

## Editorial

AS A RULE THE ISSUE of a new journal is greeted with understandable perplexity by the academic community, for a number of reasons. We were conscious of this fact when we decided to launch *Ad Parnassum*. But we found the necessary support and encouragement to pursue the ambitious programme not only in the disinterested, imperative and profound passion for research, but also in certain specific (yet substantial) musicological issues that we aim to tackle as best we can. It was also a very pleasant surprise to register that the project received such extensive, genuine and authoritative backing from scholars throughout the world. To them I offer my most sincere thanks, both personally and on behalf of the editorial staff. In particular we wish to dedicate a special mention to Eugene K. Wolf, emeritus professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, who died on 12 December. With the enthusiasm and generosity that always distinguished him, he was among the first to support *Ad Parnassum* and even agreed to join the Advisory Board. This first issue, therefore, includes an obituary to Eugene K. Wolf by Albert Dunning.

But what do we feel are the principal grounds for a journal on the instrumental music of the 18th and 19th centuries? Above all, I must make it very clear that these chronological boundaries in no way reflect a desire to subject the processes of history to surgical sectioning. Quite the reverse. *Ad Parnassum* takes issue precisely with the historiographical claim that the flow of time — which is necessarily anti-academic — can somehow be enclosed in artificial, watertight compartments *ad usum academicum*. Exactly as it takes issue with certain mythopoietic readings that are all too readily embraced by a musicology in search of certainties. These, we may say, are matters of irrenounceable methodological principle. More particularly, the central issue that will engage the attention of *Ad Parnassum* concerns the formal and chronological divisions of a forbiddingly rigidified tradition: the age of thoroughbass, the gallant style, Viennese classicism... comforting categories of incomprehensibility; a fossilized depository of didactic knowledge with its devastating, hierarchical truths; the feeble fruit of an ill-concealed teleological vision of art.

But apart from the tensions of the methodological battle, there is also a contingent reason for our choice. Owing to the mysterious processes of fashion, the musicological establishment is imposing a questionable order of priorities on research, by making every effort to favour the 18th-19th-century studies that concentrate on opera instead of instrumental music. *Ad Parnassum* aims to do what it can to curb this domineering tendency, which it regards as an impoverishing option from every point of view. The risk, in the medium term, is a paralysis of the debate on a historical-artistic scenario that is evidently felt to be sufficiently understood, but which instead most surely needs further deciphering, as Federico Celestini shows here in his 'Copernican' proposal of discussion, *Das blicklose Auge der klassischen Kunst*. This time, however, it should be done without the never-innocent certainty that one has counted all the stars in the sky.

Roberto De Caro