

From the Editors

When asked which of the well-known 'isms' he liked best, Marcel Duchamps replied without hesitation: 'eroticism'. Regardless of the beauty of the wording, which we hope will rivet readers' attention, the way in which the relationship 'music, erotica and culture' is perceived represents, for every humanist, and especially for the musicologist, quite some challenge. The area of reflection described by the triangle of these three notions certainly does not lie at the centre of musicological thought, although there are many interesting examples of how this situation is slowly changing; suffice it to mention here gender studies, queer studies, certain strands of modern sociological thinking on music or the aesthetics of corporeality (somaesthetics). These difficulties are increased by the particularly subtle nature of the problem, the interpretation of which can easily slide into triviality or vulgarity, or else into unmotivated generalisation. Yet the subject is worthy of interest—not only because the history of humankind, including the history of musical culture, abounds in different aspects, and in theoretical and artistic manifestations, of the relationship 'music, erotica, culture'. Indeed, it is the Eros of paganism, the Christian *agape/caritas*, the knightly *fin' amors* and *Minne*, the Petrarchism of the Renaissance, Romantic passion, and finally the various metamorphoses of the idea of erotica in the post-modern world, to limit ourselves here to only the most important phenomena in the realm of Western culture, that created, and continue to create, the basic and elementary matter of art, literature and music. For we are dealing here with the very source of art, with its overt and covert sense. And, as we know from Pseudo-Longinus, the hidden sense—here: stamped by eroticism, in its richest manifestations—is the fundamental, essential sense of all the arts. Our task, meanwhile, is to painstakingly work our way—a way that is undoubtedly fraught with danger—towards an understanding of this sense.

The book that we present to readers here is, to a modest degree, an attempt to seek this sense. It is also a late fruit of the conference 'Music – Erotica – Culture', which the Department of Musicology of Adam Mickiewicz University, together with the Poznań section of the Polish Composers' Union and the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Po-

znań, organised on 23–24 April 2002 as part of the Contemporary Music Festival *Poznań Spring*. Musicologists and music theorists from a number of different academic centres in Poland (Katowice, Łódź, Poznań, Warsaw, Wrocław) were joined at the conference by scholars representing other humanities disciplines (philosophy, anthropology, the history of literature and theatre), which lent the conference an interdisciplinary character. Not all the papers delivered on that occasion could be included in the present publication, whilst one of the texts here was written at a later date. Although these texts address only a few of the aspects of the broad spectrum of issues linked to the relations of ‘music, erotica and culture’, and they approach these issues from wholly different perspectives, we hope that this book will, in its entirety, contribute to enriching discussion on the shape of this fundamental triad, embracing a variety of cultural, religious and political contexts.

All that remains for the editors is the pleasant duty of thanking all the authors for their labours and the deputy vice chancellor of Adam Mickiewicz University, Professor Dr hab. Marek Kręglewski, for his understanding and his kind support, without which this book could not have been published.

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