

Maud Karpeles: Her Contribution to Dance Research and to the Council

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Introduction

The seventieth anniversary of the ICTM provided an opportunity for scholars in the ICTM's Study Group on Ethnochoreology to revisit the role played by folk music and dance researcher Maud Karpeles in the establishment of the IFMC, later the ICTM. An anniversary roundtable was coordinated by ethnochoreologist Catherine Foley and included presentations by ethnochoreologists from Europe, the United States, and Australia (Buckland, Dunin, Mellish, Mollenhauer, Opetcheska-Tatarchevska, Schofield, Smith, and Stavělová) (figure 1). The roundtable was presented at the ICTM's 44th World Conference at the University of Limerick on Saturday, 15 July 2017. This chapter is based on the roundtable presentations of these ethnochoreologists. The authors argue that Karpeles's role in the establishment of the IFMC was significant, and without Karpeles and her vision, the IFMC may not have come into existence. It was the founding by Karpeles of the International Folk Dance Council during the International Dance Festival in London in 1935—with Karpeles as secretary—which laid the foundation for the post-Second World War establishment of the IFMC in 1947, with again Karpeles as secretary. Using archival and bibliographic research, the authors examine Karpeles's work and research on dance in specific parts of the world leading up to the founding of the International Folk Dance Council and the International Folk Music Council, and her continued efforts advancing the work of the IFMC up to the time of her death in 1976. In recognition of her contribution, Karpeles served as honorary president of the IFMC from 1963 until her death in 1976. A brief biographical background to Maud Karpeles will first be presented.

Maud Karpeles, 1885–1912

Maud Pauline Karpeles was born into a privileged middle-class lifestyle in London in 1885. Both parents, although atheist, were of German Jewish inheritance, her father a tea merchant, and her mother, the daughter of a rich banking family, whence their wealth principally derived. In common with girls of her background and class, Karpeles was home tutored before later attending a single-sex boarding school which offered limited academic instruction. She left the school, fluent in German and an accomplished pianist, to further her musical expertise by studying in Berlin. Here, while hosted by her father's socially influential relations, she encountered artistic circles, including visits to family receptions from eminent musicians, theatre designer Gordon Craig, and radical dancer Isadora Duncan. Karpeles realized, however, that her own musical aptitude was insufficient to pursue a career as a classical concert pianist (Pakenham 2011).

Following her return to London in 1906, Karpeles brought together her left-wing sentiments (such as, becoming a member of the Fabian Society), her philanthropic interests, and a love of the performing arts in volunteer work with disadvantaged children. In tandem with the social work of the late nineteenth century, the University Settlement Movement, the role of the arts in ameliorating the lives of disabled children was gaining a high profile, especially through the Guild of Play, a club for urban children. It included a repertoire of songs, games, and dances that sought to renew “Merrie England” through the country's youngest citizens (Buckland 2014). Karpeles persuaded her younger sister, Helen, to join her as a volunteer teacher at the Guild of Play in Canning Town in the east end of London.

As a result of theatrical interests, both sisters regularly attended the Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Festival, where in 1909 they watched a folk-song and dance competition. The panel of adjudicators included



Figure 1. Members of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology who presented at the Maud Karpeles Anniversary Roundtable at the ICTM's 44th World Conference at the University of Limerick, Ireland on 15 July 2017: (front row) Stephanie Smith, Theresa Jill Buckland, Catherine E. Foley, Daniela Stavělová, Elsie Ivancich Dunin, and Liz Mellish; (back row) Derek Schofield, Ivona Opetcheska-Tatarchevska, and Jeanette Mollenhauer (photo courtesy of Derek Schofield).

pioneers of the Edwardian English Folk Revival, Cecil Sharp and Mary Neal. Later that year, as part of his goal to realize the recent inclusion of English folk dancing into the national educational syllabus, Sharp instituted London-based classes in morris dancing, which both sisters joined. Initially Karpeles learned the dances primarily in order to augment the repertoire at the Guild of Play, but soon discovered a talent for dancing. So, she began a life-long pivotal role in performing, researching, and promoting folk music, dance, and song. Karpeles became a founding member, together with Sharp and others, of the English Folk Dance Society in 1911 (Schofield 1986).

A kinora film reel of 1912, photographs, and written testimony from witnesses of her dancing all underline her grace, flow, energy, musicality, and lightness (Heaney 1983; see figure 2). Although no doubt instructed in dance forms as a young girl of her social class, Karpeles's dancing experience up to the point when she encountered English folk dancing appears minimal. The impact of her morris dancing, however, clearly resulted in a visceral response for some onlookers: composer Ralph Vaughan Williams recollected that "Maud's dancing was so beautiful that it made him cry" (Pakenham 2011:23).

Maud Karpeles, Cecil Sharp, and English dance in the United States, 1915–1918

Maud Karpeles spent time in the United States between 1915 and 1918 working with Cecil Sharp, who was there to make a living with lectures and teaching engagements; the money from which could be sent home to his family during the First World War.

In March 1915, Sharp founded the English Folk Dance Society American Branch, establishing an organization to promote English dance in the United States. Maud Karpeles first came to the United States in June 1915, to assist Sharp with teaching in the first summer schools of the new organization, 1915–1917. Their teaching was a major impetus in the revival of English dance in the United States in the twentieth century.

