Tips for CIM organisers

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The aim of this document

This document has two main aims. The first is to help colleagues to organise a CIM. The second is to maintain a high academic and organisational standard at CIMs. Please do not be put off by the length of the document. Organising a conference generally takes a lot of time. In our experience, the time you spend organising the conference can generally be reduced by studying guidelines such as these well in advance. If you spend an hour or two studying this now, you can save tens of hours of organisational time in the future. We therefore recommend to all CIM organisers that they study this document carefully as soon as possible, say three years before the conference. Please read it again two years before, and again one year before. Each time, please send your questions and suggestions for improvement to the president of the Society for Interdisciplinary Musicology (SIM).

If you would you like to organise a CIM:

First, please write to the SIM president with answers to the following questions:

- How long have you been a member of SIM?
- Which CIMs have you attended in the past?
- What experience do you have of peer-review procedures as an author, reviewer or editor, in any area?
- What experience do you have as an author, reviewer or editor in CIM or JIMS?
- Do you have one or more good publications in the proposed thematic area of the conference?
- Describe briefly how you worked together or are working together with a colleague from a different discipline, crossing the boundary between humanities and sciences, humanities and musical practice, or science and musical practice.
- As a CIM organiser, you should collaborate with colleagues across the humanities-sciences divide. If you are a humanities scholar, with which scientist will you collaborate to organise the conference? If you are a scientist, with which humanities scholar? Have you already talked to that person about co-organising a CIM?

To organise a CIM you should be able to demonstrate positive contributions in all the above areas. Please also attach your short CV and publication list. Your application will be considered by the SIM council.

If we have already agreed that you can organise a CIM:

Welcome and good luck! The aim of this document is to help you to turn your idea into a successful event.

The most important points

Read this document carefully. The aim of this document is to help you. Basically, you are free to do what you want. But you should also take advantage of the experience of other conference organisers in this series. The time you spend reading this document will be much, much shorter than the time that can be wasted by poor conference planning. So please invest this time as soon as possible. This document summarises suggestions based on previous CIMs. Of course there are many

different opinions and approaches to organising a conference. This document includes many suggestions from past organisers. Please read it carefully and send your questions and suggestions to the SIM president, which will help her or him keep the document up to date. After your suggestions have been incorporated, the document will have the character of a loose agreement.

Attend a CIM. Before planning a CIM, is important to present a paper at a previous CIM to get a feel for the content, participants, organisation and procedures. Please also browse through other pages on the CIM homepage and send me any questions or comments about the detailed content. We like new ideas, but we also expect the best features of previous CIMs to be maintained. If there is a disagreement, the matter can be referred to the SIM council. But in the end you are free to do what you consider appropriate. What you decide to do should at least be based on your active contribution to a previous CIM.

Take control and act independently. You are responsible for the entire conference, including every detail. It is also up to you to remember to do things at the right time (see draft timetable below). As they say in airports: Boarding calls will not be made. The SIM president and council will assume that you have read and understood this document and that you will remember to do the most important things at the right time (see "planning" below").

Distribute the call for papers (CFP) widely about 18 months in advance. It's a good idea to start drafting the CFP two years in advance and comparing it with the calls for papers of previous CIMs (please contact the organisers directly). If you think 18 months is too soon, write to the SIM president about it well in advance and we will come to a new agreement. Or just read the following: The most important predictor of the success of your conference is the number of abstract submissions. If you get a lot of submissions, the conference will probably be good. Afterwards people will write to you saying how much they enjoyed it, how many interesting people they met, and all the things they learned. If not, it could be a failure: when leading contributors see that there are not many good papers on the program, they may withdraw themselves and make the program even smaller. If you are thinking of a conference with about 100 presentations (e.g. 50 talks in two parallel sessions over three days, plus 50 posters) and good quality (which based on past experience means rejecting at least 20% of submissions based on anonymous reviews), you will need well over 100 abstract submissions that conform to the submission guidelines and are worth sending to reviewers. For a regular conference on an interesting topic, that may not be so difficult to achieve. But in the case of CIM there is an additional difficulty: humanities scholars and scientists need to get together well before the submission deadline to plan their abstract. For that reason, you should decide on the exact dates of the conference about 2 years in advance, and send out the CFP about 18 months in advance. "Sending out" means drafting a list of the main email lists in all areas of music research and making sure the CFP is sent to those lists. Please you send your call to at least 20 email lists in diverse subdisciplines of musicology, and request that people send it to further lists. You can ask the organisers of previous CIMs for a list of the email lists that they used; please also search the internet for relevant lists, because new lists are appearing all the time. Or just ask colleagues in different subdisciplines which lists they are on.

