

Foreword

“My idea of good company, Mr Elliot, is the company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation; that is what I call good company.”

“You are mistaken,” said he gently, “that is not good company; that is the best. Good company requires only birth, education, and manners [...]”

— Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

It is a privilege to contribute this Foreword to a special issue of the journal *De musica disserenda* honouring Metoda Kokole and her jubilee. This eminent Slovenian musicologist's scholarly contributions have enriched not only the national understanding of Slovenia's musical past but also the wider European discourse in musicology. Her meticulous and original research has illuminated many aspects of cultural heritage of the Slovenian lands, situating it firmly within the broader European context.

Metoda Kokole's wide-ranging intellectual interests were evident from an early age. Her innate curiosity drew her towards music, leading her to play both the piano and, later, the harpsichord. Equally captivated by classical philology and mythology, she displayed an exceptional aptitude for languages, ultimately choosing to study French language and literature, a programme she successfully completed. Simultaneously, she pursued studies in musicology, which at that time was the sole academic discipline in Slovenia offering a profound exploration of art music from earlier periods — an area that resonated deeply with her burgeoning scholarly inclinations.

Her dedication to musicology grew, culminating in the completion of a Master's degree and subsequently a PhD. Her doctoral dissertation was recognized with the Silver Sign

of the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), an accolade awarded for the best doctoral dissertations in the humanities. Her academic experience has been further enriched by numerous scholarships abroad, including study periods in London, Paris and Oxford, which have informed and enhanced her scholarly pursuits.

Shortly after completing her undergraduate studies, she began her career at the Institute of Musicology ZRC SAZU. At a time when she was the first woman at the Institute to obtain a PhD, Metoda Kokole faced challenges, yet her commitment, determination and dynamism enabled her to rise to these demands. Her perseverance and leadership skills eventually led to her appointment as the Institute's head in 2004, a position she used to introduce lasting innovations. Her initiatives include new funding models for the Institute, co-founding the Slovenian Music Heritage series, Slovenia's first online repository of critical editions of sources and monographs on the national musical heritage and serving as its General Editor. She also played a central role in establishing the academic journal *De musica disserenda* and the Harmonia concertans – Early Music at New Square concert series, where she is a member of the organising committee.

Metoda Kokole's contributions to ZRC SAZU, where she has served for over three decades, including nearly twenty years as Head of the Institute of Musicology, are invaluable. Under her leadership, the national research programme Researches in the History of Music in Slovenia flourishes, as do the series Monumenta artis musicae Sloveniae and its Supplementa, which present critical editions of early musical works belonging to the treasures of the Slovenian cultural heritage. These initiatives have played a crucial role in sharing the rich musical history of Slovenia with both national and international audiences. In addition, she is or has been a member or leader of numerous groups or associations of experts (e.g., for numerous years she has been the Chair of the National Committee of Slovenia for RILM, New York, the President of the Coordination Committee of the Historical Seminar ZRC SAZU and the President of the Slovenian Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies, currently serving as a Vice-President of the Society), as well as a leader of many Slovenian musicological research projects. She has also participated in European projects as the leader of the Slovenian partner group in the HERA European research project Music Migrations in the Early Modern Age: The Meeting of the European East, West and South (MusMig) and is currently a member of the Management Committee and a co-leader of one of the working groups in the COST project A New Ecosystem of Early Music Studies (EarlyMuse).

Metoda Kokole's scholarship has been instrumental in expanding our knowledge of early music. While her principal research focus lies in early Baroque music, especially

within Central Europe, her academic interests extend far beyond. Her extensive bibliography reflects her knowledge of and proficiency in different languages, wide-ranging interests and engagement with topics spanning from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, including studies on Italian opera, the dissemination of Italian music into the former Inner Austrian lands, musical migrations, musical iconography etc. Her integration of Slovenian musical heritage into the Central European context, combined with her meticulous archival research, exemplifies the rigour and breadth of her scholarship. Without her contributions our understanding of the musical legacy associated with the Slovenian lands and its surrounding regions would be significantly diminished.

Her work spans a wide array of formats, including scientific articles, chapters in academic books, presentations at international conferences, and entries in encyclopaedias and lexicons. Among her many significant contributions, her critical editions of early musical works from Slovenia's cultural heritage are particularly noteworthy. Likewise, her monograph on Isaac Posch — which is available in both Slovenian and English — represents an important achievement in the study of early Baroque music. This work, which explores the unique synthesis of European stylistic elements in Posch's music, has provided scholars and enthusiasts alike with fresh insights into this fascinating repertoire. Importantly, she has made her research accessible also to broader audiences through popular articles and exhibitions, bridging the gap between the academic and public spheres.

Her editorial contributions are equally noteworthy. She has overseen the publication of numerous critical editions in the *Monumenta artis musicae Sloveniae* series and edited multiple issues of *De musica disserenda*. Under her stewardship, these publications have achieved international recognition for their scholarly rigour and editorial excellence. Those fortunate enough to observe or collaborate with her on these projects have benefited greatly from her dedication, exacting standards and meticulous attention to detail, acquiring expertise that is otherwise hard to come by.

In addition to her publications, Metoda Kokole has made enduring contributions to the promotion and dissemination of musicological knowledge. As the *spiritus agens* behind numerous events — symposia, exhibitions, workshops and concerts — she has significantly enhanced the visibility of early music in Slovenia and beyond. The *Harmonia concertans* series, held in the Atrium of ZRC SAZU, exemplifies her commitment to sharing the beauty and significance of early music with as wide an audience as possible. Her work reflects not only her scholarly passion but also her genuine belief in the power of music to inspire and connect people.

Her influence extends beyond research to the pedagogical work at several Slovenian universities and especially mentorship, where she has guided PhD students, myself included, with patience, precision and generosity. Her ability to combine exacting academic standards with genuine care for her students' progress exemplifies her unique qualities as an academic and mentor. Personally, I am deeply grateful for the encouragement, insights and opportunities she provided during my doctoral studies, as well as for her unwavering support in navigating the challenges of research and beyond.

Metoda Kokole's contributions to the field are complemented by her warm and enthusiastic approach, which has earned her the admiration and affection of colleagues around the world. The contributors to this issue, though limited in number by space constraints, reflect the breadth of her professional network and the high regard in which her work is held.

On this joyous occasion of her jubilee, we — a company of well-meaning people who have something to say in the written form of articles — extend our heartfelt congratulations to Metoda Kokole. Her scholarly achievements in the field of musicology, her tireless dedication and her personal vigour inspire great respect among her colleagues. May this publication, compiled with the respect and affection of her colleagues, serve as good company for her: a source of both intellectual engagement and pleasant reading befitting her illustrious career and vibrant personality. We wish her continued success, inspiration and fulfilment, both in her research and beyond.

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editor