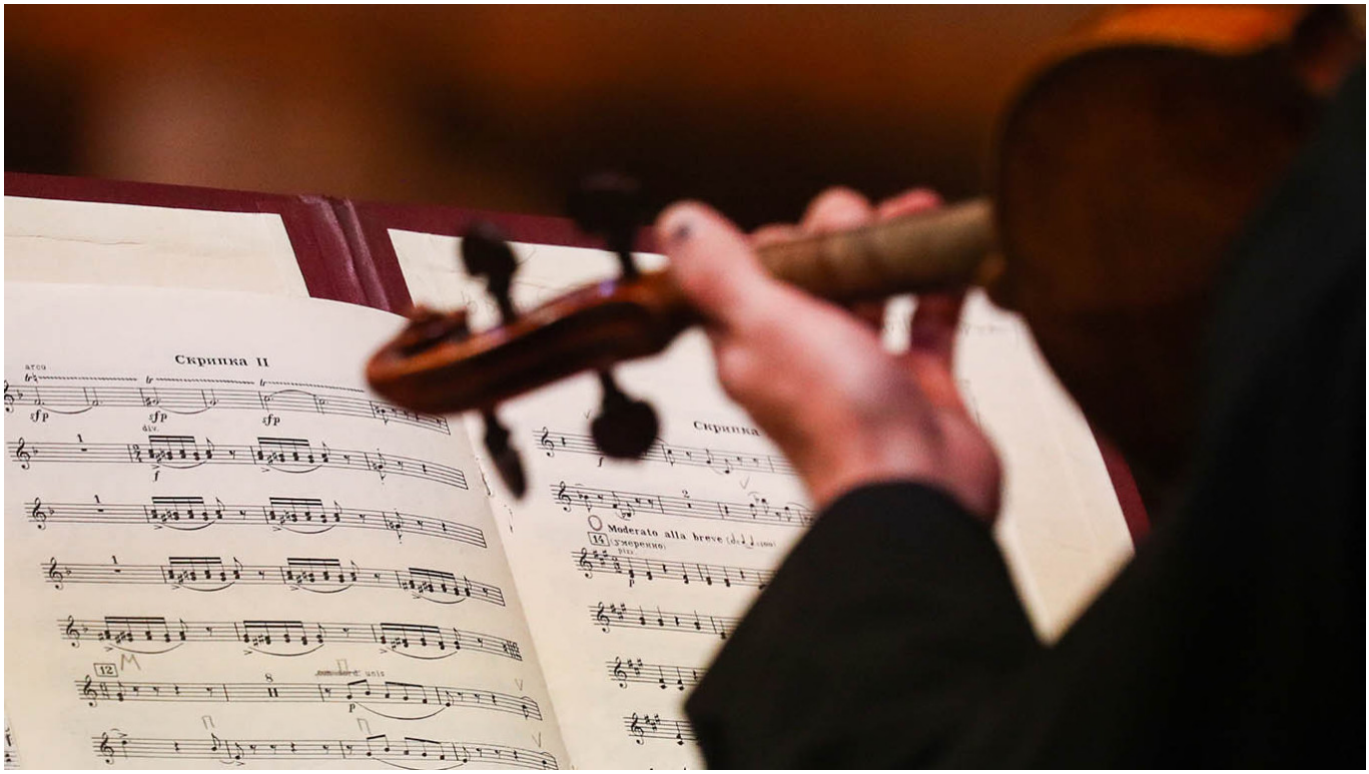
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Prosecutors Seek to Nationalize Russia's Oldest Music Publisher

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Mikhail Tereshchenko / TASS

Russia's Prosecutor General's Office has filed a lawsuit to nationalize Muzyka, the country's oldest and largest music publisher, business outlets Vedomosti and RBC reported Friday, citing sources familiar with the case.

Prosecutor General Igor Krasnov reportedly ordered an investigation into what prosecutors call a 2012 "sham auction" that allowed Muzyka's Russian-American director, Mark Zilberquit, to privatize 100% of the company's shares for 8.4 million rubles ($104,500).

Zilberquit was accused of undervaluing Muzyka's library, digitizing its sheet music, restricting access and forcing state institutions and musicians to pay inflated prices or turn to semi-legal online sources. They argued that the privatization was meant to "deprive Russia of its cultural assets" and harmed the country's "democratic" and "ethical" foundations.

Founded in 1918 after the nationalization of the Jurgenson publishing firm, Muzyka grew into a Soviet-era monopoly and remains the publisher of works by Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev and

Shostakovich, as well as textbooks and educational materials.

The case names Zilberquit, his wife and business partner Yelena Zilberquit, and P. Jurgenson Foundation head Anastasia Jurgenson. Prosecutors have reportedly asked a Moscow district court to freeze their assets, ban business activity and restrict them from leaving Russia.

Neither Muzyka nor the Prosecutor General's Office had commented on the reported lawsuit as of Friday afternoon.

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