THE "RUNNING SET"

Sharp and Karpeles made collecting trips in the southern Appalachians during 1916–1918. Their Appalachian diary entries illuminate various challenges and accomplishments in their travels.

One of their most important discoveries was the so-called "Running Set" at Pine Mountain Settlement School in Kentucky. On 31 August 1917, Karpeles writes in her diary: "After supper went to Miss de Long's



Figure 2. Maud Karpeles dancing a solo morris jig. Photograph taken from the kinora film reel in 1912 (photo courtesy of the English Folk Dance and Song Society).

house. Saw some set running—most interesting. Has great possibilities” (Karpeles 1917). Karpeles used a correct local name for the dance: set running. Sharp writes in his diary for 31 August:

In the evening we go to Miss de Longs and see a Running Set. This must be carefully noted some day. It is a fine dance and may serve to throw light on some of the older seventeenth and eighteenth cent[ury] dances. (Sharp 1917)

They watched the dancing in dim light and were not able to note the figures. They went on to Hindman Settlement School, where Karpeles writes on 18 September:

After supper we went to a dance which Mr. Bradley had arranged for us. Had to walk 1½ miles in dark along very muddy road. Mr. Sharp tumbled into mud hole and lost shoe. Dance was an interesting experience but actual dancing was no good. The girls did not know the dance and took little interest. The men were too fiddled with whisky to be much good, and there was no one to call. In addition, this small room was filled with onlookers. I danced and had to pull my partner around, as his head was swimming. (Karpeles 1917)

On 2 October in Hyden, Karpeles notes:

Mr. Lewis escorted us to a house in the town, where they had arranged a “running set” for us. Just 4 couples. Not good dancers, but good enough for us to be able to take down the figures. (Karpeles 1917)

Sharp writes on 8 October in Hyden:

This is a great relief to me to know that the dance is at last on paper. This dance is as valuable a piece of work as anything that I have done in the mountains. I may get some more figures to add but I do not think there is anything else to learn about it. (Sharp 1917)

In December 1917, Sharp described the “Running Set” that they saw at Pine Mountain as follows:

It was danced one evening after dark on the porch of one of the largest houses of the Pine Mountain School with only one dim lantern to light up the scene. But the moon streamed fitfully in lighting up the mountain peaks in the background and, casting its mysterious light over the proceedings, seemed to exaggerate the wildness and the break-neck speed of the dancers as they whirled through the mazes of the dance. There was no music, only the stamping and clapping of the onlookers, but when one of the emotional crises of the dance was reached ... the air seemed literally to pulsate with the rhythm of the “patters” and the tramp of the dancers’ feet, while, over and above it all, penetrating through the din, floated the even, falsetto tones of the Caller, calmly and unexcitedly reciting his directions. (Sharp and Karpeles 1918 [1985]:14–15)

The description of the dance was published in *The Country Dance Book, Part V*. They concluded:

we are led to infer that the Running Set represents a stage in the development of the Country-dance earlier than that of the dances in *The English Dancing Master*—at any rate in the form in which they are there recorded. (ibid:10)

Their work provides documentation of living folk song and dance traditions in the early part of the twentieth century in the United States, the significance of which cannot be overestimated. However, their collecting had its blind spots. Sharp was looking for survivals of English song, and he assumed that most of the people in the mountains were of English, Lowland Scots, and Ulster Scots origin. He was not interested in collecting and noting everything he came across from people that did not fit this ethnic profile.

Phil Jamison has analysed Sharp's interpretation of the running set in his 2015 book on Appalachian dance. Jamison concludes:

The dances that Cecil Sharp called the "Running Set" were not, as he believed, an ancient, unadulterated form of English country dance but represented a more recent American hybrid that developed from diverse roots in the American South during the nineteenth century. While some of the dance figures may have come from the English country dances, these American dances clearly show a greater debt to the Scots-Irish, French, Native American, and African-American dances. (Jamison 2015:74)

The importance and value of Sharp's and Karpeles's early twentieth century song and dance fieldwork in America remains. Karpeles's role in this work has been historically underestimated, and prepared her for her future fieldwork and collecting activities. As Malcolm Taylor suggests,

there is no doubt from reading her Appalachian diaries and the corresponding parts of her autobiography that her time in America with Cecil Sharp was the most important passage of her life, and that Sharp was her inspiration. What does not stand out from the pages is that Maud's own presence was a key ingredient in the endeavour. (Taylor 2011:viii)

Maud Karpeles was indeed a key ingredient, and she continued to extend her music and dance research and activities to other parts of the world.

Maud Karpeles, 1924–1935

Cecil Sharp (1859–1924) had shown little interest in folk dance from continental Europe, and during his lifetime, there were no visits by European dance groups to England. Perhaps because of her family background, Maud Karpeles was more open to European culture.

The person who alerted Karpeles to European folk dances was Violet Alford (D. N. Kennedy 1971; Armstrong 1973). In 1923 Alford made comparisons between the English morris, sword, and country dances, and dances from Spain, France, and the Basque country (Alford 1923). She had tried to interest Sharp in the Basque dances, but later said that Sharp's response made her feel like an "upstart" (Alford 1956:125). Sharp's lack

of interest is perhaps not surprising because his central thesis was that these English dances were distinctly *English*.

