



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

This is a self-archived – parallel-published version of an original article. This version may differ from the original in pagination and typographic details. When using please cite the original.

AUTHOR Cloonan Martin

TITLE Musicians of the World Unite!: The Initial Years of the International Federation of Musicians

YEAR 2022

DOI <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003150480>

VERSION Publisher's PDF

CITATION Cloonan, M. (2022) Musicians of the World Unite!: The Initial Years of the International Federation of Musicians. In *Music as Labour: Inequalities and Activism in the Past and Present*. Routledge, pp. 175–189. DOI: 10.4324/9781003150480-12.

It is deposited under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>) which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

11 Musicians of the World Unite!

The Initial Years of the International Federation of Musicians

Martin Cloonan

Introduction

This chapter critically examines an attempt to unite musicians across international borders in order to confront common issues via the formation of a collective organisation of musicians' unions. It focuses on the early days of the International Federation of Musicians (FIM), which was founded in 1948 and held its first Congress in 1949. Based largely on the minutes of the organisation's first two full meetings (which were accessed in FIM's offices in Paris), the chapter consists of three parts. The first outlines some previous work, introduces the idea of musicians as workers and charts FIM's formation. Part two analyses the key issues that the organisation addressed in its early days, including debates over which musicians should be organised, relationships with the recording industry, changing technology and the movement of working musicians across international borders. Finally, some concluding remarks illustrate the continuing relevance of the issues that FIM faced in its early days, and that continue to echo down the years.

Part One: Musicians as Workers and FIM's Formation

This chapter emerges from previous research undertaken by John Williamson and myself on the history of the British Musicians' Union (BMU) (www.muhistory.com; Williamson and Cloonan, 2016). The Union was founded in 1893 and still organises and represents musicians in the UK (www.musiciansunion.org.uk). We used its history as a lens through which to provide an account of both musicians' working lives and the industries in which they worked over a 120 period.

A key approach in our work was to consider musicians primarily as workers. We cited others who had previously done this (Williamson and Cloonan, 2016: 8–10) and were less interested in claiming originality than in stressing the implications of such an approach. This entailed recognising that once musicians are categorised as workers, certain things follow, including reflections on the myriad places in which they work and the factors that affect such work. While some issues, such as gender, location and the general

state of the economy, affect all workers, others can be seen as being particularly pertinent to musicians. These include changing technologies, the state of the music industries, competition from other musicians and the main musical genre worked in. As workers, musicians seek employment opportunities in internationally organised industries characterised by intense competition, in which the supply of labour generally exceeds the demand. The overwhelming majority of musicians are self-employed freelancers, and this often militates against the sorts of industrial organisation traditionally associated with trade unions.

Another key variable for musicians is the aforementioned fact that their employment has been international for many years. Prior to the advent of recording, itinerant musicians would travel across continents to perform and singers such as Jenny Lind were touring internationally as early as the 1850s (Waksman, 2011). Rohr (2001: 5) has written that British musicians were hampered by ‘their relative lack of professional status, organization, and autonomy [and] foreign competition’ and later cites foreign competition as helping to keep wages low (Rohr, 2001: 165). Ehrlich (1985: 17) also reports a long tradition of misplaced resentment against foreign musicians. In all this, it is important to emphasise that if – as with music – workers are working in a conglomeration of international industries, then their rights have to be safeguarded an international scale. This is exactly what FIM attempted to do.

FIM is the collective organisation for musicians’ unions across the globe. However, it has hitherto received scant academic coverage. One article comments on its negotiations with the International Federation of Phonographic Industries (IFPI) and the European Broadcasting Union (Miscimarra, 1981) and another looks at trade union organisation in the international entertainment industries (Fattmann, 2002). While other works mention FIM in passing (Parker, 2004; Williamson and Cloonan, 2016) and a former General Secretary has provided an overview (Burckhardt, 1984), overall, as an organisation that has tried to represent musicians’ interests internationally for over 70 years, FIM has attracted little academic attention. This chapter seeks to redress this.

