



## **IAML 2024, Stellenbosch**

### **Closing Session**

Time: Friday 28 June, 15.30 – 16.00 SAST

Location: Endler Hall, University of Stellenbosch

#### **Words of farewell from outgoing President Pia Shekhter**

A wonderful week has come to an end. On behalf of the IAML Board and the attendees of the congress I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the Organizing Committee and to all the people behind the scenes who have contributed to such a success. It has been a true privilege to attend this Congress in charming Stellenbosch, surrounded by such stunning scenery. The Konservatorium and the University Library have been perfect venues for our meeting and the technical support has been absolutely flawless.

Ellen Tise, Senior Director of the University Library and Information Services and the people on the Organizing Committee have made each and every one of us feel like a very special and welcome guest. Their generosity has been exceptional, with free and very tasty lunches. A special treat that gave us all a pleasant surprise.

The concerts have also been extraordinary and obviously been chosen with great care. It has been most appreciated by the attendees.

I propose a warm round of applause.

Let me also thank the paper and poster presenters who have charged the congress week with so much knowledge and engagement. I would like to encourage all congress attendees to share your experiences with colleagues back home, and to enthuse them about IAML. Remember that each of us can all play an important role as ambassadors of our fantastic Association.

Last, but not least, I thank our sponsors: The Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, South Africa – gold sponsor and sponsor for the Opening reception; Nkoda – our second gold sponsor and Sabinet for the amazing performance at the opening ceremony and for the music we will enjoy at the Farewell dinner tonight.

I would like to talk more about the strong impressions I have from my first ever visit to South Africa, but it will have to wait until the Farewell dinner.

Since this is my last congress as IAML's President, our Secretary General Anders has promised to allow me a few minutes for some personal reflections.

It has been a great honour for me to be IAML's President for three years. I am always immensely proud to represent our Association at various events.

When I became IAML's President in 2021 I soon realized that there is actually no job description for the President. You are more or less free to form your role as President according to your own priorities. During my eight years as IAML's Secretary General I had the privilege to work together with three great Presidents, namely Roger Flury, Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie, and Stanisław Hrabia. They were all excellent, but with very different approaches.

Right after I was elected, Anders Cato, asked me what would be my Presidential theme. I think he asked with a wink in his eye, because this is not something IAML's Presidents typically have. I thought however that this might not be a bad idea and pondered for a long time before I finally formulated the motto: "Together we advocate for the importance of our work and reach out with confidence and professional pride." I wanted to include the words advocate and reach out, because these words are central in IAML's stated aims. Other words I wanted to incorporate were 'confidence' and 'professional pride'. As a member of IAML we can all support the advancement of our profession through international cooperation, help set the professional agenda, and establish standards and best practices. This is something very rewarding and does, I think, boost one's confidence and professional pride.

During the General Assembly I mentioned the long process we called "The Future of IAML". which started in 2010 and continued for many years. It focused on restructuring the organization and was by its nature inward facing. When I indicated my interest in becoming IAML's President I emphasized that I would, if elected, concentrate on outward facing matters, such as advocacy, networking, and visibility. These three interconnected areas have been a focus during my presidency.

I have done my best to make IAML visible and to emphasize our important role in the world's musical ecosystem by actively participating in international conferences and meetings with our sister organizations: the International Music Council (IMC), the International Musicological Society (IMS), the International Association of Sound and Audio-Visual Materials (IASA), and the International Council for Music and Dance. IFLA (the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions)) is, obviously, another essential partner. I have also tried to tie us closer to UNESCO. I believe that cultivating these relationships are crucially important for the sustainability of our Association.

Another focus has been on IAML's national branches – the backbone of our Association. I think a closer collaboration between IAML's twenty-four national branches has great potential, for example when it comes to education & training.

I am convinced that IAML has a successful and sustainable future, thanks to the expertise and commitment of the membership in IAML's spirit of friendly and supportive co-operation. I take this opportunity to thank them sincerely for their engagement at various levels.

