

Post-conference Note from the Program Committee Chair

Dear Colleagues,

The 10th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition (ICMPC 10) ended successfully after 5 days of many impressive presentations and fruitful discussions. We thank every one for helping us throughout all phases before and during ICMPC 10. In particular, as a chair of the program committee, I greatly appreciate all the contributors who submitted their papers and all the reviewers who thoughtfully reviewed those submissions despite lots of papers I allotted for review to each. I hope you would agree that we could hold high academic standard thanks to a large number of contributors and careful impartial review. On the other side of the coin, regretfully, we were not able to accept approximately 22% (more than 100) of the submitted papers in the review process, since the number of submissions exceeded the site capacity.

The task of the Program Committee had almost completed before the conference started, with my last job remaining, which would be to fulfill the responsibility for explaining so as to make the review process open to the contributors at this moment. In the review process, submitted papers (structured abstracts) for all formats of presentations (spoken papers, posters, symposia, and demonstrations) were assigned to 2 or 3 reviewers (members of the Scientific Advisory Board) who evaluated for scientific merit and anticipated interest to the conference attendees. We asked the reviewers to consider the following criteria in evaluating the submitted papers.

- Relevance and impact to the theme of the ICMPC (music perception and cognition)
- Significance and benefit of the research for the core and its related areas of the ICMPC
- Originality of the approach and outcomes
- Clarity of the concepts, ideas, and results
- Validity of the conceptual framework, methods, and interpretation of the findings
- Appeal and likelihood of inspiring a discussion at the conference

The ICMPC has continued to maintain the area of music perception and cognition as its core theme since it was launched in Kyoto in 1989, and according to this understanding we set out the basic principle that the reviewing process should lay weight on the extent to which the paper makes an important contribution to this core and its related areas. We adhered to this basic stance in organizing the program of ICMPC 10. This meant that any proposals that have weaker relevance to this core arena would be given correspondingly lower evaluations.

All submissions were graded by the reviewers in their overall quality on a 10-point scale, following evaluations based on the above criteria. Then, according to Guidelines for Conference Organizers of ICMPC, the scale was categorized into 5 grades: excellent (10 and 9), good (8 and 7), adequate (6 and 5), poor (4 and 3), unacceptable (2 and 1).

Acceptance was offered to all papers in the two upper grades scored 7 and above. The mid-category (adequate) papers scored 6 and 5 were accepted after papers in the upper grades when there were remaining spaces within the program. Some papers scored 4 and 3 were accepted at the discretion of the Program Committee (for instance if from a country with little history of work in this area, to encourage development). Any papers evaluated as the lowest

grade were not accepted. The same grading was applied to all proposals, whether for symposia, spoken sessions, poster sessions, or demonstration sessions.

In addition, we asked the reviewers to submit brief comments to the author and the Program Committee regarding the reason for the score they awarded a paper. Comments to the authors should offer them useful suggestions for writing a full paper for the proceedings and for giving a better presentation at the conference. Comments to the Program Committee should give reason for the score, so as to assist us in making final decisions and in giving the author a convincing account for the decision when the paper is rejected. Therefore, we asked the reviewers to provide comments particularly for papers scored 4 and less. For sake of simplicity, we provided examples of comments that substantiate lower scores that roughly correspond to the review criteria mentioned above.

- The subject matter is not suitable to the ICMPC community.
- The originality is not sufficiently high.
- The paper is difficult to understand (The clarity is low).
- The reliability/validity is not sufficient.
- The paper has an ethical problem.

To put it bluntly, reading through all the submitted papers, I noticed that some contributors might get the wrong idea and submitted papers that had no clear relevance to the core theme of ICMPC. Although they might be suitable to some other conference, unfortunately, we were not able to accept those papers to ICMPC 10. I suspect that our basic stance for organizing the ICMPC 10 program, taking music perception and cognition as the core theme, might not be exactly the agreed-upon standards of the current ICMPC community. Currently, ICMPC has extended its original central area over a large variety of related areas, covering neurosciences, music education, music therapy, ethnomusicology, social psychology, computational modeling, and so on, to the extent that a seemingly distorted situation is coming out in which the original core area has been a minority. This expansion is expected to bring significant benefits to the ICMPC community, but it would do so, I believe, only if we could keep sight of the relevance to the core theme of music perception and cognition in its precise sense of the word. I hope ICMPC to keep its original core area intact and to enjoy continuing development for there is much rich material yet to be explored. Otherwise, ICMPC would have to be renamed. After my intimate involvement over the last few years I would not like ICMPC to be transformed into a hodgepodge conference.

Another concern is that a few authors apparently did not take the review process seriously. They seem to have wasted given space for the abstract (400 words). Some of the abstracts submitted were not well-thought, not well-organized; some were filled with repetition of the same thing, and some others had only a research idea with no experimental results, even no description of methods given. The most serious problem for us was that unexpectedly large number of abstracts spoke of no results or conclusions. It might be unreasonable to demand the experimental results of the completed studies from authors 8 months in advance, but it is impossible for reviewers to conduct proper evaluation of the submissions with no results at all. Although we eventually toned down the condition in some degree, we excluded quite a few papers from the program list for this reason. I am concerned that we might have rejected potentially valuable papers worth being accepted when completed.

Post-conference Note from Program Committee Chair

While not all the remarks above will be agreed upon by all members of the Committee, the gist of this assessment will hold wide appeal. I would be pleased if this summary will help organizers of future ICMPC and the colleagues in the ICMPC community.

Thank you again for your contribution and assistance to ICMPC 10, and I hope to see you again somewhere and some day in the future.

Best regards,
Ken

Ken'ichi Miyazaki, Chair
ICMPC 10 Program Committee