

**Delegates' comments for the  
ISME 30<sup>th</sup> ISME World Conference on Music Education,  
15-20 July 2012, Thessaloniki, Greece:**

**MUSIC PAEDEIA: ISME WORLD CONFERENCE 2012**

“A journey for all, a conference to remember”

As I reflect on the conference and as I look at my photos and videos, I keep coming back to two words, ‘Heart and Soul’.

For the first time since 1990 when I attended the ISME Conference in Helsinki, I was just a delegate, not someone who worked behind the scenes. This luxury allowed me to attend stimulating sessions, immerse myself in wonderful performances, spend time with colleagues and friends, explore the city, and, best of all, meet the people who made it all happen.

The Opening Ceremony “Circle of Life” was all ‘heart and soul’. It set the tone for the entire conference experience, reinforcing the sub-theme, *From Ancient Greek Philosophers Toward Global Music Communities*. It was creatively imaginative, moving smoothly from one group of performers to the next. It was awe inspiring, and, at the same time, it was fun!

The waterfront location was wonderful! The venues were very good, as well as the food services and restaurants in the nearby vicinity. Staging evening outdoor concerts and gatherings in the park area was a fantastic idea. I particularly liked the fact that local citizens, including young children, could mingle with delegates.

Scheduling and room assignments were good. One can never predict the number of delegates attending each session but even in small rooms, people seemed to adapt well. However, I think ISME needs to re-think the number of sessions being allotted to any one person.

Concert venues ranged from exceptional to good. The area above the exhibition area presented a few problems but the performers rose to the occasion and made the best of a difficult situation.

The tour group, SYMVOLI, was very good. A wide selection of tours was offered both prior to the event and on site. I took their tour to Turkey and also two personalized tours, all at very affordable prices.

Every time I walked into the conference venues I was greeted by a smile, a greeting and any information I needed from a young volunteer who made me feel welcome, who began my day with joy and who reinforced my hope for the future. When the COG and the volunteers came on stage at the Closing Ceremony, I was overcome with emotion for the tenacity shown by everyone involved in staging this great event with dignity and grace at a time of great challenge for Greece.

Please accept my grateful thanks for such a wonder-filled experience at the ISME Conference and in Greece!!

Joan Therens, *Canada*

Dear Polyvios,

I would like to express my great gratitude and congratulations for the wonderful ISME Conference in Thessaloniki! I enjoyed the conference very much, and I appreciated all your efforts regarding the organization of this conference in view of the many economic difficulties! Everything went so well. Thank you and your team for all of this!

Nevertheless, we all owe you our respect and gratitude to host the conference in such an amicable atmosphere!

Beside the conference, Thessaloniki with its rich heritage and everywhere visible relics from Macedonian and Hellenistic times showed how strongly Greece reflects the roots of European culture and history. Best regards and all good wishes!

Wilfried Gruhn, *Germany*

Polyvios,

Ruth and I arrived home just a few days ago following two weeks of post-conference travel, and I have been intending to write to you to express thanks for a genuinely outstanding conference.

The program was excellent, the physical arrangements were superb, and the conference was as well organized as any ISME conference I can remember. You and all of your colleagues did an outstanding job from the initial announcements, through the invitations and screening of participants, to the contacts with attendees before and during the conference. The local hosts were invariably available and responsive. We enjoyed everything about our stay in Thessaloniki and can't think of anything that you could have done differently. In summary, it was a truly memorable experience from beginning to end. Thank you for your long and demanding effort. The results were greatly appreciated by all of us who were fortunately enough to be present.

Paul Lehman, *USA*

ISME Thessaloniki will be one very special recollection for me. Because the very convenient settings and arrangements both for the Research Seminar and the big Conference. More because I met again friends from my first visit ten years ago, invited by the Greek Society: lovely people, hard workers, very musical, really involved in the field of music education. I already went twice to Thessaloniki: will there be a third one as we say in Spanish?

Best

Ana Lucia Frega, *Argentina*

Bonjour,

J'aimerais vous remercier pour l'organisation de la 30<sup>e</sup> conférence de ISME à Thessaloniki. J'ai eu le plaisir d'accompagner les 2 groupes de l'école FACE et nous n'avons adoré notre voyage. Nous avons eu la chance de voir le Gala d'ouverture qui était magnifique, tant par la qualité et la diversité des groupes qui y ont perforé. L'émotion était au rendez-vous. Et que dire de la qualité des groupes provenant de partout dans le monde ; ces derniers nous ont charmés par l'excellence de leur prestation. Que du bonheur!

