

Call for Papers

Toots Thielemans (1922-2016)

A Century of Music across Europe and America

International Conference

KBR (Royal Library of Belgium), Brussels, 9-11 May 2022

PRESENTATION

Jean-Baptiste ‘Toots’ Thielemans was born on 29 April 1922 in the Marollen, a historic neighborhood of Brussels. He died near Brussels on 22 August 2016, at the age of 94. Over the course of his lifetime, he became one of the most renowned musicians of his generation, primarily as a harmonica player but also as a guitarist and whistler. He was also a major representative of Belgian culture and jazz music around the world.

The career and work of Thielemans go far beyond his iconic status as a harmonica player and his composition *Bluesette* (1963), which has become a jazz standard and a popular song covered by many artists. His work spanned the main styles of jazz between the 1940s and the 2010s, but also extended to many other genres of music: musette, blues, bossa nova, Música Popular Brasileira, French chanson, folk music (Belgian, French, Swedish, etc.), Anglo-American pop, easy listening, screen music (both for film and television), advertising, classical music covers, and so on. His output also includes more than a hundred personal compositions, and collaborations with hundreds of musicians from all over the world.

Thielemans’s personal archives and documents are now held in a special “fonds Toots Thielemans” in the Music Division of KBR (Royal Library of Belgium) in Brussels. The fonds contains more than 5000 objects of various types: manuscript and printed scores, recordings, correspondence, press clippings, photographs, paintings, drawings, caricatures, posters, concert programs, administrative archives, personal objects, and souvenirs such as trophies, diplomas, medals, awards, and gifts. The Musical Instruments Museum (MIM) of Brussels also holds some of his instruments. The fonds Toots Thielemans of KBR is complementary of other fonds and collections held in Belgium and devoted to Belgian jazz as well as 20th Century popular music: fonds Marc Danval (KBR), fonds Eric Mathot (KBR), fonds Robert Pernet (MIM), fonds Jean Warland (MIM), fonds Robert Goffin (AML, Archives et Musée de la Littérature), collection Albert Michiels (AP Hogeschool Antwerpen), collection Juul Anthonissen (Heist-op-den-Berg) and La Maison du jazz de Liège. See the bibliography for the complete references.

Despite Thielemans’s historical importance and the number of sources that have recently become available, he has not been the subject of much research. The conference *Toots Thielemans (1922-2016). A Century of Music across Europe and America*, to be held at KBR (Royal Library of Belgium) from 9 to 11 May 2022, aims to fill that gap. It will be the first academic event dedicated to research about and around Thielemans. It will take place in the context of the festivities organized throughout Belgium for the Toots Year 2022, celebrating the centennial of his birth. Besides many concerts, the main event of the Toots Year 2022 will be the immersive exhibition *Toots 100. The Sound of a Belgian Legend*, organized at KBR from

22 April to 31 August 2022. There will also be a special concert organized during the conference, in collaboration with the jazz departments of the Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles and the Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel.

We welcome all research into the various aspects of Toots Thielemans, his life, work, reception, and the multicultural contexts in which they took place. We encourage multidisciplinary approaches and a diversity of perspectives, including papers from musicians, producers, or anyone having worked with him. We also encourage papers proposing musical analysis of Thielemans's works (compositions and improvisations) anchored in their cultural context, and papers using archival materials, either from the fonds Toots Thielemans and other fonds at KBR and the MIM, or from any other relevant institution.

