

ICTMD BELGIUM'S FIFTH SYMPOSIUM

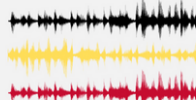


200 YEARS OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC & DANCE IN BELGIUM

19 DECEMBER 2025
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS MUSEUM, BRUSSELS



ICTMD
Belgium



MUSÉES ROYAUX
D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE

PROGRAMME

9.45 Introductory Speech

Saskia Willaert (MRAH-MIM) and H el ene Sechehaye (ULB, ICTMD Belgium chair)

10.00-11.30 Session 1 - Documenting traditions in Belgium

Chair: R emy Jadinon (RMCA)

- **Matthieu Thonon (MRAH-MIM) & Stephane Colin (MRAH-MIM)**
Traditional Music in Belgium, a Documentary Series Produced by the MIM.
- **Julien Mar echal (IMEP) & Marie-H el ene Mar echal (IMEP)**
Collecting Traditional Music in Wallonia, from Romanticism to Digital.
- **Mieke Witkamp (CEMPER)**
Transmitting Transnational Traditions:
Music and Dance Heritage in Flanders and Brussels.

11.30-12.00 Coffee Break

12.00-13.00 Press Conference

Introduction by Ana s Verhulst (MRAH-MIM)

Fa nch Thoraval (MRAH-MIM) & Matthieu Thonon (MRAH-MIM)

Rediscovering Wax Cylinders from the MIM.

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.30-15.30 Session 2 - Case Studies (1): Dance and Music Traditions in Belgium

Chair: Adilia Yip (RCA/RMCA)

- **Aur lie Giet (CrB)**
Traditional Dances in Wallonia: History, Myths and Creativity.
- **Marie Mawet (ULB)**
Dialect Songs and Heritage Legitimation in Tournai: the Path to 'Becoming Tradition'
Through the Lens of the Royale Compagnie du Cabaret Wallon Tournaisien
and the Filles Celles Picardes.

15.30-15.45 Coffee Break

15.45-16.45 Session 3 - Case Studies (2): Dance and Music Traditions in Belgium

Chair: H el ene Sechehaye (ICTMD Belgium/ULB)

- **Selin Antimov (independent researcher/ Dokuz Eyl l University)**
Tabandan Oyun Havas : Music and Dance of the Emirdađ Community in Brussels.
- **Roger Hourant (independent researcher)**
The Quadrille des Lanciers Still Danced in Wallonia.

Practical Information

- The symposium is free to attend for both members and non-members of ICTMD Belgium. However, we are only able to provide lunch for ICTMD Belgium members. For non-members, it is possible to bring your own lunch or head out into town during the lunch break. If you would like to join us for lunch, please complete your membership by 14 December 2025.
- To attend the conference, register [HERE](#) by the 14 of December.
- For additional information please contact ictmd.belgium@gmail.com

Matthieu Thonon & Stéphane Colin
Royal Museums of Art and History, Musical Instruments Museum (MIM)
Traditional Music in Belgium, a Documentary Series Produced by the MIM.

Since 2017, the MIM has produced short documentaries devoted to traditional music in Belgium. These films are published online on the museum's website in their original language with English subtitles. The documentary series was created on the initiative of two departments of the museum, the education department and the library, with the aim of filming and archiving Belgian musical folklore that is still active in the field. As some of these traditions are in decline or even threatened with extinction, the aim of the project is twofold: to archive folklore to ensure its survival and to raise awareness among the general public. The films focus mainly on the various musical, instrumental, and even purely sonorous aspects of traditional Belgian folklore. Stéphane Colin and Matthieu Thonon, from the education department and the library/audiovisual collection respectively, produced the films in their entirety, from location, scouting and filming to editing. They strive to remain as faithful as possible to the atmosphere that animates the various events. Eleven films, ranging in length from 15 to 45 minutes, are available online. The project is ongoing with various topics currently in progress.

Julien Maréchal & Marie-Hélène Maréchal
Institut Royal Supérieur de Musique et de Pédagogie (IMEP)
Collecting Traditional Music in Wallonia, from Romanticism to Digital.

