

An Overview of the IFMC/ICTM Executive Board

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Introduction

Since its foundation on 22 September 1947, the organization known today as the International Council for Traditional Music has been governed by an Executive Board consisting of a president, at least two vice presidents, and a variable number of ordinary members. The main duty of the Executive Board has been to decide on policies that would further the Council's mission; while the responsibility of implementing those decisions, running day-to-day operations, and communicating with the Council's members, subscribers, partners, and affiliates remained with the Secretariat.

I was appointed executive assistant of the ICTM Secretariat in July 2011, and soon after became very interested in the history of the Council. This article, which expands on the paper "From IFMC to ICTM to what? Considering the Council's past while moving into the future," co-presented with Don Niles at the 43rd ICTM World Conference (July 2015, Astana, Kazakhstan), attempts to provide an overview of how the composition of the Executive Board and Secretariat has changed over the course of the history of the Council.

The Executive Board

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

The composition, terms of office, and means of accession to the Executive Board (EB) have greatly evolved over time. The current ICTM Statutes stipulate that the EB is formed by "a President and two Vice Presidents (Officers), and nine Ordinary Members, all of whom are elected by the membership" (ICTM 2017 Statutes:§7.2b). Additionally, the EB can co-opt up to three additional members for a maximum of two consecutive two-year periods.¹

1 From 1947 to 1971, the Rules defined officers as being the president, vice presidents, treasurer, and secretary; e.g., see the section 11 of 1951 Amended Statutes (*BIFMC* 5, Nov

The first Executive Board of the International Folk Music Council was appointed for a period of one year on 24 September 1947, during the International Conference on Folk Song and Folk Dance (London, 22–27 September 1947). The Board was formed by five officers (president, secretary, treasurer, and two vice presidents), and eleven ordinary members. The president, secretary, and treasurer were all based in the United Kingdom, because it was agreed that (a) Maud Karpeles would need to be the secretary, and she was based in London; and that (b) these "principal officers" should be able to communicate closely during the first year of the Council (Karpeles 1972:15).

Of these original fourteen EB members, eleven were based in Europe (Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK, and Yugoslavia), one in Africa (Uganda), one in North America (USA), and one in South America (Brazil) (figure 1).

One of the cornerstones of the Council from its beginnings has been its commitment to be "a bond among peoples of different cultures." While the first Board was, not surprisingly, overwhelmingly European in its constituency, it is quite remarkable that only two years after the end of the Second World War, the Board included members from both sides of the politically divided Europe, from Africa, and from both North and South America. It would take more than twenty years, however, before the Board would be enriched with the voices of members from outside those four regions.²

By contrast, the Council's EB is, at the time of writing, formed by a president, two vice presidents, nine elected

1951:22–25) and section 11 of the 1971 Rules (*BIFMC* 29, Oct 1971:15–18). For the sake of consistency, the statistics featured in this article adhere to the current definition of the Executive Board, and therefore treat presidents, vice presidents, and EB members as one group, and secretaries general and their assistants as another.

2 West Asia (Israel) in 1969; Central America and the Caribbean (Jamaica) in 1970; East Asia (Japan) in 1977; South Asia (India) in 1981; Southeast Asia (Philippines) in 1984, and Oceania (Australia) in 1989.

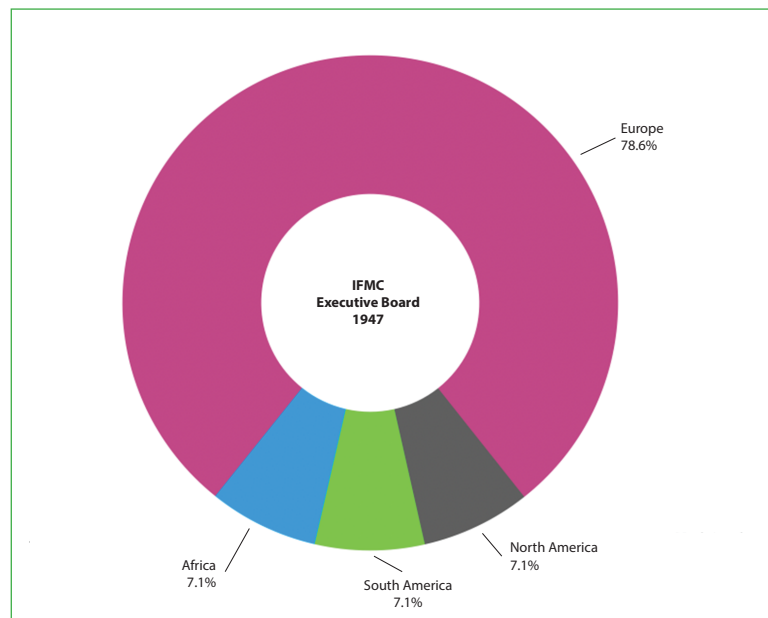


Figure 1. IFMC Executive Board, 1947.