We welcome papers including, but not limited to, the following themes:

- **The man**
 - His biography, its unknown aspects and the primary sources about them
 - His path as a migrant musician from Belgium to the United States
 - His activity in Scandinavia, Latin America, and East Asia
 - His numerous collaborations in jazz (e.g. Bill Evans) and other musical styles
- **The musician**
 - The harmonica player: his sound “between a smile and a tear” (Thielemans’s own characterization of his playing), the body-instrument interface, his techniques, the evolution of his playing, and a comparison with other harmonica players
 - The whistler and his guitar: analysis of this combination, his repertoire as solo guitarist (especially during his years with Benny Goodman and George Shearing)
 - Leader and guest: his band configurations, his collaborations as sideman
- **The music**
 - Compositional work, from *Bluesette* and beyond, including covers by other artists
 - Improvisational activity, transcription and analysis of solo improvisations
 - Creative process (analysis of his performances, recording sessions and concerts, sketches, and other genetic documents)
 - Screen music (film, television)
 - Style, aesthetics and history of jazz: crossovers between jazz styles, between “serious” and “popular” music, contribution to Brazilian music, contribution to the creation of European bebop, etc.
- **The contexts**
 - The Brussels musical scene of his early years (1920s-1940s): chanson, jazz, dance music, etc.
 - The relation between European jazz and American jazz
 - Questions of race, notably as a white musician with black musicians working in the USA and Europe
 - Questions of gender, notably his (non-)conformity with masculine stereotypes in jazz
- **The icon**
 - His place in the construction of Belgian identity (“Belgitude”)
 - His public image in visual media (photographs, caricatures, videos, etc.)

- The discourse by and about him in the media (press, radio, television, Internet)
- The preservation and transmission of his heritage (patrimonial and pedagogical)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

• Primary sources in Belgium

- Fonds Toots Thielemans (KBR): <https://www.kbr.be/fr/fonds-toots-thielemans/>
- Fonds Marc Danval (KBR): <https://www.kbr.be/fr/fonds-marc-danval/>
- Fonds Éric Mathot (KBR): <https://www.kbr.be/fr/fonds-eric-mathot/>
- Belgicapress (KBR): <https://www.belgicapress.be/?lang=EN>
- Fonds Robert Pernet (MIM): <https://www.patrimoine-frb.be/collection/archives-de-jazz-de-robert-pernet>
- Fonds Jean Warland (MIM): <https://www.patrimoine-frb.be/collection/fonds-musical-de-jean-warland>
- Fonds Robert Goffin (AML): <http://fonds.aml-cfwb.be/>
- Collection Albert Michiels (AP Hogeschool Antwerpen): <https://anet.be/isadtree/ap/opackcisad/isad:kc:2889>
- Collection Juul Anthonissen (Heist-op-den-Berg): <https://www.juulanthonissen.be/>
- Maison du jazz de Liège : <http://www.maisondujazz.be/>

• Secondary sources on Toots Thielemans and on Belgian jazz

- COPPENS, Elisabeth, *La vallée de la Senne. Berceau d'une famille*. Préface de Toots Thielemans, Bruxelles, Ordre du Bloempanch, 2002.
- CORNAZ, Marie, "Le fonds Marc Danval: une source hors du commun pour l'étude de la vie musicale à Bruxelles", *Cahiers bruxellois: revue d'histoire urbaine*, vol. 45, 2013, p. 85-96.
- DANVAL, Marc, *Toots Thielemans*, Brussels, Racine, 2006.
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- DELLICOUR, Xavier, "L'activité des musiciens de jazz liégeois dans l'immédiat après-guerre (1944-1949)", *Revue de la Société liégeoise de musicologie*, vol. 26, 2007, p. 71-86.
- *Dictionnaire du jazz à Bruxelles et en Wallonie*, Liège, Mardaga, 1991.
- DUFOUR, Valérie, "Les premiers disquaires de Bruxelles et les réseaux locaux d'un nouveau complexe musico-industriel (1900-1930)", in Michel DUCHESNEAU et Federico LAZZARO (eds), *Musique et radio en pays francophones. 1900-1950*, Paris, Vrin, 2020, sous presse.
- HEYMAN, Matthias, "Music (1924-1939) : A History of Belgium's First Jazz Journal", *Current Research in Jazz*, vol. 7, 2015, <http://www.crj-online.org/v7/CRJ-BelgiumJazzJournal.php>.
- HEYMAN, Matthias, "'Out of Nowhere?': Pre-war jazz networks and the making of post-war Belgian jazz", in Haftor MEDBØE, Zack MOIR and Chris ATTON (eds), *Continental Drift: 50 years of jazz from Europe*, Edinburgh, Continental Drift Publishing, 2017, p. 85-96.

