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Music (1924–1939): A History of Belgium’s First Jazz Journal

Matthias Heyman

Introduction

Belgium’s fascinating jazz history is something of a paradox in that it is little known locally or externally, yet it is filled with unique events—such as the creation of one of the world’s first hot clubs devoted to jazz (in 1932)—and significant proponents, some of whom were among the most highly regarded musicians on the European jazz scene in the 1920s and 1930s. But rather than survey the early history of jazz in Belgium and its performers, I will introduce the Belgian jazz journal *Music* (1924–1939) along with its creator, Félix-Robert Faecq (1901–1992), as it is an ideal way to explore some of the nation’s key figures, policies and perspectives in the era between the two world wars. Other Belgian music magazines existed, but in general they devoted little or no attention to jazz, a topic that was also largely ignored by the general press. As such, *Music* played an instrumental role in the introduction, reception, and popularization of jazz in Belgium, and at times was even used as a mechanism for achieving specific goals. Despite this periodical’s tremendous importance, it is now nearly forgotten, and unfortunately there are only two complete runs available anywhere, both in Belgian archives. [1] It is hard to assess to what extent lack of access to this magazine has affected how Belgian jazz history has been perceived, but one thing is certain: *Music* is a vital tool for any serious student of the history of Belgian jazz in its first few decades, a period often neglected in examinations of this nation’s jazz past.

Try this test: type the keywords “Belgian jazz musician” into an Internet search engine. Results may vary, but chances are that one friendly face dominates your screen: that of guitarist and harmonica player Jean “Toots” Thielemans (born 1922). Some might recall that guitarist Django Reinhardt (1910–1953) was also born in this tiny nation, even though he is usually thought of as French (he really should be considered a Sinti gypsy). And for others, names like saxophonist Robert “Bobby” Jaspar (1926–1963), guitarist René Thomas (1927–1975), vibraphonist “Fats” Sadi Lallemand (1927–2009), or pianist and composer François “Francy” Boland (1929–2005) may ring a bell. For many, even Belgians themselves, the history of Belgian jazz and its performers boils down to these few musicians. But this small European country, about the size of the state of Maryland, had far more to offer, even in generations prior to those of Thielemans and Jaspar. It was a hotbed of jazz activity early on, in part due to its central location within Europe: Amsterdam and Paris were just three to four hours away by car or train (before the arrival of high-speed rail), and Berlin and London were each about a day away. Moreover, with the capital Brussels, a mini-Paris of sorts, the cosmopolitan Antwerp, one of Europe’s main ports of entry, Liege, Wallonia’s main cultural hub, and Ostend, a vibrant seaside resort, Belgium had four distinct cities that were filled with entertainment and nightlife, and which attracted many visiting bands. [2] All this ensured that jazz, first introduced to Belgium in the early 1920s, was able to spread quickly.

From *Musique Magazine* to *Music*

While traces of African-American music can be found much earlier, jazz first found its way into Belgium around 1920 through pioneering expatriates such as drummer Louis Mitchell’s Jazz Kings. [3] This “modern rhythmic music,” as it was often called, attracted many young, affluent middle-class men. Several of these urbanites were quick to learn how to play this new and exciting music, whereas others realized their talent lay elsewhere and sought alternative ways to get involved. A good example of the latter is Félix-Robert Faecq, one of the most prolific jazz promoters in *Interbellum* Belgium. [4] This singular figure was to become the founder of the periodical *Music*, just one of the many initiatives he took to further the cause of Belgian jazz.

Faecq, who was born in 1901 to a middle-class Brussels family, first became aware of the exhilarating music that accompanied novel dances such as the one-step and the foxtrot during a ball in the fall of 1918. He began scouring the music scene for more of the same, and upon witnessing Mitchell’s seven-piece band in Le Perroquet, a foyer situated in the Brussels Théâtre L’Alhambra, he became enamoured with jazz. It was the start of “a lifetime dedicated to jazz,” as he later titled his memoirs. [5] Soon, Faecq dropped out of his law studies to pursue a career in music. His first steps in the entertainment industry appear to have been a short stint as an artist’s representative for the Casino of Spa, though no evidence other than his own reminiscences exist. In 1920 he also seemed to have been active as an amateur singer with a repertoire that belonged to the Parisian music hall tradition. In 1927 he made a couple of recordings under the pseudonym Biloute, but, apart from this little side project, did not pursue a career as a performer.

Faecq’s business career began in earnest in 1921 when he decided to become a sales representative for an international record label. After thoroughly prospecting several companies, he finally settled on the British Edison Bell Winner company for its “quality, price and repertoire.” [6] Although Faecq was obliged to enter military service for one year starting from October 1921, his commanding officer allowed him to continue working in between active duty, even permitting him to hold a public listening session at a local café in Mons (Wallonia), where he was based. By the end of 1922, his military service completed, Faecq was back in his hometown of Brussels, and was able to fully focus on his work as a label representative. He expanded his business the following year by adding another British label to his portfolio, Imperial Records, introducing local music fans to white dance, novelty and jazz bands such as the Southern Rag-A-Jazz Band and bands led by Sam Lanin, saxophonist Nathan Glantz, and violinist Paul

Specht. Some admirers, including author Robert Goffin (1898–1984), amateur pianist Paul Nayaert, and the British expatriate bandleader/drummer Billy Smith, befriended Faecq, who regularly received samples of the latest records by American labels such as Gennett, Paramount, and Brunswick, allowing his “inner circle” of aficionados to discover “authentic” hot music played by The New Orleans Rhythm Kings, the California Ramblers (with, among others, the Dorsey brothers and bass saxophonist Adrian Rollini), the Cotton Pickers (Brunswick’s generic name for studio groups which often included members of the Original Memphis Five, such as trumpeter Phil Napoleon and trombonist Miff Mole), and other American groups. Not surprisingly, Smith and other local bandleaders asked Faecq if he could obtain sheet music of records played at these private sessions. Faecq attempted to fill their requests during his business trips to London, but soon decided to become a sheet music representative himself, landing a contract with the A.J. Stasny Music Company, then one of the largest American publishers of popular music, as well as the Sam Fox Publishing Company (since 1917 the exclusive publisher of John Philip Sousa). Though a hardcore fan base for jazz was already established, Faecq soon noticed that “the general public was still into the blare (original: “*fionflons*”) of the last century,” and that jazz did not sell too well in the “provinces” (i.e., the backcountry), as exemplified by the reaction by a salesman from La Louvière (Wallonia): “Where do you think I will be able to sell this music of savages?” [7] But Faecq nevertheless chose to devote his energies “to make the public love this new music.” [8]