Participer à la conférence de ISME fut une expérience très positive pour moi dont je ne garde que de bons souvenirs. Bravo et merci à toute l'équipe !

France Arcand, *École FACE, Canada*

Dear Polyvios,

We're settled back in our respective countries now, but the memories of a wonderful ISME conference remain. Thanks to you and your fabulous team for hosting the conference and doing a spectacular job of making our stay worthwhile and interesting and enjoyable.

I can only imagine the amount of time and energy that went into the organization and management of the event, even in the face of challenging local circumstances and uncertain times. I hope that you feel the depth of gratitude from the ISME community that you so richly deserve.

Congratulations, and sincere thanks.

Marie McCarthy, *USA*

Well Polyvios, what can I say? That was some great conference you and your team organized! Despite the heat wave we were treated to a well-oiled machine that gave us all great pleasure and enrichment for the whole week. Heartfelt thanks for your splendid efforts which, on the face of it, never seemed to tire over the whole time. No doubt you were totally exhausted by the end of it, but it never showed through. You had a fine team that went out of their way to ensure that we felt comfortable with the way things worked - our grateful thanks for their conscientious work.

My personal thanks for making the Directory a feature, with both the launch and the provision of the computer at hand for delegates to check entries. That was all a great effort which I thoroughly appreciate. I hope you have been able to take a bit of rest and relaxation over the past week and can feel that all has been well worth the herculean task. We all enjoyed the experience, and made lots of new friends, learning lots as well.

A wonderful effort! Kind regards, Graham.

Graham Bartle, *Australia*

Hello to all,

As an educator, conductor and participant of the ISME conference 2012, I would like express my thanks for the opportunity given to me and my students to attend the ISME 2012 conference in Thessaloniki. The experience for my young concert band was exceptional. They loved the wonderful opening concert and were able to see and hear all the different facets of Greek music and culture. It was so enriching for them to hear all the varieties of music from around the world and to share their love of music with so many different peoples. Many friendships were made and the memories will last forever. Personally, the experience of conducting this group of students for our 2 concerts in the wonderful acoustics of the amphitheatre was very rewarding. The wonderful comments and feedback from ISME delegates was extremely gratifying for both myself and my students. Thank you.

Carol Kay and Harmonie Con Brio Ecole FACE Montreal, *Canada*

Dear Polyvios, I would like to formally express my gratitude to you and your team for organizing such an excellent ISME conference.

From the very moving opening ceremony, the conference programme was full of arresting moments in the energy of concerts, the scholarship of papers and posters, and the dynamism of workshops. How you managed to skillfully pack so much into the week and make it run so smoothly is beyond comprehension!

Even though I had visited Thessaloniki before, the conference venue in action really took me by surprise...the elegant buildings, the sense of light and space, the view over the bay....one could only begin to imagine the huge cultural and historical significance that the city held in the past, and continues to transmit in the present. Delightful memories linger of meeting old ISME friends in the foyers and corridors, and the feeling of privilege to be connected to this huge history. But like any ISME event, the joy is in the local experience--and the 30th world conference buzzed with the palpable energy, dedication and enthusiasm of GSME and its volunteers, extending a warm hand of empathy towards all those who had travelled from afar. This truly was a journey for all and without doubt, a conference to remember.

Thank you sincerely for the enormous commitment that went into making this event such a success and please convey my thoughts to your team. Best wishes, Regina.

*Regina Murphy, Ireland*

Dear Polyvios. I would like to congratulate you, the organizing committee and staff and all the volunteers for this successful conference, and more considering the difficult circumstance and problems you live in Greece at the moment.

In special the opening ceremony and then the Greek evening gave all of us an authentic image and overview of the musical, pedagogical and philosophical potential you still dispose in your country with roots in the ancient Greece. It was an example of an artistic heritage which did not need to be put in a big show. I have been very touched as others by the keynote speaker Nikos Kypourgios, very humble artistic personality with wonderful, special compositions. I can understand that children but also adults love his music.

In my long history of ISME this was one of the best conferences, also because of the special atmosphere, the hospitality and the way Greeks was presenting themselves to the world of music education.

I have a wonderful souvenir from Thessaloniki! Kind regards.

