

HÉLÈNE SECHEHAYE

Postdoctoral Researcher, FRS-FNRS, Université Libre de Bruxelles
Professor in Ethnomusicology, Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles

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DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

2021 | **Qualified Lecturer** (Maître de conférences) (FR) – CNU

2020 | **Doctor in Music and Musicology** (FR) and in **History of Arts and Musicology** (BE)
Université Libre de Bruxelles (BE) and Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne (FR)

Dissertation: *Des Gnawa à Bruxelles aux Gnawa de Bruxelles. Analyse de pratiques musicales relocalisées [From the Gnawa in Brussels to the Gnawa from Brussels. Analysis of relocalised musical practices]*

Funded by a **Mini-ARC** grant (4 years, full-time) awarded by the Université Libre de Bruxelles

Promoters: Béatrice Ramaut-Chevassus (UJM), Anne Damon-Guillot (UJM), Marie-Alexis Colin (Secretary, ULB) and Stéphanie Weisser (ULB)

Additional Jury: Andrea Rea (President, ULB), Denis Laborde (Reporter, CNRS / EHESS), Olivier Tourny (Reporter, CNRS / Aix Marseille Université), Laurent Pottier (UJM)

Gnawa are a brotherhood community coming from the sub-Saharan presence in Morocco. They are known for their nocturnal ritual of trances, the lila, but also for their incessant musical activity in the public and tourist attractions of Morocco. This thesis concerns the musical practices of the Gnawa in Brussels. Indeed, the Moroccan community of Brussels is one of the most important in the capital, and Gnawa has become one of its audible voices. About forty musicians are active both in rituals and in weddings, both in concert venues and in the streets for parades.

This thesis focuses on the movements of repertoires, practitioners and their instruments. These circulations bear a historical significance: on the one hand, they are at the origin of the emergence of the Gnawa practice, born from the meeting of several sub-Saharan African cultures brought by slaves to Morocco. On the other hand, they are constitutive of the contemporary identity of the Gnawa both in their initiation process through ḡōla and in the construction of their career.

The Gnawa presence in Brussels also raises the question of regional musical styles. In Morocco, each region has an “ancient” style, which has gradually been replaced by a modern, globalised style. In Brussels, while the repertoire of the guembri lute is often played in its globalised version, the drum repertoire remains very much attached to its Tangier style. Based on analyses of the musico-choreographic repertoire, this thesis reviews how and why regional musical identities are sometimes highlighted and sometimes put aside.

This research is based on several years of fieldwork carried out in Brussels, Morocco and others places of the Moroccan diaspora in Europe, and takes into account historical, ethnomusicological, anthropological and sociological data. The Gnawa activities in Brussels are

considered both from a transnational perspective, linked to globalised practices around the world, but also deeply rooted in a specific Brussels locality, which gives them a unique trajectory

2013 | Master in **History of Arts, Musicology Section** | Université Libre de Bruxelles | Grande distinction
Master thesis: *Écrits de compositeurs à propos de l'enregistrement [Composers' Writings on Recording] (1919-1939)* promoted by Valérie Dufour

TEACHING

2020 – now | **Professor in Ethnomusicology** | **Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles**, Rythms and Rythmics Department

Guided Listening: Rhythm in Traditional Music | **3 courses of 15h/years** | Students: B1 (from 2020), B2 (from 2021) and B3 (from 2022)

Rhythmic Theories and Notations | **15h/year** | Students: B2

2021-2022, 2023-2025 **Substitute Lecturer** | **Université Libre de Bruxelles**, Musicology Department

Cultural History of Music, 18th-20th centuries | **24h/year** | Students: B1 Musicology, B2 History of Arts and M1 Cultural Management

2018 - 2020 | **Université Libre de Bruxelles** | Musicology Department

12h of Exercises in Music History from the Middle Ages to the Baroque | Students: B1 and B2

