Introduction

In 2024, La Sirène de Paris will celebrate an exceptional 150 years of longevity. On this occasion, in association with the Institut de recherche en musicologie (IReMus - UMR 8223), the Centre d'Histoire Culturelle des Sociétés Contemporaines - Recherches Arts Spectacles Musiques of the Université Paris-Saclay (RASM-CHCSC) and the Musée des Instruments à Vents - La Couture Boussey, is organizing an international symposium whose aim will be to contextualise this original musical institution within a socio-historical perspective.

La Sirène de Paris

Created in 1874, La Sirène de Paris is one of the oldest wind bands in the French capital. At the beginning of the 20th century, it had more than 140 musicians from the communes of Ivry, Gentilly, Bicêtre and Paris, performing in numerous events in the provinces and abroad. The Sirène de Paris garnered an illustrious reputation as a band. Still active, though transformed into a wind band in the 1950s, it currently has 70 amateur but skilled musicians, coming from various horizons.

Central elements of this symposium include: Its history, its repertoire and instrumentarium, its recruitment history, its audience, its institutional framework (status, organization, networks and relations with other musical and public institutions). It will make it possible to make the most of an exceptional collection that has been seldom used to date; consisting of a large historical part, the collection holds score library, administrative and accounting archives, collections of programs and posters, instruments and various artifacts linked to the history of the orchestra (medals, banners, busts and portraits of members, photographs, etc.) covering the years 1874 to the present day. Gradually, these artifacts will be made available to researchers at the IReMus (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Quai François Mauriac, 75 706 Paris Cedex 13).
Historical context

Established in France since the end of the 18th century, the wind band has known various fortunes according to the vicissitudes of time. Associated with official decorum, memorial commemorations and the festive spirit, it is the great witness of political regime changes and aesthetic mutations. Art or popular music, the wind or brass band born of orpheonism in the 19th century is today part of the notion of a living heritage.

In the academic context, although it has been the subject of long-standing studies, its cultural and social identity has often confined it to a functional bubble that is not much appreciated by researchers. In parallel, the associative and federative networks, although very active, have shown only limited interest in a critical review of their activities. Moreover, the published works, which mostly refer to a historical perspective, have often ignored the music itself as well as the evolution of practices and repertoires from the second half of the 20th century to the present day.

The French university demonstrates the changes in historical and musicological research over the last few decades. Due to more global approaches, musical objects are now perceived through the prism of human and social sciences, lending to a renewed vision of the wind band. The openness to work carried out outside national borders has also made it possible to propose a plural reading of the wind ensemble at the crossroads of European and world influences.

Bibliography

Without being exhaustive, let mention as a reminder the pioneering studies of Danièle Pistone (1979), Paul Gerbod (1980), Philippe Gumplovicz (1984) and Marie Claire Mussat (1986) who were the first to rehabilitate these bands and the world of popular music within the University. To this generation, we must add their direct heirs who made the regional field a productive field of research, notably for Alsace (Myriam Geyer-Buanic, 1999), Normandy (Jean-Yves Rauline, 2000), Franche-Comté (Vincent Petit, 1998 and 2004), the thermal basin of Vichy (Christian Paul, 2006), Pays de la Loire, (Jérôme Cambon, 2009), Vendée (Soizic Lebrat, 2012) or Limousin (Yanis Arroua, 2022).

On a different scope, others have tried to grasp the phenomenon in its long term (Patrick Péronnet, 2012), its sociology (Vincent Roué, 2007; Vincent Dubois, 2009-2013; Fabrice Rain, 2017 and Marion Henry, 2019), its military specificity (Mylène Pardoën, 2013; Thierry Bouzard,
2016), its transnational virtues (Laurent Martino, 2016) and its instrumental technique (Xavier Canin, 2016; Thomas Harrison, 2017), without neglecting the contributions of independent researchers.

Outside France, we observe a similar dynamism in research, with collective works in Greece, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Spain, not forgetting the symposiums of the Internationale Gesellschaft zur Erforschung und Forderung der Blasmusik (IGEB) which, since 1974, has been organizing a biannual symposium and publishing numerous studies dedicated to wind ensembles.

See bibliography established by Patrick Peronnet available at AFEEV.

**Orientations of the symposium**

This symposium, organized for the occasion of the 150th anniversary of La Sirène de Paris, will be an opportunity to contextualize the singularity of this musical ensemble with a renewed perspective from the French-speaking and international scientific community. Our understanding is deepened through plural approaches encompassing disciplines such as musicology, ethnomusicology, history, sociology or educational sciences. The symposium particularly welcomes contributions on the orpheon movement, musical creation for wind ensembles in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, the relationship between art and popular, civil and military music, musical associations, local identity, belonging to the nation and community, as are those evoking, in their diversity of approach, La Sirène de Paris of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Without limiting itself to a monographic study devoted to La Sirène de Paris, this symposium intends to be the starting point for a reflection on the place of the wind band in contemporary Western culture and its consideration by musicology.

**Possible topics**

Proposals for papers, may focus on the following areas:

- The Sirène de Paris, its history, repertoire and instrumentarium; its recruitment history and audience; the institutional framework in which it operates (status, organization, networks and relations with other musical and public institutions).
- The singularities and the local, national and international dynamics (federations, competitions, cultural exchanges, teaching). The Siren, a Parisian specificity?
- Practicing as an amateur and as a professional.
- Repertoires for wind bands between tradition and mutations (transcriptions, creations, new media, etc.)
Contemporary developments (banda, big band, brass band, student bands, etc.)

**Schedule and format**

Proposals for papers should be sent to fabien.guilloux@cnrs.fr before 1st September 2023.

Abstracts are accepted in French and English language (max 3000 characters), with a short bio (max 900 characters).

**Scientific and Organizing Committee**

*members of the Organizing committee*

Oscar Catalan (IReMus – Sorbonne Université / CRR Boulogne-Billancourt) *
Louise Courant (La Sirène de Paris) *
Gilles Demonet (IReMus – Sorbonne Université)
Fabien Guilloux (IReMus – CNRS)*
Philippe Gumplowicz (RASM-CHCSC – Université Paris-Saclay)
Barbara Kelly (University of Leeds)
Emanuele Marconi (IReMus – Sorbonne Université / Le Musée des instruments à vent) *
Louisa Martin-Chevalier (IReMus – Sorbonne Université)
Patrick Péronnet (IReMus)
Catherine Vallet-Collot (IReMus – BnF)

**Request to consult the archives of La Sirène de Paris**

Fabien Guilloux (IReMus – CNRS) : fabien.guilloux@cnrs.fr

**Partners**

La Sirène de Paris | Institut de recherche en musicologie (IReMus - UMR 8223) | Centre d’Histoire Culturelle des Sociétés Contemporaines - Recherches Arts Spectacles Musiques de l’Université Paris-Saclay (RASM-CHCSC) | Bibliothèque nationale de France - Département de la musique | Musée des instruments à vent - La Couture Boussey