

Reports from ICTM National and Regional Representatives

Austria

by *Hande Sağlam, Chair of National Committee*



The ICTM National Committee for Austria can look back on a very busy and successful year despite the pandemic.

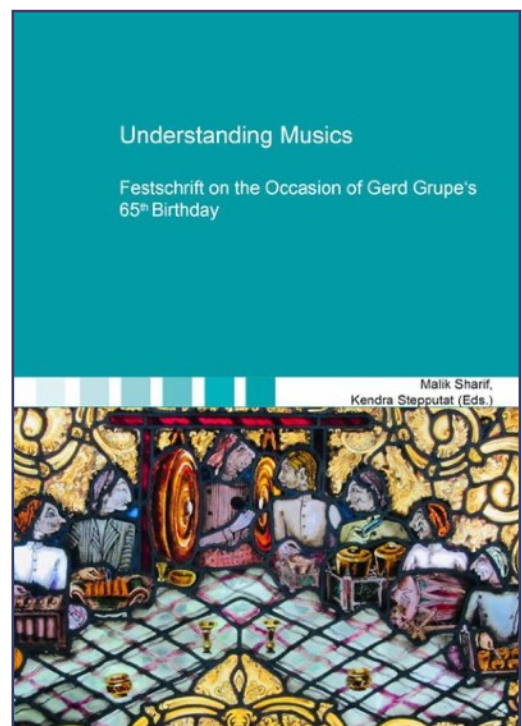
On 20-21 November 2020, the ICTM National Committee for Austria (NC) held its 13th annual meeting via Zoom. The main focus of the meeting was right-wing populism and the role of ethnomusicology. This very topical and highly complex issue was controversially discussed by four representatives of four different ethnomusicological institutions in Austria, in a roundtable titled “Is the Field Also Political? Ethnomusicology and Right-Wing Populism.” The representatives of those four ethnomusicological institutions were Anja Brunner (Institute of Musicology at the University of Vienna), Kerstin Klenke (Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences), Thomas Nußbaumer (Department of Musicology, Mozarteum University), and Javier Silvestrini (Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna - mdw).

The keynote speaker, researcher of jazz and popular music André Dohering, presented some aspects of his current research project, titled “Popular Music and the Rise of Populism in Europe.” This topic left a lot of space for presenting current research, and younger researchers were especially encouraged to join the meeting. Therefore, the second day was dedicated to junior academics. For the full programme you can visit [our website](#). The annual meeting was very successful, and with more than 60 participants, was one of the NC’s largest meetings. We would like to thank the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz (KUG) and our board member Babak Nikzat for their technical support during the meeting.

The general assembly of the NC was held on 20 November 2020. During the assembly, the NC decided to draft its own ethical and political statement to more precisely define the position and the goals of the committee, and to explicitly

distance itself from right-wing extremism. This statement will be available on the NC’s website in the spring of 2021.

In October 2020, Gerd Grupe, professor of ethnomusicology at KUG, celebrated his 65th birthday. On the occasion he was presented with a festschrift honouring him and his accomplishments in the field of ethnomusicology. The book, titled *Understanding Musics*, was co-edited by Malik Sharif and Kendra Stepputat, and features 25 contributions by Gerd Grupe’s colleagues and students.



Another publication comes from Innsbruck: Raymond Ammann and Vanessa Carlone published their book *Tirolerei in der Schweiz* in the series “Schriften zur musikalischen Ethnologie.”

On 29 October 2020, the concert series “Echos der Vielfalt – Musikwelten in Tirol” took place in Innsbruck. This concert series was as a result of field research on the music of minorities in Tyrol carried out in 2004 and 2005 by the Mozarteum University (Thomas Nußbaumer) and the mdw (Ursula Hemetek and Gerlinde Haid), and sees itself as a contribution to the integration of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural minorities in Tyrol and as an open platform for cultural diversity. This time, musicians from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ireland, Syria,

Turkey, and Austria performed in this concert. The complete concert recording can be found [here](#).

Since January 2020, Anja Brunner has led her research project “[Women Musicians from Syria: Performance, Networks, and Belonging/s](#)” at the Institute for Musicology of Vienna University. The project is funded by the Austrian Science Fund and will continue until 2023. The project documents the lives and music of five women musicians who migrated to Austria and Germany after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, and who have continued their musical work after migration. By exploring the networks, opportunities, and performances of these musicians, the aim of the project is to show which belonging/s—at emotional and institutionalized levels—are relevant in the lives and music of these musicians.

For the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the year 2020 was marked by significant changes in staff. At the end of June, Gerda Lechleitner, long-standing and active member of the ICTM, retired after a long and successful career at the Phonogrammarchiv, where she headed the team for the editing of *The Complete Historical Collections 1899–1950* and the publication of the *International Journal on Audio-Visual Research*. In October, Nadja Wallaszkovits, musicologist and head of the Phonogrammarchiv’s audio department, took on a professorship for conservation and restoration of new media and digital information at the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design. In January 2020, the Phonogrammarchiv welcomed two new members of staff, Katrin Abromeit and Benjamin Fischer, who specialize in the restoration of historical sound carriers and audio digitization.

Having officially opened on 29 November 2019, the [Music and Minorities Research Center](#) (MMRC) can look back on its first year of operation. Despite the challenges caused by the pandemic, MMRC was able to successfully initiate or implement a number of projects and activities. A widely-visible highlight was the first MMRC Lecture, which took place on 11 November 2020 and featured the key note “Anthropological Reflections on Fortress Europe” by Dawn Chatty (University of Oxford), a response to this keynote by Marko Kölbl (mdw), a lively discussion, and musical contributions by Salah Ammo, Bahram Ajezyar, and Milad Bakhtiyari ([a recording of the event is available online](#)). With regards to research, Ioannis Christidis has joined MMRC with his doctoral project “Music in the Experience of Forced Migration From Syria To the European Borderland.” A collaborative research project on music in Viennese municipal housing complexes (led by MMRC and including the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv as one of the partner institutions) had to be

delayed due to the covid-19 pandemic, but will finally start in early 2021. Work also began in 2020 on the new peer-reviewed open access journal *Music and Minorities*, which will be launched in autumn 2021 with an inaugural collection of articles on music and forced migration.

The Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology at mdw offers a full [master’s programme](#) in ethnomusicology. In the fall semester of 2020, the second group of MA ethnomusicology students started their studies, after performing in a self-chosen traditional music or dance style at the entrance exam. The curriculum provides extensive space for fieldwork training, as well as independent fieldwork projects. A further focus is on the socio-political implications of our discipline, offering courses on, for example, minority research, gender studies, and applied ethnomusicology. The MA in ethnomusicology is the first of its kind in Austria and takes up a pioneering role within German-speaking academia. The [master’s programme](#) is offered in German and English.

In 2020 the Council unfortunately lost two prominent members: Rudolf Pietsch and Franz Födermayr.

Franz Födermayr was a university assistant from 1964, and professor of comparative musicology from 1973 to 1999 at the Institute of Musicology of the University of Vienna. He was a teacher, the doctoral supervisor of many ethnomusicologists, and without a doubt a very important figure in the history of Austrian ethnomusicology.

Rudolf Pietsch worked at the Department of Folk Music Research and Ethnomusicology of mdw since 1981. His achievements for our institute and university but also for the folk music scene in Austria as a whole were considerable and manifold. Rudolf Pietsch’s ability to combine musical practice and scholarship was without doubt one of his most significant strengths. In addition to his teaching, he was also able to inspire generations of students of folk music as a musician.

Franz Födermayr and Rudolf Pietsch will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by all members of the Austrian NC.