

British Forum for Ethnomusicology

AGM

University College Cork, online and in person

10-11am UK time, Saturday 6th April 2024

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Ruard Absaroka (RA); Alexander Cannon (AC); Morgan Davies (MD) – General Administrator (minutes); Andrew Green (AG); Byron Dueck (BD) – Chair; Lea Hagmann (LH); Stina Horner (SH); Matthew Machin-Autenrieth (MMA); Min Yen Ong (MYO); Peter Underwood – Membership Administrator; (PU); Amanda Villepastour (AV); Stephen Wilford (SW)

Members Present included: Christine Dettman, Helen Ni Ghuibin, Jim Hickson, Hettie Malcolmson, Eric Petzoldt, Cara Stacey, Jonathan Stock, Esbjorn Wettermark, and many others

1. Apologies: Cassandre Balosso-Bardin (CBB); David Wong (DW); Luigi Monteanni (LM); Jason Stanyek (JS); Helena Simonett (HS)
2. Chair's report (BD)

Annual conference 2024

BD began by formally thanking all of those involved with organising this year's conference – the first time the BFE has ever met in the Republic of Ireland and the second joint conference with ICTMD Ireland. Thanks went first and foremost to Jonathan Stock for proposing the idea and chairing the conference organising committee. We very much appreciate how much work has gone into this event.

BD also thanked the other members of the committee based at University College Cork: Kelly Boyle, Michelle Finnerty, Alexander Khalil, Lijuan Qian, and Jack Talty.

BD offered thanks again to ICTMD Ireland for kindly agreeing to make this a joint conference, noting what a pleasure it was to be together again after eleven years, with hopes that the BFE can reciprocate in the future. BD also offered thanks to Dr Ann-Marie Hanlon, ICTMD Chair, and Dr Kalie Streit, ICTMD Communications Officer, for their contributions to the organisation of the event.

BD also thanked the conference assistants: chief assistant Zhao Yuanyuan as well as Chen Wei, Chen Wenqiu, Cheng Zhiyi, Kathleen Coker, Luca Gambirasio, Li Wenguan, Liu Chenchen, Liu Tianyu, Rachel Rentz, Laura Reese, Yang Yalun, and Zhang Mengwei.

BD also thanked the BFE Committee members who had helped organise the event, including MMA as key conference liaison, LM as student liaison and PU as membership administrator.

Finally, BD offered thanks in advance to Beverley Diamond for her contribution as keynote speaker, to Sile Denvir and Aibhse for their lecture recital, and to Niamh Dunne for her performance. [Chair's report follows:]

Departures

Dunya Habash as Student Liaison

Shortly following the last annual conference in Edinburgh, Student Liaison Dunya Habash stepped down at the end of a two-year term. Dunya helped organise the Research Student Conferences in 2022 in Plymouth and 2023 in Northumbria, with the former complicated in particular by a surge in coronavirus cases that made the event a lot more hybrid than was expected. She also played an important role in certain conversations on the BFE Committee around equality, diversity and inclusion. Thank you for your service to the BFE, Dunya.

Three of us will be stepping down at the end of elected or co-opted terms following this conference: Ruard Absaroka, Matthew Machin Autenrieth, and me.

Ruard Absaroka as Finance Officer and former Treasurer

Our current Finance Officer and former Treasurer Ruard Absaroka will be stepping following at least ten years, and possibly twelve, on the BFE Committee. Ruard has done an immense amount for the committee during his time in post. As a former Chair, Barley Norton, shared with me, Ruard played a central role in the challenging process of taking the membership system for the BFE in-house, which happily led to a significant increase in members and a much more professional and responsive relationship with our membership. In addition to this, Ruard set up an online system allowing donations to be made, and has continued to take part in recent discussions regarding possible improvements to this. He also helped to negotiate a financial agreement with Routledge, the publisher of the BFE's journal, and to restore the BFE's status as a charity.

All in all, his contributions to how we handle membership and his careful oversight of the books helped set our society on a solid financial footing, as evidenced by an overall increase of 108% in the BFE's bank balance between 2017 and 2022. His contributions have also made our small society more professional and stable. Thank you for your service to the BFE, Ruard.

Matthew Machin-Autenrieth as Conference Liaison

Matthew Machin-Autenrieth is leaving his post as the most senior of our three Conference Liaisons. He has served on the BFE Committee for three terms, which means nine years and many, many conferences.

The role of Conference Liaison is complex and challenging. It can involve coordinating joint events like the RMA/BFE Research Students Conference and mentoring early-career researchers as they host a first gathering. It frequently also involves contributions to discussions around travel bursaries and the student paper prize.

