

THE PERIOD FROM 1997 TO 2002

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I joined the council of the IMS in 1992 at the Madrid congress, full of inhibitions at a table where leading figures of my profession were sitting and where I, coming from Hungary, a recently opened country of the East Bloc, still felt unprepared for such a prestigious nomination. From several encouraging conversations with great names beyond my own field of research I was specifically grateful to Kurt von Fischer, whose widespread interests and sharp comments I could also admire also at forthcoming occasions in Zurich. In the following years, at committee meetings in Antwerp and Oxford, I had the pleasure to work on the program of the next IMS congress in the company of new acquaintances, an eloquent group of scholars. It was different from previous experiences in meetings at specialized conferences or lecture series outside of my country, mostly in the USA. Nevertheless, the congress in London in August 1997—perhaps the best in my memories, not the least because of the famous scenes that attracted so many leading figures of musicology—ended with a shock for me. Stanley Sadie told me that he would propose me to be his successor as the President of the Society. When, sincerely surprised, I asked Stanley why me, he simply said: “Few scholars produce two such books in two years such as you did recently” (he was alluding to the 1995 Haydn keyboard sonata book and the 1996 book on Bartók’s compositions, both in English).¹ And so the most irregular but fascinating five years of my life started. In addition to my job in Hungary—leading the Bartók Archives, teaching musicologists, being the director of the newly founded PhD program in musicology in Budapest—I had to fly to IMS meetings and conduct business conferences.

¹ László Somfai, *The Keyboard Sonatas of Joseph Haydn: Instruments and Performance Practice, Genres and Styles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Béla Bartók: *Composition, Concepts, and Autograph Sources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

Needless to say, a President who is full of inhibitions needs help from many sides. Fortunately, compared to other societies, in our Switzerland-based Society a very special calmness and friendly mood dominated, as I soon experienced. Directorium members came and went, but running the business was secured by the well-selected home team: the Secretary General Dorothea Baumann, her Assistant Antonio Baldassarre, and Treasurer Madeleine Regli. Dorothea, by all means, was a key partner, taking over the greater part of the actual work during my term, not only daily business and organizing the meetings, but also ticklish negotiations. I am very grateful to her for the dedicated work and friendship; in addition, I enjoyed her expert explanations on acoustic matters. In emergency cases Antonio perfectly substituted for her, besides we could discuss Haydn problems, among others.

In my five years in office, annual IMS council meetings were re-instituted (except for the year 2001). In this respect the most successful meeting was in the year 1998. Following a previous *modus operandi*, important council meetings were arranged at two subsequent sessions in two separate places. Thus, in 1998, the annual council first met in Boston during the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society—in order to give a fuller voice in the Society’s workings to our overseas members—, and soon thereafter a meeting, with a different combination of participants, was held in Zurich. However, meetings never comprised the full membership body. Since the meetings were held either during the school term or in the so precious holidays in between, and the Society could not pay the bill, a full participation of the elected council members could not be expected.

In the time in between there were several Directorium meetings with the officers (the Past President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General, and myself) in order to transact regular business or conduct special negotiations. We met in connection with the council meetings, and had additional sessions, mostly in Zurich but also in Basel, Leuven, and London. I could always count on the friendly advice and constant help of Sadie, the Last President. The two Vice Presidents, David Fallows and Ellen Rosand, outstanding scholars with much more experience in the international musicological world and in administration than myself, were supportive in many ways. I may add that in critical situations the best suggestions mostly came from David. Like an elder brother, he encouraged and inspired me. I was more than satisfied that after five years in Leuven I could put the job in his hands.