4h of Introduction to Computer Music Writing | Students: MA1

2017 | **Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Étienne**

2h of Methodology in Ethnomusicology | Students: M1 in Musicology

6h Supervision of the Ethnomusicology Seminar « Children Musicians » taught by Anne Damon-Guillot | Students: M1 in Musicology

ASSISTANTSHIP

2021 (1 month) | **Research Assistant** | **Haute École de Musique de Genève (Switzerland)**

Project Writing for an FNS Funding "IMA: Interpreting Today's Music"

GRANTS

2023-2028 | **Member of the Collegium of the Académie Royale des Arts, des Sciences et des Lettres de Belgique** (classe des Arts)

2023-2026 | **Postdoctoral Grant, FNRS** (4 years, full time) awarded by the Belgian National Fund of Scientific Research

2020 | **Stipendia Academiae Belgicae** (3 months, full time) awarded by the Academia Belgica for a research stay in Rome (between April and July 2021)

2016-2020 | **Mini-ARC** (4 years, full time) awarded by the Université Libre de Bruxelles for the completion of a doctoral thesis in ethnomusicology

2012 | **Excellence scholarship** awarded by the Université Libre de Bruxelles for the writing of the master thesis

2011 | **Excellence scholarship** awarded by Wallonie-Bruxelles International for a language study stay at the Pushkin Institute (Moscow, Russia)

ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

25-28/11/2024 | Conference « **'Alala Yellali'. Femmes, genre musical et identités de genre dans la musique chaabi, du Maroc aux diasporas** » | Université libre de Bruxelles | Co-organised with Edouard Degay Delpeuch & Laïla Amezian | Member of the academic and organising boards

15-16/11/2023 | Conference **'Rythmes et Rythmiques'** | Conservatoire royal de Bruxelles | Co-organised with Arnould Massart | Member of the academic and organising boards

10/12/2021 – 16/12/2022 – 15/12/2023 – 13/12/2024 | **Annual Symposium of ICTMD Belgium**, Symposium annuel co-organised with the Belgian National Committee of the ICTMD | Conservatoire d'Anvers (ARIA), Institut Royal Supérieur de Musique et de Pédagogie (IMEP), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KULeuven) | Member of the academic and organising boards

09-11/05/2022 | **Toots Thielemans (1922-2016). A Century of Music Across Europe and America** | International conference co-organized with Hugo Rodriguez (KBR) | Royal Library of Belgium | Member of the academic and organising boards

21/03/2018 – 21/03/2019 – 12/03/2020 – 15/03/2022 | **BRuMM – Musiques migrantes à Bruxelles** | Study and exchange days | Université Libre de Bruxelles & Centre Bruxelles d'Action Interculturelle Member of the academic and organising boards

1/03/2019 | **Les Gnawa en diaspora** | Study day | Université Jean Monnet de Saint-Étienne / Musée des Civilisations de Saint-Just Saint-Rambert | Member of the academic and organising boards

28/09/2017 | **Le Portrait de musicien** | Study day | Université Jean Monnet, St-Étienne | Member of the organising board

21-28/05/2016 | **Gnawa Made in Brussels** | North Brussels Cultural Centres | Academic adviser and member of the organising board

ADMINISTRATION

2020 – now | **Founding Member and president of ICTMD Belgium**, Belgian National Committee of the International Council for the Traditions of Music and Dance (ICTMD). Organization of a network of researchers in Belgium, development of scientific projects (symposiums, conferences, seminars) and mediation (workshops, conferences).

2019 – now | **Belgian Liaison Agent for the International Council for the Traditions of Music and Dance**
Drafting of annual reports, relaying of Belgian activities abroad and of foreign activities in Belgium

2015 - present | Member of the **Société Française d'Ethnomusicologie**

2014 – present | Member of the **Société Belge de Musicologie**

RESEARCH STAYS

15 April – 1 June 2023 | **University of Cambridge**

Research Stay on the invitation of Dr. Vanessa Paloma Elbaz (Peterhouse College, University of Cambridge). Preparation of the edited volume *Music, Power and Space: a Mediterranean Perspective*.