In addition to this, Matthew has been a truly engaged member contributing to many other aspects of Committee business, including for a long period the EDI Working Group. He has made significant interventions in key discussions and decisions and covered for me when I have been in the field.

It's rare that researchers enjoy administrative work, and I am hesitant to say anything that might land Matthew with more of it. So it is with some caution that I say there are few people I would be happier to be on a committee with than Matthew, who consistently made working on the BFE Committee easier. Thank you for your service to the BFE, Matthew.

Others leaving include

Fred Moehn as *Ethnomusicology Forum* Co-Editor

Katie Young as Editorial Assistant for *Ethnomusicology Forum*

Frances Wilkins as *Ethnomusicology Forum* Book Reviews Editor

Phil Alexander as *Ethnomusicology Forum* Media Reviews Editor

and I will mention them a little later in summarising the editors' report for the journal.

Arrivals

When there are departures, there are also arrivals. We are still hard at work recruiting in particular for a new conference liaison, so there is a chance someone will come knocking on your door.

One arrival many of you will already be familiar with from his work here at the conference, our new student liaison, Luigi Monteanni. Luigi, would you be able to stand up?

Luigi is a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology at SOAS, University of London, studying the relationships between transnational popular music and regional music in Bandung, Indonesia. He is also the co-founder of Artetetra Records: a music label and collective pursuing practice-based inquiries regarding notions of digital folklore and exoticism in late globalization. He has lectured at universities such as SOAS, ISBI Bandung and Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan) and worked for a couple of years as an applied anthropologist and qualitative researcher for Istituto Piepoli and IPSOS.

The other incoming person, not here today, is the new BFE Chair. I am delighted to announce this will be Fiorella Montero-Díaz. Fiorella is Senior Lecturer in Ethnomusicology and Director of Programmes for Music and Music Technology at Keele University. She has an undergraduate degree in sound engineering and piano performance, an MA in ethnomusicology from Goldsmiths, and a 2014 PhD in music from Royal Holloway.

Fiorella has extensive knowledge of the BFE both in terms of its history and as a present-day organisation. From 2014–2017 she was the general administrator and archivist of the society,

during which time she built the BFE's first historical archive. She then served on the executive board of the society, with particular expertise in the area of partnerships.

In recognition of her contribution to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in higher education, Fiorella was awarded the 2020 Stonewall Role Model of the Year Regional Award and the 2019 Keele Excellence Award.

She has had articles published in *Ethnomusicology Forum* and *Popular Music* and she is the co-editor, with Franka Winter, of *Citizenship in the Latin American Upper and Middle Classes. Ethnographic Perspectives on Culture, Politics, and Consumption* (Routledge). She was also the winner of a GCRF Networking Grant from the Academy of Medical Sciences for her project Sounding a Queer Rebellion: LGBTI Musical Resistances in Latin America, which has built an interdisciplinary network of 13 partners in South American countries. Welcome back to the BFE, Fiorella!

Initiatives

Over the last years, the BFE has introduced a number of initiatives, many in response to post-2020 (Dr Danielle Brown, Mr George Floyd) calls for the transformation of ethnomusicology. These include a working group focusing on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion; editorial assistance for authors of articles in *Ethnomusicology Forum* who face challenges writing in English; the introduction into the schedule of a regular online conference, facilitating the participation of ethnomusicologists who for various reasons cannot travel; and a BFE-supported membership scheme for researchers facing barriers to paying membership fees. Another initiative on the horizon, possibly for 2025, is a study day on ethics and gender.

These initiatives involve commitments of time, and in some cases, we struggle to achieve them with the limited human resources we possess. So, when the BFE puts out a call for new committee members, conference organisers, journal editors, or members of the committee, I urge you to consider taking it up. People are taking a break from the committee after a decade of contribution, and we need others to take up their work. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to those of you in attendance who have done work for the BFE or are currently doing so, whether on the journal, on the executive committee, as evaluators of prizes, or as conference organisers. I would also like to say that if you are good at keeping track of things that need doing, and sending reminders; if you have a sense for how to design structures, or make them better; and if you are able not only to deconstruct, but construct – we really need you.

We are also very grateful for your donations! [Report ends.]

3. BFE competitions and awards (AV)

AV paid tribute to BD as outgoing chair, noting that BD's style is consensual and that he is always cool-headed and thoughtful. AV remarked what a pleasure it has been to work with BD, whilst also noting that she is excited about FMD coming in as Chair.