With little extant academic or other literature available, the main source for researchers is FIM’s own archives.¹ These are contained in the Federation’s own offices in Paris and in the Friedrich Ebert Foundation collection in Bonn. Amongst other papers, these archives contain minutes of all of its 21 Congresses and all of its Executive Meetings, as well as reports to conference from the General Secretary. Another archival source is the BMU’s Archive at the University of Stirling (<https://libguides.stir.ac.uk/archives/mu>), containing such resources as the Executive’s reports to biennial conferences, which in recent years have included reports on international activity. As noted earlier, this chapter is based on FIM’s own minutes of its first two meetings.

FIM was founded at a meeting in August 1948 when 23 representatives of nine European musicians' unions² gathered together in Zurich's Congress Hall for four days of what was billed as a meeting of the International Conference of Musicians.³ The meeting was initiated and organised by Rudolf Leuzinger, President of the Swiss Musicians' Union (Schweizerischen Musiker-Verband). This was an attempt to unite the world's disparate musicians' unions under one umbrella organisation, which aspired to be the representative voice of musicians internationally. While northern Europe was well represented at the founding meeting, and there was also an Italian delegation, notable absences included France, Germany (which sent a supportive letter) and the entire the eastern bloc, although a supportive letter was received from Hungary. It appears that all the delegates were men.⁴

The minutes report that, on the second day of the meeting, 'it was unanimously decided to set up an International Organisation of Musicians' (FIM, 1948: 7) and that the new organisation would be called the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) (FIM, 1948: 26). It was to be based in Switzerland, partly because the Swiss union wanted to secure performers' rights on an international basis and believed that the location of the bureau implementing the Convention on copyright in Berne would help to facilitate this (FIM, 1948: 20–21). It was also agreed that the President should be located in a country outside of the Secretariat's home. The BMU's Bill Batten⁵ subsequently became the first President and the UK has held the presidency ever since. Its then-General Secretary, Hardie Ratcliffe, proclaimed that 'The world should understand that musicians have decided to close their ranks' (FIM, 1948: 33).

The context in which FIM was formed is important. This was just three years after the end of the Second World War, at a time when many countries were still struggling to rebuild their economies.

In October 1949, FIM held its first Ordinary Congress in Vienna. This was attended by the seven members of the Executive Committee and 13 delegates from six countries.⁶ Again, all the delegates were men. As of 2021, FIM is still in existence, now with 69 member nations – 37 in Europe and North America, 18 in Africa, 9 in Latin America and 5 in Asia and the Pacific.

Meanwhile, many musicians found themselves struggling to find work in the post-war world. Thus, it was reported at the first meeting that 'Economic difficulties' had prevented a Finnish delegation from attending (FIM, 1948: 2), and at the first Congress, the Finnish situation was described as being 'particularly delicate' (FIM, 1949). In 1948, the Austrian delegation reported that '50% of the musicians were without work' (FIM, 1948: 6) – a figure that rose to 70% in 1949 (FIM, 1949: 8). This same year, an unemployment rate of 50% was reported amongst German musicians (FIM, 1949: 31).

Economic and other difficulties made for a somewhat tetchy atmosphere in these early meetings, and while FIM was founded on the ideal of what

Leuzinger described as an ‘international family of musicians’ (FIM, 1948: 2), a great amount of contention is evident in the minutes. Issues were fiercely debated, and it is clear that delegates disagreed vehemently on not only what a musician was, but also how they should be best assisted. Examples of this are included below.

Part Two: FIM’s Early Days

Within the music industries, there were four key areas with which FIM had to immediately engage: recording, publishing, live music and broadcasting. The record industry had begun to organise collectively via the formation of the IFPI in 1933. Within the publishing sector, rewards for musical composition via the assertion of writers’ and performers’ rights had been established by the formation of various collective management organisations such as the Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique (SACEM) in France (1851) and the Performing Right Society in the UK (1914). International copyright agreements had been established in 1886 via the Berne Convention. While its organisation was largely undertaken by national promoters, live music was clearly international as artists toured across national borders. Meanwhile, broadcasting had shown its importance throughout the war. In Europe, this primarily meant public sector broadcasting, but there was also some commercial activity such as Radio Luxembourg, which also began in 1933. As FIM formed, these four areas comprised the most important parts of a political economy of music that was still largely organised and regulated on a national basis, but with significant amounts of international work. That economy was located within a world of post-war reconstruction in which the role of the public sector was taken for granted and attempts were being made to build international organisations to counter the sorts of poisonous nationalism that had led to the war.