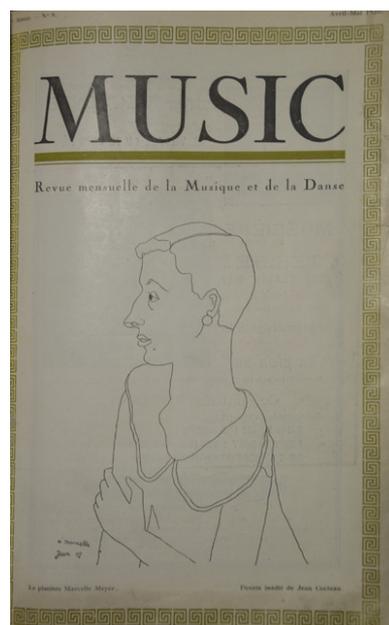


Félix-Robert Faecq hands a trophy to Pi Sheffer of the Dutch Blue Ramblers, the second prize winner of the large ensemble category at the International Jazz Tournament of 1936. (From the Bizet Collection.)

He soon realized that jazz could be disseminated in several ways: not only by public performance, records, and sheet music, but also through the written press. As national newspapers were devoting little coverage to the new genre, and few specialized music periodicals existed, he decided to create his own journal, *Musique Magazine*, which debuted in October 1924. Faecq decided to appoint his close friend Nayaert as its chief editor (Nayaert remained with the magazine until October 1925, using the pseudonym Pierre Neuville). This allowed Faecq to advertise in his own magazine, cleverly avoiding any visible conflict of interest with his other commercial activities. However, circumstantial evidence suggests that a certain Robert Verneuil, *Musique Magazine*’s managing director and so-called “owner,” was in fact an alias of Faecq himself, which allowed him to maintain tight control. [9] Although the scope of this monthly was quite broad, with a fair share of space devoted to classical music, variety, and the musical theatre, it also carried a dedicated jazz column, *Jazzmania*—a rare occurrence in music journals in those days. (The celebrated British periodical, *The Melody Maker*, which would also feature articles on jazz, first appeared in January 1926, several months later.) Initially, Faecq was not openly involved as a writer or editor (although his alter ego Verneuil did contribute some articles), but the periodical did take a central place in his professional life, and over time he used it directly and indirectly as a means of communication with both trade professionals as well as music fans, as a promotional tool for his own products, and sometimes as a lever and practical means to accomplish certain goals, for example, using the journal as a spearhead to persuade (one might say force) the national broadcasting corporation into featuring jazz—more specifically, Belgian jazz—in their regular programming.

In 1925, Faecq took over an old sheet music shop and made it his business office, baptizing it the Universal Music Store. On the second floor he installed his wholesale office, and on the ground floor was a retail store run by his mother. He began to import sheet music and arrangements by Melrose Bros. Music Company, which published Jelly Roll Morton’s compositions from 1923 to 1928. Although records by African-American musicians were then unfamiliar to many European musicians—race records were rarely exported—there appears to have been great interest in the “arrangements in Dixieland-style” that he imported, and according to Faecq, musicians came from as far away as Germany to obtain them. [10]

In April 1925, *Musique Magazine* changed its name to the more international-sounding *Music*, and although very few articles appeared in other languages than French, it regularly included reviews of concerts and other events in neighboring countries. A bit paradoxically to this outspoken internationalist approach, the journal began to focus more on national performers as exemplified by more frequent appearances of Belgian artists on its covers. Moreover, the subtitle “Revue Mensuelle de la Musique et de la Danse” was added, effectively widening the periodical’s scope to include dance as well. [11] In May of that year, a group of Belgian classical composers known as Les Synthétistes started their own magazine, *La Revue Musicale Belge*, which focused almost exclusively on classical music, especially brass band and concert band music, genres seldom covered in *Music*. [12] Although no real rivalry existed between the collaborators of these journals—some even wrote for both magazines—*Music*’s makeover, with its change of name, coverage of dance (and later theatre) as a focal point, and the inclusion of a short composition (by Belgian composers, naturally) as a centerfold in each issue, ensured that the periodical kept its unique position in the market of music trade journals. [13] Moreover, the addition of this musical supplement, which *The Melody Maker* would also soon adopt, indicates that the target audience of *Music* was not just the interested concertgoer, but also active musicians, whether amateur or professional. A bit later the journal also began to feature articles on music theory, for example a series of articles on modulation in 1929 which were written by none other than Paul Gilson, the so-called “leader” of Les Synthétistes and editorial head of *La Revue Musicale Belge*. With these features, *Music* became a true trade journal for music and other forms of entertainment in Belgium.



Jean Cocteau’s drawing of pianist Marcelle Meyer for the April–May 1925 issue. (From the Robert Pernet Fund, MIM Brussels.)

