

Konstruktorzy St. Petersburga do 1917 roku

Mühlbach. Workshop (later the factory) by Mühlbach was open in 1856 in Petersburg in the house 3 on Ofizerskaja Street (nowadays Dekabristov Street). Franz-Adolf (in Russia Fyodor Mihailovich) Mühlbach arrived to Petersburg from Revel, some time worked as the master at Wirth and Bekker. When he saved enough means, he decided to begin own business. Firstly workshop by Mühlbach produced only grand pianos. Materials was ordered from abroad and manufacturing of mechanisms, assembly, adjustment and tuning of instruments were made on a workshop. On a design production Mühlbach was in many respects similar to instruments of his teacher - J. Bekker. During the first time only three workers, besides his owner, worked here, but manufacture began gradually to extend.

Prior to the beginning of 70th years name of Mühlbach as piano maker was poorly known. His instruments involved attention of wide musical circles only on the All-Russian manufactory exhibition of 1870 which took place in Petersburg where the grand piano by Mühlbach's manufacture was exhibited.

The magazine *Muzykalniy Svet* (Musical Light) wrote about production by Mühlbach: the English Design warrants for durability and promotes that tuning kept long; a sound is light, metal (the main condition for a concert grand piano), the perfect flatness during the seven-octave keyboard; basses have a timbre of organ, the top notes of a treble sound metallicly, without that woodness that we meet in instruments of other masters; a touch is convenient and pleasant; lifting and sinking of pedals is not accompanied by a unpleasant sound that is very important now when pedals serve as means for transfer of various effects of piano playing upright-pianos he make only under the order as, in his opinion (as it is fair), instruments of this sort cannot correspond to all requirements. The prices rather inexpensive if to take in a reason durability and beauty of a sound (1870, ?).

Factory by Mühlbach produced by this moment up to 50 instruments in a year in a quite wide assortment. Concert, salon, cabinet grand pianos, and also upright-pianos, were rather inexpensive. Cases of instruments were made from nut or rosewood; the mechanism was an English design, compass of the keyboard - 7 octaves. Sale occurred directly in a building of the factory.

In 1878 son of F.M. Mühlbach, Fyodor Fyodorovich, became to be co-owner and the manager of factory. He learned piano manufacture in Leipzig. He entered a number of valuable improvements into a design of instruments making use of the experience saved up in Germany. He possesses a merit of creation of a grand piano such as "Minion". This small grand piano used huge demand due to the compactness and pleasant sounding.

In the beginning of 80th years father and son Mühlbach have bought the ground area between 5-th and 6-th Rota's of Izmailovskiy Polk (nowadays streets Krasnoarmejskie). the three-tier factory edifice was built on a site and the stone four-storied building was capitally reconstructed. In a new premise was established the steam engine by capacity of 10 horsepower.

After move to a new premise productivity of factory began to grow quickly. High acoustic qualities, stability and durability of Mühlbach's instruments promoted increase in number of orders. This growth became especially considerable from the middle of 90th years. By the end of a century the annual turnover of factory has made 200 thousand roubles. Number of workers grew also: 150 person worked at the enterprise by 1898.

In last quarter of a century instruments by Mühlbach repeatedly became the highest awards at the international exhibitions: the firm received 16 medals among which were 10 gold. In 1893 in Chicago instrument by Mühlbach awarded Grand prix, 1896 in Nizhni Novgorod - the State Emblem. A high estimation for

Mohlbach's grand pianos distances the Russian pianist A. N. Yesipova both the Polish pianists I. Paderewsky and J. Hoffmann. In 1902 factory "F. Mohlbach" passed into the hands of A. F. Nating. A. I. Nating, the expert on piano manufacture operated the manufacture. In 1905 was constructed the big five-floor building on a place of old structures from the side of 5-th Rota, and in 1912 - a building from the side of 6-th Rota. Annual production rate of the factory those years was equaled to 270 thousand roubles. The firm had warehouses of integrated products in all provincial cities of Russian empire. In the spring of 1914 the factory has produced the new advanced model of a cabinet grand piano such as Steinway, with the bent, integral sides of the case, treble bells and the mechanism of double repetition. Unfortunately, such grand pianos outstanding on quality, was possible to made only four. During the war manufacture at the factory was reduced to a minimum. By the end of December, 1916 here it was totaled only 12 workers. The enterprise was closed on December, 22, 1917.

Zimin P. History of the piano and its predecessors. Moscow, 1968.