AV encouraged students to apply for this year's student prize and proceeded to outline the new structure for BFE Student Prize. [Report follows:]

BFE Student Prize

In prior years, the BFE Student Prize is awarded annually for the best student paper presented at the BFE Annual Conference. For this year, and future conferences, the BFE Executive Committee decided to revise the guidelines for the Student Prize to be more inclusive of diverse approaches to the presentation of research. Students are now able to submit a traditional written paper submission (as in previous years), or a video submission of their presentation at the Cork conference. This allows students to work to their strengths, such as in performance-based presentations of research.

It may suit presenters who give more extemporised presentations, presentations that incorporate an element of performance. Along with videos made of live presentations, we can also accept post-recorded presentations. If you are a student wanting to enter this prize, please read the revised call and speak to someone on the committee if you are still unsure.

Following the BFE Annual Conference at The University of Edinburgh, April 2023, the student prize was awarded to **Ivan Mouraviev** for his outstanding paper, "Bass, Space, Place: The Mediation of London Dubstep Culture in an Online Discord Community." As there was a very strong field of student submissions, the prize panel made the unusual decision to nominate two honourable mentions last year. These were for **Pantea Armanfar** for the paper, "The voice of laleh-va: a plant instrument in ab-bandan forming the mutual cultural heritage of wetlands and humans," and **María del Mar Ocaña Guzmán** for her paper, "'Jewels'" within the Sound Archive: Unfolding the Metaphor's Materialities."

Judges: Heather Sparling (Chair) (Cape Breton University), Elina Seye (University of Helsinki) and Joe Browning (City University, London).

BFE Fieldwork Grants Scheme 2024

This is a scheme that supports doctoral candidates conducting ethnomusicological field research in the UK and abroad by contributing towards travel, subsistence, and other relevant fieldwork costs that are not covered by other grants.

This year we have awarded two grants. This year's recipients are Jiaxi Xie (Goldsmiths College, London) for travel costs during several months of immersive fieldwork with the Karen people near the Thai-Burmese border, and Edda Starck (The University of Aberdeen), for ecological research about violin bows. Her BFE award will cover the purchase of audio equipment for her fieldwork in Bavaria, Germany and Pernambuco, Brazil.

Judges: Min Yen Ong (University of Cambridge), Andrew Green (University of Warsaw), and Amanda Villepastour (Chair) (Cardiff University).

AV noted that the announcement of a winner for the BFE Early Career Prize is pending. This prize is awarded biennially for a distinguished article written by a BFE member who is in the early stages of their career. Nominations can be made by any member of the BFE, and self-nominations are also encouraged. Articles should be in English and be published in any peer-reviewed academic journal or edited book.

BFE/RAI Ethnomusicology Film Award 2024

This biennial award is for the most outstanding film about music/sound. The prize in 2023 went to Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier for *La Tumba Mambi* about the Tumba Francesa Societies in the east of Cuba.

Judges: Lucy Duran (SOAS) and Rebecca Dirksen (Indiana University).

AV noted that the call has gone out for next year's submissions [post-meeting note: i.e. for the 2026 award].

BFE Book Prize 2024

This is a biennial prize that recognises outstanding scholarship in ethnomusicology for a monograph or edited collection written in English.

Winner: Hettie Malcolmson (University of Southampton) for her monograph *Danzón Days: Age, Race, and romance in Mexico*. (2023) University of Illinois Press. HW thanked everyone, and echoed AV in thanking BD for his work as Chair of the BFECOM.

As there was a strong consensus in the prize panel that this book was the outright winner, they made the unusual decision not to award a Commendation Prize this year.

The panel wrote a detailed summary about the book, which will appear in full on the BFE website. I will read only an edited version now.

Danzón Days is a powerful ethnography of a racialized dance culture in coastal Mexico, which focuses largely on elder amateur dancers. The book makes valuable contributions to ethnomusicology and to further fields of study, including dance studies, choreomusicology, Latin American Studies, and African Diasporic Studies. It is a mature piece of scholarship based on years of engagement with the communities and an abundance of interdisciplinary secondary literature, resulting in layered observations about social dynamics, and writing that is deeply insightful and empathic, yet also critical. The book focuses on a notably under-researched demographic group of mostly mestizo (mixed-race) people who are generally not considered to be part of the African diaspora nor of Indigenous nations. Through engaging this community over many years, Malcolmson contends with a range of complex group

dynamics involving race, gender, age, ability and power on multidimensional and nuanced levels. Malcomson describes the ways that dance groups create spaces where liaisons can take place, yet, crisscrossed with different levels of liberty or restriction relating to gender and marital status. Throughout the book, ethnography, social critique, and the analysis of music and dance are integrated with sharpness and eloquence.