Alford wrote about her visits to the French Basque country (Alford 1925, 1926), leading to a group of English dancers, including Karpeles, visiting a festival in Bayonne in April 1927. Sharp's successor as director of the English Folk Dance Society (EFDS) and, from 1932, the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), Douglas Kennedy, and his wife Helen (Maud's sister) wrote of that trip, "as Violet Alford had long foretold, the English Morris men found their Pyrenean counter-parts" (H. Kennedy and D. N. Kennedy 1961:4). Basque dancers were invited to London later that year, and English dancers visited San Sebastian in 1929, with a reciprocal visit to London in 1930, performing at the January festival of the EFDS in London's Albert Hall.

Before 1935, European dance groups had visited Britain in 1927 (the Netherlands and French Basques), 1929 (Denmark), 1930 (Spanish Basques), 1931 (France), 1932 (Spain), 1933 (Norway), and 1934 (Portugal). And English dancers performed in Europe in 1924 (the Netherlands and Belgium), 1926 (the Netherlands), 1927 (French Basques), 1928 (Czechoslovakia and Austria), 1929 (Spanish Basques), 1931 (Denmark), and 1932 and 1933 (the Netherlands) (Pakenham 2011). Karpeles would have taken part in most, if not all of these visits to Europe. Kennedy may have been the director of the EFDS, but Karpeles was a senior and respected person in the society who had had the closest connection with Sharp, and who was now collecting and publishing in her own right (Karpeles 1928, 1930, 1931, 1933; Schofield 2015).

Karpeles and researchers outside of England

In her autobiography, Karpeles states: "It was at Bayonne that I first met Dr. František Pospíšil, the famous Czech expert on the Sword Dance, who had the greatest admiration for Cecil Sharp's work" (Karpeles [1976]:136). The following year, in September 1928, Pospíšil was invited as a late entry to the 50th Jubilee Congress of the Folk-Lore Society in London, where he showed his films. Karpeles attended the congress, representing the English Folk Dance Society, and was therefore exposed to Korčula Island's sword dances through Pospíšil's films. In the same year, the Executive Board of the English Folk Dance Society invited Pospíšil as one of the first (of only three) Foreign Corresponding Members. He continued to be listed until 1935, by which time there were six additional foreign correspondents. This was an

early stage of involving academic-level researchers from outside of England for comparative dance studies.

A further opportunity arose which gave Karpeles her first position on an international body, introducing her to dance and music scholars and enthusiasts from many parts of the world, especially Europe. The League of Nations was set up to maintain world peace, and in 1922 established a commission for intellectual co-operation. From this came a desire by European ethnologists and folklorists to create a platform for the comparative study of folk culture and methodology. The League of Nations was reluctant to give its support because it feared that the study of folklore would lead to political claims, especially regarding disputed territories (Rogan 2004:290). Nevertheless, an international congress was held in Prague in 1928, which established the Commission internationale des arts populaires (CIAP). The programme in Prague was split into sections including museums, costumes, music and song, and dance and drama. The event attracted scholars, artists, conservators, promoters, and government officials. Amongst Britain's representatives were Karpeles and Kennedy, and when national commissions were established, Karpeles had the enthusiasm and reputation to become the UK secretary. The work of CIAP was severely hampered by internal argument, distrust of CIAP by the League of Nations, and mounting tension within Europe. CIAP re-emerged after the Second World War as part of UNESCO, and eventually became SIEF, International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (Rogan 2004).

The 1935 International Festival in London

In 1933, the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), prompted by Karpeles, proposed an international folk dance festival in London. Her plan identified three objectives which, almost word-for-word, were published in the festival handbook:

- (1) To promote understanding and friendship between nations through the common interest of folk-dance;
- (2) To demonstrate the value of folk-dance in the social life of today;
- (3) To further the comparative study of folk-dances. (EFDSS 1935:3)

Karpeles had considerable success in mobilizing support amongst the political, social, and artistic elite in Britain. Invitations to dance groups were issued by the British Foreign Office, through national committees of CIAP, foreign corresponding members of EFDSS, and through personal contacts. The emphasis in the invitations was for "traditional dancers" as opposed to reviv-

alists, and there was a preference for groups that would show dances of a "ritual or ceremonial character," rather than social dances (EFDSS 1933).

The festival lasted a week in July 1935, and included government receptions, concerts in the open air and in the Albert Hall, and a conference at which leading dance scholars from across Europe and beyond presented papers and debated (Howes 1935).

Dance groups came from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Soviet Union, and the UK. Kennedy directed the performances, Alford was conference secretary, and Karpeles was the overall festival secretary. One commentator wrote of her "extraordinary combination of business ability, untiring zeal and organizing genius" (Batchelor 1935:245).

Karpeles had found her niche. She was increasingly, however, coming into conflict with Kennedy, her brother-in-law, over the direction of the folk-dance revival. He wanted to move the revival on to reflect changing social conditions, whereas she wanted to remain true to Sharp's legacy. The European folk dancers and scholars had visited London and been reminded of Sharp's achievements. She had found the context for her continuing devotion to his work—in an international setting.

There were further visits of European dance groups to London, and in January 1939, seven European groups attended the annual Royal Albert Hall Festival—from Yugoslavia, Romania, Lithuania, France, the Netherlands, Norway, and Denmark. Meanwhile, Karpeles visited the International Folklore Congress in Paris in August 1937.