How often can CIMs happen?
There should not be more than one CIM in a calendar year, for two reasons:

- Academic sustainability: we want to avoid creating a bubble that will one day burst.
- Identification: More than one conference in a calendar year would cause confusion regarding the abbreviations CIM04, CIM05, CIM07 etc.

How big is a typical CIM budget?
This will vary a lot depending on your concept and support network, so the following figures are mere ideas, or at best very approximate. Total income and expenses might be 15 000 Euro or more. Income might be split like this: 10 000 EUR from registration fees and 5 000 from grants.
Here is a possible breakdown of expenses in EUR (order-of-magnitude estimates only!):

- 2000 or more for travel and accommodation of guest speakers
- 2000 for lunches (paid for directly by participants)
- 3000 for printing (abstract booklet, program, posters)
- 4000 in contracts (administrative assistants, creating and maintaining website)
- 1000 for coffee breaks
- 1000 or more for musicians performing at reception and banquets
- 2000 for smaller cost categories

Please note that these figures have not yet been compared with the budgets of recent CIMs. It would be possible to give more information about the finances of recent CIMs, but I am not sure that that would help organisers very much, because in every location there are different opportunities for funding and at different institutions there are different traditions for financing conferences. Organisers who are curious about the finances of other CIMs may of course write to the organisers directly.

Funding
Every location has different opportunities for public and perhaps also private funding. Find out for yourself about those local opportunities and traditions well in advance of your conference to enhance your chances of getting the funding that you need. Check out other conferences that happened recently at your university and ask where they got their funding from, which people they approached and so on. There is not much that can be said about this on a page like this - you have to enquire for yourself.

Collecting registration fees
Computer systems for payment by credit card are improving. When you consider the enormous amount of time that it takes to deal with bank transfers, credit card payments etc. by regular mail or email (it's amazing how much can go wrong and how long it takes to fix errors), it is worth spending some money in advance on a reliable computer payment system, or perhaps finding out if your university has one that you can use.

To collect registration fees by post or email from participants in advance, you might need a half-time position for about 3 months, or perhaps 10 hours per week for 6 months, which of course is very expensive. A lot of administrative time can be saved if people are asked to pay the registration fee in cash on arrival in exchange for

conference materials, but that increases the chance of last-minute cancellations. A possible solution might be to insist on written confirmation in advance of the intention to attend including specification of travel plans - when and how - and a contribution to the proceedings, but that hasn't been tried yet. Perhaps the best policy is to ask colleagues at your local institution how they collected registration fees, and take their advice.

How many people will attend a CIM?
Up to now, each CIM has attracted 50 to 100 people - the number depends on theme, location and possible clashes with other conferences. If you are doing something particularly new or unusual, you need to explore alternative and creative forms of publicity, otherwise the number of abstract submissions may be disappointing, which could even lead to cancelation of your event. You can avoid calendar clashes by reading (music) conference websites (1, 2, 3) and by setting and advertising the date of your conference on the main CIM webpages as early as possible (I suggest three years in advance, see suggested timetable below).

Sustainability
Conferences produce a lot of CO2 from flying. To reduce that, the registration fee can be reduced for participants who can demonstrate on arrival that they did not fly on the way. This is easy to do and I strongly recommend it. Please also get in contact with your local computer support people well in advance of the conference and talk to them about video conferencing, which can allow many more people can take part in your conference, especially students or people with less money. Conferences of the future will surely incorporate a lot of video conferencing, and given the urgency of global warming, the time to start is now. The more people get used to video conferencing, the more the technology will improve, which in turn will increase acceptance. Another option is to hold your conference in two distant locations simultaneously; many of the presentations can be coordinated by video link. You can find more ideas on sustainability here.

Theme
The theme of your CIM should be relevant and interesting for most musically relevant disciplines and subdisciplines of musicology. It should allow for a good balance between humanities and sciences. As far as possible, the theme should be expressed in a single word. A variety of interpretations of that word should be allowed.