A great deal of time at FIM’s first two meetings was inevitably consumed by organisational issues such as how it would be constituted and funded and where it would be located. While these might be seen as the mundane machinations of a new organisation, it is apparent that they were often highly contentious. The minutes contain various references to lively debates and the need for the meeting to be adjourned so that tempers could cool. For example, when the Italian delegate, Mario Montavani, was told in 1949 that his union could only have one vote rather than the three he had argued for (based on the union’s membership size), he left the room in protest (FIM, 1949: 13). When the issue was revisited later, there ‘was again a very lively discussion’ (FIM, 1949: 15), although it was ultimately agreed that all delegates would have one vote each (FIM, 1949: 16). Even a seemingly innocuous issue such as the proposed location of FIM’s offices proved to be contentious. BMU General Secretary Hardie Ratcliffe ‘did not hide his indignation’ when he found out about the costs of secretarial support in Switzerland (FIM, 1949: 29), condemning the apparent materialism of

the FIM staff and declaring that British trade unionists 'are accustomed to sacrifices in order to help the trade union movement' (FIM, 1949: 30). Leuzinger responded by asking delegates 'to regain their previous calmness and objectivity' (FIM, 1949: 30). When the financial report for FIM's first year was received, a 'very spirited discussion arose during which Vital Hauser (Switzerland) criticised the attitude of the Executive and Leuzinger deplored that so important an item had been rushed through by congress' (FIM, 1949: 29), although the report was eventually unanimously approved.

Debate often concerned the appropriate remit of national unions apropos of those of FIM. What emerged was a formulation whereby FIM could make recommendations to its members but not force them to take up common positions. While this would have important implications for the organisation in the longer term, here it is more important to identify those issues that emerged in the first two meetings and then recurred throughout the organisation's history, as it is these that highlight perennial issues for musicians as workers. Here I deal with four such issues: which musicians should be organised, relations with the record industry, changing technology and international touring by working musicians.

Organising Who?

One of the first issues the new organisation had to face was *who* it was representing – all musicians (including amateurs)? Full-time professionals? Semi-professionals? Only those with music qualifications? All those seeking employment? Here, Bernet Kempers of the Dutch Koninklijke Nederlandse Toonkunstenaars Vereniging (KNTV) said that he represented a union of professional musicians, and that 'He expected that an International Musicians' Union would fight against untrained or half trained musicians. Semi-professionals and amateurs should not be protected' (FIM, 1948: 10). In contradistinction, the British delegate, Van Phillips, replied that 'we were not creating an academy of music but a mass organization' (FIM, 1948: 11). Thus, there were different conceptions of what a musician was and therefore whom the new organisation should seek to recruit and represent. A minimal approach might limit membership to those with qualifications in music, whereas a maximalist approach would accept anyone seeking to play music.

The first meeting received reports from each of the delegations. Raoul Dieu of the Belgian Syndicat des Artistes Musiciens de Bruxelles reported that in his country:

The musicians were not well organized. There was a lot of unemployment. The situation was aggravated by the fact that anybody could enter the profession without special qualification. Many musicians did not belong to any of the unions.

(FIM, 1948: 3)

While such an approach illustrated a bias towards orchestral musicians, it was also confirmed that the Union also organised amateur and semi-professional musicians. Kemperts complained that ‘the number of those wishing to enter the profession had risen to an appalling degree’ (FIM, 1948: 5) and it was confirmed that only qualified musicians could join his organisation, with others joining different unions. In Denmark, it was reported that ‘about 800–1000 musicians had not been admitted to the union, because they had not the required qualification’ (FIM, 1948: 4). An Italian delegate, Fidele D’Amico, held that ‘it was impossible to evaluate musicians working in ensembles and orchestra-musicians in the same way’ (FIM, 1948: 17).

Elsewhere, attitudes appeared to be changing, as the Swedish Svenska Musik reported that, in the first 30 years of its existence, it had organised only ‘qualified musicians,’ but then admitted semi-professionals in 1937, something that changed the shape of the union. As of 1948, of around 16,000 members, only 3,500 were (full-time) professionals; 10,000 were semi-professional and another 2,500 were ‘variety-singers, actors, dancers, women keepers of the wardrobe, technical assistants, etc’ (FIM, 1948: 6). In Switzerland, the federal nature of the country had resulted in musicians being organised on federal lines in a number of different organisations (FIM, 1948: 6–7). Musicians wanting to join the SMV had to ‘prove that they earned their living in the musicians’ profession’ (FIM, 1948: 7). The most self-aggrandising account came from Ratcliffe, who proclaimed that:

No employer could afford to employ musicians without a previous agreement with the Musicians’ Union regarding the salary and conditions of work. This was the direct consequence of the fact that the union had for several years organized everybody who earned money playing music.