Despite the fact that jazz received a certain amount of coverage in *Music*, not only in the column *Jazzmania*, but also in advertisements for current records and upcoming concerts, Faecq and Nayaert, the magazine’s key figures, felt that still more was needed to promote jazz so they organized a “jazz session” held at the concert hall in L’Union Coloniale on January 15, 1926. [14] The session presented four hours of live music in two sets by two amateur jazz bands, the Waikiki Band and the Bistrouille Dance Orchestra, with one-tune intermissions by the saxophonist Harold Connelly (from the American band The Georgians, led by Frank Guarente) as well as the pianists Constant “Stan” Brenders (future bandleader of the I.N.R. Jazz Orchestra) and Sylvain Hamy (of the Bistrouille Dance Orchestra). Although not announced as such, this session was an actual concert, making it a seminal moment in Belgian jazz history. [15] The best known precedent of this

presentation of jazz in a concert setting is the famed Aeolian Hall “An Experiment in Modern Music” concert by the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in 1924, but even earlier, jazz or proto-jazz concerts had been staged in halls normally reserved for highbrow music: James Reese Europe’s Clef Club Orchestra performed in Carnegie Hall as early as 1912, and across the Atlantic the visiting Southern Syncopated Orchestra was engaged to play London’s Philharmonic Hall in 1919. [16] Though it is likely that jazz was presented on the concert stage in other European cities around this time, the concert of 1926 in Brussels was Belgium’s first such presentation of jazz. [17]

Faecq apparently did not appreciate the historical significance of their event at that time, as it is not announced or reviewed in *Music*, nor did Faecq inform the general press, something he always did with future initiatives, such as the later jazz tournaments. With no follow-up concerts scheduled, and no media coverage (that I have been able to find), it seems this session made little impact on the contemporary music scene, but it had at least one important consequence for the development of early Belgian jazz: Shortly after the concert Faecq became the music publisher of both Ernest Craps (1903–1992) and Pierre Pacquet (1904–1966), two members of the Bistrouille A.D.O. whose compositions had been featured at L’Union Coloniale concert. [18] A year earlier, in 1925, Faecq had created his own music publishing corporation, International Music Company (I.M.C.). As with his Universal Music Store and *Music*, the use of an English name suggests that he was consciously trying to position his enterprises on the international market. That he succeeded in gaining interest abroad becomes clear from a partial list of countries which imported I.M.C. sheet music prior to 1929: Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, India, Australia, and Japan. [19] Faecq continued to represent what he called “Anglo-American” music, but he also began to enlist several Belgian composers and arrangers, covering music that ranged from light classical music to popular songs, but always with jazz as a focal point, and with Craps and Pacquet, who used David Bee and Peter Packay as their artist names, soon becoming the main suppliers in this genre. [20] As music by the duo began to appear in *Music* (in the form of a centerfold lead sheet for piano) their popularity grew, and by 1927 the I.M.C. was selling Packay’s and Bee’s music throughout Western Europe. In the following years their compositions were being recorded by such bands as the Savoy Orpheans (“Vladivostok,” 1927), Jack Payne and the BBC Dance Orchestra (“Hot Bricks,” 1928), the Original Ramblers (“High Tension,” 1929), and even one American band, Luis Russell and His Orchestra (“High Tension,” 1930). [21]

While Belgian jazz tunes were beginning to be recorded outside Belgium, Belgian jazz musicians had so far recorded only occasionally, often as sidemen in multinational bands, such as pianist Egide Van Gils (1905–1986) with Arthur Briggs’s Savoy Syncopators Orchestra (Berlin, 1927). The first significant series of recordings by a Belgian jazz band dates from 1925, when the Miami Jazz Band, led by pianist René Demaret, recorded in London, Ghent and Paris, followed a little later by the Excellos Five led by drummer Robert Kierberg, which cut several records in Berlin. [22] Unfortunately their efforts received little attention and both bands, as well as their records, were quickly forgotten. Two years went by before a Belgian band recorded again. It was once again Faecq who took the initiative: He approached Edison Bell with a proposal to record a septet led by clarinetist/alto saxophonist Charles “Chas” Remue (1903–1971) which he had heard regularly in L’Abbaye, a popular dance club in Brussels. [23] The label agreed, and as Belgium had as yet no high quality recording studio that specialized in popular music, the band, in the company of Faecq, travelled to London. Faecq took care of all the practical arrangements, in return asking a five percent management fee as well as the inclusion of a significant percentage of Belgian compositions. On June 27 and 28, 1927, Chas Remue and his New Stompers Orchestra recorded a total of fourteen tunes, including five by Bee and Packay. [24] Despite the 1925 records by the Miami Jazz Band and the Excellos Five, Remue’s Stompers have often been cited—and continue to be cited—as the first Belgian jazz band to record, as exemplified by the cover of the December 1935 issue of *Music*. [25] Indeed, with the Miami Jazz Band’s Demaret being born in France (though he spent his professional career in Belgium), and two of the Excellos Five being Dutch (the trumpet player Louis de Vries and the pianist Joop de Leur), these records are not, strictly speaking, 100% Belgian, unlike the New Stompers. Still, these earlier historically important records are too often overlooked to the benefit of those by Remue’s band, leading some to believe that the history of Belgian *recorded* jazz did not start until 1927.

In his memoirs Faecq wrote that these 1927 records were relatively successful in the U.K. and Belgium, but he also felt they were not quite perfect, for example citing mic fright and the effects of seasickness as the possible causes for their flaws. He began planning a second recording session, firmly believing that this would establish Remue’s reputation on the English music market, according to Faecq the largest in Europe at that time. [26] To his astonishment, two band members did not want to participate in this session, and Remue refused to replace them, leaving Faecq no other choice than to call off the session. [27]

Music’s Specialty: Jazz!