In the face of inactivity from CIAP, but with a continuing desire by European ethnologists and folklorists for co-operation, new organizations were established. Folk dance was no exception, and in the final session of the 1935 festival, an International Folk Dance Council was formed, with Karpeles as secretary. It was under this organization that an International Folk Dance Festival in Stockholm, Sweden, was arranged for August 1939. In spite of the international tension in the run-up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the festival went ahead, with a group of English dancers and a presentation from Karpeles called "The Functions of the International Folk Dance Council with special reference to the Compilation of a Record of Folk Dance Material" (International Folk Dance Council 1939). Karpeles's aspirations, however, had to wait until after the Second World War.

The 1935 international festival in London and the Romanian *călușari*

One of the invitations to participate in the 1935 festival in London was addressed to the Romanian Institute of Folklore in Bucharest. An exchange of letters followed between Karpeles, Romanian diplomats based in London, and the Romanian academics, Romulus Vuia and Constantin Brăiloiu, regarding the selection of the group who would participate in the festival (Pașcalău 1988:492). The invitation requested that the dancers selected for the festival should be, if possible, villagers, and certainly not professionals (Brauner 1979:19). According to Harry Brauner, an ethnomusicologist based at the Bucharest Institute of Folklore, Brăiloiu and Vuia immediately thought of the *călușari* dancers and invited three possible groups to Bucharest where a formal selection took place (ibid.:44).¹

Meanwhile Karpeles sent her friend, Philip Thornton, a musicologist and multi-linguist, to Bucharest to take part in the selection process. Brauner, whom Thornton had previously met earlier in 1935 while he was researching music in Romania with Bartók (Nalder 1993:5), mentions that Thornton had already travelled to other countries to check potential groups for the festival (Brauner 1979:44), thus revealing Karpeles's involvement in the quality control and selection of the groups to be invited.

The selection of the *călușari* groups took place in the courtyard of the Society of Composers in central Bucharest. Brăiloiu, Brauner, and Thornton were present. Brauner reports that there was fierce competition between the three groups as “the young men were fighting ... for this unthinkable opportunity; a journey never dreamed of over land and sea” (ibid.). Finally, the group of young men from the village of Pădureți, Argeș County, was selected to travel to London.

The story of their journey has become a legend both in Romania and in the UK, especially their consternation during their first rehearsal when they realized that they did not have the fresh garlic (and wormwood) that they attach to their ritual flag, as they believed these were essential to give them their supernatural powers. As Karpeles recounts in her autobiography, a “messenger was sent post-haste to Soho and returned with the garlic before the rehearsal had finished” (Karpeles [1976]:191), thus avoiding a major catastrophe.

Karpeles recounts that she considered the Romanian *călușari* dance to be the most memorable performance of the entire festival as the “vast audiences were thrilled and transported by the sense of mystery and magic which the dance evoked” (ibid.:189). She expressed her appreciation of the *călușari* in a letter to the press director for the Romanian ministry, dated 2 August 1935, saying that their “dance and music ... is a perfect work of art that I will never forget, of which I am privileged to have experienced” (Pașcalău 1988:492). She also lamented, later, that a film was not made of their performance (Pakenham 2011:201).

A busman's holiday in Yugoslavia

Although an invitation was sent to Yugoslavia for a dance group to participate in the 1935 International Folk Dance Festival in London, none was able to handle the travel cost and time commitment. However, in the following year, Maud Karpeles travelled to Yugoslavia and wrote about her trip, “A Busman's Holiday in Yugoslavia,” published in the *English Folk Dance Society News* (Karpeles 1936). Three photographs of sword-dance groups were published in her article: Rusalija group from Miravci village in southern Macedonia, and Moreška and Kumpanjija groups on Korčula Island in Croatia.

Karpeles had continued her own sword-dance documentation in England, but her experience with Cecil Sharp did not go beyond English-based song and dance materials in England and in the United States. It was through František Pospíšil, whom she had met in 1927 and whose films about Korčula Island's sword dances he had shown at the 1928 Jubilee Congress in London, that in large part led her to observe sword dancing in Yugoslavia.

There is known correspondence from sisters Ljubica and Danica Janković, dance researchers in Belgrade, with the English Folk Dance and Song Society by 1934, by which time they had published their first volume of *Narodne igre* (Folk dances). The personal meeting of the sisters with Karpeles, her nephew John Kennedy, and Philip Thornton took place in Belgrade in April 1936, at the beginning of the “busman's holiday.” The sisters had helped Karpeles, Kennedy, and Thornton with an Easter holiday itinerary into Macedonia. On this trip, Karpeles visited Rashtak village (in Skopje's Black Mountain region, northern Macedonia) and Miravci village (near Gevgelija, a town in southern Macedonia).