Since CIM is already thematically diverse due to the mixture of humanities and sciences, all conference submissions should clearly address the theme, otherwise the conference will lack focus. Good submissions that do not clearly address the theme should be accepted only as posters (even if both reviewers like the content).

The theme of the conference is like a signpost that should be clearly attached to all publicity about the conference, beginning about 18 months in advance (see timeline below). With this single word or phrase you should endeavour to reach as many interested people in the world as possible. You first aim is that they write "CIM" into their diaries or planners, along with the theme (again: a single word is a good idea). There should be no competing music conference, local or global, that reduces the clarity of the theme. It should be clear that the conference will allow a critical mass of experts to devote their attention to the theme, which in turn will produce significant progress in the area of the theme.

Of course, all submissions must also be musically relevant. For example scientific

methodology or background issues should not be put in the foreground at the expense of musical issues. Such submissions should be accepted only as posters, even if reviewers them. CIM is about music!

Call for papers (CFP)

Don't reinvent the wheel. Collect the CFP of previous CIMs and use them as models. Please write directly to the organisers of previous CIMs to get these documents. Use much the same format, and take advantage of what has already been tried and tested. But of course new developments are also welcome.

It should be clear from the CFP that CIM is no ordinary conference, because each submission has at least two authors, one from the humanities and one from the sciences. (Some organisers have allowed for the first two authors to represent two of the following three areas: humanities, sciences, musical practice. But note that this contradicts the main aim of the Society for Interdisciplinary Musicology, which is to promote communication across the most difficult divide, the one separating humanities and sciences.) Potential participants should understand that they need to start looking for a suitable collaborator well before the deadline, if they do not already have one.

Abstracts should be structured with the usual headings: Background in XXX (first discipline corresponding to the main expertise of the first author, e.g. “Anthropology”), Background in XXX (second discipline corresponding to the second author, e.g. “Psychology”), Aims, Main contribution, Implications for musicological interdisciplinarity, References. Amazing but true: many people don't realise that we are expecting relevant text under all of these headings, especially the first two: It is not enough to label the disciplines, you also have to talk about relevant research in those disciplines (not about the disciplines themselves, incidentally). In your guidelines, please make this clear. Please also write that, of these six sections, the Aims section should be the shortest; the aim should be stated clearly and directly in one short sentence (since one of the main problems encountered in abstract submissions is an unclear aim). Please also indicate that abstract submissions with missing sections will be rejected.

The abstract submission deadline should be presented as if it is quite strict, and you can confidently expect most people to regard it as such. In fact, deadlines are often flexible: submissions may be accepted as long as two weeks after the specified deadline. If you receive late submissions, you will have to make a subjective, independent decision: If you think the submission has potential, send it to reviewers (even if it means bothering them with an additional task), and if you think it does not have potential, inform the author that they missed the deadline, so that's it, sorry. In my experience as a conference organiser, you must be free to make this decision autonomously, otherwise the review procedure would never be satisfactorily completed. There simply isn't time for a discussion.

For distributing your CFP, see "the most important points" above.

Target participants

Aim for a balance between older, more experienced researchers and younger, more ambitious and flexible researchers. When preparing your publicity, make it appealing to both groups. It is especially important to attract a lot of good doctoral students and postdocs:

- Young researchers are the future of musicology. CIM will have been a success if it succeeds in making musicology more flexible and inclusive in the long term.
- Young researchers are more flexible and therefore more likely to develop synergetic collaborations between humanities and sciences in advance of the conference. Their supervisors are often too busy with various projects already running to start a new project with a colleague from a distant discipline.

Keynotes
You should invite one or more scholars to give keynote addresses, and include their names in the CFP in order to encourage others to submit abstracts.