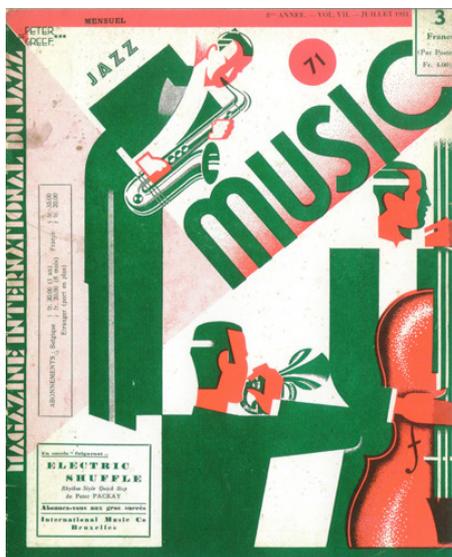
Music shifted its attention increasingly towards jazz beginning in 1928. This was exhibited in a number of aspects, for example by featuring jazz artists (or at least musicians that were perceived as such) on its covers, Ted Lewis being the first one to appear (in March of that year), followed by Paul Whiteman—in the form of a caricature—in June 1929 and the Dorsey brothers in January of 1930. The September 1929 issue is an “orchestral edition [...] especially aimed at artists and orchestra musicians,” but it was clearly not intended for *symphonic* orchestra musicians. [28] The central photo shows the dance band of violinist Paul Specht, and the surrounding cover illustration not only depict a typical jazz ensemble of the day—dominated by brass and wind instruments alongside a rhythm section of piano, banjo, and tuba—but also the body language (musicians in a trance, eyes closed, horns raised to the heavens) has “jazz” written all over it. Although unsigned, this cover is undoubtedly the work of illustrator (and occasional drummer) Peter De Greef (1901–1985), at that time one of the most productive graphic designers in Belgium. [29] His typical style, in between Art Deco and Streamline Moderne, suited the image Faecq wanted to project of *Music* and of jazz in general perfectly: stylish, luxurious, progressive and above all, modern. De Greef was not the only illustrator who worked for *Music* (the April–May 1925 issue included a drawing of French pianist Marcelle Meyer by her famous compatriot Jean Cocteau (1889–1963)), but once *Music* became a fully dedicated jazz journal in 1931, De Greef, himself a jazz fan, became Faecq’s main supplier of all illustrations, photo montages, and other decorative elements for the journal (for example, the logo of the later Jazz Club de Belgique). Faecq did not limit his cooperation with De Greef to *Music*, but also used him as an illustrator for sheet music in his I.M.C. catalogue as well as for posters for the jazz contests he organized in later years (1932 to 1939). [30] De Greef’s tasteful illustrations depicted jazz musicians as suave and sophisticated yet engaged and “swinging,” thereby helping to shape much of the perception the general Belgian public had of jazz music. [31]

Music also continued its monthly output of sheet music, but increasingly featured jazz compositions by, for example, Sylvain Hamy and “usual suspects” Packay and Bee, both of whom were also featured on covers (in March and August 1930, respectively). In addition to these written compositions, “improvised” compositions or “hot choruses,” as they were called, were regularly found in the journal from 1930 on. Although it is unlikely these were actually transcribed from recordings, as was the case with, for example, Louis Armstrong’s *50 Hot Choruses for Cornet* (1927), they were notated in an improvisatory style by some of Belgium’s finest performers, such as saxophonist Alfons “Fud” Candrix (1908–1974). This was

one of the first tools for learning jazz for many budding musicians, but *Music* would later offer more pointers to help enterprising music students find their way through the ins and outs of the new and “exotic” music, as shall be seen below.

January 1930 marked the first installment of a series of articles by Goffin under the name *Aux Frontières du Jazz*, which ran almost monthly until July 1931. These articles would form the basis of a book under the same name published in 1932 by Editions Sagittaire in Paris. Faecq made sure the book received ample attention in *Music*, for example with a full-page advertisement in the April 1932 issue (which, small wonder, informs the readers that the book could be ordered via his Universal Music Store), and also by dedicating the entire front cover of the October issue of that year to Goffin's study. The book was announced in the advertisement as being the “first and only book that documents and exalts jazz with a COMPLETE [capitalization in original] study of the origins of orchestras, instrumentalists, straight and hot [jazz], the negro influence, the composers, the choirs and singers, etc.,” and although it is by no means the complete study it promises to be, it is one of the earliest works that attempts to contextualize jazz as an art form, and analyze it from a (personal) sociocultural perspective. [32] Naturally, Goffin, who at that time had not yet travelled to the U.S., only had a limited number of sources at his availability and had seen hardly any African-American jazz bands save for a few expatriates or visiting artists and orchestras. Thus, his text at times employs a very personal perspective, for example by writing about his experiences hearing the first jazz bands in Belgium, including Mitchell's Jazz Kings.

Also, the advertisement claims Goffin's book to be the very first of its kind, but *Aux Frontières du Jazz* was not, although it does precede Hugues Panassié's famous *Le Jazz Hot* (1934) by two years. As Stuart Nicholson notes, Goffin's work is predated by *Das Neue Jazzbuch* (Alfred Baresel, 1925), *Le Jazz* (André Coeuroy and André Schaeffner, 1926), *The Appeal of Jazz* (Robert W.S. Mendl, 1927), *Jazz* (Emil F. Burian, 1928), *Jazz Band* (Anton G. Bragaglia, 1929), and several other European publications that focus on certain aspects of jazz, or at least what was perceived as such by the authors in question. [33]



Peter De Greef's jazzy covers helped transform *Music* into a specialized jazz magazine by early 1931. (From the Robert Pernet Fund, MIM Brussels.)

By 1931, *Music* had completed its transformation from a broad-based entertainment journal to a fully dedicated jazz periodical. The first six issues from that year bear the subtitle *Organe Franco-Belge du Jazz*. In July, it was retitled *Magazine Internationale du Jazz*; the “Internationale” was subsequently dropped, resulting in the straightforward subtitle *Le Magazine du Jazz*. This chronology places *Music* among the earliest periodicals devoted entirely to jazz. As Walter van de Leur notes in his study of *De Jazzwereld*, magazines had previously dedicated space to jazz, most notably the British periodicals *The Melody Maker* (founded in January 1926) and *Rhythm* (December 1927) as well as the French *Jazz-Tango* (the first issue is dated October 15, 1930; it was renamed *Jazz-Tango-Dancing* beginning with the December 1931 issue). [34] Also the American *Metronome* (1881) featured some jazz content from the late 1920s until 1936, when it became a true jazz journal. [35] *Music* deserves a place in this list as well, as it had, since its 1924 inception (then still as *Musique Magazine*), included the *Jazzmania* column, as well as regularly featuring other jazz content, including articles, announcements, and concert or record reviews. August 1931 saw the creation of the Dutch *De Jazzwereld*, while in France *La Revue du Jazz* had been founded in July 1929 by the Armenian-born Frenchman “Grégor” Krikor Kelekian (1898–1971), the then-famous bandleader of his Grégoriens, making these two as well as the newly formatted *Music* (from January 1931 on) arguably the world's earliest dedicated jazz periodicals.

