichen und würde wünschen, dass sie nach Möglichkeit korrigiert werden. Und jedenfalls müsste dem deutschen Text sowohl in den Textbüchern, als auch im Klavierauszug, eine Vorbemerkung vorausgeschickt werden, die folgendermassen zu lauten hätte: "Die Oper ist nach einer russischen Textbearbeitung des Arthur Schnitzlerischen Schauspiele 'Die Frau mit dem Dolch' komponiert worden, und der hier vorliegende deutsche Text einige wenige Stellen des Schnitzlerischen Originals wörtlich benutzt werden konnten." Ich bitte Sie diese meine Forderung auch in unsern Vertrag aufzunehmen, dessen Entwurf Sie mir freundlichst bald einsenden wollen. Auch würde es mich sehr interessieren die Musik im Klavierauszug kennen zu lernen. Ich bin sehr einverstanden damit, dass Sie bei der Auszahlung der Tantièmen, so weit Russland in Frage kommt, die Vermittlung übernehmen. In den übrigen Ländern werden Sie ja wohl Ihre Vertreter haben.

Ihren weiteren Nachrichten gerne entgegensehend  
Hochachtungsvoll  
Arthur Schnitzler

Most Honorable Sir!

Today I am sending the German text of *The Woman with the Dagger* back to you with gratitude. However, it remains very apparent that this is a translation from Russian: I took on myself the temerity of marking in red certain spots which I considered to be especially weak; I would like to have them corrected, if this be possible. And, in any case, the German text in both the libretto and in the piano-vocal score should be preceded by a comment of the following content: "The opera is set to a Russian text adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's play *The Woman with the Dagger*, and in the German text presented here only a few fragments from Schnitzler's original text have been translated precisely." I request you to include this requirement of mine into the contract the rough draft of which you graciously wished to send me in the days ahead. I would also be interested to become acquainted with the music in the piano-vocal score. I fully agree that you should take upon yourself the mediation in the payment of the royalties in connection with Russia. You will probably have your own representatives in other countries. In expectation of further news from you,

Sincerely yours,  
Arthur Schnitzler.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Jurgenson B. P. Pis'mo k V.I. Rebikovu ot 19 sentyabrya 1911 goda [Letter to Vladimir Rebikov from September 19, 1911]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov V.I.). No. 440. The letter is supplemented by a typescript copy of Arthur Schnitzler's letter from September 26, 1911 attached to it: such is the date indication in the archive. However, most likely Jurgenson sent a copy of Schnitzler's letter on September 27, as he himself reports about it to Rebikov in the corresponding letter. See: Jurgenson B. P. Pis'mo k V.I. Rebikovu ot 27 sentyabrya 1911 goda [Letter to Vladimir Rebikov from September 27, 1911]. RNMM. F. 68 (Rebikov V.I.). No. 442.

As we see, much to everyone's joy, Schnitzler agreed to Esbeer's translation, bringing in a few slight corrections to it.<sup>31</sup> The phrase which he suggested was really placed onto the title page of the piano-vocal score published in 1912. Thereby, the sought-for compromise was found, and Rebikov was not required to recompose the vocal part.