- Send invitations two years before the conference. The earlier the better! You need to leave enough time for negotiation with potential keynotes, and for people who take months to say no, so that you can ask someone else. The CFP cannot be distributed until the keynotes are finalised, and after that you will need time to distribute the call to all interested people in different disciplines, and to make sure they got the message; time for potential participants to prepare their interdisciplinary collaborations and abstract contributions; and time to evaluate the submissions; and time to finalize the program.
- Before inviting someone to give a keynote, make sure you have enough money in your budget to cover all travel and accommodation expenses. We do not normally offer a fee, nor do we cover food; but keynotes may be offered a free ticket to the conference dinner or banquet.
- Before offering keynotes, do a systematic literature search to find colleagues who have recently made major high-level international contributions in the specific topic area of your conference. Of those, you should favor colleagues with a proven ability to work across the humanities-sciences divide. If you can afford more than one keynote, strive for a good balance between women and men, and between native English speakers and others. There are many different ways of promoting cultural diversity that you might consider.
- Keynotes are normally given by individuals. The CIM requirement that the first two authors represent humanities and sciences in either order does not normally apply to keynotes. Instead, we choose keynote speakers who already have considerable experience crossing the boundary between humanities and sciences. They are asked to present examples of this kind of interdisciplinarity, and they are generally in a good position to do so without the need to collaborate.

Planning
Experience shows that there is nothing to be lost by doing things on time, and nothing to be gained by doing them late or in a hurry. If you are interested in organising a CIM, please first consider the following.

- **-5 years:** Start negotiating place, year and theme.
- **-4 years:** Decide tentatively on place, year and theme.
- **-3 years:** Have the date, place, and theme announced on the main CIM page. Explore possible sources of funding, considering their priorities, aims and procedures.

- **-2.5 years:** Apply for financial assistance from several sources; when one application is successful, it may increase the changes of others succeeding. Invite colleagues to join the three committees described elsewhere (local, advisory, review). Invite keynotes as soon as you are sure you can cover their expenses. Apply for an internet address or domain from your local institution and think about internet software and design issues.
- **-2 years:** Finalize conference dates (e.g. Thursday, Friday, Saturday). Avoid clashes by checking the music conference billboards at Royal Holloway, Conference Alerts, Royal College, Music Conferences Worldwide; once the dates are set, advertise them on those billboards. You webpage design should be similar enough to previous CIM pages to make the connection clear, but also different enough to establish your identity. Tentatively establish committee membership and list the names on the website. Contact JIMS and make arrangements for a special issue following the conference. Draft the CFP.
- **-18 months:** Finalize and distribute the CFP and open your conference homepage. The CFP should include the conference homepage address, one or more "figurehead keynote(s)", the members of the academic advisory committee, and the logos of supporting organisations. The homepage should include a title line that makes it easy to find it in a search engine, e.g. <title>Conference on Interdisciplinary Musicology on theme, place, date</title>.Distribute the call widely: find 20 about major email lists of different relevant disciplines by searching the internet and asking colleagues, then ask colleagues on those lists to make sure the message gets through. Send the call also to organisers of previous CIMs, and ask them to forward it to CIM participants. Music research societies may also help with distribution. Don't worry if your CFP goes out before the previous CIM; potential participants need to get your CFP at least half a year before the abstract submission deadline so they can think about their exact research question and initiate collaboration with a colleague in a contrasting discipline.
- **-9 months:** Abstract submission deadline
- **-6 months:** Send acceptances (talks and posters) and rejections - along with reviewers' comments in every case - to all those who submitted an abstract, including all "borderline cases". People need a definite decision so they can plan accordingly.
- **-4 months:** Authors of accepted abstracts should now submit revised abstracts and register (early registration should be cheaper)
- **-2 months:** Publication of tentative program; submission deadline contributions to proceedings (voluntary)
- **-2 weeks:** Publication of final program; email to all participants with program, travel tips and so on.

You don’t have to adhere to all details of this table, but you should inform the SIM president of any major deviations between your own planning and this table, or of any suggestions on how to improve the table for the benefit of other organisers. Tip: once the time or location of any event has been published in the tentative program, don’t change it! The administrative hassle is not worth it.

Quality control

Abstract submissions are reviewed by anonymous experts - two experts per submission corresponding to the two main disciplines, one of which will be

humanities, the other sciences. You might consider sending each submission to four people, two humanities and two sciences reviewers. That way, the procedure is not delayed when a reviewer fails to submit reviews on time or repeatedly fails to meet self-imposed deadlines.

Evaluation procedures should be as simple and transparent as possible (preferably published on your own conference homepages). Don't overload the reviewers with a complicated evaluation procedure or unnecessary questions! Here is a possible evaluation format.