It is little wonder that all three journals often looked to each other for inspiration, and even collaborated on occasion. In February of 1930 Grégor voluntarily disbanded his magazine and, after a one-year hiatus, became a contributor to *Music*. [36] The issue of February 1931 lists him as the *Chef de la Collaboration Française*. This same issue bears the subtitle *Organe Franco-Belge du Jazz*, suggesting that for a brief time the magazine actively tried to establish itself on the French journal market. But with *Jazz-Tango* (which was discontinued in

November 1938) and later *Jazz Hot* (the first issue is dated March 1935, and it continues to be published), France was never short of a jazz journal of its own.

Albeit less outspoken than *La Revue du Jazz*, the Dutch *De Jazzwereld* also had close ties to *Music*. Van de Leur provides an insight into its content, which for example comprised a “technical corner” and a “Gramophone Section for Jazz Musicians—to learn from,” sections that could also be found in *Music*: The February 1930 issue of *Music* called out to its readership: “Jazz Musicians! Learn by listening to records,” followed by a list, the first of many, of recordings featuring solos “in the latest style.” [37] Several other issues featured technical articles, such as an “effective method for improvisation,” after the “hot chorus” supplements a new and more explicit step in educating the Belgian would-be jazz performers. [38] Both periodicals were also connected administratively. An advertisement in *Music* from March 1932 announces *De Jazzwereld* as its Dutch counterpart (“de Hollandsche ‘MUSIC’”), and Flemish readers interested in subscribing to the magazine could easily do so through the administration of *Music*. [39] Additional associations with other European jazz journals were sought as well, and a month later also *Music*'s German-speaking readership could sign up for a magazine in their own language: the Swiss *Jazz*. [40] Much later, in November of 1935, another collaboration was struck, and a joint subscription to *Music* and the French *Jazz-Tango* was offered for the years 1936 and 1937. [41] In December of that year the banner “member of the ‘Associated Jazz Newspapers’” was added to the covers of *Music*, but little is known of this association. It possibly was an informal entente that loosely tied *Music*, *De Jazzwereld*, *Jazz*, and *Jazz-Tango*, allowing people from much of the Continent to read about their favorite music in their maternal language without much effort: subscribing to “foreign” magazines was possible within their own country, and at a minimal cost. [42] Moreover, Faecq had always been looking to form alliances with jazz promoters from other countries. Earlier, in an editorial of the February 1931 issue of *Music*, Faecq (under his pseudonym Verneuil) had already issued a call to arms to unite forces in creating a “continental block” to promote European jazz. [43] While acknowledging the superiority of American jazz, he felt that Continental jazz was not given the attention it was due across the English Channel and overseas. An entente such as the “Associated Jazz Newspapers” might have been one of his efforts to remedy this lack of awareness, albeit it did not seem to have produced any concrete results.

With the arrival of the former French bandleader Grégor in February 1931, *Music* had somebody with a technical understanding of the music among its staff, but at the same time also several prolific Belgian jazz musicians were hired, such as trumpeter Gus Deloof (who acted as the *Chef des Rubriques*

Techniques; 1909–1976) and pianist John Ouwerx (1903–1983). This made *Music* a true jazz journal written by and for knowledgeable jazz experts and aficionados. By the early 1930s it had become the primary means of communication with and within the Belgian jazz milieu, both amateur as well as professional.

Music, the Jazz Club de Belgique, and Promoting Jazz

Despite a growing interest, 1930s Belgium still lacked a broad base of support for jazz. While *Music* had established itself as the country's first and only jazz magazine, the general press showed little interest in hot music, be it local or international. Also record companies and broadcasting corporations did little beyond the occasional recording date (by 1931 there had been merely a handful of sessions by Belgian jazz bands) or radio broadcast (mostly playing records instead of live remotes). [44] A few individuals tried to advocate for jazz as best they could, but there was no overarching organization that could lead the effort, and thus the initiative remained in the hands of a few. But this would soon change.

In the fall of 1931, five French students, including future promoters Charles Delaunay (1911–1988) and Hugues Panassié (1912–1974), started an informal university club called the Jazz Club Universitaire, which by 1932 was renamed Le Hot Club de France, and was officially introduced in *Jazz-Tango* in November of that year. [45] Around that same time, several Belgian jazz aficionados, Faecq and Goffin among them, set up an organization to bring Belgian jazz fans together, and act as a sort of platform through which jazz could be promoted. [46] The March 1932 issue of *Music* announced the creation of such club for the first time, and its basic structure was made public and proclaimed the Jazz Club de Belgique (J.C.B.) would be modeled after the Touring Club de Belgique—a national mobility organization formed in 1895—with an overarching national department as well as several regional sections. [47] Goffin was to be the president (later honorary president) while Faecq served as treasurer. The club strove for a democratic and transparent structure, as *Music*'s readers were not only invited to join the club, but also given the opportunity to make suggestions as to how it should be organized, even giving them a voice in deciding subscription fees! [48] After a transitional period the J.C.B. was officially presented in the November 1932 issue, and the magazine began to include the reports of the club's semimonthly reunions, thus functioning as the club's official organ. [49] In that same issue the J.C.B.'s mission statement was made public, its eleven core points nicely balanced between promotional activities, such as supporting Belgian jazz composers, and more recreational activities, such as listening to jazz records and viewing short films that featured jazz (of which there were not yet very many).



A special issue celebrating the recent publication of Robert Goffin's *Aux Frontières du Jazz* in 1932. (From the Robert Pernet Fund, MIM Brussels.)