Over the past decade, there has been a resurgence of interest in the practice of traditional music in Wallonia. This trend has been made possible in particular by the online publication of numerous sound and written archives from collections compiled throughout Wallonia in the 19th and 20th centuries. Although these documents are now widely used, the context in which they were produced remains largely unknown, particularly in the case of the oldest collections. However, depending on the period, the act of collecting took on different meanings and produced different kinds of traces.

This paper will lay the groundwork for a long history of traditional music collection in Wallonia. This story has its roots even before Belgium came into existence, materialised in the mid-19th century, intensified over more than a century, then paused, before taking a digital turn in the 21st century. It has seen a succession of very different projects, frameworks of thought, techniques and methods. It is important to tell this story so as not to erase the historical depth of the repertoire practised today and, above all, to accurately understand the common heritage that these collections represent.

Mieke Witkamp
CEMPER, Centre for Music and Performing Arts Heritage
Transmitting Transnational Traditions: Music and Dance Heritage in Flanders & Brussels.

This paper explores the transmission of music and dance traditions with diverse origins in Flanders and Brussels. Drawing on a series of in-depth interviews with practitioners and heritage bearers, we investigate how these traditions are being passed on, transformed and situated within the cultural landscape. The ongoing research includes cases from musicians and dancers, and interviews with music production houses like MetX and Muziekpublique, heritage organisations and cultural centers.

Across these cases, common themes emerge: the role of community networks, institutions, and (informal) learning contexts in sustaining transmission; the tension between preservation and innovation; and the complexities of cultural mixing and appropriation. Practitioners reflect on how they negotiate continuity and change, navigate institutional support, and foster intergenerational continuity in a superdiverse environment. As the project is still in progress, this presentation will share preliminary findings rather than final conclusions. It aims to spark discussion on how intangible musical and dance heritage with transnational roots can be more inclusively recognized and supported within Flemish heritage policy and practice, emphasizing the agency of practitioners and the dynamic nature of tradition.

The wax cylinder was the world's first sound recording medium to be marketed, in 1887. When placed on a phonograph, it enabled anyone to record and reproduce sound. The MIM's audiovisual collection includes around 980 wax cylinders dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Although they were forgotten over time, recent research has brought to light once again the exceptional historical and heritage value of around 70 wax cylinders. These were digitized thanks to the support of the "Friends of the RMAH". More than forty of these cylinders prove to be the preserved part of a collection of worldwide recordings assembled from 1899 onwards by the museum's first curator, Victor-Charles Mahillon. This forgotten Belgian phonographic archive is remarkable. Both for its geographical breadth and its exceptionally early date, coinciding with the first initiatives in sound archiving in Vienna, Paris and Berlin.

Although the recently rediscovered cylinders represent only a small part of the original collection, they form an exceptional heritage ensemble: most of them are early, non-professional recordings from Provence, Egypt, China, India, Ottoman Empire, England, and North America. In several cases they constitute the oldest preserved local recordings (fife and drum from Aix-en-Provence, Greek songs from Istanbul, Bengali chant from Kolkata, muwaššah from Egypt). The other thirty cylinders relate to the earliest phonographic activities in Brussels. Although their origin is less clear, they offer rare evidence of domestic and commercial recording practices, that have generally left very few traces. On the occasion of the online release of these recordings, this conference will outline the circumstances of their discovery and highlight the most striking features of this long-forgotten heritage.

Aurélie Giet
Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles (CrB)
Traditional Dances in Wallonia: History, Myths and Creativity.

In Wallonia, although we have access to a number of musical notations (collections, minstrels' notebooks) and recordings (collections) of the dance repertoires of pre-industrial rural society, we sorely lack sources on the practices, forms and sociability of these repertoires. Folklorists and researchers took an interest in them very late in the day, when the practice was no longer alive, or only anecdotal; it was often nothing more than fragmented memories in the minds of the elderly. So what should we do today when faced with substantiated information, but also with information that we know (or guess) has been recreated? And above all, what meaning and place do these dances have in today's world? This is the story of a fledgling research project and a passionate practice, renewed with each turn of the dance.