Analysis
Theme: Does the abstract address the conference theme? yes, no, maybe
Interdisciplinarity: Is the requirement for interdisciplinarity (as stated in the CFP) fulfilled? yes, no, maybe
Background: Are the background sections interesting, appropriate, relevant? yes, no, maybe
Aim: Does the study have a clearly expressed, interesting aim? yes, no, maybe
Plausibility: Are the claims made in the main contribution section based on clear arguments and evidence? yes, no, maybe
Implications: Are the implications interesting, appropriate, relevant? yes, no, maybe

Recommendation
Accept/reject: Should the submission be accepted? keynote, regular talk, poster, resubmit, reject

Explanation
If you recommend acceptance: How could the abstract could be improved before publication?
If you recommend rejection or resubmission: Why? (just a few points)
In this section please make only constructive, impersonal comments, since all comments will be forwarded to authors.

If you don't have time to complete all these details for each abstract, please quickly give us your opinion on each abstract, in any format that you prefer.

The above questions assume that the reviews are blind, i.e. the reviewers receive no information about the identity of the authors. In that case, it is up to the organisers to ask themselves an additional question: Are the first two authors in a position to represent the two background disciplines, on the basis of their qualifications or previous publications? If you prefer to have reviewers answer this question, give them the entire submissions including author names, affiliations and bios (and don't forget to include the additional question). This is the "non-blind" option. Each option (blind and non-blind) has its own advantages and disadvantages.

In general you have to be flexible. Accept that reviewers have their own experience, expertise, and opinions about what kind of submissions should be accepted for your conference, and accept that their approaches will differ. Check the reviewers' comments before forwarding them to the authors and delete any comments that are destructive or personal. After that, put reasonable pressure on the first authors to take all comments seriously and revise their abstracts accordingly before publication.

Committees

An important aspect of quality control is the creation of committees (boards) for different purposes. We recommend setting up three non-overlapping committees

about two years in advance of the conference. Each committee has roughly 10 members (say, 5 to 20; the review committee will probably be the biggest). Names of committee members should be listed on your conference webpage (the members of the academic advisory board may also be listed in the CFP).

- The *local organisation committee* comprises people who meet occasionally face to face and deal with different aspects of local organisation such as applying for funding, organising rooms, equipment, registration fees, student support, printing and so on. Meetings will become more frequent as the conference date approaches. It can be a mixture of academics, administrators and students.

- The *academic advisory board* comprises leading academics in relevant fields in any country, including (importantly) the country in which the conference is taking place. They all have PhDs in relevant areas. They advise the local organisation committee, commenting on procedures or giving their opinion on decisions to be made. (Don't call this committee "scientific" because we are striving for a balance between humanities and sciences.)

- The members of the *abstract review committee* have just one task: to review submitted abstracts. All have PhDs and peer-reviewed publications in relevant areas and are currently active in relevant research. They are not members of either of the other committees. They are warned in advance that they will be asked to review abstracts in a given future time period and as quickly as possible, within about two weeks. Depending on the disciplines addressed in the submitted abstracts, after the submission deadline you will usually have to find additional reviewers who are not committee members.

Whom to approach? You can get ideas for the advisory and review committees from the homepages or organisers of previous CIMs, but it is also good to invite people who have never been involved in CIM (spread the word!).

Diversity. You are free to approach anyone you think is appropriate, but in every case aim for an appropriate balance between humanities and sciences, women and men, and western and non-western researchers. Think also about linguistic diversity: avoid a dominance of colleagues whose first language is English. Affirmative action for women and non-western scholars is part of quality control because quality is generally improved by increasing the diversity of people doing research (diversity of background, approach, creative ideas etc.). Affirmative action goes beyond mere anti-discrimination by pushing the balance in the other direction to counteract the wrongs of the past and continuing wrongs of the present. CIM supports affirmative action in the following ways. If there are two reviewers for each represented discipline (half of which are humanities), one should be a woman and one a man. Aim for at least 1/3 non-western scholars among the reviewers; well over half should speak a language other than English as their first language. At the category boundaries between invitations, talks, posters and rejections, give preference to women, non-western scholars and humanities scholars. Half of any invited speakers should be women; if at first you don't succeed (if you can't find suitably qualified women, or the first woman you ask declines) try again: ask for advice, change the topic and so on.

Size. You may need to do a bit of arithmetic to estimate the size of the review board. It is reasonable to ask committee members to agree in advance to reviewing 10-20 abstract submissions each. Since each submission is reviewed by two people,

one from humanities and one from sciences, you will need about 20 people on the committee: 10 from humanities and 10 from sciences. That way, you can review 100-200 submissions. It is normal to ask for additional reviews from people who are not on the committee.

