

The Secretariat under Svanibor Pettan: Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2011–2017

Svanibor Pettan

In the first half of 2011, the process of moving the Secretariat from Australia to Slovenia was reaching its final phase.¹ Australia had been its safe home for five-and-a-half years, and the stay of the ICTM office was financially supported by the Australian National University as the hosting institution. Slovenia, on the other hand, was to be the youngest and the smallest country to host the Secretariat in the Council's history, English was not the official language, and institutional financial support was not assured. President Adrienne Kaeppler and Secretary General Stephen Wild, who were in charge of the operation on behalf of the Executive Board, could only trust my decades-long dedication to the Council's legacy and my plan on how to organize the efficient functioning of the ICTM office under considerably different circumstances. The plan was based on my intense consultations with the newly-selected candidate for the assisting position, Carlos Yoder (figure 1), whom I knew previously, and with my colleagues at the Department of Musicology at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, led by Chair Leon Stefanija, whose support was firm and unconditional.

Here I wish to express gratitude to three more individuals, whose support in various ways enabled the envisioned Secretariat in Ljubljana to get a chance and prove its operational capabilities: Rector of the University of Ljubljana Radovan Stanislav Pejovnik, First Lady of Slovenia Barbara Miklič Türk, and my wife, Lasanthi Manaranjanie Kalinga Dona. Today, from the temporal distance of a decade, I believe that the visions and changes that materialized during the Secretariat's six years in Ljubljana have fulfilled expectations and opened several avenues for the further flourishing of the Council. These resulted from close cooperation with the president, vice presidents, Executive Board members, general and guest editors of the *Yearbook*, the editorial team of the *Bulletin*, national and regional representatives, study groups, local arrangement committees, programme committees, and

last but not least, the members of ICTM and other sister societies and institutions.

Notions of respectful friendship and supportive collegiality, so characteristic of ICTM, have enabled creative cooperation and consequently allowed the attainment of several new heights in the period 2011–2017. They can be summarized in the following twenty points:

1. The Council's membership increased by more than 55%, from 900 members and subscribers in 2011 to more than 1,400 in 2017. At the same time, thanks to intensified activities in non-conference years, the previous difference in membership figures between conference and non-conference years was substantially reduced.
2. The systematic search for active national and regional representatives in all continents resulted in the growth of the ICTM World Network from 75 members in 2011 to 127 in 2017. Also, the appointment of new representatives for existing countries and regions invigorated communication and cooperation.
3. Three world conferences (Shanghai, Astana, Limerick), three colloquia (Portel, Nanterre, Shanghai), fifty-six study-group symposia on all continents, and two fora (Limerick, Abu Dhabi) testify to the Council's vibrant activities during these six years.
4. The 43rd ICTM World Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan (2015), was the first in Central Asia, in the territories of the former Soviet Union, and in a country with a majority Muslim population.
5. The list of ICTM study groups was enriched by four new ones, with foci on African musics, audiovisual ethnomusicology, music and allied arts of Greater South Asia, and musics of the Slavic world. Some older study groups were revitalized.
6. The Secretariat began to provide study groups with optional assistance in organizing their elections, in order to add transparency to the process and consequently strengthen the study groups.
7. The Assembly of Study Group Chairs became a new type of gathering in the context of world conferences, comparable to the Assembly of National Representatives.
8. Fora emerged as a new type of ICTM scholarly gathering, in addition to world conferences, study-group symposia, and colloquia.

¹ I gratefully acknowledge that this chapter benefited from the suggestions made by fellow co-editors Naila Ceribašić and Don Niles.



Figure 1. While serving as ICTM secretary general and executive assistant, Pettan and Yoder also served as president and secretary of the Cultural and Ethnomusicological Society Folk Slovenia (the ICTM Slovenian National Committee), bringing together the best international and national practices. This photograph was taken after one of four memorable concerts that celebrated the coming of ICTM to Slovenia, the fully improvised musical event titled “Trần Quang Hải and friends”: Goran Krmac, Carlos Yoder, Trần Quang Hải, Svanibor Pettan, Janez Dovč, Boštjan Gombač. Ljubljana, 26 August 2011 (photo courtesy of Imago Sloveniae).