SCIENCE POPULARISATION

2024 | Lecturer for the **UDA** (Université des Aînés) | **Université de Louvain-la-Neuve** | Cycle « Introduction to World Music and Ethnomusicology » (6 2-hour sessions)

2024 – now | Lectures on the status of traditional and world music in Belgium | Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie (BE, 22 Oct 2024), Hide & Seek Festival (BE, 25 August 2024)

2023-2024 | Consultant for the reorganisation of the permanent exhibition at the **Musée de la musique** | Philharmonie de Paris (FR) – help with the acquisition of Gnawa instruments

2023 | Consultant with Hicham Bilali for Chloé Despax's sound installation for the exhibition « Une autre histoire du monde », **Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée** (Marseille, FR)

2022 – now | Lecturer for the introductions to the World Music Concerts Series at the **Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège** (Belgium)

2022 – now | Coordination and execution of the "**Chaabi Habibi**" research axis around Moroccan female music in Belgium: field research, archiving, oral presentations and musical lectures, supervision of the knowledge repatriation process. Past presentations: MuntPunt (Brussels, BE), Centre Culturel de Ganshoren (BE), Les Chiroux (Liège, BE), De Roma (Antwerpen, BE) International Community Arts Festival (Rotterdam, NL).

For **Jola - Hidden Gnawa Music in Brussels** project: Various presentations and musical lectures around Gnawa and Moroccan music (2020-present): Muziekpublique (Brussels, BE), Institut des Cultures de l'Islam (Paris, FR), Ateliers d'Ethnomusicologie (Geneva, CH), Darna (Brussels, BE), Popular University of Anderlecht (BE)

Exhibition Jola : Darna, the Moroccan-Flemish house (Brussels), September 2020.

CULTURAL WORK

2016 – 2018 | Volunteer **project coordinator** | **Seyir Muzik** asbl (Brussels, BE)

Founding member of this association specialized in the diffusion of traditional music (Mediterranean basin, Greece, Turkey). Conception and publication of CDs, promotion and booking of artists, organization and logistics of concerts.

2014–2016 | **Music school and label supervisor**, full time | **Muziekpublique** asbl (Brussels)

Association specialized in the diffusion of 'traditional music' in Brussels

Management of the music academy and the music label, programming of events, conception and publication of CDs, promotion and booking of artists, organization and logistics of concerts.

Projects followed: Adana (Armenian-Turkish quartet), Refugees for Refugees, Voxtra.

2013 | Training at the **Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie** | Université Paris Ouest – Nanterre (FR)

Putting on line sound documents concerning the African collections (collection, cataloguing and classification of the archives, documentation on the recordings, digitization of the sound tapes, putting the recordings on line...)

TRAININGS

10-15 October 2017 | **Filming Music** | Festival Haizebegi and Institut de Recherches sur les Musiques du Monde, Bayonne (FR), in partnership with the BTS Métiers de l'Audiovisuel in Biarritz | 36 hours of training

LANGUAGE SKILLS

French | Mother language

English | B2-C1

Spanish | C1

Dutch | B1

Russian | B1

Arabic | Classical Arabic : A2-B1 | Colloquial Moroccan Arabic : intermediate level

PAPERS & LECTURES

14/11/2024 | Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (FR)

« **Écouter, collecter, écrire et restituer : une ethnomusicologie des pratiques musicales dans la diaspora maroxelloise** », *Vie Congrès Doctoral International de Musique et Musicologie*

24/09/2024 | Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum, Palermo (IT)

with Laïla Amezian, Ghassan El Hakim & Amine Nawny, panel « **Body and Gender in Moroccan Popular Music: the *Shikhat's* Legacy** », 15th Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Mediterranean Musics

19-23/09/2023 Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum, Palermo (IT)

with Stefano Portelli, « **The Gnawa Rumi Album: Researching Moroccan Ritual Music in Italy Through a Collaborative Recording** », 38th International Seminar in Ethnomusicology of the European Society for Ethnomusicology

