

# Preface

## Numanities and Soundscapes

The collection of articles “Sounds, Societies, Significations: Numanistic Approaches to Music” is the second edition in the new series “Numanities—Arts and Humanities in Progress” at Springer and was prepared on the basis of scholarly investigations that were presented at the International Congress of Numanities (ICoN), 2014 and 2015, Kaunas, Lithuania.

In 2014, the ICoN started a new chapter in the 25-year history of the International Semiotics Institute when the institute moved from Imatra, Finland, to Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania. Besides continuing the institute’s aims, ICoN initiated a discussion focused on the problems and opportunities currently faced by the humanities, also in their intersection with other fields of inquiry, seeking to establish a novel, interdisciplinary platform for scholars and students (hence “Numanities”: New Humanities). In 2014 and 2015, the first two iterations of the ICoN were held under the general themes “The Role of Humanities in Contemporary Society: Semiotics, Culture, Technologies” (2014) and “Creativity, Diversity, Development” (2015) focusing mainly on the interdisciplinary framework, the exploration of the complex processes of transition in research, everyday practices, policies, and educational approaches that the humanities are going through.

The texts in this collection are displayed in five parts and represent the broad themes mostly discussed at the congresses. Part I brings together the texts by Romanian, Polish, and Lithuanian musicologists focusing on the expression of compositional techniques, musical creation, and perception as sociocultural phenomena. The article by Oana Andreica discusses the compositional aspects and temporal evolution of the musical form (*accidentée*) and the preference for the archetype of the labyrinth in the oeuvre by the representative of experimental and avant-garde music, French composer, and musicologist of Romanian birth, Costin Miereanu. Ewa Czachorowska-Zygor in her article on Polish composer Adam Walaciński’s case raises questions about the creation of artistic integrity in the context of contemporary culture. Ewa Wójtowicz presents a historical overview

of the string quartet tradition in the works of Kraków composers from 1960s, when Krzysztof Penderecki initiated a new stage in the genre with his sonorous First String Quartet. Thereafter, the experiments of articulation and texture were continued, providing a diversity of the genre, involving programmatic aspects and innovative avant-garde techniques. In her article on music and associations, Ulrika Varankaitė raises the question of the influence of sophisticated technologies and new media to musical environments and discusses the relation between cultural environments and perception of audible music language involving social and musical semiotics and music psychology.

Part II investigates various ways of musical identity expression through cultural, political, and/or social perspectives, forming some kind of national approach to musical perception. Magdalena Chrenkoff discusses some aspects of the musical manifestation of Polish national identity, addressing the musical works and activity of Stanisław Moniuszko in the second half of the nineteenth century and pointing out some important features (language, subjects, and lyrics) that were used to create the national character of music compositions at that time. Rima Povilionienė analyzes the phenomena of musical events in Lithuania in the pre-independence years, 1904–17, with a focus on the so-called Lithuanian Evenings. This kind of public events had a great influence in the formation of professional Lithuanian theatre. Moreover, with its specific musical repertoire, Lithuanian Evenings manifested as a nonviolent musical form of resistance that acquired the role of fostering and promoting a sense of national identity. Kinga Kiwała discusses the new perspectives of Polish music that emerged in the 1970s with the appearance of a new generation of composers (“Stalowa Wola Generation” or “Generation 51”), who were noted for their return to certain artistic and aesthetic values lost in modernism and the avant-garde, and therefore, the period came to be described as New Romanticism in Polish music. The article by Renata Borowiecka is focused on the works by Polish composer Paweł Łukaszewski, one of the most interesting composers of contemporary sacral music. The article presents some observations on Łukaszewski’s two opuses, *Via Crucis* and *Resurrectio*, taking into account the oratorio genre tradition and the juxtaposition of the Christian culture and manifestations of the specifically Polish identity.

Part III is devoted to the analytical interpretation of musical texts from narrative, theoretical, and interdisciplinary points of view. Focusing on a musical representation of the first city in the world to be attacked by an atomic bomb, Hiroshima, Yumi Notohara’s article analyzes the Second Symphony *Hiroshima*, composed in 1949 by Finnish composer Erkki Aaltonen from the viewpoint of musical narrative. The article by Renata Borowiecka explores the manifestation of the theme of death in music and discusses Paweł Łukaszewski’s strategies used to bring closer the mysteries of faith with the help of sacral text. In the context of Zbigniew Bujarski’s string quartets, in her article, Ewa Wójtowicz discusses the phenomena of chamber music as a space of extramusical meanings and the connection of religious subjects with the sense of belonging to the Polish tradition. An interdisciplinary approach to the interpretation of musical score is presented in the article by Gerard Guerra López. The symbiosis between architecture and music is the main point for bringing

the parallels of architect Louis Kahn's form and design and Isaac Albéniz's piano composition *El Albaicín*, and discussing a constructive principle latent in both disciplines: contrast between opposites, conflict as the inner creative spark of an architectural place or a musical discourse.

Part IV is dedicated to research in the field of popular music. The article by Jacopo Tomatis outlines some key features of Italian popular music in the context of the national commercial broadcasting system, which had developed in Italy since the 1980s and was fully established by the early 1990s. Following up the discussion about the increasing display of commercial TVs, further Jacopo Conti presents the analysis of the phenomena of Sanremo festival and its songs that created a new pop direction during the 1980s. The expression of political songs using the case of a heavy metal band from USA, Manowar is the focus of the third text. In his article, Paolo Ribaldini explores how the musical activity of Manowar, including the style of their songs, lyrical topics, or stage imagery, made a political and social impact in the history and cultural perspectives of the USA.

The collection concludes with an overview of a new study in the field of musical signification, as well as corresponding to the purpose of the ICoN, to present the latest issues in the humanities. In Part V of the collection, following the contents of the textbook *Música i sentits* [Music and Senses], published in 2014, Joan Grimalt provides some analytical and theoretical aspects in this area of musicology, herewith considering the main concepts of Márta Grabócz, Robert Hatten, Raymond Monelle, Philip Tagg, and Eero Tarasti.

Looking to the future, we are truly positive about the continuation of this series of works on a wide range of musical topics, which have helped to bring out new questions and new approaches to the humanities. To conclude, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the authors and to all these people who greatly helped in preparing the collection.

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