For the “busman's holiday,” Karpeles arranged to observe both sword-dance groups that Pospíšil had filmed on Korčula Island in 1924. After Pospíšil, who filmed sword dances for comparative studies, Karpeles

1 The *călușari* are a troop of male dancers, always an uneven number, bound together by an oath, who perform a healing ritual by dancing in villages in southern Romania, around Whitsuntide. The *călușari* continue to practise their ritual each Whitsuntide in certain villages in southern Romania, and locals still hold a strong belief in the ability of the magical powers of the *călușari* to drive away evil spirits, although nowadays the *călușari* is often better known as a spectacular performance dance.

was the first to write in English about Korčula sword dances from personal observation. She writes comparatively in her 1936 article that the *kumpanija*² in the town of Blato is

not only very spectacular, but of great ethnographic interest, for it has figures and movements in common with several of our English dances and, as far as I can remember them, with the Sword Dances of Fenestrelle (Italy) and Santander (Spain). (Karpeles 1936:410)

In 2017, additional correspondence and local data were uncovered in Blato's Kumpanjija Group archive of materials that were related to both Pospíšil (1922 and 1924) and Karpeles (1936) in their visits to Korčula Island. There is an interesting reference to Karpeles in a handwritten journal:

Karpeles the whole time wrote about what she was watching, as well as notes of the bagpiper, while the rest of the English took photographs.³ (Viteško Udruženje Kumpanjija–Blato 1936, Blato Kumpanjija's journal of meetings; translation by Dunin)

In 1936, Karpeles applies her fieldwork techniques with note-taking and music notation, along with follow-up correspondence with the leaders of sword-dance groups in Miravci and on Korčula Island in Croatia. The sensibility and interest of Maud Karpeles in the late 1920s about non-English sword dances, leads her to come to the Balkans with enthusiasm and to visit deliberately chosen places in Macedonia and Croatia, in which sword dances were danced in their social contexts. In her article, there are detailed descriptions of the costumes and dance patterns of the Rusalija, and of “ad infinitum” dancing of the male chain dances in the mountain village of Rashtak, concluding that she was seeing the finest dancing in an exceptionally festive and hospitable atmosphere.

On Maud Karpeles's invitation, the Rusalians from Miravci village were guests of the International Folk Festival and the Imperial Institute in London in 1939. Members of the Imperial Institute expressed the organizers' and performers' enthusiasm and the London audience's enchantment and fascination with the Rusalian dancers, who refused the money reward (in sterling), which was offered to them after their performance at the Imperial Institute. Continuing a correspondence, Danica Janković sent her manuscript “Rusalje from Southern Serbia (Roussalia)” to Karpeles, who arranged

its publication in 1939 in *English Dance and Song* (Janković 1939b).

In the course of the six years following Karpeles's visit to Macedonia, and two years following Rusalija's performance in London, there were still newspaper articles published in Macedonia with reference to Maud Karpeles. For example, in the daily newspaper *Vardar* (1936), there is a fieldwork report from the Janković sisters in Macedonia entitled: “The touristic-economic significance of the old traditional dances.” A subheading, “Foreigners are delighted with our folk games,” speaks to Karpeles's great interest in promoting the traditional dances of Macedonia. Karpeles had recorded a film of some of these dances in the field and from a statement of the Janković sisters in *Vardar*, we learn that Karpeles intended to revisit the Balkans and to present her field materials (film and visual) at scientific meetings. She also intended inviting the Janković sisters to lecture on “old fashioned” dances in England (*Vardar* 1936). Karpeles's visit to the Balkans in 1936 illustrated her developing interest and new understandings of dance beyond England, which brought an international dance perspective into her work. In addition, the visit demonstrated her interest in expanding and unifying an international network of collaborators and scholars in the field of folk dance, which would find an academic and performative home with the founding of the International Folk Music Council in 1947.

Karpeles and the formation of the International Folk Music Council

Maud Karpeles accumulated much experience in observing and documenting choreo-musical traditions amongst disparate cultural groups. Thus, she was well-equipped to play a pivotal role in the formation of an international organization for dance and music research. In 1946, Karpeles attended a meeting of UNESCO in the hope that they would initiate the formation of such an organization, but in the absence of any action on their part, she realized the inauguration of a scholarly association was a task to which she would need to direct attention. She had met numerous like-minded scholars, and had maintained communication with them over many years. So, in 1947, she sent invitations to “those who had attended the 1935 conference and to other folk music experts with whom I was in touch, while through the medium of the Foreign Office governments were invited to appoint delegates to attend” (Karpeles [1976]:215–216). Thus, the International Conference on Folk Song and Folk Dance was organized in London, 22–27 September 1947. The conference was funded for the most part by profits from the 1935 International Folk Dance Festival held in London.

2 The dance is variously spelled *kumpanija* or *kumpanjija* in the sources cited here, so these variations are followed when discussing the relevant articles.

3 Her drum and bagpipe music notation for Blato's *kumpanija* sword dance [see Karpeles's drum and bagpipe music notation in the Online Gallery] is located in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library's Maud Karpeles Collection in London, and until 2017, aside from her busman's article (Karpeles 1936), it was the only known tangible evidence of her visit to Blato.

Attendees at the meeting drafted a constitution for the fledgling organization, which was to be known as the International Folk Music Council (IFMC),⁴ and the aims of the Council were

- (1) To assist in the preservation, dissemination and practice of the folk music of all countries.
- (2) To further the comparative study of folk music.
- (3) To promote understanding and friendship between nations through the common interest of folk music (Karpeles 1949:4).

The English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams—who had been appointed president of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 1932—was elected president (1947–1958) of the newly founded organization, and Maud Karpeles was elected secretary (1947–1963). And, although “Dance” had been in the earlier title of the pre-World War II organization, it was replaced by “Music” in the title of the new organization, possibly reflecting the majority interest of those present and their assumption that dance could be encompassed under music.