4/07/2023 | University of Warsaw (PL)

« **Musicians Between a Rock and a Hard Place: All-Female Moroccan Ša'bī Bands in Brussels** », 20th IMISCOE (International Migration Research Network) Annual Conference

27/06/2023 | Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Marseille (FR)

with Laïla Amezian, « **The Art of Bridging Audiences: Performing Moroccan Ša'bi Music in Brussels Weddings** », 14th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Mediterranean Music

19/06/2023 | Trent University, Nottingham (UK)

« **Looking for Regional Identities in Microrhythmic Structures. A Study of Rhythmic Patterns in Moroccan Gnawa** », 19th Rhythm Production and Perception Workshop

9/03/2023 | University of Helsinki (FI)

With Laïla Amezian, « **Chaabi Habibi: Female Popular Musicians in Belgium Searching their History and Building their Future** », Women-Music-Futures conference

27/02/2023 | University of Aberdeen/University of Cambridge (UK & online)

« **Moroccan Nights in Brussels: from Gnawa Rituals to Popular Weddings** », Sonic Conversations in the Mediterranean Across the Strait of Gibraltar

25/01/2023 | University of Cambridge (UK)

« **Moroccan Nights in Brussels: from Gnawa Rituals to Popular Weddings** »

16/12/2022 | University of Antwerpen (BE)

« **Moroccan ša'bi rhythms : a typology test based on the repertoire played in Brussels** », 2d Annual Symposium of ICTM Belgium

10/10/2022 | Royal Library of Belgium (BE)

« **Subversive idols: female *chaabi* singers in the Moroccan diaspora in Brussels** », 75th Brithday of the Belgian Musicological Society

10/05/2022 | Royal Library of Belgium (BE)

with Hugo Rodriguez (KBR), « **Toots Thielemans et les musiques latino-américaines. Répertoires, réseaux et réception de « l'autre jazz** »,

26/11/2021 | Centre des Musiciens du Monde (Montréal, CA)

« **Femme qui danse, corps en transe : mouvement et féminité dans les performances gnawa à Bruxelles** », conference Rencontres Musicales d'Automne coordinated by Centre des Musiciens du Monde and OICRM

27/09/2021 | Tanger (MA)

« **From Tangiers to Brussels : Following the *šamālī* repertoire in the European capital of the Gnawa** », symposium of the ICTM Study Group for Mediterranean Studies

03/06/2021 | University of Barcelona (SP)

with Stefano Portelli (University of Leicester), « **Esperits de la diàspora : ritual i espai urbà entre Casablanca i Barcelona** », seminar of Observatori d'Antropologia del Conflictu Urbà

05/05/2021 | Université libre de Bruxelles (BE)

with Maité Maskens (ULB) et Emir Mahieddin (CNRS/EHESS), « **(Spi)ritual and musical mobilities in the diaspora** », seminar ICTM Belgium / Laboratoire de Musicologie de l'ULB.

17-19/09/2020 | Köln University (DE)

« **Refugees for Refugees : Musicians Between Confinement and Perspective** » [accepted but canceled because of covid-19], 3rd conference of the German Network on Forced Migration.

6/06/2019 | University of Lausanne (CH)

« **Gnawa maroxellois and *ğōla* : initiatory continuities** », international conference Penser les (im)mobilités musicales .

11/04/2019 | Université Rennes 2 (FR)

« **La *lila* des Gnawa maroxellois** », study day Rituels de possession et interculturalité au 21^e siècle : la musique et la transe.

01/03/2019 | Musée des Civilisations Saint-Just Saint Rambert (FR)

« **Bruxelles : une nouvelle capitale gnawa ?** », journée d'études Les Gnawa en diaspora (Université Jean Monnet Saint-Étienne / Musée des Civilisations Saint-Just Saint Rambert).

