

## Welcome Message from the ISCA President

Welcome to Shanghai, China, where we return to China for INTERSPEECH in 2020. Interspeech began in 2000/2001 with Beijing, China in 2000, and Aalborg, Denmark in 2001. In these twenty years, ISCA has seen remarkable growth, in terms of membership, educational and research impact in terms of conferences, workshops, Special Interest Groups (SIGS), Distinguished Lecturers (DL) program, and community outreach. When INTERSPEECH-2020 was awarded to Shanghai, the team was led by Conference Chair Helen Meng, Co-Chairs Bo Xu and Thomas Zheng, with an exceptional Technical and highly skilled Organizing committee. The challenges over the past year for the INTERSPEECH-2020 Organizing Committee were enormous. Dealing with the uncertainty of in-person, hybrid physical/remote access, and ultimately the decision to move to an entirely remote access conference consumed an extensive amount of planning, discussions, and coordination. INTERSPEECH has always embraced human communication interaction as our core, and the ability to meet physically to exchange ideas, see the latest scientific and technological advancements in our field, and to re-connect with colleagues as well as establish new collaboration opportunities has always been paramount to successful Interspeech conferences. The INTERSPEECH-2020 Organizing Committee worked closely with the ISCA Board, and specially our Conf. Board Members (Sebastian Möller and Margaret Zellers) as the team navigated the challenging decisions during the past ten months. This conference represents our first completely remote conference, at a time when our membership has reached an all time high (over 2500). The program established here balances the goals of what we have always cherished in our previous Interspeech events, an extremely strong technical program, world-class Keynote Speakers, expert Tutorials, a wide encompassing range of special sessions, and the corresponding social and networking options necessary for our students and young researchers in the field.

**ISCA MEDAL for SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENT:** The ISCA Medal for Scientific Achievement recognizes and honors an individual each year who has made extraordinary contributions to the field of speech communication science and technology. We are pleased to announce that at this year's INTERSPEECH-2020, we will honor Prof. Janet Pierrehumbert, for her pioneering "contributions to Phonology." A number of her landmark papers are some of the most cited works exploring intonational contours, tone structure, word-specific phonetics, and the phonetics and phonology of English.

**ISCA SERVICE MEDAL:** The ISCA Service Medal recognizes and honors an individual who has contributed to the speech communication community by advancing the goals and mission of ISCA. Since our inception in 2000, the ISCA Service Medal has only been awarded four times. This year, the ISCA Board has moved forward with recognizing four individuals who have demonstrated remarkable service, leadership and educational contributions which have helped shape and advance the wider range of activities, opportunities, and commitments to support our membership. We are pleased to recognize Prof. Isabel Trancoso, Prof. Julia Hirschberg, Prof. Roger Moore, and Prof. Sadaoki Furui for their commitment to our society and its' membership.

**ISCA FELLOWS:** We will also celebrate our members' achievements by recognizing six ISCA Fellows for 2020, who include: Paavo Alku, Catherine Best, Martin Cooke, Thomas Hain, Satoshi Nakamura, and Björn Schuller. Please join me in extending our warm

congratulations to these pioneers who have contributed from both scientific and technical advancements in speech communication!

INTERSPEECH 2020 marks the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of ISCA, which continues the success of recent events. It is a privilege for me to be a part of the conference preparation as ISCA President. This year's INTERSPEECH Organizing Committee was truly diverse and comprehensive in their scope, depth, and attention to details – overseeing all the logistics of paper submission, reviews, and final program preparation leading to our first remote/virtual conference experience. Myself and ISCA extend a sincere thanks to all of our colleagues for completing your reviews, and the technical program committee and area chairs for ensuring the highest quality technical program.

As ISCA President, I also wish to extend a sincere thanks to the all those organizations who provided financial sponsorship for ISCA INTERSPEECH-2020. These contributions have gone to provide 120 ISCA Travel Fellowships for deserving students and young scientists to attend Interspeech-2020, as well as strengthen and enrich the diversity of the conference with many special events. MANY THANKS to those sponsoring companies and organizations!!

Organizing an INTERSPEECH event takes enormous courage, endurance and dedication, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Conference Chair Helen Meng, Co-Chairs Bo Xu and Thomas Zheng, as well as the Technical Co-Chairs Jianhua Tao and Kai Yu, who led an experienced organization team to bring INTERSPEECH to Shanghai (virtually!) for the first time. On behalf of the ISCA Membership and Speech Communication community as a whole, we express our sincere thanks and gratitude to the entire INTERSPEECH-2020 Organizing Committee, who went beyond what any of us could expect in adapting to these new conference challenges during a world pandemic, and delivering a virtual/remote experience which all future Interspeech conferences will benefit.

With my best wishes for a successful conference!



John H.L. Hansen  
ISCA President