*Sylvia Schwarzenbach, Switzerland*

Hello, my name is Isadore Friedman and I am a member of the F.A.C.E Chamber Orchestra who recently attended the 30th ISME world conference in Thessaloniki this past month. I really enjoyed the conference and wanted to thank everyone who helped in the organization/planning of the event. It was a real pleasure to learn a bit more about Greek culture/music all while being hosted by the hospitable and friendly ISME staff. I particularly enjoyed the opening ceremony and found it eye opening as I was not too familiar with Traditional Greek music/dances. It was also a great opportunity to meet and hear other musicians and performing groups from around the world.

Thank you again for a great experience.

*Isadore Friedman, F.A.C.E Chamber Orchestra, Canada*

I am writing to extend my congratulations to the host and committee of the 2012 ISME Conference held in Thessaloniki. The conference was very well organized and the host and volunteers were available and eager to assist the attendees in any capacity. Obviously, the local committee had planned, well, anticipated issues that might arise and were prepared to address them.

The facility was picturesque and rooms where sessions were held were equipped with the necessary items for a variety of presentations. Registration was effortless because the host and committee had made appropriate arrangements for enrolling the participants.

Transportation was provided that accommodated the various needs of the presenters. Taxis were readily available and shuttles were consistently on time. Further, the hosts had apparently alerted the local restaurants of our arrival which resulted in a special ISME menu offered by some of them.

This conference was undoubtedly one of the most successful and enjoyable in terms of venue, sessions, accommodations and availability of the host and committee in facilitating the demands of a highly diverse population of music educators. WELL DONE!!! Best to you, Polyvios.

Marvelene Moore, *USA*

I am amazed how the huge program was put together, incorporating such a variety of topics and varying types of presentations. There was not endless lists of program changes (other than emergencies) which was a sign of initial good planning.

Choice of plenary keynote speakers allowed them to explore broad ranging topics and with differing approaches to their presentations. A global selection of speakers. Keynote on the Monday could go on and on all day.

Well done for putting together the opening and closing performance programs on very little rehearsal time - that's a reflection on experienced muso's who know how to 'wing it'.

Amanda Watson, *Australia*

Dear Polyvios,

It's a pity that we couldn't get to talk so much at the conference. I was worried to take you too much time and you were always so busy at the conference. It's just a lot of work for you. Thanks to you, we had a great time! Congratulations on successfully hosting the 30th ISME World Conference on Music Education! It has been a brilliant event!

Thank you very much for what you have done for us and the extra attention to Chinese delegates. I apologize on behalf of China Conservatory that the leadership members couldn't manage to attend the activity that they were expected.

Congratulations again and all the best, Jiaxing.

Jiaxing Xie, *China*



Dr Polyvios Androutsos, Chair  
ISME 2012 World Conference

August 18, 2012

Dear Dr Androutsos,

It is with distinct pleasure that we write this letter, on behalf of the Canadian Music Educators' Association/L'Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs (CMEA/Acme) executive to congratulate you on the very successful organization of the ISME 2012 World Conference that took place in Thessaloniki, Greece, this past July. The CMEA/Acme executive was pleased to hear of the 2012 ISME COG's achievements and joins us in celebrating your successes.

Within the conference framework, the CMEA/Acme was given opportunities (the INA Symposium, that was convened and chaired by the former Chair Graca Boal-Palheiros, the national meetings and the display table, for example), to showcase our Association and to interact with other national associations.

More than 100 Canadians attended the 2012 World Conference, including the performing groups. They benefited from the presentation of their research and the performance opportunities and enjoyed the hospitality and warmth of the organizing committee as well as the beauty of the venue and surrounding area.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous challenges facing Greece, in general, and the 2012 COG, in particular, at the time of the conference due to the economic crisis. We, therefore, would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Greek Society for Music Education (GSME) for their persistence to overcome these challenges. Through your efforts and the spirit of voluntarism, Greece was able to host the international music educators' community successfully - thus contributing to ISME's unfailing record of presenting thirty world conferences since its inception.

Congratulations once again and thank you.

Sincerely,

Theodora Stathopoulos, President

Dr Ed Wasiak, Immediate Past President

Canadian Music Educators' Association/L' Association canadienne des musiciens éducateurs  
(CMEA/Acme)

Feedback on ISME World Conference, Thessaloniki July, 2012

To: Polyvios Androutsos, Conference Director

From: President Elect, Sheila Woodward

My sincere thanks to you, Polyvios, to the Conference Organizing Committee and the huge group of volunteers for giving us such a magnificent experience during our ISME World Conference in Thessaloniki. I will treasure the wonderful memories for the rest of my life. I am sure you would like to receive some detailed feedback, considering the herculean efforts of you and your teams.