19/06/2018 | Dar Souiri, Essaouira (MA)

« **D'une rive à l'autre : la 'āda des Gnawa maroxellois** », 12th Conference of the Study Group on Mediterranean Music of ICTM.

21/03/2018 | Université libre de Bruxelles (BE)

« **Musique et musiciens gnawa à Bruxelles, des trajectoires entremêlées** », study day Musiques migrantes à Bruxelles.

28/04/2017 | Université Catholique de Louvain (BE)

« **Les Gnawa à Bruxelles, une approche de la migration par le prisme de la musique** », seminar of the Ecole doctorale thématique en sciences sociales de la Communauté Française de Belgique.

24/04/2016 | Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire (GE)

with Itzana Dobbelaere et Martina Hanakova : « **The *ṣarṣara* of the Gnawa's *guembri*: illustration of an evolving tradition** », 7th International Musicological Students Conference Competition.

6/03/2016 | Université de Strasbourg (FR)

with Itzana Dobbelaere : « **La *ṣarṣara* du *guembri* gnawa : focus sur un accessoire en déclin** », 4th study day of Jeunes Chercheurs du GREAM.

4/05/2015 | Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac (FR)

with Stéphanie Weisser : « **Des Gnawa à Bruxelles aux Gnawa de Bruxelles : pratiques musicales gnawa dans la capitale de l'Europe** », joint study days of Société Française d'Ethnomusicologie and British Forum for Ethnomusicology.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

2025 (accepted) | co-editor with Vanessa Paloma Elbaz (University of Cambridge)

Music, Space and Power. A Mediterranean Perspective, London: Routledge ('Ethnomusicologies of Europe').

2025 (accepted) | co-editor with Hugo Rodriguez

Toots Thielemans (1922-2016). A Century of Music Across Europe and America, Brussels: Peter Lang.

2024 **Musiques Gnawa à Bruxelles. Pratiques et formes rituelles en diaspora**, Paris, Vrin (« MusicologieS »).

Peer-reviewed articles

2026 (accepted) | with Stefano Portelli « **Gnawa *bldi*, Gnawa *rumi* : How Moroccan Ritual Music Finds New Life in Italy** », book chapter in Elbaz, V. P. and Secheyaye, H., *Music, Power and Space in the MENA Mediterranean*, London: Routledge.

2026 (accepted) | with Hugo Rodriguez. « **Toots Thielemans et les musiques latino- américaines. Répertoires, récits et réseaux autour de "l'autre jazz"** », book chapter in Rodriguez, H. et Secheyaye, H., *Toots Thielemans (1922-2016). A Century of Music Across Europe and America*, Peter Lang.

2025 (accepted) | with Allia Guillot, « **Mobilisations mystiques en diaspora : pratiques gnawa entre fusion musicale et *lila* rituelle à Bruxelles et à Paris** », *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie* (special issue *Musique et mystique*).