The first public event organized by the J.C.B. soon followed. With *Music* as its public voice, the J.C.B. as its supporting organization, and Goffin's *Aux Frontières du Jazz* as its "official" history, jazz was already well on its way to achieving the status the nation's most avid fans had always felt it was due, but Faecq wanted to "give jazz in Belgium its definitive surge by organizing a mass manifestation that would reach a broad audience." [50] A contest for amateur jazz bands followed by a ball was sure to attract a young and fashionable crowd eager to dance and romance, and hopefully persuaded some of them to fall in love with jazz as well. Faecq took his inspiration from the popular local brass band competitions, as well as looking across the English Channel, where jazz band contests had been held as early as September 1925. [51] The Netherlands and Austria were also among the first to organize such competitions (both in December 1931), and in Belgium a "concours" for the best "hot chorus" on trumpet and saxophone had been held in March 1928. [52] On December 10, 1932, the national tournament for amateur jazz orchestras, the first in a series of yearly contests, took place at the Brussels Palais de la Danse St. Sauveur, at that time Belgium's biggest ballroom. For Faecq the event was an astounding success: "In one single night, the first jazz tournament wiped out years of anti-jazz propaganda, [...] and illustrated the enthusiasm of the public for this new music in a decisive and definite manner." [53] Although Faecq's claim seems slightly exaggerated—little "anti-jazz propaganda" can be found in contemporary newspapers, unless the omission of jazz can be considered as such—the contest and its accompanying ball was successful enough to warrant following editions, and the J.C.B. continued to organize a yearly national contest between 1932 and 1939.

From 1936 on, the local sections of the J.C.B. also initiated regional competitions, but more significantly, between 1934 and 1938 a series of international amateur tournaments was staged in corporation with the Dutch *De Jazzwereld*. These contests, which alternated between Belgium and the Netherlands, were true pan-European events, attracting contenders from Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland and the U.K. As one might expect, *Music* reported extensively on all of these tournaments, covering every possible aspect: the first announcements, the contest regulations, the ticket order form, the subscription for the bus shuttle service (to take fans from the provinces to the city), reproductions from press reviews, and to top it off, an extensive evaluation by Faecq (who had a reputation of being a perfectionist), weighing all positive and negative aspects in order to improve subsequent contests.

As signs of impending war became impossible to ignore, all plans for further competitions were put on hold, but all through the 1930s they played an important role in the acceptance and popularization of jazz in Belgium, as such fulfilling one of the J.C.B.'s most important objectives. [54]

Another one of the club's goals from 1932, however, remained unfulfilled: "Establishing a reformation program to eradicate the scandalous current lack of jazz at the I.N.R." [55] Whereas other core points were more easily realized—the initiative often lay in the hands of the J.C.B.'s board members—this particular point needed the cooperation of the I.N.R., an external partner that was as yet not entirely convinced of the necessity of broadcasting jazz over its airwaves. The J.C.B., with Faecq as its *primus inter pares*, made this their main effort during the years that followed, and *Music* allows us to observe their course of action in pursuit of this goal. [56]

In the early 1920s the first American commercial radio stations began broadcasting popular music, and by the late 1920s jazz held a prominent place on the air, as exemplified by regular live relays and radio shows by Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway, both of whom achieved national fame in part due to their radio exposure. [57] As such it is easy to understand why many jazz promoters, Faecq included, took an early interest in the medium, and saw

this relatively new technology as a prime opportunity to promote the cause of jazz. In Belgium, however, both private commercial radio stations, such as Radio Bruxelles (founded in 1923, later renamed Radio Belgique) and N.V. Radio (founded in 1929), as well as the I.N.R., the national public broadcasting corporation (formed in June 1930 by merging the two aforementioned commercial stations), programmed little jazz. Earlier, Faecq had tried to persuade several radio stations to feature more “hot music,” but from 1932 on, backed by the J.C.B. and with *Music* as leverage, he was able to make his point more forcefully. The national radio did occasionally broadcast live or recorded jazz, but this was hardly sufficient to satisfy the J.C.B. Little time was lost in tackling the “scandalous current lack of jazz at the I.N.R.,” and in February 1933 a petition was issued among *Music*’s readers. [58] The demands were threefold: first, form a professional jazz orchestra under the auspices of the I.N.R.; second, create a commission that controls the music broadcasts of the I.N.R.; third, broadcast a minimum of 25% music by Belgian (jazz) composers. [59] Around this same time, the J.C.B.’s Administrative Board, among them Faecq, Goffin, and Packay, initiated talks with the Minister of P.T.T. (postal, telegraph, and telephone services) and the Board of Direction of the I.N.R., but to no avail. [60] For the time being, the very concrete and ambitious demands were unrealized.

Over the next few years, a series of polemical articles in *Music* followed, each one more opinionated than the last, until June 1935 when the matter came to a breaking point. In an anonymous article, the I.N.R. was accused of incompetence and ill will towards jazz, and the author even called upon the national written press to “start a merciless fight until the I.N.R. is completely removed and replaced by an independent organization that [...] is worthy of [...] ALL [capitalization in original] musical genres, [...] including jazz.” [61] Whether this vitriolic attack was the tipping point remains the question, but a few months later—seemingly out of nowhere—*Music* was pleased to announce the creation of a jazz orchestra under the auspices of the I.N.R.: On Sunday, January 19, 1936, after a mere fifteen days of rehearsing, the newly formed Orchestre de Dance de l’I.N.R., led by Stan Brenders (1904–1969), made its radio debut. [62] Faecq, for the first time in the whole I.N.R. saga writing without the cover of anonymity, triumphantly—if somewhat bombastically—declared: “The year 1935 ends with [a] victor[y] [...]: those of the Belgian ‘swinging brothers’ [quotation marks in original] over the enemies of jazz within Belgium.” [63]

With many of its goals accomplished, the J.C.B. could temporarily rest on its laurels, even though it kept supporting jazz in every way it could. For example, there were still no record labels in Belgium that specialized in jazz, so in 1937 the J.C.B. launched its own label, simply naming it Jazz Club. The records, which mainly featured music from Faecq’s I.M.C. catalogue played by some of Belgium’s top performers, were presented in *Music* and sold by subscription exclusively to the members of the J.C.B., again illustrating how much of Belgium’s jazz industry revolved around a small group of aficionados, notably Faecq, Goffin, and Packay. A second goal was to give jazz a place in the curricula of the Belgian music conservatoires, but this was not achieved until the 1980s, and did not involve the J.C.B. in any way. [64] In general, the J.C.B.’s stance became less militant, and Faecq had his hands full with organizing the international, national and regional jazz competitions, running his store and publishing company, presiding over the J.C.B. (he never was the nominal president, but reports show that he unofficially acted as such), and leading *Music*, besides occasionally writing for it.