- HEYMAN, Matthias, “The role and function of jazz competitions in Belgium, 1932-1939”, *Popular Music*, vol. 39 n° 3-4, 2020, p. 439-458.
- *Jazztime in Europe. Documenting Modern Jazz on the Continent*, <https://jazztimeeurope.wordpress.com/>, date of consultation : 02-06-2021.
- MANNAERTS, Pieter, “Jazz en erfgoed: van *Lady Bird* naar *A Love Supreme*”, *Faro. Tijdschrift over cultureel erfgoed*, vol. 5 n° 2, 2012, p. 50-57.
- MEURANT, Anne (dir.), *Jazz in Little Belgium. La collection Robert Pernet au Musée des Instruments de Musique Bruxelles*, Brussels, Musée des Instruments de Musique, 2004.
- MURRAY, Christopher B. (éd.) with Marie CORNAZ and Valérie DUFOUR, *Musical Life in Belgium during the Second World War*, *Revue belge de musicology / Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Muziekwetenschap*, special issue, vol. 69, 2015.
- PERNET, Robert, *Belgian Jazz Discography (1897-1999)*, Brussels, Robert Pernet, 1999.
- SCHROEDER, Jean-Paul, *Bobby Jaspar. Itinéraires d'un jazzman européen (1926-1963)*, Liège, Mardaga, 1997.
- STEENHORST, René and DE BACKER, Peter, *Toots 90*, Gent, Borgerhoff & Lamberigts, 2012. Available in French, Dutch and English.

- **Online bibliographies on jazz in Belgium**

- *Cemper-Jazzcollecties en -archieven* : <https://www.cemper.be/jazzcollecties-en-archieven> (contains a link to an Excel list of 40 archives collections about jazz in Belgium)
- *Muzikaalerfgoed.be*: <http://www.muzikaalerfgoed.be/voor-erfgoedliefhebbers/over-muzikaal-erfgoed/60-muzikaal-erfgoed-van-de-jazz/publicaties/154-de-jazzbiografie>
- *Les Lundis d'Hortense (Jazzinbelgium.com)* : <https://www.jazzinbelgium.com/ldh/media/media?lang=fr>
- *BiblioJazz (Sorbonne Université)*: <https://bibliojazz-collegium-musicae.humanum.fr/s/bibliojazz/page/accueil>

PRACTICAL INFO

Communications could be individual or collective (2 people max.).

They should have 30 min length (20 min. presentation and 10 min. discussion).

The languages of the conference are French, Dutch and English.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, virtual communications (by video) are possible, but we encourage live presence of the participants.

A publication will follow based on the communications presented at the conference.

To submit a proposal, please send to tootsthielemans.kbr2022@gmail.com a single PDF document with the following info:

- Name(s) of participant(s) and affiliation(s)
- Live or virtual communication (last-minute change are possible depending on the situation)
- Title of the paper
- Abstract (between 2000 and 3000 signs, spaces included)
- Short bibliography
- Short bio of the participant(s) of max. 900 signs, spaces included.

Proposals submission deadline: 15 November 2021 (23.59 CET)

Notification of acceptance: mid-December 2021

REGISTRATION

- For participants (3 days)
 - PhD students and unfunded researcher: € 20
 - Other : € 40
- For audience
 - 1 day with coffee-breaks
 - Students/unemployed or assimilated : € 8
 - Non student: € 12
 - 3 days with coffee-breaks
 - Students/unemployed or assimilated: € 20
 - Non student: € 30
- Concert
 - Students/unemployed or assimilated: € 10
 - Non student: € 15

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

- Hugo Rodriguez (KBR)
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- ICTM Belgium
- Laboratoire de Musicologie (LaM-ULB)
- Visit.brussels
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