Having enjoyed a marvellous ECME seminar in Corfu and a glorious ferry journey and bus ride through the spectacular Grecian countryside, I arrived at the Macedonian Hotel to be greeted by most luxurious facilities and hospitable staff who could not have been more courteous, helpful and friendly during every moment of my stay. Truly, this was a wonderful hotel and I found the location to be excellent, with a mere five-minute taxi ride along the bay side to the conference venue. Taxis were always easy to obtain, whether placing a phone order or just flagging one down in the street in front of the hotel or near the concert hall. I never had a problem finding a taxi and the quick ride was at a very reasonable cost.

Information on the conference had been accessible in advance on the ISME website, so we knew where and when to meet for the start. I was helping a student on a last-minute problem with his presentation and arrived just too late for the registration. Nevertheless, the volunteer at the information desk was extremely helpful and lent me a spare program so that I would be able to find my venue for my presentation early the next morning. The system for entry into the opening ceremony was well-managed as we were able to get tickets at the doors with no problem and, once inside, people were able to reach their seats quickly.

The opening ceremony was spectacular. We experienced exquisite music of many different styles representing the country's cultural diversity. The performances were emotionally very moving as people of all ages, from young children to elderly musicians, shared their joy in music. They touched the spirit and I found myself in tears several times. The organization was perfect, with each item moving smoothly to the next and the standard of technology being excellent. My sincere congratulations on a concert that will always remain in my fondest memories.

It was very helpful to have the two conference venues right next to each other, allowing us quick movement between the two. I had expected Greece to be hot and came well-prepared with light clothing and a hand-held fan that I had bought in Beijing during the previous conference, so I did not find the heat unpleasant. It was also helpful that one could purchase cold drinks at each of the two venues at any time. In fact, I particularly loved the warm weather that allowed us to enjoy outdoor dinners until late in the evenings and to experience the outdoor Greek festival of music, costume and dance. It was lovely to be part of the vibrant local community, mingling with families who were strolling along the waterfront in the evenings.

The conference presentations were most stimulating and there was a wide range from which to select. I found there to be a high standard of papers, posters, workshops and keynote addresses which reflected a diversity of topics and cultures. I enjoyed the themes running through the conference and being able to follow the various presentations of particular SIGs. The larger symposiums and keynote addresses were appropriately assigned to bigger rooms.

The concerts were stunning, giving us a rich experience of cultures from across the world. I even enjoyed catching moments of rehearsals in some of the common areas, as I moved about. The many opportunities for connecting with colleagues from around the world was invaluable before, between and after presentations and concerts.

The presence of the volunteers was a huge bonus to the conference. At the information desks, one could always be sure of a smile and friendly response, whatever the situation. Besides help with technology, there were always people assisting in every room who kept the flow of the events going well. The facilities were excellent, well-stocked with tables and chairs and audio-visual equipment. It was good that we could have flexibility and use our own laptops if we found the need to do so. The conference venues, including restrooms, were always spotlessly clean and well-equipped. Of course, the architecture of the buildings allowed one to enjoy the most spectacular views, which were an added bonus.

It was very considerate that the catering venues at the conference centre and concert hall offered reduced prices and also that local restaurants did the same. Every meal I had in Greece was delicious. The produce was always fresh and the selections plentiful. Thank you for providing information on places to eat and on sight-seeing in our materials. It was very pleasant that you arranged for tours that we could take with great ease, being collected from the conference venue. Thank you also for scheduling the time for us to take a tour during the conference. I joined the enthralling tour to see the hand-making of pianos.

The closing ceremony was inspirational and provided a delicious taste of the music we can expect in 2014. I appreciated, Polyvios, that you made a point of thanking many people appropriately who deserved accolades.

I again express my heartfelt thanks to you, the COG and the volunteers, for your exceptional standard of organization and for how you were all extremely polite, friendly, and helpful. I can honestly say that this conference was one of the very best and that I enjoyed it immensely. You made us feel very welcome in Greece and I am determined to return again to enjoy your beautiful country, wonderful culture and exceptionally warm people.

