

Honorary Membership of IAML

Citation: Martie Severt, 2026, Thessaloniki

statement by Nienke de Boer

Honorary membership is awarded by the General Assembly in recognition of distinguished service over many years.

It is an honor to propose this special recognition to our dear colleague from the Netherlands, and Past President of IAML, Martie Severt.

He has made significant contributions to IAML both nationally and internationally.

In reviewing Martie's career, it is worth noting that it is described in much more authentic detail in his own synopsis, which he wrote for the Fontes Jubilee edition celebrating IAML's 75th anniversary.

Nevertheless, it is clear that music, music librarianship, the Netherlands branch of IAML and 'big' IAML have played a crucial role in the past 50 years of Martie's life.

Martie was born on a farm in the small village of Lintvelde, near Beltrum, in the eastern Netherlands. From his earliest childhood, music was already present. In the local church, he was surrounded by liturgical music as an altar server. His love for this music, in service of something higher, has stayed with him to this day.

He studied in Utrecht, where he completed a Bachelor's degree in Musicology and a Master's degree in Law. Since 1974, he has been a member of the Gregorian Chant Choir in Utrecht, which has contributed to liturgical celebrations not only in the Netherlands but also internationally, including in Paris, Prague and Rome.

Music librarian

Martie worked in music libraries for almost 50 years, until his retirement earlier this year. He began his career in 1976 as a student assistant in the library of the Institute of Musicology in Utrecht.

From 1981 to 1990, he worked at The Hague Public Library. After that, he spent 23 years at the Music Library of the Dutch Broadcasting Corporation in Hilversum, where he served as manager of one of the largest sheet music collections in Europe.

He later worked for eight years at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, until early 2026. In this role, he played an important part in bringing together three major music collections: the music department of The Hague Public Library, the collections of the Netherlands Music Institute, and the music library of the Royal Conservatoire.

The years in Hilversum were particularly important for his connection with IAML. Martie not only attended conferences, but also took the initiative to re-establish a Dutch branch of IAML, which had ceased to exist owing to reforms in the Dutch library system. This new branch encouraged many colleagues in the Netherlands to become involved in our important international network. Through his enthusiasm, commitment, and ability to bring people together, he played a key role in supporting both national and international cooperation.

NVMB

Martie was one of the founding fathers of the Dutch branch of IAML, the NVMB. And he has been a board member and Treasurer, ever since. Initially, he combined the tasks of Treasurer and Secretary.

The year 2026 is a year of celebrations. We celebrate IAML's 75th anniversary. The NVMB celebrates 30 years. And at our last national General Assembly, we celebrated Martie's 30 years of service as Treasurer of the NVMB.

It is no surprise that Martie was recognized for his many years of consistent dedication to our national association. He was appointed an Honorary Member of the NVMB in 2021.

With strong commitment and a passion for music librarianship, he always serves the NVMB selflessly and in a modest and caring way. This truly characterizes Martie and is greatly appreciated.

A resumé of Martie's achievements must not, of course, omit his appointment as a Knight in 2012. Or, as the Mayor of Amsterdam said: "It has pleased her Majesty the Queen to appoint Martie Severt as Knight in the Order of Oranje-Nassau."

This was particularly special, as Martie is also known for his knowledge of and interest in the Dutch royal family.

In addition to his service to the NVMB, he has been a board member and Treasurer of the Royal Society for Music History of the Netherlands since 2015.

IAML

Martie also plays an important role in the relationship between the NVMB and IAML. He is a constant connecting factor. Martie told us he had the opportunity to attend the IAML congress in 1987 in Amsterdam for one day. From 1991 onwards, Martie attended the IAML congresses annually, which encouraged him to start a Netherlands branch in 1996.

This has been a very important step in the history of music librarianship in the Netherlands, thanks to Martie.

He also served as Treasurer of IAML from 1998 to 2007, working with Presidents Pamela Thompson, John Roberts and Massimo Gentili-Tedeschi.

Martie Severt was elected as President in 2007 and held this position for three years. During his term, he presided over the conferences in Naples, Amsterdam and Moscow - an honor he greatly valued.

To complete the list of his many contributions to IAML, he has also served as Correspondent Editor of *Fontes*, Vice Chair of the Broadcasting and Orchestra Libraries Section, Chair of the IAML Outreach Committee and he is currently a member of the Investment Committee.

Conference

A highlight of Martie's career was the IAML-IMS conference in Amsterdam in 2009.

He was the driving force behind the conference and a member of the organizing committee. None of us knew IAML and its conferences better than he did. He guided us in a kind and reassuring way through the long and memorable process of preparing and delivering a successful IAML conference - including riding a bicycle while carrying large red and green boxes for our promotional video.

Even more importantly, we all still cherish fond memories and feel deep gratitude for having been able to host hundreds of dear IAML and IMS colleagues and friends. Thanks to Martie's experience with IAML and his knowledge of the music library landscape, we were able to present and share our musical life in the Netherlands with the international community.

Gregorian Chant

Despite all his success, Martie has always remained a modest and kind person.

He is someone who simply does what needs to be done, regardless of the nature of the work. He has been, and continues to be, a great support to all of us. May he long continue to do so for many years to come.

Personally, I believe that Martie's knowledge of and experience in singing Gregorian chant have been beneficial for IAML and for all of us. Not only because he has chaired many congress sessions on liturgical music, which were always in his excellent hands.

But above all, the singing of Gregorian chant reflects his personality in a subtle way. All singers, in their robes, are equal - no one stands out or takes a solo role - and at all times they serve a greater purpose beyond themselves. This spirit of humility, dedication, and service is clearly present in all he has done and still does for our community. And that makes Martie Severt not only a remarkable and amiable colleague, but also a truly valued friend.

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that we propose to grant Martie Severt honorary membership of IAML.