Karpeles’s advocacy for dance within the IFMC

Karpeles, however, never forgot her interest in dance, and was determined that choreological research should not be neglected by the organization. For many years, Karpeles had been, in her letters, engaging in discussions with fellow dance scholars about a variety of salient topics, such as dance notation (Karpeles to Juana Cristoloveanu, pers. comm., 1958; ICTM Archive MS 10017, series 4, folder 120) and the scope of dance genres and events which should be included in the Council’s research agenda (Karpeles to Gertrude Kurath, pers. comm., 1960; ICTM Archive MS 10017, series 4, folder 123). One scholar who shared Karpeles’s passion for dance studies, and with whom she corresponded frequently about formalizing the study of dance within the Council, was the German academic, Felix Hoerburger. In a letter to Hoerburger, she expressed her belief that dance research

is an aspect of our work which should be dealt with ... I feel it is not much good having a general discussion on a subject by people who have not made a special study of it. It might be the best plan to have one or two papers on the subject and then appoint a small commission to make further study. However, I shall be glad to have your views on this. (Karpeles to Hoerburger,

pers. comm., 1957; ICTM Archive MS 10017, series 4, folder 89)⁵

Twelfth annual conference of the IFMC in Sinaia (1959)

In 1959, the twelfth annual conference of the IFMC took place in Romania, and Karpeles, as secretary general, was in charge of the organization. This was the first IFMC conference attended by delegates from all socialist states. Karpeles was delighted with the large turnout, of over 100 delegates from twenty-six countries, including for the first time representatives from states of the USSR, Mongolia, and Vietnam (Pop 1959:89), and the discussions were speeded up by simultaneous translation into five languages (Pakenham 2011:239). According to Pakenham, Karpeles “was in her element,” she never forgot the Sinaia conference (*ibid.*). The venue for the conference was the former royal palace in Sinaia, situated in the picturesque foothills of the Carpathian Mountains where, as Karpeles comments, they “were given luxurious hospitality. I had a marvellous suite with a marble-tiled bathroom attached” (Karpeles [1976]:246). In her report after the conference, she praised the organization by the Romanian hosts, and stressed that this had been “one of the most successful events held under the Council’s aegis” (United States Embassy (Romania) 1971:84).

Karpeles and the Dance Commission

By 1960, the Executive Board had validated Karpeles’s desire, writing to Council members that scholars whose focus was on dance rather than music should also be allowed to have an equally active role in organizational activities. In that same year, the General Assembly of the IFMC agreed to establish a Dance Commission (*BIFMC* 18, Sep 1960:11). As was her custom, Karpeles (*figure 3*) was instrumental in the recruitment of a group of international scholars who would be able to guide the Commission in both academic and administrative fields, and the ICTM Archive contains correspondence sent by Karpeles to researchers such as Willard Rhodes (USA), Douglas Kennedy (UK), Donal O’Sullivan (Ireland), Otto Andersson (Finland), Andreas Reischeck (Austria), Roger Pinon (Belgium), Salvador de Barandiaran (Spain), Suiho Matsumiya (Japan), and many others. However, her chief confidante and collaborator continued to be Felix Hoerburger, and the two

⁴ The change of name from International Folk Music Council (IFMC) to International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) did not occur until after Karpeles’s death.

⁵ See chapter “ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology” by Dunin and Foley in this volume for a history of the study group.



Figure 3. Maud Karpeles at her desk (photo courtesy of the English Folk Dance and Song Society).

continued to discuss, by letter, various procedural matters relating to the Commission.

The first official meeting of the Dance Commission was held in July 1962 in Czechoslovakia, and one problem became evident immediately: the commission had been established as a discrete entity of carefully selected scholars who had been invited to participate, thus effectively closing the door to discussion for anyone outside of the group. Once more, Karpeles took swift action, writing to the Executive Board in November 1962 to suggest that “it would be better to discontinue the Commission as a closed body and instead to hold at our next Conference a meeting for the discussion of practical matters which will be open to all interested members” (Karpeles pers. comm. to the Executive Board 1962; ICTM Archive MS 10017, series 4, folder 71). She also wrote to Felix Hoerburger expressing her concern that some nations had proposed overly large numbers of delegates to the commission, while other nations had not responded to her request for representatives. She argued that open meetings would be likely to ameliorate this situation and allow for a more equitable arrangement to be provided to all interested scholars (Dance Commission minutes, 5 and 7 Aug 1963; ICTM Archive MS 10017, series 4, folder 71). In 1964, the IFMC’s Executive Board encouraged a wider

IFMC membership, but the endorsement for this open membership took several years and meetings to implement. In fact, it was not until 1979 that the meetings became truly open, demonstrated by invitations to the last working meeting held in East Germany of the otherwise closed Terminology Group and the next IFMC conference held in Norway in 1979, with an expanded number of Scandinavian and international dance participants (see the chapter “ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology” by Dunin and Foley in this volume).

