FOREWORD

Nations and nationalism have been a main research topic for decades, but the last few years have witnessed noticeable growth in these studies. The perspective generally accepted in the humanities – that demands for political independence of the nations in nineteenth-century Central Europe were premised on a sense of cultural identity – has also been taken up by contemporary musicological thought. Essays by philosopher and social anthropologist Ernest Gellner on "invented nations" in *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), or by historian and political scientist Benedict Anderson on "imagined communities" in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), supported the idea that cultural constructs influenced the political interpretation of states. The concepts of "people" and "nation", which penetrated Central Europe from the end of the eighteenth century, are often interchangeable. The term "people" hides an ambiguous ethnic but unambiguous social meaning related to the use of a common language and sometimes to profession of the same religious faith. The concept of "nation", instead, possesses an ethic value, a quest for alterity and produces the effect of exclusion of the "other".

The origin of the concept of nation in nineteenth-century Central Europe, more specifically the historical paradigm and the popular musical canon, was also the central research task of the Study Group "Music and Nation" at the international congress "Nationalisms and Irredentisms of *Mitteleuropa*", which was held in November 2012 in Gorizia. It was organized by the Institute for Cultural Encounters of *Mitteleuropa* (*Istituto per gli Incontri Culturali Mitteleuropei*), with the helpful and welcome support of its head, Fulvio Salimbeni, and secretary Marco Plesnicar. The participants focused on political, linguistic, ethnic and cultural paradigms which, after Herder's discovery of *Volkslied*, enabled the recognition of certain popular or church songs in the process of creating a historical canon representative of ethnic and territorial identity. Some of the contributions from that conference are now presented in this volume of *De musica disserenda*.

The introductory study examines the national identity of Slavic Central Europe by means of a new approach to various cultural paradigms, namely the historical events out of which the popular musical canon flourished at the end of eighteenth-century Poland, and in nineteenth-century Bohemia, Slovenia and Croatia (Ivano Cavallini: "Cultural Paradigm and Popular Canon: The Discourse on Nation in Nineteenth-Century Music of

Slavic *Mitteleuropa*”). The next articles are case studies and refer to various stages of the identification process: from exoticism to self-consciousness and from self-consciousness to the appropriation of the national style in music. The authors do not take into consideration the quality of music, but rather its social functions as identified by Polish, Czech, Croatian and Slovene patriots from the end of eighteenth-century to the nineteenth century (Alina Żórawska-Witkowska: “Popolo, nazione e patria nelle prime opere polacche (1778–1794)”; Tomáš Slavický: “Musica, identità e mitografie nazionali dei cechi nel diciannovesimo secolo”; Stanislav Tuksar: “The Invention of Musical Illyrism”; Vjera Katalinić: “How to Create a National Opera? The Lisinski Case. Imaginary Memoirist Sketches with an Epilogue”; Natka Badurina: “Croatian Historical Myth, the South-Slavic Brotherhood and the Death of Opera”; Nataša Cigoj Krstulović: “Language, Literature and Music in Slovenian Cultural and Political Aspirations before 1914”). The final article presents the immense influence of James Macpherson’s *Ossian* poems on the formation of German Romanticism, the extent to which *Bardendichtung* and an awareness of Scottish and Irish melodies existed independently in the German musical imagination (Harry White: “Macpherson, Ossian and the Bardic Ideal: Some Irish Reflections on a German Phenomenon”).

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