Judges: Anna Morcom (Chair) (UCLA), Juan Diego Diaz (University of California, Davis) and Ilana Webster-Kogen (SOAS). [Report ends.]

BD noted that anyone with questions relating to prizes should contact AV, MD, or himself.

4. Treasurer's report (SW)

[Report follows:]

The financial health of the BFE remained strong in 2023 (in comparison to our historical financial data), despite an overall deficit at the calendar year end of £4,179.37. Our income decreased by circa £3.8k, with a reduction of around £950 in membership fees and £1k in Taylor and Francis (T&F) royalties. The loss of membership income is not particularly worrying as we experience regular fluctuations due to the 2-year membership option that we offer, and our editing fee income from T&F increased by around £850 (effectively offsetting the diminished royalties). Our reduced income line also reflects the removal of the SEM High Tea reimbursement that we have received in previous years, which is then mirrored in the decreased expenditure in this area. Our JSTOR royalties increased slightly from 2022 (by roughly £115), while the interest received on our various bank accounts rose significantly (around £600), reflecting interest rate changes in the UK. A priority for the forthcoming year will be amalgamating some of our capital, gained from various sources (including membership fees paid through PayPal), and transferring this into one of our existing bank accounts which accrues a higher level of interest.

There was a significant increase in BFE expenditure in 2023 compared to the previous year (just under £9k). One notable increase was our T&F journal copies recharge (of around £2.1k), which is a result of disputed membership numbers, leading to a double payment in 2023 to cover a legacy debt to T&F. This will be a one-off occurrence and should return to normal levels in 2024. Another significantly increased outgoing has been in our Ethnomusicology Forum (EF) editing fees, which have jumped by around £3.4k from the previous year. This demonstrates our recent attempts to offer a greater degree of copy-editing support for contributors to the journal, and particularly to those authors for whom English is not their first language. Other escalating costs included a greater outlay on prizes and bursaries (increased by circa £2.3k), which reflects both a legacy of delayed claims due to the COVID-19 pandemic (awardees for fieldwork prizes unable to spend and/or claim their bursaries due to travel restrictions) and our commitment to give more back to our members, with a particular focus on students, ECRs, and those from underrepresented groups. We have also experienced a growing need to offer financial support for the expenses of BFE

Committee members attending our events and meetings, where they are unable to reclaim these costs from institutional or other funding sources.

While growing expenditure and an overall annual deficit may initially appear concerning, it should be noted that the financial health of the BFE has improved significantly over the past decade, primarily as a result of membership being taken in-house from our previous arrangement with T&F. Our financial assets remain strong, particularly for an organisation of our size with limited overhead costs. While it is imperative that we maintain, or ideally increase, our membership numbers if we wish to maintain this financial stability, there are undoubtedly opportunities for us to take advantage of increasing interest rates for savings, and to explore opportunities for expanding expenditure in support of our membership.

On a personal level, I would like to offer particular thanks to Ruard Absaroka for his ongoing support and work with me on BFE finances, and to Peter Underwood for tirelessly working on membership issues that facilitate significant income for the BFE. [Report ends.]

SW opened the floor for feedback and questions. Raquel Campos queried the costs paid to the BFE Membership and General Administrators. SW responded that these costs are fairly stable and that the BFE was continuing to pay a living wage, whilst renumeration administrators fairly and in line with experience and cost of living. SW added that this data can be amalgamated on the report in future if that would be preferable. BD added that extra costs had been discussed on the Executive Committee and there had been a general feeling to spend money during a crisis, particularly in terms of looking after students and ECRs whilst they may be feeling the pinch. SW agreed, noting that the BFE has fairly limited overheads and so is able to absorb costs in terms of increasing expenditure, adding that the organisation is in a much stronger financial position than ever before.

Helena Gubbins asked if there was any possibility of adding an option for ongoing membership subscription, to come out of one's bank account automatically on a yearly basis. SW responded that this had been discussed but that it was considered not to be the best option for members, noting that the BFE still receives some Direct Debit payments from legacy members dating back to the time when T&F were in charge of membership fees, when year-on-year Direct Debit payments were still an option.