Attendance. Please do not expect committee members to attend the conference; the main thing is to take advantage of their expertise during planning and the review procedure, and if in addition they attend the conference it is a bonus. (Any committee member is invited to send me ideas for improving these guidelines!)

Student support team. A few months before the start of the conference, you will need to start putting together a fourth committee, called the student support team, made up of student volunteers, and led by a member of the local organising committee. This committee will give students the opportunity to learn how a conference is run and to enjoy being part of it rather than observing from the outside. Their enthusiasm will perk up the atmosphere! The student support team should to ensure in advance that each individual talk runs smoothly. For this they will need two assistants in every presentation, one who understands the equipment and one who makes sure the speakers have what they need and is ready to act if anything else goes wrong. Not to mention having someone always at the registration desk, having all team members in contact my mobile phone etc. It's a good idea to appoint an advanced student or younger academic staff member to organise the student support team. She or he will need to plan a meeting lasting a few hours for the entire team just before the conference, to go through the details. Include the names of the team members on your homepage and/or program and acknowledge their contribution in the closing session or dinner.

The art of delegation. Conference organisers often make the mistake of trying to do everything themselves. The solution is to learn the art of delegating - giving other people specific responsibilities. If a conference seems disorganised, it may be because the organiser has too much to do and think about, which is often because s/he did not delegate enough tasks to other people in advance.

Accepting submissions for the program

First, a few words of warning:

- It is not normal to reject anything unless two reviewers independently recommend rejection, or if the topic clearly does not suit the conference. If on the other hand two reviewers independently recommend rejection you really should reject regardless of your personal opinion.

- You will have to limit the number of presentations of which a given participant can be first author. I suggest one spoken presentation and one poster per first author. Another possibility is to say that each participant cannot be first author of more than one presentation of any kind. The number of presentations for which a participant can be second or later author might be limited to a number like three. It's a good idea to decide these rules in advance to avoid potential misunderstandings.

- Regular submissions should be programmed in parallel sessions so that participants are forced to choose which talk they will attend. Keynotes should be scheduled without anything else running at the same time; the same applies to poster sessions. In this regard it is important to be consistent and treat everyone equally. A paper that has been accepted as a regular talk

should not be scheduled alone without competition from another parallel session. The number of parallel sessions should be held as constant as possible (usually two, sometimes three).

- Organisers should follow their own rules. Of course you and your colleagues in the local organising committee should take the opportunity to present your own work, but in that case you must also arrange for an independent person to organise a confidential peer-review procedure and to promise never to allow you to find out the identity of the reviewers. If two reviewers independently agree to reject your submission, you must accept their verdict. In other words treat yourself and others equally. In addition, an organiser should not be the second author of several papers of which his or her students or colleagues are first authors. The program should not give the impression that organisers are giving themselves special treatment in this regard. Colleagues whose submissions were rejected will be especially sensitive to this. Finally do not make the mistake of favorising a local committee member by scheduling their talk without competition from another talk.

The program

Talks should not start before 9 am (perhaps 8:30 for an additional event to make sure people arrive on time for a 9am talk) and they should not continue beyond 6 pm. Regular talk timeslots should last for 30 minutes. Experience has shown that this is the best solution for CIM. At scientific conferences, timeslots are sometimes shorter (20 minutes), and at humanities conferences they are sometimes longer (45 minutes). Because CIM balances humanities and sciences, CIM should aim for a compromise between these extremes. It will be easier to plan, read and remember the program if all talks start on the hour or half hour. Keynotes should last for one hour, that's 40 for the talk, 15 for questions and 5 to change. Make sure the speaker knows at the start they have to stop after 40 minutes to allow for questions.

Parallel sessions are good because if the conference lasts for about three days it enables you to approach an optimal number of participants which in my experience is 100 (although 50 is also ok). Many of these people will give posters. The optimal number of parallel sessions is two because it gives people some choice but does not overwhelm them. Treat all 30-minute papers equally by making sure the number of parallel sessions is always the same so that the audience size will be approximately constant. If you can't fit the accepted papers into two parallel sessions, some should be shifted to the poster session or rejected. CIM is not intended to be a big conference - quality is more important than quantity.