(FIM, 1948: 4, emphasis in original)

He added that ‘in Great Britain many musicians earn three times as much as unskilled workers,’ that the Union was now engaged in work around creating a demand for music and that ‘The legal protection for musicians which was in existence in Great Britain surpassed the provisions existing in any other country of the world’ (FIM, 1948: 4).

That this was a somewhat hyperbolic account is less important than the fact that Ratcliffe’s intervention raised at least two important points – whether all musicians should be in the same union and whether they should be in a union of performers alongside actors and other performing artists. In fact, Van Phillips qualified Ratcliffe’s claim by noting that ‘composers and opera-singers’ were in other unions, with which the MU was trying to unite (FIM, 1948: 5). It was also reported that in Holland, there were ‘several unions of musicians’ (FIM, 1948: 5). In Austria, the musicians were a section of the *Gewerkschaft der Angestellten der freien Berufe*, with

five sub-sections: orchestras; chamber music; dance bands; conductors, composers and virtuosos; and teachers of music and singing (FIM, 1948: 6).

Subsequently, the question of how best to organise musicians – as a united body of musicians, as separate organisations for orchestral musicians and others or as part of larger conglomerates of creative workers – became an ongoing issue. How that question was answered varied across international borders and to this day, FIM has more than one member organisation within some countries.⁷ Meanwhile, the first meeting ultimately accepted a proposal from Austria's Dr W. Russ-Bovelino that 'The International Musicians' Union aims at the protection of the interests of *all* musicians in the artistic, economic, social and all other spheres' (FIM, 1948: 6, emphasis mine).

The Record Industry and Performers' Rights

Relations with the recording industry were prominent from the start. A proposal that a delegate from the IFPI be allowed to attend the inaugural meeting was defeated on the basis that this was premature and should be done only after FIM had established itself (FIM, 1948: 2). The most contentious issue here concerned disputes between the record companies and unions over the so-called performing right. When recordings are made, those whose performances have been recorded have certain rights in determining how those recordings are subsequently used. Generally, the 'featured artists' named on the recordings assign their rights to the company issuing the recordings, while the other 'non-featured' (i.e., unnamed) artists on recordings such as session players are paid one-off fees. However, as copyright law developed, the rights of these unnamed musicians to have a role in determining the usage of the recordings gained legal protection, albeit with variations across international borders. The main debate here concerned whether the 'performing right' was to be seen as individual one that could be freely bought and sold (as the record companies and some individual musicians held), or whether it was as a social one, the exercise of which should be constrained in order to limit any potential damage to musicians as a whole (which was generally the unions' view).⁸

Importantly, the use of recordings in public places and in broadcasting was increasing in the post-war years. As record companies generally owned the rights to the recordings, they could charge for their usage. However, as just noted, musicians also had some rights in controlling the use of their performances on such recordings. Determining the appropriate balance of the ownership rights of recordings and the performance right – and the financial rewards which flowed from these – was to cause ongoing debate.⁹

Within FIM, attitudes towards the performing right immediately became a key issue. In 1948, Van Phillips informed that meeting the BMU had forged a valuable agreement with Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL), the record company-owned UK collecting agency for performance royalties, via which the Union – as the representative organisation for the non-featured

artists – received funds annually from PPL for the use of recordings in public.¹⁰ Phillips noted that this had been achieved because of the BMU's industrial muscle, whereby 'the phonographic industry could not do anything without the musicians' cooperation' (FIM, 1948: 31). He stressed that FIM's role should be 'to make the national unions strong' (FIM, 1948: 31), so that, rather than relying on lawyers bringing legal cases in order to improve musicians' working conditions and secure performers' rights, FIM should focus on workers taking action.

