

Editorial

The issue of the freedom or independence of art has been one of the key questions in all histories of arts – visual, literary and musical – and has likewise been topical in philosophical discourse. In contemporary musicology – which has been enriched with new aspects of the interdisciplinary study of music and musical life, particularly in the past decade – the view has become prevalent that a work of music cannot be fully independent, since, being an anthropological phenomenon, it is directed towards expression and communication. Functional and autonomous, as separate aspects for investigation, offer two possible approaches to a work of music that complement each other. These are the determination of their inter-relationship or the developmental dynamism of this relationship, and the location of the relationship between the possible, the desirable and the necessary within a given cultural milieu.

The way in which a certain composition was understood and what its meaning was – or to put this differently: how it functioned as a sign and assumed a certain meaning – depended on the context of time and geographical area: that is, on the culture and its tradition, on the social, political, cultural and historical background. The dynamism of the inter-relationship between the functional and the autonomous in music shows to what degree and in what form the music of a given time and space proved capable of transcending its historical, political, social and quotidian environment. The presentation of the criteria that determined the “functional value” of music with regard to the historical time and space, that is to say historically acceptable criteria, renders possible the recognition of historical significance and, on the other hand, also of the artistic/aesthetic potential of individual musical works.

Even though its theoretical foundations were laid a good thirty years ago, discussion focused on the above-mentioned aspects of music remains a central research interest for several musicologists. Current views on the problems at issue are aired in papers written by musicologists of different schools and orientations, who come from England, Ireland, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Croatia and Slovenia, and are distinguished scholars in the fields of historical and systematic musicology, as well as in other papers contributed by two native scholars in the fields of philosophy and history. These papers will be published in two successive numbers of the journal *De musica disserenda*. All of them were originally read at the international musicological scientific conference entitled *Functional and autonomous in music: patterns and meanings*, which was held by the Institute of Musicology at the Scientific research centre of the Slovenian academy of sciences and arts in Ljubljana on 19 and 20 October 2006. The present number of the journal contains the general aesthetically-philosophically and historically oriented portion that relates to music and musical life in various historical periods in the wider European context, while the next number (III/1) will bring an article on the influence of folk music on art music as well as contributions on the reception of opera in the nineteenth century and others dealing with music and musical life in Slovenia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Nataša Cigoj Krstulović and Metoda Kokole