5. Membership report (Peter Underwood)

[Report follows:]

Currently, the BFE currently has 273 members. This is still a strong position to end the first quarter. The BFE-supported membership scheme has provided 25 memberships over the past two years, which is great – however, there are plenty more spaces, so please continue to refer anyone you feel may benefit from the scheme to us. Perhaps more interesting are the changes in demographics so far this year:

- student memberships are down from 30% to 20%
- low-income memberships have increased from this point last year
- enhanced and emeritus memberships are already ahead of where they were at the end of 2023
- we have also welcomed a new Lifetime Member

While the conference format may also contribute to these changes, they also mirror wider changes in academia over the past few years. I will be keeping an eye on student memberships for the remainder of the year and into 2025 to see if this trend continues and how we might assist students further.

Last year's report went into detail regarding issues with Taylor and Francis (T&F) which had impacted members receiving journals between 2020 and 2022. I am pleased to say that due to the hard work of the committee over 2023, as well as our contacts at T&F, a) all members who responded to our survey have now received any journals they were missing, and b) the changes put in place with how T&F processes our data led to markedly less delivery problems in 2023 and beyond. With that being said there are still occasional hiccups, so to minimise disruption for members we will be double checking each year to make sure the previous years' journals have all been received. Please look out for those emails and let us know of any issues.

Other changes came later in 2023 with the rollout of our new online-only membership and Data Privacy Policy. The online-only membership gives members the option to opt-out of receiving hard copies of *Ethnomusicology Forum* – alongside the ecological benefits that fewer hard copies and less shipping provide, we have been able to pass the savings on to members as well. I am very pleased that we are now able to offer this choice to members, and it has proven quite popular – around a third of all new and renewing members this year have chosen to go paperless so please do take advantage of that if you wish to.

Furthermore, we have updated our Data Privacy Policy to be more transparent, matching it to the new processes at T&F, and creating the foundations for a BFE archive to preserve the history of both the organisation and ethnomusicology for future researchers. This is still in its infancy, but I welcome any feedback, especially around the policy's readability and ease of understanding. [Report ends.]

BD thanked PU for all the work he did in sorting out issues with T&F, particularly relating to the journal, along with considerable work on GDPR policy development.

6. Podcast project report (LH)

LH reported that BFE podcast project is still going, although only one podcast was received in 2023. LH asked all members present to encourage students who have podcasts to submit them for the project, adding that the team can help them to develop their work. LH added that

it would also be wonderful if academics could send in submissions. LH acknowledged that podcasts are not accepted as a peer-reviewed output but added that this can be changed in the future. LH requested that anyone with a potential podcast project please send the team an email (podcasts@bfe.org.uk). LH also thanked MD for managing the podcast pages on the BFE website.

7. *Ethnomusicology Forum* Journal Editors report (HS and JS)

[Report follows:]

In 2023, *Ethnomusicology Forum* (*EF*) published three regular issues within volume 32, comprising a total of 18 stand-alone articles and 13 reviews. Six of the research articles were made available as Open Access. One special issue is currently in process, and we anticipate its publication either this year or the following year.

Taylor & Francis recently provided us with some data on journal usage. In 2023, *EF* had 50,600 downloads through TFO (Taylor & Francis Online), 30,800 through JSTOR, and 13,500 through EBSCO, totalling 95,000 downloads. The largest number of downloads came from Europe, followed by North America, Australia, Asia and Africa. Open Access publications are downloaded much more frequently than traditional papers.

The number of institutions with access to the journal via subscription deals is 3,300, of which 1,200 are in North America, 166 in Europe, 141 in Asia, and 34 or fewer in Latin America, Australia, the Middle East and Africa, respectively. In 2023, we received a total of 101 submissions, with a notable rise in submissions from China (26), although many of them were deemed unsuitable for publication in *EF* and were therefore rejected immediately. Consequently, the acceptance rate has declined to 26%. We received 12 submissions from the UK and 4 from the US, marking a significant decline compared to previous years (2020–2021). [Report ends.]

BD noted that, following Alexander Cannon's (AC) departure from the Co-Editor role in the spring of 2023, Frederick Moehn (FM) temporarily served as Co-Editor until the end of 2023. BD reported that, beginning in January 2024, Jason Stanyek has started a full three-year term as Co-Editor. BD also reported that, in the autumn, Amanda Bayley (BD) took over the role of *EF* Reviews Editor from Frances Wilkins (FW) and Phil Alexander (PA). Additionally, BD welcomed to Laura Spence (LS) as the incoming *EF* editorial assistant, taking over from Katie Young (KY).

BD thanked FM, FW, PA and KY for their work for the BFE and its journal, and also thanked Jason, Amanda and Laura for coming on board. BD added that he was delighted that the BFE had been able to bring in people of such immense expertise and professionalism to fill the shoes of their similarly gifted predecessors.