Karpeles as an IFMC ambassador in Czechoslovakia

Maud Karpeles played a significant diplomatic role between East and West while serving the IFMC. This was made manifest in the Council’s preparation for the fifteenth IFMC conference in Gottwaldow, Czechoslovakia, in 1962, with Karpeles as secretary. Karpeles was also a member of the programme committee for the conference. Gottwaldow was formerly, and now again, called Zlín, where Tomáš Baťa had established a shoemaking company that had achieved a worldwide reputation. This 1962 conference was important for the cooperation or integration of Czech

ethnochoreologists into the international dance research scene during the period of the Cold War, when cooperation with the capitalist world was extremely limited due to the political restrictions of the Communist state and its ideological pressure. It was the period of the Iron Curtain between Eastern and Western countries, and organizing such a conference was not an easy task due to the political situation.

The city of Gottwaldov had been transformed into a state-owned enterprise after the Communist coup in 1948, and while the city was renamed after the first Communist president, Klement Gottwald, it became a showcase for the achievements of the new socialist society. It is something of a paradox that an international conference composed, among others, of participants from behind the Iron Curtain could be held at this place. The hosting of the fifteenth IFMC conference in Gottwaldov was therefore something unusual in socialist Czechoslovakia, where the totalitarian regime reduced contact with the capitalist world to a minimum, and those rare visitors from capitalist countries were frequently under close supervision by the secret police. This may be the reason why—considering that the best place to hide is in plain sight—the city of Gottwaldov was the right place to show the proclaimed internationalism that was part of the official policy of the day. The second reason was undoubtedly the fact that folklore at that time was valued as a political and ideological tool, and this is why the conference dealing with this topic was accepted and promoted by the establishment (Bonuš 1951; Kopecký 1951; Jírový 2005).

The importance of the IFMC Conference in 1962 for the local regime was mentioned in several journals and daily newspapers (*ČTK Agency* 1962a, 1962b, 1962c, 1962d; *Věčerní Praha* 1962a, 1962b). Attention was mainly drawn to the huge number of participants: 150 from twenty-three countries, in addition to 100 participants from Czechoslovakia, who were folklorists, teachers, and culture workers. Karpeles played a significant role in the preparatory diplomacy required for the fifteenth IFMC conference. The event made it possible for ethnochoreologists to make and maintain contacts in the folk music and dance fields of research between East and West. The press mostly reported about Soviet and American participants, as it was convenient for the ideology of the day. Those conference presentations that dealt with dance folklore were mainly appreciated for their practical demonstrations. There was also an exhibition of books and music records about traditional culture organized by the local museum in Gottwaldov. However, no reference is made in any of these local sources to the IFMC secretary and member of the programme committee for the conference, Maud Karpeles.

Being a member of the programme committee, Karpeles did not present a paper at the conference, but played an important role in the preparatory “diplomacy” prior to the conference. In 1960, Karpeles, in her capacity as secretary of the IFMC, had written a letter to Vladimír Karbusický about the date of the conference. She informed him about the members of the Executive Board and appreciated the nomination of Karel Vetterl as chair of the national committee.

Karbusický was a member of the Committee for Folklore Studies in Music that was active during the preparation of the IFMC conference in 1962. The committee had been founded in 1959 and consisted of researchers from the Institute of Ethnography in Prague and Brno, and from other organizations: Czechoslovak Radio, Culture House of Prague, Institute for Folk Culture in Strážnice, and Institute for Musicology in Bratislava. Members of the committee were active as local organizers for the IFMC conference.

Conference participants were offered a wide range of social events. Of special note was the visit to the International Folklore Festival in Strážnice, presenting folk culture in the framework of socialist propaganda (Krist and Pavlicová 2015).

An important occurrence for the further development of international cooperation between the politically divided East and West in the field of ethnomusicology, as well as ethnochoreology, was the foundation of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology, where the Eastern bloc was already represented by a considerable number of researchers. During its meeting in Gottwaldov in 1962, the IFMC Executive Board, with Karpeles as secretary, initiated the foundation of IFMC study groups, national committees, and the Dance Committee. As dance folklore served political propaganda goals, and the folklore revival movement in former Czechoslovakia enjoyed official state support (Stavělová 2017; Pavlicová and Uhlíková 2018), the fact that folk dance became the subject of international research was in line with official ideology and positively judged by the authorities. Today, we have to take into consideration that this ambivalent meaning of traditional music and dance culture (“folklore”) was extremely important for the further cooperation of Czech researchers with IFMC. One of the advantages offered by the conference in Gottwaldov in 1962 was the possibility for many Eastern researchers to attend the meeting; furthermore, it was for many of them an important starting point for cooperation within an international context.

The Czech National Committee of the IFMC, composed of members of the former Committee for Folklore Studies in Music and local organizers of the 1962 IFMC conference, had its first meeting in 1963. For ethnochoreologists Hannah Laudova and Eva Kröschlova,

their membership in the Dance Committee meant that they could become permanent members of IFMC and, later, ICTM.