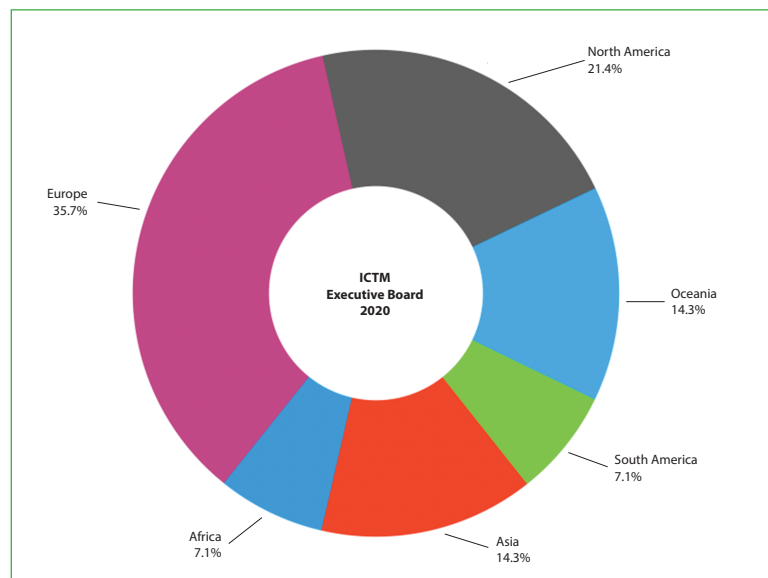


Figure 2. ICTM Executive Board, 2020.

ordinary members, and two (out of three possible) co-opted ordinary members. Of these fourteen people, five are based in Europe (Croatia, Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia), three in North America (Canada, USA), two in Oceania (New Zealand, Papua New Guinea), one in Africa (Nigeria), one in South America (Argentina), and two in Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore) (figure 2).

This remarkable increase in diversity did not happen overnight. As shown by figure 3, if we aggregate the years of service of all 139 EB members from 1947 to 2020, and we group them by the world region each identified with,³ a majority of the historical constituency of the

Council's EB has been European (59.3%), while the second largest constituency has been North American (15.6%),⁴ more than twice the size of the next one, Africa (6.5%).

However, figure 3 samples the whole history of the Council's EB, and therefore fails to illustrate the considerable diversification of the constituency of the Board since 2005.

Up to 2004, the Rules of the Council mandated that nominations to the EB could be submitted by the Board itself, by affiliated national committees, or by two indi-

used to categorize reviews in the *Yearbook for Traditional Music*.

3 As reported in the *Bulletin of the IFMC/ICTM*. The regions chosen for analyzing the constituency of the EB match those

4 It should be noted that the USA is the country with the largest number of ICTM members (Pettan 2021).

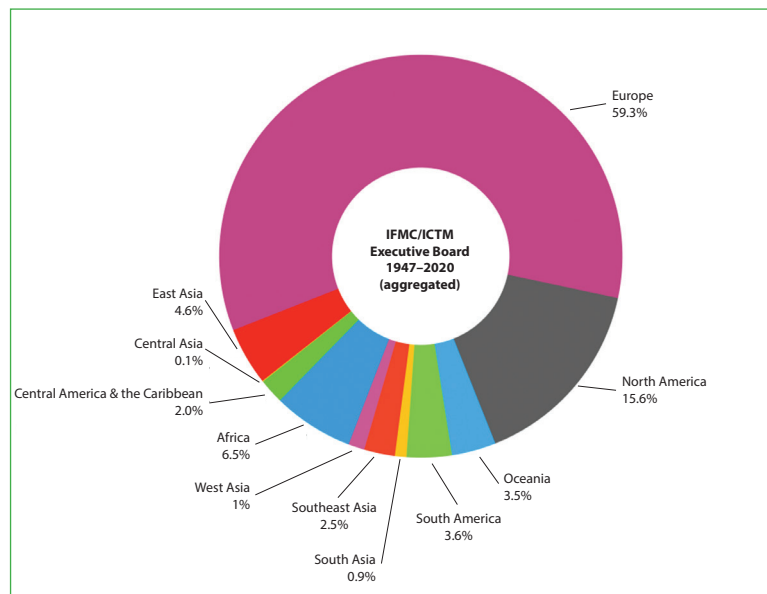


Figure 3. IFMC/ICTM Executive Board, 1947–2020 (aggregated).