The first Congress (1949) saw the IFPI's Vice President, Heinrich Landis, in attendance as the Executive Committee's guest. He noted that FIM had been at the IFPI's own Congress in Amsterdam and so saw his presence as being equal treatment, assuring delegates that 'a good deal of the problems of the musicians could be solved together with the friendly organisations of records [sic] manufacturers and broadcasting companies' (FIM, 1949: 4). Later during the meeting, however, Ratcliffe said that he did not want Landis to be present throughout, as he 'wanted to tell the truth about this Organization' (FIM, 1949: 11). Other delegates also expressed concern at Landis' presence. From the chair, Batten said that this was somewhat difficult when FIM had attended IFPI's Amsterdam meeting. Ratcliffe argued that because the IFPI *already had* a policy on the use of recordings, it was fine for FIM to attend its meetings. However, in contradistinction, FIM's policy here was still emerging and would be determined at this meeting. Under such circumstances, an IFPI presence might jeopardise discussions of that policy. The minutes record that, during this discussion, the 'atmosphere grew tense' (FIM, 1949: 12) as some delegates criticised the EC's decision to invite Landis, while the Swiss delegates could not countenance the invitation being withdrawn. The meeting was adjourned for ten minutes to let things calm down. Eventually it was agreed that Landis would only report to the meeting (FIM, 1949: 13) and Batten undertook to explain the situation to him.

Thus, the relationship between FIM and the record industry was not only a vital one, but also a divisive one. Ratcliffe later said that he was astonished that, as FIM's General Secretary, Leuzinger had spoken in his report of collaborating with the IFPI. Ratcliffe expressed his view that:

The record manufacturers wanted to establish the right on the record, the musicians wanted to establish the right on their performances. In his opinion the two extremes were diametrically opposed.

(FIM, 1949: 20)

This issue was a profound one for musicians' representative organisations. As the popularity of recordings rose and they were used more frequently in broadcasting and public places, they became more financially lucrative and, in the long-term, income for record companies grew. Under such circumstances, the question of remuneration for the repeated use of one recording of a musician's performance was a highly pertinent one.

There was some philosophical discussion here as Leuzinger argued that there was a debate as to whether the rights of performers ‘was considered as a connected right of copyright – consequently as an individual right – or ... whether it was considered and treated as a social right (protection of the whole injured profession)’ (FIM, 1949: 22). He suggested that FIM had to choose between these two positions or gradations of them. He also noted that it was important to look at the use of recordings in the broadest sense so that, beyond recordings themselves, the performing right ‘must be legally fixed also for broadcasting, television, sound-films etc’ (FIM, 1949: 21).

Debate over tactics followed. The BMU had made it clear that its success was based on industrial muscle rather than appealing to the good natures of the record companies that made the records and the broadcasting organisations that increasingly made use of them. In short, the question was whether, as workers, musicians’ interests were best forwarded by working alongside employers or by confronting them. The former view was taken by the EC as Sven Wassmouth (Sweden) said that ‘the E.C. was of the opinion [that] ... the defence of the rights of the performing musicians did not exclude the recognition of the rights of the record manufacturers on their products’ (FIM, 1949: 21).

However, Ratcliffe suggested that FIM was getting too close to the IFPI and, in broadcasting, the International Radio Organisation. To him, FIM ‘had to give up any hope of getting help from these organizations and ... had to go our own way’ (FIM, 1949: 23). He also felt that the ILO was too focussed the *individual* rights of performers, whereas the *collective* right was more important. For Ratcliffe and the BMU, the performing right was a collective one and even if an individual musician had assigned it to record companies, the collectivity of musicians should still benefit. For Ratcliffe, FIM representatives had to ‘choose between individual right and collective protection’ (FIM, 1949: 23). This was countered by Hauser, who argued that Ratcliffe was ‘absolutely wrong’ to think that supporting the individual right would help the record companies (at the expense of musicians) (FIM, 1949: 24).

Overall Ratcliffe argued that

from the judicial point of view the individual right was justified and had to be defended. But practically we had to aim at an individual right which would work in favour of the collectivity. It did not matter for the time being how we would achieve this aim. *The secondary use of records must be restricted by all means*, and the musicians as a whole should be able to claim money for it.