Marie Mawet
Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)
Dialect Songs and Heritage Legitimation in Tournai: the Path to 'Becoming Tradition' Through the Lens of the Royale Compagnie du Cabaret Wallon Tournaisien and the Filles Celles Picardes.

Founded respectively in 1907 and 2004, the Royale Compagnie du Cabaret Wallon Tournaisien (R.C.C.W.T.) and the Filles Celles Picardes are now the last dialect cabaret troupes still regularly active in Wallonia. While both of their repertoire is in keeping with local folklore and current events, certain songs from the R.C.C.W.T., passed down from generation to generation, have gradually acquired the status of 'traditional tunes' of the city, while none of the Filles Celles have attained this status. This paper examines the process by which a popular repertoire, initially linked to an urban context and a minority language, becomes recognised as 'traditional'. Using the example of these two companies, both widely recognised in the city's cultural landscape despite their 'age gap,' we will analyse the linguistic, social and aesthetic criteria that allow certain songs to enter the category of 'heritage', while others fall into oblivion. This analysis will help underline how the very notion of tradition is continually negotiated between local memory, institutional recognition and contemporary identity issues.

Selin Antimov

Independent researcher/ Dokuz Eylül University

Tabandan Oyun Havası: Music and Dance of the Emirdağ Community in Brussels.

This study examines the translocal music and performance practices of the Emirdağ community, who migrated from Emirdağ, a town in the Afyonkarahisar province of central Anatolia, to Belgium following the 1964 Turkey-Belgium Labour Agreement. It explores the community's socio-cultural life and the central role of Tabandan, a musical and dance practice, in shaping cultural belonging and intergenerational transmission. Conducted between 2022 and 2024, the research includes fieldwork carried out in Brussels in 2023. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen individuals from different generations, along with qualitative interviews with eleven professional and amateur musicians. Observations of weddings, henna nights, and community gatherings provided in-depth insight into social organization, migration experiences, and performance practices. Also known as Dabandan, Tabandan is a traditional folk dance that has become a prominent feature of Emirdağ community events. Community members describe it as 'almost like a national anthem', and its repeated performance underscores its cultural and identity-bearing significance. During performances, musicians develop interpretive variations within the framework of tradition, maintaining both continuity and creativity. The participation of musicians from various cultural backgrounds further reinforces the translocal nature of the performance.

Through the interplay of music and dance, Tabandan enables participants to simultaneously recreate social bonds and cultural identity while generating a shared sense of rhythm and collective order within the performance space. The study thus opens a discussion on how Tabandan, within the Emirdağ community in Brussels, operates as a medium of cultural continuity and identity formation in the processes of migration and translocal experience.

Roger Hourant

Independent researcher

The Quadrille des Lanciers Still Danced in Wallonia

The quadrille is a dance performed by four couples which consists of five figures: the Drawers (Tiroirs), the Lines (Lignes), the Windmills (Moulinets), the Visits (Visites), and the Lancers (Lanciers). It is called Lancers because it was written for the military cavalry by Duval in England, and is mentioned in Ireland by Hart in his 1820 treatise. This dance was introduced at the court of Napoleon III in 1855 and spread throughout European salons, societies, and villages. It was danced until World War II, when it disappeared in favor of modern dances. The quadrille survived in a few villages in Wallonia (Saint-Mard, Ster, Lobbes, Thieulain, and 18 villages in the Eastern Cantons). This paper focuses on two of them in particular: the quadrille danced at village fairs in the Eastern Cantons and the 'Danse du Roi' (King's Dance), a quadrille danced in honor of the archer who won the annual shooting competition.

ICTMD Belgium is the Belgian National Committee of the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance, a scholarly organisation which aims to further the study, practice, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of traditional musics and dances.

Membership information:

To become a member of ICTMD Belgium, please send an email to ictmd.belgium@gmail.com, indicating your name, email address and affiliation, and pay the relevant membership fees to BE98 1030 6992 0193.

Membership fees: €15 (BA, MA, PhD students), €30 (regular), €60 (supporting membership), €90 (institutional membership). Please indicate 'First name Last name Membership Year'.

Memberships are valid from 1 January to 31 December. Membership fees paid for the symposium will be carried over to your membership in 2026.