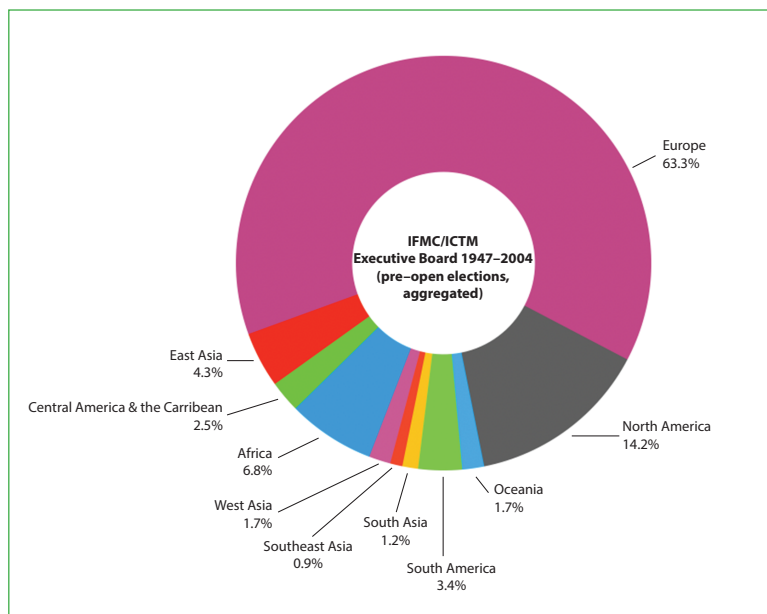


Figure 4. IFMC/ICTM Executive Board, 1947–2004 (aggregated).

vidual members residing in different countries. In the vast majority of cases, however, no nominations were received from outside the Board, and only one candidate was produced for each vacant position, so “the new slate *for* the Board, nominated *by* the Board, was automatically accepted” (Niles 2005), seldom involving the membership.

Figure 4 shows that the EB’s constituency was, up to 2004, still very concentrated in Europe and North America, even though the number of Board members from the other parts of the world had increased (see n. 2).

On Wednesday, 7 January 2004, the 36th General Assembly of ICTM unanimously approved new Rules that, among other long-awaited changes, established

a Nomination Committee and related mechanisms to ensure that *all* ICTM members would be allowed to participate in the election of officers and EB members. The new Rules were adopted the following September, after a ratification was conducted via a postal ballot,⁵ and the first modern ICTM elections were held in 2005.

5 I believe this meticulous process of democratization can be traced back to the 91st EB meeting, held in Rio de Janeiro on 11 July 2001, during which a subcommittee to revise the ICTM Rules was appointed, formed by Krister Malm, Anthony Seeger, Tsukada Kenichi, and Egil Bakka. The work of this subcommittee, together with the first Nomination Committee (formed by Don Niles, Marianne Bröcker, and Allan Maret), has been in no small part responsible for the wide diversity observable on the EB today.

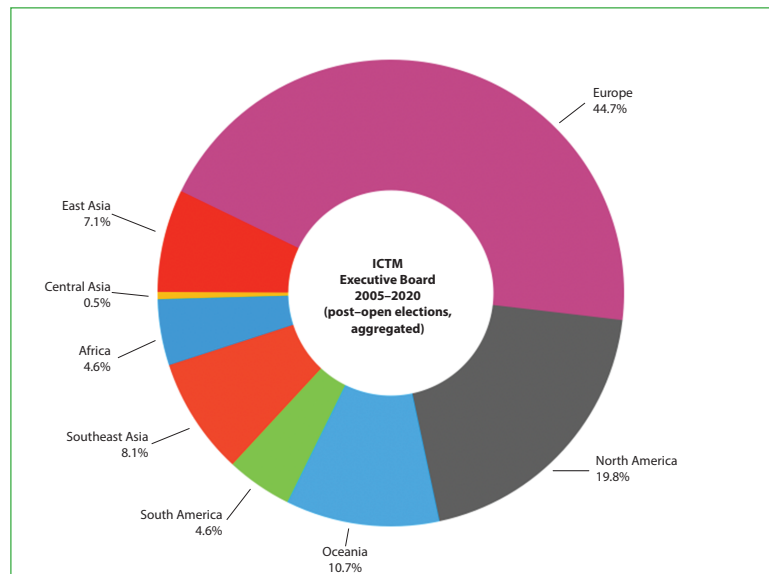


Figure 5. ICTM Executive Board, 2005–2020 (aggregated).