Dealing with the essential topics of our discussions, we inherited a problem from the previous council. Rudolf Flotzinger, the Editor of *Acta Musicologica*, wished to retire after a long period of work. The new council had only to finish the selection procedure from the four best of the originally twelve candidates. Thomas J. Mathiesen (Indiana University, Bloomington) was the obvious choice. He came up with a mature concept of a restructured *Acta*. Negotiations on technical matters and editorial procedures between Mathiesen, and Bärenreiter in Basel, had a good start but then the process slowed down, and in spite of the firm pressure on the publisher, in January 1999 Mathiesen pulled out. The search for a new Editor started again. Thanks to the young and energetic Philippe Vendrix (Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, Tours, France), we had a "new" *Acta*, different in appearance, beginning with the 2000 issue. It better represented the official languages of our international society, and courageously accepted selections from the work of younger scholars.

The problems of this journal lay not only within the goals and style of its function as a periodical—this we knew. The function of the IMS was, of course, very different from that in the pre-war years, or even in the 1950s and 1960s. Not only flourishing international societies and groups dealt with particular subject areas within the discipline, some national societies had considerably outgrown the IMS in size. The AMS, with its annual meetings, was the most influential forum of world musicology, and their journal (*JAMS*) became the most prestigious publication. The heart of the problem was that the five-year cycle of the IMS congresses made it impossible for our members to survey the changes and new trends in the field and support the best achievements in accordance with the publication policy of the society's journal. Nevertheless, as an international association of scholars, our Society had a responsibility to draw in scholars from countries which, for one reason or another—geographical or financial—had not been able to participate. The expansion of the IMS to South America, Africa, and Asia was still not at all as satisfactory as our dear friend Pierluigi Petrobelli repeatedly claimed.

Before the Canberra vs. Leuven vote for the next world congress,² reserving a substantial meeting for Europe, just in case the next congress goes to Australia, the council urged the organization of an intercongressional symposium, preferably in one of the countries

of the former Soviet Bloc. Budapest was suggested asserting that the "Cantus Planus" Study Group's meetings in Hungary were so successful that the same spiritus rector, László Dobszay, could be trusted with the organization of an intercongressional symposium in 2000.³ Smooth operation and individualized, personal care characterized the work of his team. In many ways it provided a model for similar conferences.

Naturally, the preparations of the 2002 congress in Leuven were much more complicated and required great effort on several sides. Some peculiarities of the situation there were confusing, for example, because it is not easy to grasp how the Flemish Community might deal with emergencies. It was also a bit unusual that this time our host was not a national society but a distinguished small institute, the Alamire Foundation, and the Faculty of Arts of Katholieke Universiteit, more or less the same energetic men working here and there: Herman Baeten. He should once write his memoirs of the conferences with the IMS council. By all means we were grateful to him: he was instrumental in building up the Leuven base of the congress. One more name must be mentioned: Herman Vanden Berghe (the famous Belgian pioneer in human genetics), an authority in strategic decisions, who could be addressed when nothing else sufficed. Meetings with a scientist of his format was a new experience in my professional life.

The Leuven congress was one of the most memorable, and in a very special way:⁴ a congress with many talented young scholars in musicology; a congress with breakthroughs for the musicological communities of the Eastern-European nations. Barbara Haggh, chair of the program committee, offered valuable years of her life to the intellectual planning and then to the masterly organized realization. She had a great team in her committee and the best personal advisor, her husband Michel Huglo—and what Michel did not know about the IMS congresses was not worth knowing. Meeting this celebrity of chant studies several times and listening to his stories belongs to my happiest memories of the past five years.

2 Cf. *IMS Communiqué* 66 (1998): 17, and 67 (1998): 3.

3 *The Past in the Present: Papers Read at the IMS Intercongressional Symposium and the 10th Meeting of the Cantus Planus, Budapest and Visegrád, 2000*, ed. László Dobszay, 2 vols. (Budapest: Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, 2003).

4 *International Musicological Society: 17th International Congress, Mgr. Sencie Institute, Leuven, 1–7 August 2002, Programme and Abstracts*, ed. Ivan Asselman and Bruno Bouckaert (Neerpelt: Alamire, 2002).