The two rooms should be next to each other or at least close. Don't expect your participants to wander around the university looking for the rooms. The tea/coffee and food during the breaks should be free (part of the conference fee) and it should happen close to the rooms and posters. The area where refreshments are served should be a place where participants feel comfortable (with windows and a door to walk out for the smokers). Poster presenters will be happy if conference participants are constantly walking past their posters even when they are not being presented, so don't hide the posters away in a room that no-one goes into except during the official poster presentation. Coffee breaks should last for 30 minutes - no shorter! People have very interesting conversations in coffee breaks that often led to new collaborations. People also need a break so they can concentrate for the next two hours. Don't forget to serve cakes, cookies, fruit etc. Lunch break should last for at

least 90 minutes so people can have good conversations. Two hours is about right.

The 30-minute slots should begin and end exactly on time, especially if there are parallel sessions. There is nothing to be lost from running the program on time - and a lot to gain. Some people are afraid of being exactly on time because it has a kind of military feel. That may be true in general but not at a conference in which there are different events running in parallel. In that case timing is important, otherwise important agreements will not be kept and people will be justifiably upset. Participants invest a lot of money in the trip and should be given an attentive audience for the arranged period of time. This is not generally possible if the previous speaker has run over time. Moreover, running everything on time (including the end of sessions before breaks) allows audience members to plan their private time, e.g. arranging to do things after sessions finish or between sessions.

Since we have now created a Society for Interdisciplinary Musicology, please include a time-slot of 60-90 minutes for a general meeting of the society that is not in parallel with something else.

If you are afraid people will be late for the start of a session, e.g. the first session in the morning or after lunch, program something before the start so that people can be late for that something but on time for the session. Remember people are finding their way around an unfamiliar place and have unknown commitments. For example a session might begin with an introduction by the chair in which the speakers and their main points are introduced (on the program: "Chair's introduction"). This could start for example at 8:50 for a 9:00 session or at 10:55 for an 11:00 session. The chair should begin this introduction exactly on time regardless of who is in the audience (this applies to anything in the program). That everything should start and end on time and not 1-2 minutes late should be emphasized in the guidelines for chairs. All talks in 30-minute slots should end after exactly 20 minutes, which gives enough time for questions and changing rooms. Speakers should be informed that they are not permitted to continue presenting during the question period. The question period is not "theirs" to use, it "belongs" to the audience who paid registration and travelled a long way to the conference, and it is administered by the conference organisers. The end of the last session before a break should also be on time and not 1-2 minutes late. When the time is up, there is no time for the people still wanting to ask a question, they can do so privately or should have raised their hands sooner. Sorry.

All chairs should receive in their welcome pack a set of cards in A4 size with "10 minutes to go" and so on in large letters. They should be asked to sit in the line of sight of the speaker to make sure these signs will be seen (perhaps even write that on the back of the cards). They need a short text explaining why everything should start and finish on time and how to make sure that happens. It might be an idea to write these suggestions on the back of the cards themselves. In general, if people are not sticking to the program, the organisers are responsible, either because they forgot to put important details in the program or they were too casual about enforcing it.

Study the programs of previous CIMs when creating your program. Consider the concentration span of the audience (you can't put more than four 30-minute sessions in a block without a break). Tea/coffee breaks are important, that's where some of the most interesting interactions for individuals take place; but toward the end of the break someone has to ring a bell and remind people to return to the sessions (so you will need a bell or some similar way to make noise). Think in advance of all the ways in which programs can get behind schedule, and incorporate the solutions in the program to make sure that doesn't happen.

Presentation guidelines
Experts don't need guidelines for reviewing paper submissions, but younger researchers do need helpful guidelines on how to give a talk or present a poster. You can generally find and compare different guidelines from different conferences in different disciplines, then write your own and put them in the internet. Guidelines should be relatively short (about one page) which means focusing only on the most common problems and their practical solution, and forgetting the rest. For example, a common problem with posters is that it takes too long to see what the poster is really about. Too much information is presented, there is too much clutter and the main point is missed. Often the main aim or point only becomes clear after talking to the authors for a while. The solution is to write somewhere prominently (e.g. at the start of the abstract or conclusion) what the poster is mainly about in a direct and simple fashion that people in different disciplines will understand - as for example a journalist would do. Often a simple everyday example helps. Also, don't forget to say obvious things, such as for example that posters should be in A0 format, and that both vertical (portrait) and horizontal (landscape) formats will be accepted (which depend on the size of your poster boards).

