

Symposia

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Aside from the Council's world conferences, the scholarly events that involve the most ICTM members must certainly be study-group symposia.

Ever since the establishment of the first study groups, members have been gathering in meetings to discuss their common interests. While early meetings often focussed more on discussion, rather than formal presentations, symposia today are overwhelmingly concerned with the presentation of prepared papers and discussion about them, although invariably mixed with business meetings, performances, excursions, publication displays, etc. The formal presentations often end up published in an edited volume of proceedings or long abstracts.

Symposia today may take place quite regularly, often biennially in years during which there are no world con-

ferences (i.e., even-numbered years), or very irregularly, particularly if members are in scattered, distant locations.

The term "symposium" is now the standardized way of referring to such a scholarly gathering for a study group, but before the issuance of the "Terminology for Study Groups and National/Regional Committees" in 2011, there were a variety of names used, probably the most frequent being simply "meeting."

Originally held during world conferences, such events eventually became separate from them, and were commonly reported on in the *Bulletin*. Because of their importance to the work of the Council, the Secretariat in recent years sought ways to financially support participation in symposia. After trialling such assistance in 2018, a Study Group Allowance was approved by the



Figure 1. Participants of the international online symposium "Music – religion – spirituality," hosted by the University of Ljubljana, ZRC SAZU, and other partners, which enabled recognition of the most recent study group so far on Sacred and Spiritual Sounds and Practices. Ljubljana and online, August 2021 (photo by Mojca Kovačić).

In *Celebrating the International Council for Traditional Music: Reflections on the First Seven Decades*, edited by Svanibor Pettan, Naila Ceribašić, and Don Niles, 191–192. Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana Press and International Council for Traditional Music, 2022.

Board in the same year and launched in 2019 (*BICTM* 147, Oct 2021:8).

Symposia have always been in-person events, but all that would change dramatically in 2020. In the January 2020 *BICTM*, the secretary general and president both announced that twenty symposia would be held that year (*BICTM* 142, Jan 2020:2, 3). The first symposium of 2020—that of the Study Group on Music and Dance in Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico, 9–13 March 2020 (*BICTM* 143, Apr 2020:2)—was the last in-person symposium before the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation or postponement of all the others.¹

As it became clear that the pandemic was not going to allow in-person gatherings soon, other formats for symposia were considered. The first online symposium was the seventh symposium of the Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology, 26–29 August 2020,² and other study groups followed suit. While video conferencing opened up such events to a much greater number of participants, scheduling these very international events became challenging indeed because of time-zone differences. Nevertheless, the rewards remain significant for all participants.

The first hybrid conference, combining in-person and online participation, was the 23rd symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Musical Instruments, hosted in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 24–27 March 2021. Since the last in-person symposium in March 2020, all symposia have either been online or hybrid (figure 1); as of the time of writing, there have been no solely in-person symposia.

Much further information about symposia is found in this volume in the chapters on the origins of study groups and particularly in the chapters concerning individual study groups.

1 A complete list of ICTM events rescheduled because of the pandemic can be found at <https://www.ictmusic.org/story/ictm-activities-rescheduled-due-covid-19-pandemic>.

2 I appreciate the essential assistance of Carlos Yoder in clarifying the information about symposia held from March 2020 to date.