

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

In August 1995, the beautiful old town of Alexandria near Washington D.C. saw the third International Conference of ISIS - after Budapest in Europe (1989) and Hiroshima in Asia (1992) for the first time on the American continent.

And there was another "first" on this occasion: among its many workshops exploring symmetry in nature and human artifacts, visible or at least visually conceivable, the interdisciplinary community witnessed the first entire symposium dedicated to exploring symmetry that develops primarily in time, "Symmetry in Music, Dance, Drama and Poetry". This symposium encompassed two lectures during morning plenaries, three coordinated afternoon sessions, as well as two lecture-performances and two talks with demonstrations in the evenings - altogether twenty-one presentations.

The spread of topics was excitingly rich, including in each of the four areas examples from at least one Western and one nonwestern culture. In the field of poetry, two papers on English authors were juxtaposed with one exploring Muslim calligraphy. In the area of dance, a video-enhanced account of functional and expressive movement and the enthralling performance of the Palindrome Dance Co. set two Western approaches against a Japanese adaptation of anthroposophic eurythmy. Among the presentations dealing with theater or stage production in the widest sense, occurrences of symmetry in a recent American movie contrasted with those in Baroque operas, while an investigation of Javanese puppet plays was matched with an exploration of asymmetrical space in the Japanese *Noh* play and tea ceremony. In the field of music, two overview studies dealt with Western art music and ethnic musics respectively; two presentations that focused on the 'grammar' of music stood besides two that explored the relationship of analysis and performance; two papers that linked musical symmetries with computable data were admirably contrasted by two in which composers talked about how considerations of symmetry affected their creative choices.

This issue of the journal *Symmetry: Culture and Science* can give but a poor rendering of the wealth of the contributions. As is inevitable in a medium that offers only printed text and printed visual images, the enrichment provided by the declamation of poetry, the movements of actors and dancers (seen real and videotaped) and the sounding performance of the music must be left out.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all participants for making the week of the conference into such an extraordinary experience for all in the international community of interdisciplinary scholars - for all of us fascinated by symmetries perfect and intriguingly broken.

Siglinde Bräuer