- 2025 (accepted). « **Le quatrième mur de la *zāwiya* : amplification sonore et modalités de co-énonciation dans la *lila* rituelle des Gnawa** », *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* (special issue *Liturgies amplifiées*).
- 2025 (accepted) | with Laïla Amezian « **Living Tradition, Flexible Musicians: Female performers of Moroccan *šā'bī* music in Brussels** », *Intersections : Revue Canadienne de Musique*.
- 2025 (accepted) | with Laïla Amezian, « **When the Singer Hires the Musicologist: Chaabi Habibi, An Action Research lead Among Female Moroccan Musicians in Belgium** » book chapter in Seye, E., *Women, Music, Futures*, Helsinki : Helsinki University Press.
- 2025 | biographical note « **Benoît Quersin** », *Biographie nationale de Belgique*, Bruxelles : Académie Royale de Belgique.
- 2023 | « **Des idoles subversives : Pratiques féminines du *chaabi* dans la communauté marocaine de Belgique** », *Revue Belge de Musicologie* n°77.
- 2022 | « **Les oralités secondes : Entretien avec Jean Lambert** », *Cahiers d'Ethnomusicologie* n°35.
- 2021 | with Stéphanie Weisser and Olivier Lartillot | « **« Bruiteurs » ou « altérateurs » ? Quand un son grésillant n'est pas (seulement) un son bruité** », *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie* n°33.
- 2019 | « **En tambours et en trompettes : Remork et Karkaba, fusion et marocanité à Bruxelles** », *Cahiers d'Ethnomusicologie* n°32 & *Colophon* [online: <https://www.colophon.be/05-fiche-doc-belgique-maroc>].
- 2019 | « **"En Belgique, il n'y a rien" ? Le rituel de la *lila* chez les Gnawa marocains** », with Stéphanie Weisser, *Civilisations*, vol. 67.
- 2019 | « **Refugees for Refugees. Musicians between Confinement and Perspectives** », article co-écrit with Marco Martiniello, *Arts*, vol. 8, n°1.
- 2016 | « **The *šaršara* of the Gnawa's *guembri*: illustration of an evolving tradition** », with Itzana Dobbelaire et Martina Hanakova, *Kolo naukowe Krakow Online Musicology Magazine*, vol. 30, p. 7-28.
- 2015 | « **Les Gnawa à Bruxelles : analyse d'une reconfiguration culturelle** », with Stéphanie Weisser, *Brussels Studies*, vol. 94, 24 août 2015 [online : www.brusselsstudies.be].

Reviews

2023. Richard Jankowsky, *Ambient Sufism. The Social Work of Musical Form*, *Cahiers d'Ethnomusicologie*.
2022. Alessandra Ciucci, *The Voice of the Rural Music, Poetry, and Masculinity among Migrant Moroccan Men in Umbria*, *Revue Française de Musicologie*.
2022. Ursula Hemetek, Inna Naroditskaya et Terada Yoshitaka (dir.), *Music and Marginalisation beyond the Minority-Majority Paradigm*, *L'Homme*.
2022. Liselotte Sels. *Between Turku and Halay*, *Ethnomusicology Forum*.
2021. Pascal Cordereix et Jean Lambert (dir.), *Congrès de Musique arabe du Caire 1932*, *The Yearbook for Traditional Music*, vol.53.
2020. Anne Damon-Guillot & Talia Bachir-Loopuyt (éd.). *Une pluralité audible ? Mondes de musique en contact*, *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie* n°33.
2020. Jean Pouchelon. *Les Gnawa du Maroc, intercesseurs de la différence*, *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie* n°33.

2019. Nicolas Darbon, Musique et littérature en Guyane. Explorer la transdiction, in *La Revue Belge de Musicologie*.
2017. Bertrand Bouvier et Anastasia Danaé Lazaridis (ed.), Samuel Baud-Bovy (1906-1986). Néohelléniste, ethnomusicologue, musicien in la *Revue Belge de Musicologie*.
2016. Simha Arom et Denis Constant-Martin. L'Enquête en ethnomusicologie. Préparation, terrain, analyse in la *Revue Belge de Musicologie*.

Albums

2022. *Gnawa Rumi* [Musiques gnawa en Italie, co-produit avec Stefano Portelli], Nota (IT), 12 pistes, livret trilingue IT/EN/AR.
2020. *JOLA – Hidden Gnawa Music in Brussels*, Muziekpublique (BE), 13 pistes, livret quadrilingue FR/NL/EN/AR.
2018. *Baul Meets Saz. Namaz, Seyir Muzik* (BE), 7 pistes, livret EN.
2016. *Voxtra. The Encounter of Vocal Heritage*, Muziekpublique (BE), 23 pistes, livret trilingue FR/NL/EN.
2016. *Refugees for Refugees. Amerli*, Muziekpublique (BE), 14 pistes, livret trilingue FR/NL/EN.
2015. *Vardan Hovanissian & Emre Gültekin. Adana*, Muziekpublique (BE), 14 pistes, livret trilingue FR/NL/EN.