(FIM, 1949: 24, emphasis mine)

In response, Leuziger suggested that the two sides – collective and individual – were actually not as far apart as it seemed, and supported Ratcliffe by arguing that ‘musicians should not only get money from the secondary use of gramophone records, but that this use should be very much limited’

(FIM, 1949: 24). He went on to praise the BMU for getting the BBC's use of records limited to 22 hours music a week (a cut from the previous 52)¹¹ and said that 'The idea of the BMU that no records should be played where living musicians could be engaged was showing the way to be followed by us' (FIM, 1949: 24). He also said that the IFPI also had an interest in restricting the use of recordings in broadcasting as 'the manufacturers [i.e., the record companies] were right in asserting that secondary use of their products injured their industry too' (FIM, 1949: 24). Here, Leuzinger espoused a widely held contemporaneous view – that both musicians and record companies had an interest in restricting the use of recordings by broadcasters, the former because such use denied employment opportunities to live musicians, the latter because playing records on the radio was held to harm sales. While in the longer term, record companies came to see that playing a record on the radio was effectively an advertisement for it, which was likely to boost sales, the Union never abandoned its position that using records meant less employment for live musicians.

Leuzinger argued that 'The best solution would be if the musicians of FIM could say: that they recognized the individual right but that they agree to accept a generous solution in order to protect efficiently their profession' (FIM, 1949: 25). Wassmuth proclaimed that he 'preferred to protect the whole profession' (FIM, 1949: 25). He also argued that the 'two principles could be put together' (FIM, 1949: 23), for while the performing right 'was an individual right ... it had to be dealt with collectively' (FIM, 1949: 26). Wassmuth called for the establishment within each country of a commission to defend this right, while an international commission – dominated by FIM – should also be set up.

Ultimately it was agreed to appoint a committee to determine FIM's policy on the use of recorded music. That Committee – which included all the main protagonists in the debate – met overnight and came up with answers to 18 questions. It was suggested that each nation could decide how best to recognise the performing right and what licensing and remuneration was needed. The Committee also believed that the broadcasting of recorded musical performances and recording of musical performances 'through mechanical means' (i.e., records) should be prohibited, with exceptions determined by the national committees. Such committees or their international counterparts should also levy fees for usage. The Committee also opposed the taping of performances for use either in recording studios or in theatres and concert halls. The secondary use of gramophone records outside of the home 'should be limited to the extent that living musicians are not injured by it,' while 'dubbing on film or other soundtracks has to be absolutely prohibited' (FIM, 1949: 28). Any fees that were due for secondary usage should be paid by the user, rather than by the record company. However, by five votes to four, Congress adopted the position that 'no resolution on the policy of FIM regarding mechanical music be adopted' (FIM, 1949: 29).

The debate here showed that, overall, FIM supported the BMU's positions of being against the public use of recordings outside the home, insisting that performers should be paid on the rare occasions it was allowed and making such payments to a collective organisation, such as was the case in the UK. While the ways in which such policies were implemented (or not) varied across international borders, they were based on two important principles: no recording of music without musicians being paid and no public use of recordings without further payment.

Technology

The public use of recorded music was wrapped up in another key issue – the development of technology. The founding Conference agreed to the immediate establishment of a 'Committee for mechanised music' (FIM, 1948: 15), the partial aim of which was to gather information about how musicians were compensated for the repeated use of recorded music in broadcasting and other public places. This was said to be the 'most pressing (issue) for our organization' (FIM, 1948: 31). A year later when, as President, Batten made his opening address to the first Congress, he warned of 'the great dangers arising from the ever improving mechanisation of music including broadcast and television ... which were threatening musicians of the world' (FIM, 1949: 4). On its final day, the Congress adopted a motion that:

The congress underlines the necessity of protecting the living performing musicians against the detrimental effects of mechanical music and expects immediate help from all competent or entitled national and international institutions and organizations. The congress gives authority to the E.C. of FIM to adopt the measures they would deem necessary for the carrying into effect of such a protection.

(FIM, 1949: 40)

Once again, the context of this motion should be borne in mind. Such protectionist measures were then politically popular. Moreover, new technology in the form of the 'talkies' had had a devastating effect on musical employment in the 1920s and 1930s, as thousands of cinema musicians were made redundant (Roberts, 2014; Williamson and Cloonan, 2016; Piškor, Chapter 3). In addition, musical employment was still struggling to adapt to the post-war environment and the possible displacement of musicians by developing technology was obviously of concern to FIM.