Dear Graham, Judy and the entire ISME team,

also on behalf of Yoga, once again many thanks and compliments again for arranging such an inspiring and well organized conference. Much food for thought!

Updating my own website with some personal impressions and slides bring back happy memories of an unforgettable week in Thessaloniki (<http://www.aiume.org/?p=1820>).

I hope this reflects the spirit of this extraordinary event and attracts others to join into the effort for which ISME stands. We'll continue to do our part ...

With warm regards,

Ludwig

Ludwig Pesch, *The Netherlands*



I would like to thank you for the wonderful welcome which you accorded me when I was in Greece for the ISME conference. You really made me feel at home and I enjoyed myself being there. Watching the Greek Night musical festivals was another great experience for me. Greece was like a second home to me and I will always remember this experience.

Many regards,

Emmason

Emmason Kayengo, *Zambia*

Dear Polyvios,

I have been back in Australia for a few weeks and am still thinking about the great experience I had at the ISME conference in Thessaloniki. I wish to put on the record my thanks to you and the team for an exceptional experience.

Being in Thessaloniki was wonderful. The city, the setting, the sites, the people all came together to provide an unforgettable experience. The conference gave me the opportunity to meet and have time with new, old and older friends.

The program was packed. There was such a diversity of rich and engaging research complemented with the array of performances. The memorable opening ceremony gave me such a positive direction to how the conference would unfold. This is an enduring memory.

The GSME colleagues and volunteers were absolutely remarkable. Their unbounded energy, dedication and commitment are unforgettable. Music Education is definitely in safe hands in Greece. We have so much to learn from what you put into practice with this conference. You organised and delivered a momentous educational and musical experience.

My sincere thanks and congratulations,

David

David Forrest, *Australia*

Dear Polyvios and Members of the Organizing Committee of the 30th ISME World Conference, Preparation of an ISME Conference is without doubt something extraordinary, many months of dedication with only one prime objective, that ISME continues to be every two years the important meeting point with colleagues from different parts of the globe. All with desires of enhancing their learning together, desires of enjoying the event, and the sincere desire of meeting each other once again in a future ISME Conference.

This without doubt is what the ISME Conference in Thessaloniki offered to us all. In awesome surroundings where we were able to meet with our colleagues and friends and also meet new colleagues and friends. Furthermore ISME 2012 inaugurated new meeting areas of knowledge such as the Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

For all of this, once again were we able to exchange and network our ideas, enjoy and participate in innumerable events and return to our respective countries with renovated illusions.

OBJECTIVE MORE THAN ACHIEVED POLYVIOS,

Congratulations and thank you for this new ISME opportunity.

Maravillas Díaz, *Spain*

The members of the Greek Society for Music Education demonstrated what wonderful hosts and partners they could be with the spectacular success of the 30<sup>th</sup> International Society for Music Education (ISME) World Conference, held 15-20 July, 2012, in the lovely, historic Thessaloniki. This was a huge undertaking, requiring more than four years of dedication and commitment from many Greek music educators under the heroic and untiring leadership of Polyvios Androutsos, Conference Chair, and the Conference Organizing Group Executive Committee.

Many G.S.M.E. members spent countless hours making plans, organizing venues for presentations, posters, concerts and rehearsals, reviewing hundreds of paper submissions and numerous concert recordings, working out the complex schedule, generating the Abstracts and Concert Program books and the CD Rom of Proceedings, recruiting volunteers and special guest speakers . . . this list could go on and on and on! The hard work paid off tremendously well, as conference attendees were treated to a stimulating program of exciting plenary sessions, presentations regarding almost every aspect of music education one could imagine, and a wide array of music from across the globe. The many international conference delegates were enthralled by the Greek music, traditional and new, and the many talented performers, from the exciting opening ceremonies to the delightful Greek night of music that ended up on the beautiful waterfront to the moving closing song that helped bring the conference to an end. Volunteers answered questions with a smile, gave directions with patience, and demonstrated to ISME members from throughout the world what a wonderful, dedicated community of music educators G.S.M.E. comprises.

Clearly, the conference provided an unforgettable experience for the delegates, who left for home with wonderful memories of the warm, friendly atmosphere and the enthusiastic spirit of our Greek hosts. On behalf of all the international visitors, I wish to express the most sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who helped with ISME 2012, which reflected so well on your organization and music education and educators in your country.

Wendy Sims, *USA*