Opening and closing the conference
Like a piece of music, or more generally any form of ritual, a conference needs a start, a middle an end. The start makes it clear that we are departing from everyday life for a while and the end is about returning to everyday life. The start should also make participants feel like part of a special group, and the end is about discontinuing that group, but remembering how special it was.

You will need an opening session in which participants are welcomed, reminded about the aims of the conference, and told about basic organisation. That way you don't have to make organisational announcements at the start of sessions which can also take time away from presenters. Presentations by local deans, rectors, presidents, politicians and so should be avoided or kept short because they do not fulfill the main aims of opening sessions for the participants. Instead, the organisers or an invited speaker should prepare an entertaining presentation with good use of media, perhaps also live music and good examples of the research questions that surround the conference theme and clarify the theme's relevance and the timeliness of the conference.

The best way to close the conference is with a dinner and party. This event should be inexpensive so that both young and old can afford it (remember that people who get a refund for registration, travel and/or accommodation usually do not get a refund for the dinner). It should last from about 7 pm to about midnight at the end of the last day. Needless to say, you will need the right amount of alcohol so that the dinner will develop into a party where people have fun. The venue should have a nice atmosphere: windows that open and close with a nice view outside, an opportunity for people to go out and come in. You will need good live background music that will not stop people talking to each other. When the music stops, you will need appropriate unobtrusive background recorded music. A short wrap-up announcement and thanks to student support team etc. is a good idea, but keep it short and don't interrupt the main function of this event which is for individuals to talk to each other and have fun. Academic organisers may think the dinner is not part of their job, but in fact CIM is about interaction between humanities and sciences, and interaction is based on social relationships.

If the dinner is on Saturday, that should be the end of the conference. Please don't schedule anti-climactic sessions on Sunday morning after a party. People need a

break, and they also need to go home to their families. Many will be teaching on Monday morning, followed by a full week. Besides, conference participants whose talks are programmed on the morning after a party will rightly feel they are not being treated equally. There is already inequality between talks and posters, but at least it is transparent and based on reviewers' comments.

Post-conference publication

Around ten of the papers presented at each CIM are published in a special issue of JIMS. The papers must satisfy the JIMS submission guidelines. Additional papers can be published in a special issue of another journal or in a book. The other journal's discipline or focus should correspond to the conference theme. Each issue or book needs one or more guest editors. Conference organisers are asked to contact JIMS well in advance of the conference to make arrangements.

The first thing to do after the conference is to select the best papers and invite the first authors to contribute to a special issue. Papers should only be invited if they have been published in the proceedings, and participants must be informed of this requirement well before the deadline for proceedings submissions. To decide which proceedings papers to invite, it helps to collect all available evidence in a table and send the table to the prospective editors for comment. The relevant evidence includes

- the ratings for the original abstract submission
- ratings of the conference presentations (two possibilities: ask the chairs of the sessions in advance to evaluate the presentations in their session, and ask conference participants to nominate the best talks of the conference in an evaluation form to be submitted on the last day of the conference), and
- ratings of the proceedings papers (the prospective editors can do that).

The easiest and most objective procedure is to express all ratings as numbers, add them up and sort the candidates in order of their total rating. Once the guest editors agree on the selection, the first authors with the best ratings should be informed that they are invited to submit to the journal in question but that the submissions (revisions of the proceedings contributions) will be subject to the journal's regular and entire peer-review procedure. That means that rejection is possible (the journal's review procedure must be respected, and the reviewers of the submissions should as far as possible be different from the previous reviewers of abstracts, conference presentations and proceedings contributions) but unlikely (in the light of the previous reviews).

Roles and responsibilities

The SIM president will advise on the content and presentation of texts such as the CFP and perhaps also guideline documents (review, writing abstracts, proceedings format etc.), and s/he may also comment on drafts of the program. It is not her/his task to publicize the conference, select committee members, look at individual submissions, write new texts, or help edit the proceedings. You, the local organiser, will have a lot to do, including applying for funding, designing and maintaining a website, arranging accommodation, food, rooms, posterboards, musical entertainment, preparing information on travel to the conference venue, having the abstract book proof-read, designed, printed, having bags and nametags made, organising a team of assistants and so on.