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***The rise, climax and decline (1920–1936) of modernist music in concert organizations in Brussels and its revival (1936–1940) at the National Radio Belgian Broadcasting Institute***

The purpose of this study is to examine the causes of the rise (1919–1927), climax (1927–1932), decline (1933–1936) and revival (1936–1939) of musical modernism as a genre during the interbellum period in Belgium. In the end of 1920s and the 1930s Brussels became an important centre of musical modernism. For example, the first performances of Strawinsky’s Psalm Symphony (1930), Prokofiev’s Le joueur (1929) and Alban Bergs Wozzeck in a French translation (1932) serve as testimonies of the city’s high status comparable to other major European centres of modern music. Brussels created a unique platform for French, German and Russian modernism. From 1933 onwards, interest in modernist music at the aforesaid concert organisations became sparse. This rise, climax and decline occurred in a commercially oriented music life that was financed by shareholders, donors and ticket sales. The revival occurred within the context of the National Radio Broadcasting Institute (known by the Dutch acronym NIR) in which the NIR Great Symphony Orchestra and its music director of the Flemish department, Paul Collaer, and principal conductor Franz André, played an important role. This orchestra was the first fully subsidised symphony orchestra in Belgium. The study will explore why musical modernism was initially successful as a genre and then declined in a commercial environment and how and why the NIR, as a fully subsidised institute, was successful by turning it into a unique platform of modernism. This research on modernistic music in Brussels between 1919 and 1940, is based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of historical data sources collected and centralized database with ca. 5.000 records relating to Belgian modernism, including ca. 1000 articles of ca. 30 Belgian Journals in Arts, ca. 2000 Brussels concerts and letters and documents of archives of composers, directors and former organizations in Brussels that promoted modernism form 1919 till 1940. In addition, the archives of the concert societies and the NIR, containing reports of the boards of directors and financial documents, were consulted.

Kristin Van den Buys (°1962) is a senior researcher. She studied musicology at Ghent University (1984) and obtained degrees in music theory at the Royal Conservatory Antwerp and the Lemmens Institute in Leuven (1989–1991). Between 1990 and 2000 she produced culture programmes for Radio 3, the classical music channel of the Flemish radio at that time. For her PhD (University of Leuven 2004) she studied musical modernism in Belgium during the interwar period. Kristin Van den Buys published about musical practice in Belgium and Flanders and about the history of broadcasting. She currently is professor in Music History and head of the research in the Royal Conservatory in Brussels, a department of the Erasmus University College Brussels. Since 2014 she is also professor Music History at the Free University Brussels and she is vice president of the Brussels Platform of Arts (doctorate in the Arts).