Figure 5 illustrates how the year 2005 would be a watershed moment in the Council’s history. After 2005, the constituency of the EB became markedly more diverse, reducing the historical majority of European voices on the Board for the first time since 1947. It was also in 2005 when a woman, Adrienne L. Kaepler, was elected president for the first time.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

While only two women were part of the original IFMC Executive Board in 1947, in 2020 we can observe a majority of women serving on Executive Board (figure 6).

From 1947 to 2020, 104 EB members have been male (75%) and 35 female (25%). This severe inequality was somewhat offset by several key people, both on and off the Board; I will mention only two. First, the Council was the brainchild of a remarkable 61-year-old woman, Maud Karpeles,⁶ who was not only IFMC’s first secretary and later honorary president, but also the editor of both the *Journal* and *Bulletin*, the main force behind the organization of the early IFMC conferences, and so much more. Simply put, without her no Council would exist today. Second, the person to serve the longest on the Executive Board was Claudie Marcel-Dubois (1947–1987), who was also the Council’s first female vice president and its first honorary member.

The complete list of all former and current EB members, including their countries of residence and terms of their office, is available on the ICTM website (<http://www.ictmusic.org/governance/history>).

⁶ Or “our inimitable Maud,” as she was described in a note acknowledging her ninetieth birthday (*BIFMC* 47, Oct 1975:1).

Special-purpose EB committees

On 23 August 1957, a meeting of IFMC correspondents⁷ was held during the 10th IFMC conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, to “consider the policy, programme and administration of the Council” (*BIFMC* 12, Sep 1957:13). The report from that meeting included the following resolution:

That in view of the pressing need of the Secretariat for more active support of the Council and in order to give more members well-defined opportunities of service, the Executive Board be authorized to appoint committees to whom the Secretary can delegate the responsibility for (a) the search for new sources of finance; (b) editorial work; (c) the preparation of conferences and festivals; (d) any other activity which in the opinion of the Secretary could usefully be undertaken by a committee, such as the increase of membership, publicity, liaison with other organizations, etc. (*BIFMC* 12, Sep 1957:14)

The resolution was discussed, amended, and carried during the 9th meeting of the General Assembly on 26 August 1957, and in turn the EB approved it on its following meeting (EB minutes, 19th meeting, 28 Aug 1957:§226).

Shortly after, the EB began to establish smaller, semi-autonomous, special-purpose bodies that would assist and advise both the EB and the Secretariat.⁸ Since 1958,

⁷ Correspondents were experts and representatives of folk-music organizations appointed by the Executive Board, but without voting rights (also see the chapter on by-laws).

⁸ An early EB “sub-committee” had been appointed two years earlier, in 1955, to examine the issue of copyright of folk music in different countries. It produced the “Statement on the copyright on folk music,” which was presented at the same meeting of the General Assembly where the resolution about EB committees was adopted.



Figure 6. Executive Board meeting: (from top left, winding around the table to the right): Marie Agatha Ozah, Catherine Foley, Ursula Hemetek (secretary general), Carlos Yoder (executive assistant), Svanibor Pettan (vice president), Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (president), Razia Sultanova (vice president), Don Niles, Tan Sooi Beng, Naila Ceribašić. Limerick, 2017 (photo by Terada Yoshitaka).

these special-purpose committees have been appointed by the EB to oversee specific processes (e.g., the transition of the Secretariat in the 1960s; the securing of a commercial publisher for the *Yearbook* in the 2010s) or to more effectively address particular topics (e.g., study groups) and/or draft policy (e.g., ethics). The committees are formed by both members and non-members of the Executive Board.

An exhaustive list of special-purpose EB committees in the history of the Council is planned for the ICTM website. Some early EB committees developed into permanent structural units of the Council (as in the case of today's Study Group on Ethnochoreology; see a separate chapter on it), while many ceased to exist because the goal for which they were founded was achieved (as in the case of several advisory committees, a planning committee in the 1960s, a committee on the revision of dues established in 1969, etc.), or because the subject developed within the purview of other organizations (as in the case of the Committee on Radio/Television and Sound/Film Archives; see a separate chapter on it). A new era of the EB committees started in 2013, under the presidency of Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, and is discussed in her chapter on that period. The list of currently active committees is available at <http://www.ictmusic.org/list-ictm-executive-board-committees>.

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