

Foreword

Svanibor Pettan

Dear Stephen,

It is both a pleasure and an honour to be in a position to write these introductory lines for your festschrift. In addition to your scholarship, you continue to inspire me with your humane wisdom and true gentlemanly behaviour, and in particular with your genuine dedication to the aims and goals of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM). The high standards of your scholarship are recognised both nationally and internationally, and your role in raising the profile of Aboriginal music studies is an undisputable fact. These examples of excellence, reflected in your leading positions and awards, are described elsewhere in this book. Allow me then to proceed with this introduction in a more personal way, with a focus on your contribution to the leading international scholarly association in the field of traditional music and dance throughout our encounters.

The many years of your active ICTM membership naturally led to the point when in 1988 you succeeded Alice Moyle as the Council's representative for Australia, just as you also succeeded her in a research position at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies in Canberra. The transition was marked by an important difference: while Dr Moyle served the Council in the capacity of a Liaison Officer (1975–88), you immediately upgraded the level of representation to that of a National Committee and served as its Chair for a decade (1988–98).

Just a year later, in 1989, you joined the Executive Board as an Ordinary Member during the 30th ICTM World Conference in Schladming, Austria—the very first world conference I attended. You remained on the Board until the 34th World Conference in Nitra, Slovakia, in 1997.

During your services to the Board, you made a major breakthrough and brought the 33rd World Conference to Australia for the first and so far the only time in the Council's history. This world conference, hosted by The Australian National University in Canberra in 1995, remains in my mind as a model for a superbly organised, large-scale scholarly event. I remember being deeply impressed by your organisational wizardry, and your kind and gentle behaviour towards every delegate who approached you, despite your multiple duties. This encouraged me to approach you too, to wholeheartedly congratulate you, the Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee, for the success of the event. This was our initial encounter, and I have a vivid remembrance of it. The *rom* Aboriginal ritual of diplomacy, to which you exposed the delegates over the course of several conference days, was living proof of your deep respect for Australian Indigenous peoples and their cultures, and also a model of cooperation between practitioners and researchers that would perfectly fit into what we nowadays term 'applied ethnomusicology'. A couple of decades later and with the same level of enthusiasm and respect, I still use my filmed documentation of the *rom* and the publication on the topic that you edited in 1986.

Like any other scholarly society, ICTM experienced several ups and downs in its seven-decades-long history. In the course of the first decade of the twenty-first century, I recall a couple of sensitive situations, in which your wisdom and brave actions significantly contributed to the well-being of the Council. Back in 2001, you were just elected Vice President, and while also serving as Chair of the Oceania Study Group (now Music and Dance of Oceania), you agreed to take over the responsibilities of the General Editor of the *Yearbook for Traditional Music*. Stephen the Superman? Most certainly, Stephen as a capable and responsible colleague, scholar, and leader, who readily offered the best of his abilities to support the Council when there was a need for it. At that same 36th World Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2001, I was co-opted to the Executive Board, to replace Anthony Seeger, who succeeded Dieter Christensen as Secretary General. From then on, I was in a position to communicate more often with you and to learn from you and other colleagues on how to cherish the Council.

At the 38th World Conference in Sheffield, UK, both of us—you as a Vice President and I as Chair of the Programme Committee—expressed interest in succeeding Anthony Seeger in his role of Secretary General. I readily supported the wish of you, as my senior and much respected colleague, to serve first in this capacity, and you did it well in the course of the next five-and-a-half years, from 2006 to mid-2011. During that period, you permanently housed the ICTM archive, earlier travelling from one previous Secretariat to the next, in the National Library of Australia. This and a few other trips to your country, as well as our pedagogical and conference cooperation, made me develop a very positive attitude towards Australia. The joint efforts that you and Lee Anne Proberts, on behalf of the Secretariat, and Wim van Zanten, as Programme Chair, invested in the success of the 40th World Conference in Durban, South Africa, are exemplary of your sincere dedication to the aims of the Council.

At the 41st World Conference in St John's, Canada, I gave up my vice presidency to become Secretary General, just as you did years before. At that conference, you were elected Vice President for the second time. At the 44th World Conference in Limerick, Ireland, where the Council will celebrate its 70th birthday, you will experience one of the rare roles that you haven't experienced in the ICTM so far: that of a (Co-)Chair of the Programme Committee.

I have no doubts that the entire scholarly community involved in the study of traditional music and dance worldwide, including the entire ICTM membership, recognises and cherishes your contribution. A respected scholar and true gentleman, you knew well how to present your arguments convincingly, but without being pushy—something that added to your reputation as a well-balanced leader. As your successor in the role of Secretary General, I wish to add that it was a true privilege to learn from you and that my gratitude and best wishes will be forever with you and with the entire team involved in the creation of this well-deserved festschrift.

Svanibor Pettan
 Secretary General
 International Council for Traditional Music

This text is taken from *A Distinctive Voice in the Antipodes: Essays in Honour of Stephen A. Wild*, edited by Kirsty Gillespie, Sally Treloyn and Don Niles, published 2017 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.