### *The Publication*

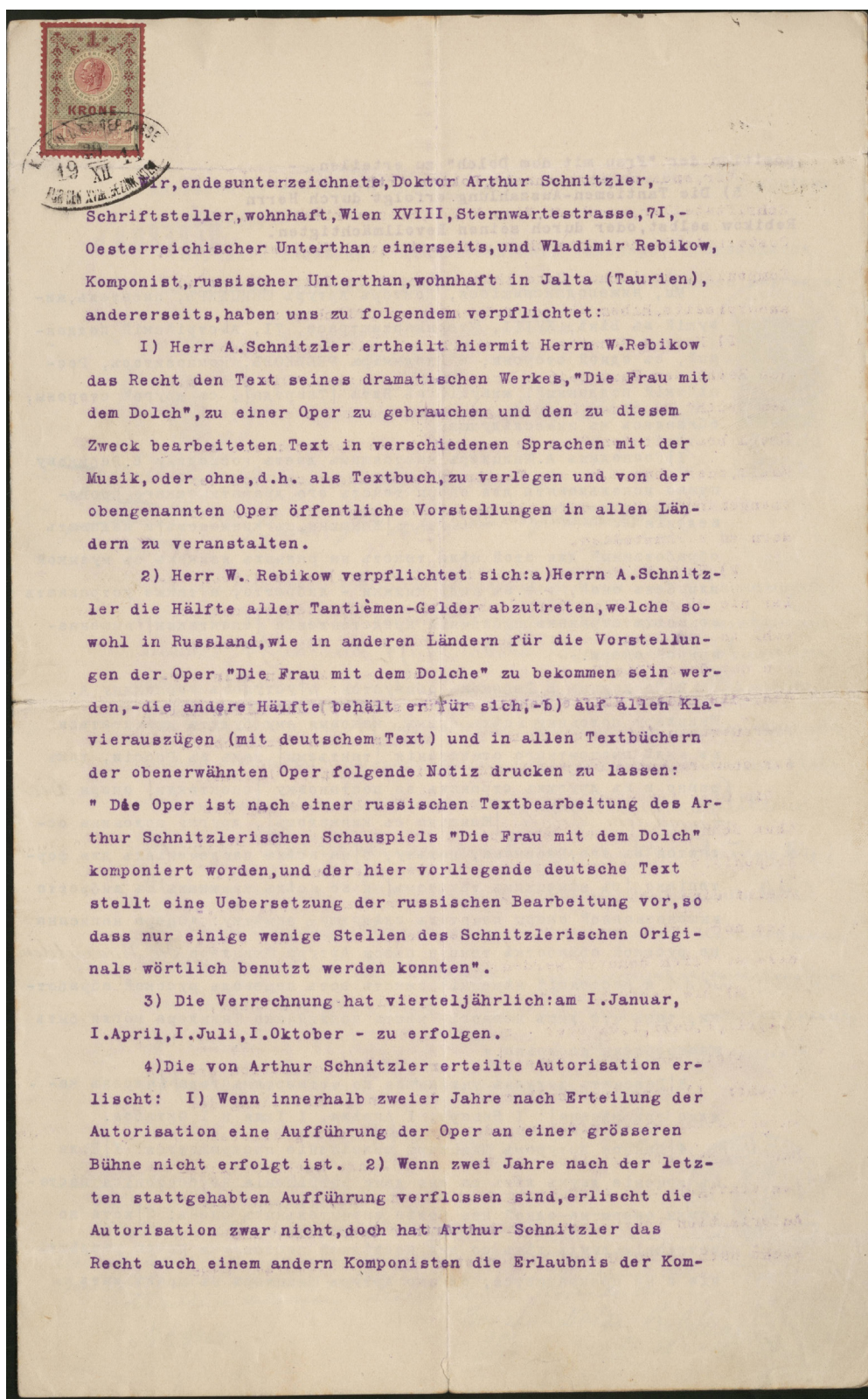
The process of the legal implementation of the contract did not pass very smoothly. The complications bore a technical character and were connected with the impossibility (or the unwillingness) of the Russian notaries to witness a German text and Schnitzler's signature — it became necessary to turn to the Russian Consulate in Vienna. But all the obstacles were disposed of, and in November 1911,<sup>32</sup> 11 months after the work on the composition was completed, the deed of Schnitzler's passing the right of the first performance of the dramatic work *The Woman with the Dagger* to Rebikov was signed (*Illustration 5*). The deed authorizing Rebikov to pass to Jurgenson the rights for publishing the opera followed an additional two months later, on January 24, 1912. The royalty comprised 1000 rubles, which for such kind of a transaction was a very notable sum of money [8]. Soon after that, the piano-vocal score was published.

In light of this entire story, the museum date indication is in need of correction — to the year 1911, indicating the time when the brochure of the libretto of *The Woman with the Dagger* was published in German.<sup>33</sup> According to the deed established between Rebikov and Schnitzler, a separate publication of the libretto was provided for the sake of promotion, apparently for spreading the information about the new opera in Germany, Austria and Bulgaria. In 1912 Rebikov and Jurgenson exchanged their opinions about this. With this same goal in mind, a mail-out of the copy of the cover of the piano-vocal score was done. Thereby, the publication of the libretto must have been dated not 1911, but 1912. Incidentally, such an expansion of the sphere of activities on the part of the Jurgenson firm related to promotion and dissemination of the books and musical scores it published eloquently testifies of the changes in the understanding of the role, the goals, and the status of musical publishing houses and the music stores affiliated with them taking place at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries (for more detail about this see [9]).

<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, we do not have the copy of the piano-vocal score with Schnitzler's marks on them, so it is not possible for us to judge of the corrections put in by him.

<sup>32</sup> The German text of the deed bears the date 11.11.1911, while Rebikov's signature was attested on November 22, 1911. See: Akt o peredache A. Shnitslerom V. I. Rebikovu prava pervogo ispolneniya dramaticheskogo proizvedeniya *Zhenshchina s kinzhalom*. 11 noyabrya 1911 goda [The Deed for Passing by Arthur Schnitzler to Vladimir Rebikov the Right of the First Performance of the Dramatic Composition *The Woman with the Dagger*. November 11, 1911]. RNMM. F. 94. No. 857.

<sup>33</sup> Die Frau mit dem Dolche (nach A. Schnitzler.). Text und Musik von Wl. Rebikow. Verlag von P. Jurgenson Leipzig–Moscau. [1911] RNMM. F. 68. No.132.



*Illustration 5. The Deed for Passing by Arthur Schnitzler to Vladimir Rebikov the Right of the First Performance of the Dramatic Composition *The Woman with the Dagger*. November 11, 1911.*

Vienna – Yalta.

RNMM. F. 94. No. 857. L. 1.



### Summation

Unfortunately, notwithstanding the efforts on the part of both the composer and the P. Jurgenson publishing house, Rebikov's *The Woman with the Dagger* has never been produced on stage — neither in Russia, nor abroad, neither during the composer's life time, nor after his death<sup>34</sup>. At the same time, in our opinion, this work, which is noteworthy and untypical for the Russian opera tradition, undoubtedly, deserves attention not only on the part of researchers, but also of performers. As for the chronology of the creation and the publication of the composition recreated on the basis of the archival documents, it will undoubtedly enrich the chronicles of both compositional activities and music publishing in our country, having written in an extraordinary page into the history of Russian music during the first decades of the 20th century.

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<sup>34</sup> There are numerous items of information about negotiations and plans, including the Zimin Theater in Moscow, the private opera theatrical enterprise in Tiflis, but we have not yet found documentary information about any of them.

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