Passing on the Baton: *Music* in the Late 1930s

Music continued to function as the official J.C.B. bulletin, and news from the national and regional semimonthly meetings appeared in every edition to keep the members, who since 1934 automatically included every subscriber to the journal, informed on the inner workings of their hot club. But the core of the periodical remained to inform the jazz lover on all aspects of his or her favorite music: reviews of discs, broadcasts and live concerts, jazz news from abroad (Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Italy, the U.K., the U.S.), special editions dedicated to visiting stars (such as Cab Calloway in the May/June issue of 1934 and Louis Armstrong in the October/November issue of that same year), informative articles (for example, “Does Stage Fright Exist for the Jazz Musician?” in *Music* of February 1938), reprints of interesting articles from the general press—often opinionated articles on jazz as a musical genre or cultural product—and last but not least the sheet music supplements and a rotogravure photo section featuring national and international artists. [65]

Music ceased at the end of 1939, the final four months bundled in one final, prewar issue (nr. 168, the fifteenth edition of the sixteenth year). Faecq, never a supporter of the Nazi regime, deliberately disbanded the journal to prevent it from falling under censorship, and since the German occupation would likely have made the production of such periodicals practically or ideologically impossible, it is probably not a coincidence that other European jazz magazines folded around the same time. [66] The July–August 1939 issue of *Jazz Hot* was its last prewar magazine, while November 1940 saw the final issue of *De Jazzwereld*. [67]

The J.C.B. never officially ceased to exist during the Second World War, but due to political maneuvering by a rival club, the Hot Club de Belgique (H.C.B.), it lost much of its influence during this period. [68] In the late 1930s a faction of the J.C.B. grew more and more discontented with the club’s current focus, which according to them lay too heavily on “straight jazz,” in their eyes a commercialized, white, and less “authentic” substyle of jazz. On April 1, 1939, Willy de Cort (1914–2002), Albert Bettonville (1916–2000), the British-born Carlos de Raditzky (full name: Baron de Raditzky d’Ostrowick, 1915–1985), and several others seceded from the J.C.B. to form their own hot club, which despite the German occupation focused as much as possible on what its founding fathers upheld as the only true form of this genre: hot jazz. [69] This decision seems not to have been in vain, as the H.C.B. (during the war temporarily renamed Club Rythmique de Belgique to sound less American) thrived to the detriment of the J.C.B.: According to Tim Lambrechts the new hot club had 10,000 members spread over forty local sections in this period. [70] It took over the organization of many concerts and events that were once the sole monopoly of the J.C.B., including Faecq’s beloved jazz tournaments, and started distributing its own periodical, *Jazz* (between March and November 1945), and later *Hot Club Magazine* (January 1946 to August 1948). [71]

After the war Faecq tried to regain the central place he had once held, but he found that the music industry had changed. Many of his achievements, including *Music*, the tournaments, and the formation of the I.N.R. radio jazz orchestra, were (at least partially) undone by the World War II, and the J.C.B. had lost most of its influence. Moreover, a new generation of jazz intermediaries who had come up under Faecq’s aegis stepped into the vacuum that was created when he was forced to seize his promotional activities (see note 66). These young promoters, Bettonville and de Raditzky in particular, were eager, on top of their game, and above all quick to catch up with the latest developments in jazz. From 1946 on, a group of young Belgian musicians began to attract the attention of jazz fans and critics, and at the International Championship of Jazz of September 27, 1947, an amateur contest with Bettonville and de Raditzky among its judges, they won the first prize. Their name? The Bob Shots, with, among its members (current and future) Jaspar, Sadi, Thomas, Boland, and Thielemans. The newest generation of Belgian jazz musicians was ready to spread their wings and achieve international fame. That they could do so was because they were able to build upon the structures and overall support that had been furnished in previous decades. The glory days of Faecq, Goffin, and the J.C.B. were past, but they had provided the shoulders that a following generation could stand on, a generation that accomplished what their predecessors had always hoped for: putting Belgium on the jazz map.

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[1] These are the Robert Pernet Fund at the Musical Instruments Museum, and the Marc Danval Fund at the Royal Library of Belgium, both in Brussels.

[2] Politically speaking, the Kingdom of Belgium, a constitutional monarchy which seceded from the Netherlands in 1830, has a complex history, as it is linguistically and geographically divided into three communities: Wallonia (la Wallonie) in the south, in which the main language is Belgian French, Flanders (Vlaanderen) in the north, in which the main language is Flemish (a variant of Dutch), and in the middle the bilingual capital Brussels. In the time frame under discussion the dominant language of the upper and middle class was (Belgian) French. Also, among most musicians (many of whom had middle class roots), French was the everyday language. Still, in order to represent the two largest cultural communities, many of Belgium’s national institutions were organized with an overarching unitary structure while at the same time having an internal bilingual subdivision. A good example is the national public broadcasting company, the I.N.R./N.I.R. (l’Institut National de Radiodiffusion/het Nationaal Instituut voor de Radio-Omroep), founded in 1930. Most musical broadcasts were national, but the spoken news was broadcasted in two languages on a separate frequency. In this article I will use the acronym I.N.R.

[3] More on Mitchell can be found in Mark Miller, *Some Hustling This!: Taking Jazz to the World 1914–1929* (Ontario: The Mercury Press, 2005), passim.

