

Music on the *Periphery of* *Aesthetics*

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Since the end of the nineteenth century, musicology has primarily been interested in music intended for well-educated philharmonic audiences, which consciously and phenomenologically internalise the works they listen to. In such a research framework, there was no room for the study of music not as a subject of aesthetic reflection, but in the function of acoustic background for various everyday activities. Radical developments in sound recording and reproduction technology over the last hundred years have helped establish a new sound culture, dominated by an acousmatic perception of sound as detached from its original source and context. Music has become present virtually everywhere, acquiring a completely new role in the society and organising it in new ways. This tendency concerns both individuals shaping their personal sound environments and programmed elements of a given space that are imposed on recipients. Due to the passive nature of this sort of perception, located on the periphery of recipients' auditory attention, it can become an extremely effective tool for social control and even manipulation.

The present issue of *Musicology Today* is dedicated to forms of musical communication whose aim is to perform various non-aesthetic (i.e. economic, political, social and/or therapeutic) functions. Most of the texts are the fruit of the International Interdisciplinary Conference *Music on the Periphery of Aesthetics. Between Politics, Business, and Wellbeing* (6–7 June 2024), organised by the Institute of Musicology (Faculty of Culture and Art Studies, University of Warsaw) in partnership with the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies (University of Warsaw). The conference programme (available at: <http://imuz.uw.edu.pl/dzialalnosc-naukowa/konferencje/international-interdisciplinary-conference-music-on-the-periphery-of-aesthetics-warsaw-poland-6-7-june-2024/>) covered three main thematic areas: a) music and politics (i.e. music and war, music in political campaigns, protest songs, and music in totalitarian regimes), b) music and business (i.e. music in sonic branding and audiomarketing, artificial intelligence and music), and c) music and wellbeing (i.e. music in/as professional therapy, acoustic ecology, and wellbeing). Special attention was paid to the analysis and interpretation of mechanisms involved in intentional actions aimed at influencing and controlling recipients' responses and behaviour, with particular emphasis on mass culture and the background music phenomenon.

A major group of articles included in this issue deals with the subject of 'music and politics' as viewed from contemporary and historical perspectives, including the current war in Ukraine (Iryna Tukova). Papers on political problems, written by Katarzyna Naliwajek, Michal Ščepán, Mariusz Gradowski, Gvantsa Ghvinjilia, Michał Piekarski, Baiba Jaunslaviete, Charles Onomudo Aluede and Agatha Ngozi Abdullahi, are complemented by texts analysing various aspects of 'music and wellbeing'. The authors of those latter (Joanna Surma, Sylwia Makomaska, Eka Chabashvili, Maya Virsaladze, Alexander Chokhonelidze, and Joni Asitashvili) present their topics in the context of contemporary challenges.

We hope that the present issue of *Musicology Today* will provoke further discussion on the various topics outlined in the texts and initiate in-depth international research conducted within joint interdisciplinary projects.

Sylwia Makomaska
Guest Editor