BD also noted that, in last year's report, AC had noted that T&F had changed their approach to setting targets, shifting from a required minimum number of pages per issue to a required minimum number of articles per issue, so-called 'benchmarks'. Following negotiations with T&F, the then Co-Editors determined that *EF* must publish a minimum of 18 research articles and 14 review articles annually. This represents a slight increase compared to previous publication rates and has resulted in a heavier workload for the editorial team. HS and FM have utilized T&F's own copyediting service for one paper that would not have otherwise met the language requirements for publication, under a deal negotiated with the BFE last year. Although the BFE-funded copyediting pool was intended to assist with this, it has added to the workload of the Co-Editors as they have had to actively engage and negotiate with freelance copy editors. While the benchmark of 18 research articles was met in 2023, the outlook for 2024 is less optimistic. BD reported that HS and JS are exploring potential new formats to address current topics and enhance the journal's appeal.

BD added that, as AC had previously done, HS and JS emphasize the substantial behind-the-scenes work required of editors, alongside the more visible tasks. They emphasize that these roles are voluntary and unpaid, and they urge everyone to be patient and understanding as Co-Editors carry out their responsibilities. Given that the success of the double-blind peer review process depends on expert reviewers, the Co-Editors appeal to the goodwill of all BFE members to consider contributing their expertise and time to the journal when approached.

8. BFE Conferences update (MMA)

[Report follows:]

First of all, I would like to say a big thank you to Prof. Jonathan Stock and the rest of the local arrangements committee at the Department of Music, University College Cork for hosting this year's conference. The BFE committee is particularly pleased to be able to hold our annual conference in the Republic of Ireland maintaining relations with our friends and colleagues across the Irish sea. Moreover, this conference forms a collaboration with ICTM-Ireland and I would like to thank the chair Dr Ann-Marie Hanlon for engaging with us in this conference. We will be looking for someone to write a conference report, so please contact me if you would be interested and able to do this.

The rest of this report gives a summary of conferences over the last year and forthcoming events. First, I would like to say a few words regarding my own position as I step down from the role of conference liaison, which I took up in 2018. It has been an absolute pleasure to serve on the committee and oversee a wide range of events that the BFE runs. I will be sad to leave the committee and all my amazing colleagues, some of whom I have worked with since joining. We are still looking for a replacement to take over from me, who would work closely with the executive committee and in particular Dr Cassandre Balosso-Bardin and Luigi Monteanni (student representative). I will continue to oversee arrangements for the forthcoming Research Students' Conference (2025) and offer advice to the new liaison. If you are interested in the role, please do email me at matthew.machin-autenrieth@abdn.ac.uk.

Previous Events:

BFE Annual Conference April 2023, Reid School of Music, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

The annual conference for 2023 was hosted by the Reid School of Music, Celtic and Scottish Studies & the School of Scottish Studies Archives, University of Edinburgh (13-16 April) around the theme of 'Music and Movement'. An enormous thanks go to Dr Phil Alexander and Dr Rowan Bayliss Hawitt for organising the conference, as well as the rest of the local arrangements committee. The conference featured a rich and varied combination of papers, special panels, lecture-recitals and film showings. Alongside the inspiring keynote delivered by Prof. Ama Oforiwaa Aduonum (Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts), the conference also featured a special online panel sponsored by the Society for Ethnomusicology in recognition of the longstanding relations the BFE has with its sister organisation across the pond. Additional events included an opening conference celebrating the life and work of Prof. Peter Cooke, as well as a ceilidh and tour. The event was a huge success, and once again I would like to extend my gratitude to Phil and Rowan, as well as the rest of the organising committee for all their hard work.

BFE Autumn Conference September 2023 (Online)

We decided to trial a different format for the online autumn conference this year. We put out a call for a conference curator, someone who would work closely with the conference liaison and conferences sub-committee to design the conference theme and chair the arrangements committee. This was intended as an opportunity for early career researchers to develop invaluable experience in designing and chairing a conference, as well as working with members of the BFE's executive committee. Dr Evanthia Patsiaoura (University of Manchester) put forward an excellent proposal for a two-day event entitled 'Revisiting the Field in Ethnomusicology: Where, Who, How', which was selected. The event (3-4 November) featured a range of fascinating talks that explored the challenges and methodologies of ethnomusicological fieldwork in the 21st century, as well as a specially designed invited panel of speakers: Prof. Melvin Butler (University of Miami, USA), Prof. Nili Belkind (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel), Dr Charulatha Mani (Australian National University, Australia) and Dr Hettie Malcomson (University of Southampton, UK). I would like to extend my gratitude to Evanthia for such a great conference, and the rest of the team – Dr Cassandre Balosso-Bardin, Prof. Byron Dueck and Dr Stina Homer – for their help.