Indeed, it was this crucial starting point that later enabled Laudova and Kröschlova's participation in the activities of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology despite political lack of freedom and repression after 1968. The conference in Gottwaldov, dealing with music and dance folklore, was considered by the political leadership of Czechoslovakia to be an acceptable way of developing further research cooperation in this area with the West during the Cold War in the second half of the twentieth century. The continuity of research opened the door for the next generation of ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists from the former Czechoslovakia, enabling them to join the ICTM organization immediately after the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

The 1962 Festival of the Balkan and Adriatic Countries

The 1962 Festival of the Balkan and Adriatic Countries was the first regional festival to be held under the auspices of the IFMC. It was held in Bucharest between 27 July and 4 August 1962, only a few weeks after the IFMC conference in Czechoslovakia, and was accompanied by an informal conference. It was organized by the IFMC Romanian National Committee in liaison with Karpeles who was involved from the early planning stages of this festival. Correspondence held in the ICTM Archive between Karpeles and the Romanian organizers reveals the use of her network of IFMC contacts that she had built up over the preceding years in selection of groups (Karpeles and Virgil Ioanid, pers. comm., 1962; ICTM Archive MS 10017, series 4, folder 120). She also travelled to Bucharest to participate together with other IFMC colleagues (Pakenham 2011:224), although she had previously said in her letters that she was not sure if her health would allow her to go (letter from Karpeles to Virgil Ioanid, 12 Feb 1962; ICTM Archive MS 10017, series 4, folder 120).

Karpeles recounts that

there were some splendid performances from many regions of Romania and neighbouring countries. I was particularly glad to see once again the Kumpanija dance from Korcula, Yugoslavia which had lost none of its dramatic quality since I saw it 26 years ago in its native heath. (Karpeles [1976]:254)

She reported in the next IFMC *Bulletin* that “the Rumanian National Committee ... has every reason to be proud of its achievement and the parent body has every reason to be grateful to the Rumanian Committee for the splendid way in which it has furthered the objects of the Council” (*BIFMC* 22, Oct 1962:28–29).

Karpeles's legacy

In August 1964, the IFMC conference in Hungary featured a meeting of the invited members of the Folk Dance Committee. However, as the IFMC Executive Board advocated for the scheduling of open access sessions dedicated to dance research at future IFMC conferences (*BIFMC* 23, April 1963: 3), there was also a conference session about dance for any interested scholars (*BIFMC* 26, Oct 1964:13), a pattern that eventually became normative at Council conferences. As discussed previously, it was not, however, until 1979, that the meetings became truly open. Since 1964, the group known then as the Folk Dance Committee has undergone numerous revisions in respect to both name and scope, eventually becoming what is, today, known as the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology.⁶

Karpeles continued to actively engage with the IFMC throughout the rest of her life, attending a Board meeting in Warsaw in August 1976, only two months before her death (*BIFMC* 51, Nov 1977:17). Her contribution to the Council as a whole (see the chapter by Mollenhauer in this volume), and to the furthering of dance research within the activities of the Council, is without equal, yet for Maud Karpeles, it was a commitment which was “the source of so much pleasure” in her life (Karpeles [1976]:257).

Conclusion

Maud Karpeles played a pivotal role in establishing the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) in 1947, having previously assisted in founding the International Folk Dance Council (IFDC) in London in 1935 at the International Folk Dance Festival. The objectives of the IFDC were carried over into the later establishment of the IFMC, and one could argue that the roots of the IFMC were established in 1935 with Karpeles as its visionary. Karpeles continued with her involvement in all aspects of the Council's work for the rest of her life. She was, for example, the first *Bulletin* editor and the first *Journal* editor. She was a strong advocate of the ethos of the Council and, as was illustrated in this chapter, she endeavoured to develop the work of the Council in countries right across Europe, East and West, and further afield. This included her involvement in organizing meetings including conferences and writing numerous letters to individuals, organizations, and government officials; many of her letters are located in the ICTM Archive in Canberra, Australia.

⁶ The evolution of the study group's name and scope may be found in the IFMC *Bulletins*, 1964–1977, and in the chapter on the history of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology (Dunin and Foley) in this volume.

Karpeles was honoured by the IFMC by being appointed honorary president of the Council from 1963–1976 (the year she died). She has also been honoured by the Council by the establishment of the Maud Karpeles Fund, a fund for ICTM members for activities that support the mission and aims of the Council.⁷ Upon her death, Klaus Wachsmann (1977:11) said she was the “soul and the spirit” of the Council from its beginning, and Willard Rhodes noted that Karpeles

supplied the imagination, vision, mental and physical energy and force to launch successfully the IFMC and guide its growth and development. She was a gifted organizer and administrator and enjoyed the collaboration and respect of an international coterie of distinguished scholars and musicians. But it was her humanity and philosophy that marked the character and work of the Council. (Rhodes 1977:284)

Using archival and bibliographic research, the scholars of this chapter conclude that Maud Karpeles’s role in the establishment and development of the IFDC in 1935 and the IFMC in 1947 was a hugely significant one. Her dance/music research interests along with international correspondence and an impressive network of connections led to the post–Second World War founding of the IFMC. Karpeles pressed for the inclusion of dance research within the work of the Council, and today it is visibly present, particularly with the ICTM’s Study Group on Ethnochoreology and other ICTM study groups that have both a music and dance remit, for example, the Study Groups on Music and Dance of Oceania and Music and Dance in Latin America and the Caribbean. Dance research is, therefore, strongly represented in the work of the Council today and, considering the importance of the establishment of the International Folk Dance Council in 1935 for the founding of the International Folk Music Council in 1947, it might be timely to re-introduce the word “Dance” back into the name of the Council. This would acknowledge the inspiration and historical roots of the Council and Maud Karpeles’s life-long commitment to the Council and to music and dance research and scholarship.

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