9. As far as cooperation with UNESCO is concerned, the Council has been successful in its role as an NGO in the ICH-evaluation processes, and in getting grants to support participation for its world conferences in Astana and Limerick.
10. New funds were established to support the participation of members in ICTM’s scholarly gatherings: besides the Barbara Barnard Smith Travel Award, since 2014 there are also the Maud Karpeles Fund and Young Scholars Fund.
11. Six issues of the *Yearbook for Traditional Music* were produced at a printing house in Ljubljana that enabled superb technical quality at a lower price compared to its predecessors.
12. In October 2011, the *Bulletin of the ICTM* became an exclusively online publication, while in 2014, a third issue (January) was added to the standard two (April and October). In total, sixteen *Bulletins* were created in this period.
13. Systematic efforts have been made towards cooperating with sister societies, such as (in alphabetical order) the European Music Council (EMC), European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM), International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML), International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM), International Music Council (IMC), International Musicological Society (IMS), International Society for Music Education (ISME), Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM), World Dance Alliance (WDA), and more. The Council’s cooperation with Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) was improved at several levels.
14. Brochures carrying basic information about the Council have been translated from English to several other languages—Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish—and made available to the public for better international communication.
15. The ICTM website became the central repository of information about the Council, including new sections with historical data, a new membership directory, and more.
16. The ICTM email list or listserv and social media became important communication tools, and a Latin American email list became important for Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking members.
17. The Executive Group, consisting of the president, vice presidents, and the secretary general, became formalized as the operational core of the Executive Board.
18. Since 2013, the Executive Board has improved its efficiency by carrying out specific tasks through topically-defined committees.
19. Memoranda and guidelines were updated and enriched with several new items.
20. For quite a long time, the Council’s constitutional document—the Rules—has been in force, subject to occasional changes and updates. In 2016, the Executive Group in collaboration with the respective EB committee, and then the Executive Board created

a new constitutional document named the Statutes, which replaced its outdated predecessor and enabled better serving of the needs of a modern international scholarly society. The new document was approved at the General Assembly in Limerick, Ireland, in 2017.

The credo of my service in the role of secretary general was rooted in the remembrance that the Council was established in the aftermath of World War II and had the firmly expressed intention to contribute to the betterment of the world. The final part of the ICTM's website presentation states that it "acts as a bond among peoples of different cultures and thus contributes to the peace of humankind." My aim was to promote engaged scholarship and networking on a worldwide scale, and to enable the Council, proud of its rich history of overcoming political, economic, and other divides in the past decades, to further develop and refine its potentials in terms of theory, method, and examples of good praxis (figure 2).



Figure 2. At the completion of the six-year term of the Secretariat in Ljubljana, several individuals who significantly contributed to the flourishing of the Council were presented with traditionally ornamented gingerbread hearts. The smile of Barbara Barnard Smith who received such a heart in Hawai'i provides a gentle reminder about the great potential of the Council in terms of love, respect, and intergenerational cooperation. Honolulu, 2017 (photo courtesy of Kirk Sullivan).

As secretary general, I felt honoured and privileged to be in a position to contribute to our shared path, building on the legacies of respected predecessors and on inspiration from current collaborators, especially from colleagues in the Executive Board, headed by Adrienne Kaeppler and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco as presidents, and Stephen Wild, Don Niles, and Razia Sultanova as vice presidents. Special appreciation goes to my multitalented and efficient "right hand," Executive Assistant Carlos Yoder. Knowing my successor as secretary general, Ursula Hemetek, and her academic environment for several decades, I felt fully comfortable about the Secretariat's move to the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria, in 2017. The continuation of service of the executive assistant assured the continuity of operations and contributed to the next four successful years in the life of the Council.

Let me complete this overview with a few not widely-known experiences from the period in which the Secretariat was at home in Ljubljana.

ICTM members remember Astana (nowadays Nur-Sultan), the site of the 2015 world conference, in its pleasant summertime period. But, preparations for the conference required Razia Sultanova and me to experience its winter temperatures, as well. After hearing my complaint about -29 degrees Celsius, Razia replied: "Good that you arrived today; yesterday it was -39 degrees." Conferences in new places often bring specific challenges; intense work with the local hosts and EB members in Astana was an amazing experience, a new landmark of cooperation and adjustability. I gladly testify that the students from the Kazakh National University of Arts still keep coming for a semester study exchange to Ljubljana, demonstrating that the ICTM conference truly contributed to building new bridges.

Work on the *Bulletin* counted among the great pleasures of the period. Due to my rich traveling schedules, I recall several situations in which the three of us were in mutually distant time zones (for instance, Don Niles in Papua New Guinea, Carlos Yoder in Slovenia, me in Cuba), but this never became an obstacle that our enthusiasm wasn't able to overcome.

In 2013, despite her terminal illness, Marianne Bröcker hosted a symposium of the Study Group on Musical Instruments in Bamberg, Germany. I felt it might be the last chance for the ICTM to thank Marianne for her varied and significant contributions over many years. Encouraged by the Board, I travelled to Bamberg and delivered her in person a newly created certificate of honorary membership, the Council's highest recognition. She was very happy to receive it. Three weeks later, Marianne passed away, continuing to live in our good memories.

My favourite collective brainstorming within the Council was certainly the one in Limerick in 2016, when first the Executive Group and then the Executive Board were involved in creation of the Statutes. Salwa El-Shawan Castelo Branco bravely led the process, with significant contributions of Naila Ceribašić, Don Niles, and others. The resulting document created an excellent basis for the functioning of our favourite scholarly society.