

INCIDENTAL MUSIC

a novel by Lydia Perović

Set in present-day Toronto, *Incidental Music* is a novel about three very different women. Petra is new to the city and eager to establish roots, but she keeps losing jobs, and finds it impossible to make friends or adopt a cause. Martha is prosperous, intellectual and compassionate, a happily married mother of grown children, who just might have built everything in her life on an impressive amount of self-deception. A retired opera singer, Romola left Hungary after the failed 1956 uprising, having played part in it as a member of a group of performing artists who called themselves Sektor 7. She is trying to cope with the haunting memories of an old love and her reasons for leaving the country, but her excursions to the past usually end mired in her long-ago operatic roles. The lives of the women overlap, but there is never any unison. Petra, Martha and Romola are like the three operatic voices—soprano, mezzo and alto—that sometimes pair up their melodic lines but never sing in complete accord.

Incidental Music visits the troubled and fascinating period of the Hungarian Revolution, within its larger context of the Communist post-war years in Eastern Europe, explores Toronto's heritage and urban development, takes a sober outsider view of Canadian society and politics, and last, but not least, revels in the beauty of the opera—all through the tumultuous and passionate love affairs of its main characters.

"Engaging on both intellectual and emotional levels, *Incidental Music* is a heady mix of politics, opera and tempestuous love. Perović interweaves the lives of her three main characters—Petra, Martha and Romola—seamlessly, and presents us with a Toronto that feels so unabashedly vibrant that it almost becomes a character in itself. This is a powerful debut novel—urban, smart and sexy."

—EVA TIHANYI, author of *Flying Under Water: Poems New and Selected, In the Key of Red and Truth and Other Fictions*

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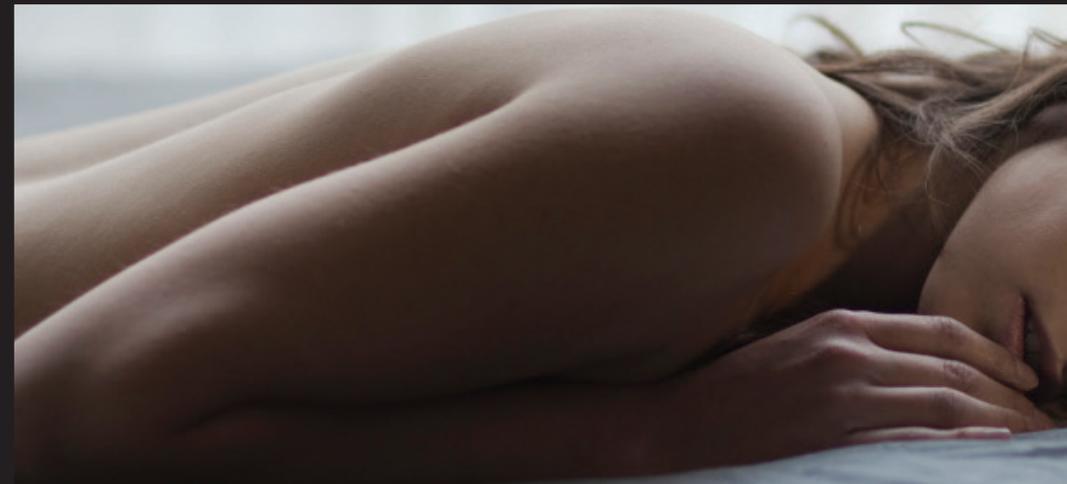

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