BFE-RMA Research Students' Conference January 2024, School of Music, Cardiff University

This year's BFE-RMA Research Students' Conference was hosted by the School of Music, Cardiff University (10-12 January) and co-chaired by Dr Nick Jones and Fenella Briggs. The conference had a varied programme, with a good balance of topics, and a number of papers

that crossed disciplinary boundaries. The conference was underpinned by the theme 'Identities', inspired by Wales's strong sense of place and national identity. However, the theme also encompassed identities in its broadest form, spanning the personal and local to wider geographical and cultural contexts. The programme was exciting and diverse, including papers and lecture-recitals in areas including musicology, ethnomusicology, composition, performance, music and media, popular music and jazz, music education, and more.

The conference featured a number of exciting plenary sessions. For the RMA keynote, the Jerome Roche prize winner, Dr Gabrielle Messeder (City University, London), presented her paper: 'Shifting Identities, Ethnic Ambiguity and Tropicalisation in Beirut's Transnational Brazilian Music Scene'. And on behalf of the BFE, Dr Saeid Kordmafi (SOAS University, London) presented his paper: 'Performing Transnationality: Thresholds of Artistic Research in 21st-Century Music Studies'. Thanks to Saeid. In addition to the keynotes were a range of other training, compositional and workshop events including: an EDI session hosted by the RMA's EDI Working Group (chaired by Freya Jarman), an improvisation workshop hosted by the Hooting Cow Collective, a tour of Wales Millenium Centre, a session of REF preparedness for students (delivered by Prof. John Morgan O'Connell), a public engagement session (delivered by Prof. Claire Rowden), a Javanese Gamelan workshop (delivered by Pete Smith) and composition workshops with Trio Anima which culminated in an evening concert of students' own compositions for the conference. I would like to extend my gratitude to Nick Jones and Fenella Briggs, and the rest of the local arrangements committee, for their amazing work and smooth running of the event, as well as my RMA counterpart Michelle Assay. For more on the event, see George O'Speck's report: <https://bfe.org.uk/conference-reports>

Forthcoming Events

BFE-RMA Research Students' Conference 2024 (University of Aberdeen)

In January 2025, the University of Aberdeen will be hosting the next BFE-RMA Research Students' Conference chaired by Dr Jonathan Hicks. Plans are already well under way and the conference is shaping up nicely. The call for papers will be released soon, so all BFE research students please do consider submitting and supervisors please spread the word amongst your students. [Report ends.]

MMA announced that the BFE's Executive Committee has reviewed a proposal for an institution to host the 2025 Annual Conference: this will be held at the University of Cambridge. Peter McMurray will chair the conference organising committee, assisted by SW. Information will be forthcoming about the 2024 Autumn Conference.

MMA thanked BD for his very kind words on his terms as Conference Liaison. MMA said that it had been a pleasure working in the role, and that it was always a delight to see the enthusiasm and energy that everyone brings to the BFE, thanking all chairs and events committees. MMA also thanked Executive Committee, adding that they are all lovely people

to work with. MMA added that the BFE does need a replacement Conference Liaison Officer, inviting any prospective candidates to find him and chat after the AGM.

To conclude, MMA voiced his absolute pleasure working with BD on the Committee. MMA noted that BD took over the Chair's role at a particularly difficult time (the COVID-19 pandemic, and increased precarity in higher education). MMA noted that BD had steered the ship admirably, and with humility and wisdom. MMA said that BD was a uniquely gifted chair, allowing space for discussion and for consensus to be reached in a fair and equitable manner, with all voices being heard. MMA thanked BD for all his hard work, adding that FMD has invaluable skills and that the BFE will thrive under her leadership.

9. EDI WG Report (SH, MYO)

[Report follows:]

Our major project this year was the implementation of a survey for members. Besides both of us talking to you about it now, there are a number of BFE committee members who have contributed to the survey throughout the period of design and implementation: of whom we would like to name Matthew Machin-Autenrieth, Stina Homer, and Romy Martinez. We are also grateful to BD for advising on the process throughout.

We received 58 responses, which is roughly a fifth of our membership. We are grateful for everyone who took the time to respond.

We approached BFE members to give us information about quite a range of topics. These included questions about BFE membership, professional status, gender, region of fieldwork, country of residence, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities, disabilities, perceptions of BFE, experience of discrimination, inequality, exclusion.