I would also like to thank the Board members from the bottom of my heart. It has been a great privilege to work with such competent, experienced, and dedicated people in a collegial and generous atmosphere. I am truly grateful and will treasure these three years for the rest of my life.

It is now a great pleasure for me to hand over the Presidency to Rupert Ridgwell, Lead Curator of printed music at the British Library. I know very well, of course, that Rupert is a prominent figure, but I must admit that I was surprised to find that there is already a Rupert Museum in Stellenbosch!! I have not had time to visit the museum, but I am sure it must be something very special. Jokes aside, I am so happy that this wonderful, clever, experienced, and well-balanced person will be my successor.

Congratulations to IAML and Good luck to our new President! I hereby solemnly present the IAML gavel.

### **The new President, Rupert Ridgwell, introduces himself**

Thank you. I would firstly like to echo Pia's words of thanks to Ellen Tise and the local organising committee for their tireless work and for welcoming us so warmly to Stellenbosch. This has been a truly fantastic Congress and I'm sure we'll all remember it for many years to come.

This week has also demonstrated once again the vitality of our Association: I'm very fortunate to be able to work with fantastic colleagues on the Board; we have so many enthused members engaged in the work of our Sections, Committees and National Branches; we have a very strong journal, and lots of activity on the website and social media. And of course we benefit hugely from the R-projects, which contribute so much to the rich tapestry of the Congress programme.

The programme this year was also enriched by contributions from many colleagues in South Africa and from across the African continent. We've made valuable new contacts, exchanged ideas, and gained new perspectives. But this is just the beginning. It's a big priority for me and for the Board to build on this experience and to continue the dialogue. We've already had several conversations about how to proceed during the course of this week, so please watch this space.

In a few moments we'll look ahead to next year's Congress but I have one more important topic to address. When Pia and I talked about the choreography of this closing session a few weeks ago we agreed that this would be the time for 'the new President to introduce himself'. At least, that's what I led her to believe. But rather than talking about me, I'm going to talk about Pia instead. It's a great honour to succeed Pia as IAML President, but my goodness she's a hard act to follow.

Looking back let's remember, Pia, that your presidency began in a rather unique way, not in person but on Zoom at the end of our first online Congress in 2021. Your long experience of IAML was really important in guiding us through that uncertain period as we began to emerge from the pandemic.

Throughout your term of office, you've worked tirelessly as an ambassador for IAML, advocating for the profession internationally at the highest levels. You also encouraged us to take full advantage of technology to meet online between Congresses, providing a new forum for members to exchange knowledge and information. You've been a true motivator, taking every opportunity to bring people together and to find new ways to collaborate. And the new Focus Areas you presented this week will provide an important roadmap for the years ahead.

But most importantly you've undertaken all your duties with such warmth and enthusiasm, with endless curiosity, a great sense of fun, and with absolutely charming powers of persuasion. Qualities that to me embody so much of the IAML spirit and what we value most about our Association.

From a personal perspective, it's been a real joy and a privilege to serve with you on the Board. And of course this is not the end. We'll continue to benefit from your wisdom as Immediate Past President over the next two years and I hope and feel sure that you'll continue to do great things for IAML beyond that as well. But for now on behalf of all our members, thank you Pia for your devotion and service to IAML and to our profession.

Now I'm afraid it's an eternal truth that all good things have to come to an end. Thank you for your attention and your support. Now it's time to look ahead to our next meeting, which will take place in Salzburg, Austria, in July next year. Please welcome to the stage members of the Local Organising Committee, led by Barbara Schwarz Raminger, who will tell us about their plans and the delights they have in store for us.

### **IAML 2025 in Salzburg: Words of welcome from the Salzburg Organising Committee**

The Salzburg Organising Committee presented itself and welcomed everyone warmly to Salzburg with an inspiring video.

The Committee consists of Birgit Lechner, Eva Neumayr, Stefan Engl, Barbara Schwarz-Raminger, Agnes Brunbauer, Armin Brinzing and Irene Brandenburg.

See more about the congress on the [congress website](#).