Working Abroad

Another perennial issue was the issuing of work permits to foreign musicians wishing to work across international borders. Opinion was divided here, as an aspiration to spread musical knowledge by encouraging international

touring was met with concerns that local musicians might be displaced by 'unfair' competition from touring foreign musicians. So the history of musicians' international work is also the history of attempts by local representative organisations to restrict the import of musicians into their jurisdictions. Australia (Dreyfus, 2009), the UK (Cloonan and Brennan, 2013) and the USA (Roberts, 2014) provide just a few examples of this.

Unsurprisingly, these issues soon surfaced within FIM. The 1949 Congress received reports of how musicians' unions in countries such as Italy, Norway and Sweden were sent applications for tours by foreign musicians for approval (FIM, 1949: 8–9). It was reported that, in Switzerland, the authorities did not always respect the union's call to refuse a work permit and in response, the union 'wanted to send as many good Swiss light orchestras as possible to those countries from which guest orchestras were coming' (FIM, 1949: 10). The Austrian delegate, Prof. Franz Sirowy, argued that semi-professionals should be excluded from any exchange deals. It was reported that, in West Germany, musicians' unions 'had no influence whatsoever on the admission of foreign musicians' (FIM, 1949: 10). Ratcliffe reported that exchanges were now taking place between the UK and countries such as France so that 'the tendency was no more, as it had been formerly, to close the border hermetically' (FIM, 1949: 8).

This reflected a growing acceptance within FIM that exchanges of musicians were permissible, provided that the domestic unions had some control over the numbers coming in. This mixture of nationalism and internationalism was to continue down the years. It also presented some difficulties for FIM wherein some members wished to keep national policies, whilst others wanted the organisation to take a collective stance. Leuzinger reported that a dispute between three orchestras in Vienna and the Austrian union had led FIM's Executive Committee to take the view that 'FIM should not interfere with internal national questions' (FIM, 1949: 10). However, this decision did not find favour with all the delegations and fierce debate ensued. Hauser opened it by saying that he 'wanted to intensify the exchange between member countries of FIM' (FIM, 1949: 30). He deplored the fact that the BMU had reached an exchange agreement 'with the French Musicians' Union which was not a member of FIM' (FIM, 1949: 30). There then followed a row between the BMU and the Italian MU. The BMU took the view that this was a national question for unions to deal with internally and therefore 'FIM was not in a position to deal with the international exchange of musicians' (FIM, 1949: 30). However, Mantovani insisted that the matter should be discussed as 'the question of the exchange of musicians was considered by the union as one of the most important problems which were to be solved by FIM', especially as the country was 'in a position to export art' (FIM, 1949: 30).

The minutes report that 'a very lively discussion' arose between the two delegations and that the debate became so heated that Batten adjourned the meeting for lunch (FIM, 1949: 30). Following this, Mantovani explained

that it was very important to his union that international exchange 'should be controlled by the musicians' unions and by FIM' and that salaries for foreigners were the same as for locals. It was eventually agreed that both FIM and the national unions should try to control the international exchange as far as possible and that such exchanges should only be agreed provided that both the union of the country of origin and the receiving country had agreed the exchange, with the salary for visitors to be 'a little higher than those of indigenous musicians belonging to the same professional category' (FIM, 1949: 32). However, it was also noted that this could only take the form of advice to members, as FIM could not tell its member organisations what to do.

The question of agents also arose, and it was agreed that if these were to be tolerated, they had to be recognised by the Unions and FIM should set up an international employment bureau if necessary. It was noted that the use of agents was outlawed in countries such as Austria and Italy (FIM, 1949: 35) and Hauser described them as 'parasites.' The meeting resolved that FIM should lobby the ILO to ensure that 'profit-making agencies ... be generally and internationally prohibited' (FIM, 1949: 36), although the different legal position in various countries suggested that this would remain an aspiration.

Conclusion

The longevity of the issues discussed in 1948 and 1949 is shown by the Agenda for the twenty-first FIM Congress, held in Reykjavik in 2016. This included motions on performers' rights and travelling musicians (FIM, 2016). There was also continued debate about whether and how FIM should work with employer organisations such as the IFPI and organisations such as the International Labour Office (ILO). So in many ways, not much had changed. The main issue remained how to get performers paid and how to determine the best ways of ensuring this. But the power of trade unions had diminished dramatically since 1948 and rather than relying on their industrial muscle, the move now was towards legal remedy, often via joint campaigns with employers and other allies. The industrial muscle was gone and now, rather than forcing broadcasters and record companies to submit to their will, musicians seemed consigned to lobbying for changes to legislation and working in partnership with those whom they had once opposed.