The survey responses included many comments that will be very valuable for the BFE in informing decision-making going forward, and which are deserving of serious attention. They also give us useful statistics about our membership's demographic profile.

At this stage we are processing the survey in the form of a report to be presented to the Executive Committee, and they will take the next steps in terms of feeding back data in some form to the membership.

Based on the survey results, the main areas we'd like to work on are:

1. Increasing accessibility of conferences (these include factors such as fees, having hybrid options available, venue locations, provision for disabilities)
2. Making membership more accessible to all.
3. Making prizes and bursaries more accessible and inclusive
4. Partnering with other organisations (e.g. RMA, EDIMS, ICTM)

5. Improving on ways of safeguarding and reporting complaints and incidents.
6. Learning to be aware of and avoid microaggressions towards others
7. Implementing Mentorship schemes

Some other projects which we are still working on include a reporting tool, bystander training, and input into the prizes process.

If you have any suggestions for the EDI group, please do get in touch. The Working Group email address is edi@bfe.org.uk. [Report ends.]

MYO added that members could contact her in her capacity as Membership Liaison via her Oxford email address (minyen.ong@music.ox.ac.uk).

10. Approval of minutes of last AGM at the University of Edinburgh, 15th April 2023

The minutes were approved without corrections.

11. AOB / Discussion items arising

BD thanked the BFE Committee members, stating that it had been wonderful to work with everyone over recent years.

BD noted that there are three areas where the BFE Committee would welcome either assistance or feedback [report follows]:

The first involves the worrisome situation of Music HE in the UK. Many of you will be aware of the on-going damage to university arts and humanities programmes, with music cut back or even closed at Keele, Royal Holloway, Kent, and Oxford Brookes. I recently had an email from Barley Norton, former chair of the BFE, who told me that the music department at Goldsmiths was looking at 40% cuts to staff and significant reduction in teaching in ethnomusicology. One of the areas we would appreciate help – especially from senior scholars with a good sense for the kind of letter that might sway a senior management team – is in keeping an eye on these developments, keeping up with them, and helping us draft carefully targeted letters. If you think you might be able to help with this kind of work, please drop me or FMD a line: chair@bfe.org.uk, or look up my Open University email address.

Second, as I mentioned earlier, notwithstanding the drop in funds this year, the years from 2017 to 2022 saw an increase of over 100% in the BFE's bank accounts. At a recent meeting of the committee, we committed to saving less and providing more benefit to members. The two areas where we agreed to provide more immediate support are in the area of the fieldwork prizes and conference travel bursaries for PhD students. Feedback that we have

received over three last year suggests that these areas in particular would help us to be more inclusive as a society.

Committee members have mentioned a number of other potential areas for investment. We are aware, however, that new initiatives do not simply involve outlays of money (spending the money is the easy part) but also administrative structures to accommodate and oversee the spending. And we are in some ways poorer in terms of time than we are of money! If you have ideas about what we prioritise with these funds rather than supporting PhD fieldwork and research student attendance at conferences, please let us know. Similarly, if you think ‘Yes, those two areas seem like really important targets for funding’, please send us feedback along those lines.

Finally, some of you will have seen the message sent by the president of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music, Julia Byl, to the Society for Ethnomusicology, and read the CSTM’s Ceasefire Statement on Israel and Palestine. I understand that Julia, who is also a member of our society, will be circulating that statement to the BFE email list in the coming days. As a Committee, we have received no other formal requests to write similar statements on the part of the BFE, neither in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, nor in the wake of the October 7th 2023 killings in Israel, nor in light of the thousands of civilian killings that have followed in Palestine. I am unaware of any UK-based university subject association that has made such a statement, although if you know of some, please feel free to draw them to my attention by email. SEM has made statements along these lines in the past. In the past we have made such statements (BLM was the last one) – more recently we make statements relating directly to professional ethnomusicologists, e.g. when Oxford Brookes was facing closure. We have not been commenting more broadly on social and political issues. If you think the BFE Committee should make such statements, or if you think the BFE should not make such statements, please let us know by email – you can contact me, or other members of the committee listed on the BFE webpage, or our administrator, Morgan Davies.

I realise that I am raising three issues that many of you will want to say something about right now, here in person, but these are areas where your considered, written responses by email would be most helpful. I’m of course happy to discuss these things during the following conference breaks, too. [Report ends. Meeting adjourned.]

12. Date of next AGM (5th April 2025, University of Cambridge)