

# Transform

NEW VOICES IN COMMUNITY MUSIC

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## **First Writes: Peer Review as a Rite of Passage**

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## **Editorial**

### **First Writes: Peer Review as a Rite of Passage**

Since its inception in 2015, The International Centre for Community Music has actively engaged with emerging scholars in the field. At the ICCM's annual conferences, students and early career researchers have been encouraged to present their work in innovative formats to diverse audiences of community music practitioners and academics. These conferences have opened up multi-directional dialogues between musicians, educators, researchers, and community music organizations, and it is hoped that this new online journal will widen the access to these interactions.

It is also hoped that this journal will widen access to publication for emerging scholars in community music. For every early career researcher, writing their first journal article, going through the peer review process, and finally seeing the article in print is a significant step on the academic ladder. Even if a full-time career in academia has not been the aim of postgraduate study, publication in a peer-reviewed journal is one of the ways of celebrating and validating our research findings. For first-time authors, however, the prospect of undergoing peer review can be daunting, simply due to an understandable uncertainty about the intricacies of the process.

One of the aims of 'Transform' is to facilitate transformations in the writing experience for first-time authors of peer-reviewed journal articles, by providing more direct editorial contact and interpreting peer-review as a mentoring process. All of the authors represented in this edition of 'Transform' are being published for the first time in a peer-reviewed journal. Two of the authors have recently completed Master's degrees involving research upon which their articles are based. The other four writers have been finishing their PhDs at the same time as finalizing their articles. Some of their ideas about their projects have therefore undergone transformation during the writing and review process, as their research has approached completion.

Each of the authors in this inaugural edition presented their research at the ICCM's conference in November 2018. They all submitted draft papers to the editor in advance of the conference and had the opportunity to obtain one-to-one feedback on their drafts during the event. After the conference, revised drafts were submitted for the editor to check, amendments were suggested where necessary, and the final drafts were then sent off for peer

review. The peer reviewers adopted a rigorous but collegiate approach, providing in-depth written feedback and constructive suggestions for further improvements. The authors responded to this feedback by making appropriate revisions, which were again checked by the editor, who was accessible to the authors for advice and clarification throughout the process.

In this issue, we learn about some of the transformative experiences of people making music in the community, as well as the transformative process of researching and writing about musical participation. Working on this has been transformative for me too. I now understand exactly why publishing a peer-reviewed article can sometimes seem to be such a longwinded process! It obviously relies on the availability of suitable peer-reviewers, on the reaction time of the authors when they receive and respond to feedback, and on the work commitments of the editor as well as the reviewers and authors. However, there is a vast difference between being aware of these factors and living through the experience of making sure that this kind of collaborative project is completed within a reasonable timescale. In this case, we have had a wonderful team of reviewers, who have provided timely, lengthy and detailed feedback, and managed to do all this with great good cheer, support and encouragement for the authors. My thanks go to every member of the editorial board for helping to transform our ideas into reality, so that the first edition of this open-access journal can now be read by anyone with an interest in community music.