But musicians remain workers. While their problems are specific to the industries in which they work, they are *workers'* problems. The music industries are becoming increasingly global and, if nothing else, FIM is attempting to offer an international response to this. Looking back at its early days is one way to try to understand musicians' problems on a global scale. For while the musicians of the world have tried to unite, the obstacles they face in doing so remain as hazardous as ever.

Notes

- 1 Another step would be to look at the archives of its members and the organisations with which it has interacted, such as the IFPI. This awaits development.
- 2 Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.
- 3 Whereas the inaugural meeting was called a Conference, all further meetings were billed as Congresses.
- 4 In the minutes, two of the delegates are identified only by their initials. However, their minuted interventions show them to be men. The minutes also reveal that it is routinely assumed that all delegates would be men (FIM, 1948: 23) and that the General-Secretary would always be a man (FIM, 1948: 25). See also references to men in FIM 1948: 23, 28 and 29. This seems to be part of a bigger problem as, referring to the BMU, Williamson and Cloonan write that ‘trawling the Union’s archives for references to women prior to the 1970s is an unrewarding task’ (2016: 238). By the end of the 1970s, just 12% of the BMU’s membership were women (2016: 238).
- 5 Batten had risen to prominence as the BMU activist most active in the campaign to restrict working visits by foreign musicians. See Cloonan and Brennan (2013).
- 6 Austria, Italy Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Czechoslovakia, West Germany and Holland sent observers. Greetings were received from musicians’ unions in Belgium, Finland, Ireland, South Africa and ‘some German countries’ (FIM, 1949: 4).
- 7 See <https://www.fim-musicians.org/about-fim/membership/>.
- 8 See Williamson (2015) for how this worked in the UK.
- 9 For examples, see Cloonan (2016) and Williamson and Cloonan (2016).
- 10 See Cloonan (2016) for the history of this agreement.
- 11 See Cloonan (2016) for how the MU was able to do this through its relationship with the PPL.

References

- Burckhardt, Y. (1984) Die international Musikerföderation. *The World of Music*, 26(2): 137–143.
- Cloonan, M. (2016) Negotiating Needletime: The Musicians’ Union, the BBC and the Record Companies, circa 1920–1990. *Social History*, 41(4): 353–374.
- Cloonan, M. and Brennan, M. (2013) Alien Invasions: the British Musicians’ Union and Foreign Musicians. *Popular Music*, 32(2): 277–295.
- Dreyfus, K. (2009) The Foreigner, the Musicians’ Union and the State in 1920s Australia: A Nexus of Conflict. *Music and Politics*, 1(1): 1–17.
- Ehrlich, C. (1985) *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Fattmann, R. (2002) *The Long Road Towards Cooperation: International Trade Union Organizations in the Arts, Culture, Media and Entertainment Sector after World War II*. Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Foundation.
- FIM (1948) *Minutes of the International Conference of Musicians*. Zurich: FIM
- FIM (1949) *Report of the 1st Ordinary FIM Congress*. Vienna: FIM.
- FIM (2016) *Resolutions*. Paris: FIM.

- Miscimarra, P. (1981) The Entertainment Industry: Inroads in Multinational Collective Bargaining. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 19(1): 49–65.
- Parker, N. (2004) *Music Business: Infrastructure, Practice and Law*. London: Sweet and Maxwell.
- Roberts, M. (2014) *Tell Tchaikovsky the News: Rock 'n' Roll, the Labor Question, and the Musicians' Union, 1942–1968*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rohr, D. (2001) *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750–1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Waksman, S. (2011) Selling the Nightingale: P.T. Barnum, Jenny Lind, and the Management of the American Crowd. *Arts Marketing*, 1(2): 108–120.
- Williamson, J. (2015) For the benefit of all musicians? The Musicians' Union and performers' rights in the UK. In: Rahmatian, R. (ed.) *Concepts of Music and Copyright*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar: 167–194.
- Williamson, J. and Cloonan, M. (2016) *Players' Work Time: A History of the British Musicians' Union, 1893–2013*. Manchester: Manchester University Press