



The Muse as Eros

Music, Erotic Fantasy and Male Creativity in the Romantic and Modern Imagination

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November 2006

312 pages

978-0-7546-3570-3

Includes 68 music examples

234 x 156 mm

Hardback

£60.00

The Muse has long been figured as a divine or erotically alluring consort to the virile male artist, who may inspire him or lead him to the edge of madness. This book explores the changing cultural expressions of the relationship between the male artist with a beloved, imagined or desired Muse, to offer new and penetrating perspectives on musical representations and transformations of creative masculine subjectivity, and important aspects of the shift from the styles and aesthetics of Romantic Idealism to Modernist Anxiety in music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Each of the chapters begins with explorations into male artists' relationships with their Muse, and moves to analysis and interpretation which uncovers cultural constructions of masculine artistic inspiration and production, and their association with creatively inspiring and erotically charged relationships with a Muse. New insights are offered into the musical meaning and cultural significance of selected works by Rossini, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, Wagner, Sibelius, Mahler, Bartók, Scriabin, Szymanowski, Debussy, Berg, Poulenc and Weill.

Contents

Introduction; The Muse as immaculate beloved: Stendhal's 'crystallization' process and listening to Rossini and Beethoven; Schumann, Chopin, the fan of Eros, and the beloved's kiss; The Muse as temptress and redemptress: Sibelius's early symphonic narratives; Mahler's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies: Idyllic fantasies, the sublime, formal mastery, and processes of mourning and reparation; 'She dies': Trauma and erotic elegy in Bartók's pre-First World War music; Names, chords and the 'pale princess' in Debussy's musical language of love; Poulenc's erotics of humour, melancholy, abjection and redemption; Names, chords and Lulu's portrait as Muse; Fetishistic 'Inventions on a Chord': Szymanowski, Schumann, Brahms, Wagner, Weill and Poulenc; Bibliography; Index.

About the Author

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www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754635703

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