General Chair's Welcome

Dear ICME 2003 attendees,

On behalf of the Organizing committee, let me welcome you all to the fourth International Conference on Multimedia and Expo (ICME 2003). The first three ICME conferences were held in New York, Tokyo, and Lausanne. We are honored to have been chosen by the Steering Committee to host this conference and its attendees. Baltimore city around the 4th of July takes a very festive look, and I am sure you will have a great time attending the meeting, going to the ball game, and enjoying the sights and food available in the vicinity. The ICME conference is jointly sponsored by four IEEE societies: Circuits and Systems, Communications, Computer, and Signal Processing. You will see that the technical program broadly reflects the common research interests of the four societies. In putting this conference together, the organizing committee faced major challenges due to the threat of SARS. Many potential attendees from countries affected by SARS decided to opt out of the meeting due to potential travel limitations. Also, the cancellation of ICASSP 2003 caused many last minute additions/changes to the technical program.

I would not have been able to organize this meeting without help from trusted friends and colleagues. First of all, I would like to thank the technical program chair, Professor K. J. (Ray) Liu for working tirelessly to put together a very strong technical program. He had to work almost every day until early May to accommodate changes to the technical program due to additions of papers from ICASSP 2003. Thanks Ray! In addition, during the course of program formulation cycle, Ray and the four technical program vice-chairs, Professor S.F. Chang, Dr. R. Civanlar, Dr. J. Ostermann and Professor J. Sorenson put in endless hours for ensuring a smooth reviewing process. Thanks to the members of the program committee for coming up with an exceptional program. Special thanks are due to Professor Y. Wang for coordinating the organization of many interesting special sessions. The local arrangements chair, Professor T. Tran, was on top of things that are critical to the success of a meeting the size of ICME 2003. The assistance provided by the publicity chair, Professor M. Wu, helped the conference to be on the radar screens of members of the four societies for nearly a year. Thanks are due to Professor B.S. Manjunath for arranging the tutorials, to Professor A. Rangarajan for handling issues related to publications, and to Dr. Zheng for handling the important duties of the financial chair with great care. The registration chair, Dr. D. Turaga, and the exhibit chair, Dr. S. Der, put in a considerable amount of time in handling their responsibilities. The liaisons to Europe and the Far East, Professors T. Ebrahimi and S. Furui, helped us to keep the conference in the minds and hearts of multimedia researchers in these two important regions. Finally, I would not have volunteered to be the General Chairman of this conference if Billene Mercer and her team were not available to help me organize it. Billene, Lance, Bryan, Chris, and Stephanie at Conference Management Services were on top of things throughout the gestation period, almost taking all the worry off me! Thanks guys.

Enjoy the conference, the ball game, the food, and your visit to Baltimore.

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General Chair