[4] In Flanders and the Netherlands, the Latin term *Interbellum* is used to indicate the Interwar period (roughly 1919 to 1939). Though non-existent in English, when combined with “Belgium” this forms an alliteration to good to resist.

[5] Faecq never formally published his recollections, but he did write a series of short articles on his own life and various related aspects of Belgian jazz history entitled “30 Années de Souvenirs: Toute une Vie Consacrée au Jazz” (published in the periodical *L’Actualité Musicale* between April 1949 and December 1957, available in the Robert Pernet Fund). Most biographical information on Faecq stems from these articles.

[6] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1949 (September), no. 63: 16. All translations are by the author.

[7] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1949 (October), no. 64: 16.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Marieke Anaf was the first to reveal the identity of the mysterious Verneuil, but she does not explain how she reached this conclusion. (Marieke Anaf, “De Introductie, Verspreiding en Vestiging van Jazz in België” (Master’s Thesis, Universiteit Gent, 2010): 76.) I found much circumstantial evidence that supports that Verneuil, of which no tangible trace can be found, was indeed Faecq’s alter ego. For example, Faecq suddenly assumed the managing position from April 1937 on, the editorial not making any reference to this important personnel switch. Earlier, Verneuil had also contributed articles to *Music*, such as a portrait of Peter Packay (March 1930), clearly exhibiting a firsthand knowledge of the (Belgian) jazz scene. Finally, the most convincing evidence can be found in drafts of letters written by Faecq (found in his personal paper archive, the Robert Pernet Fund), where

sometimes the monogram “FF” is found alongside “RV,” suggesting that Faecq and Verneuil were in fact one and the same.

[10] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1949 (October), no. 64: 17.

[11] In 1928 theatre was added to the magazine’s scope (and subtitle), but both dance and theatre received little attention, and if such performances were reviewed, the focal point mostly remained the incidental music.

[12] Les Synthétistes was a loose collective of composers under the guidance of their (former) teacher Paul Gilson that was modeled after the French Les Six. Among its members were Marcel Poot, Maurice Schoemaker, and Gaston Brenta.

[13] Synthétistes such as Gilson and Schoemaker would contribute to *Music*, and when E.L.T. Mesens, *Music*’s editor-in-chief from November 1925 to January 1929, resigned, Brenta succeeded him.

[14] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1949 (November), no. 65: 17.

[15] The program of the event, which is part of the Robert Pernet Fund, simply states “séance de jazz.”

[16] For Europe’s Carnegie Hall concert, see Scott DeVeaux, “The Emergence of the Jazz Concert, 1935–1945,” *American Music* 7, no. 1 (1989): 7. For the SSO in London, see Catherine Parsonage, *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880–1935* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005): 144–45.

[17] The draft of an unpublished article (in the Robert Pernet Fund) from 1942 by Faecq on the ten-year history of the Jazz Club de Belgique (of which more below) mentions another jazz concert at L’Union Coloniale as early as 1923. There is, however, no further evidence to support that this concert indeed took place.

[18] “A.D.O.” (Amateur Dance Orchestra) was a suffix often used by Belgian dance bands at this time.

[19] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1951 (January), no. 78: 22–23.

[20] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1950 (February), no. 68: 8. In his memoirs Faecq remembers to have suggested both composers to adopt English pseudonyms, but here his memory seems to be failing him, as the program of the L’Union Coloniale concert (in the Robert Pernet Fund) of January 1926, at which time Faecq was not yet introduced to the pair, clearly shows that these monikers were already in use. The flyer also reveals that at least one of their compositions, “The Bridge of Avignon” (which is based on the French folk song “Sur le Pont d’Avignon”), dates from before their contract with Faecq, although he claims that it was written after their engagement by the I.M.C. (ibid.: 9).

[21] Robert Pernet, *Belgian Jazz Discography* (Brussels: Robert Pernet, 1999): 823–32. Faecq also tried to promote Bee’s and Packay’s work across the Atlantic, as exemplified by a letter to American drummer and bandleader Ben Pollack from May 1929. He proposes Pollack to perform some Belgian compositions, singling out those by Packay, during his upcoming engagement at the Kursaal of Ostend, as it would “greatly please the Belgian public if they would hear works of Belgian composers when appearing in Belgium and such delicate attention from you would certainly be mentioned [sic] with praise by the Belgian press” (carbon copy letter from 1929, in Robert Pernet Fund). It is unclear whether Pollack complied, but Faecq tried promoting his artists (and Belgian jazz in general) to other performers as well, among them Red Nichols (carbon copy letter from 1928, in Robert Pernet Fund) and Bennie Goodman (carbon copy letter from 1939, in Robert Pernet Fund). However, the only noteworthy American band known to have recorded a composition from Faecq’s I.M.C. catalogue is Luis Russell and his Orchestra (Pernet, *Discography*, 827).

[22] For Miami Jazz Band: Pernet, *Discography*, 459–60. For Excellos Five: ibid., 268–69. Demaret’s band recorded in London for Imperial (under the name L’Orchestre de l’Étoile), in Ghent for Chantal (under the names Jazz-Band Chantal or Jazz-Band Miami), and in Paris for Pathé (under the name Miami Dance Orchestra) (ibid., 459–60).

[23] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1950 (April), no. 70: 15.

[24] Faecq did not detail how the repertoire of this session was chosen, but it is fair to assume that the selection of Bee’s and Packay’s work was at least partially Faecq’s doing.

[25] The cover states: “The first Belgian orchestra to—in London in 1927—make phonographic records of jazz music on the initiative of Mr. F. R. Faecq.”

[26] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1950 (April), no. 70: 14.

[27] Twenty-three years later, Faecq was still annoyed by the insinuations of these two (unnamed) musicians that he unjustly profited from this recording session, besides being frustrated by Remue’s shortsightedness for not wanting to replace them to ensure this second session could take place (ibid.: 15).

[28] *Music*, 1929 (September), no. 54: cover.

[29] As a drummer, De Greef played with Hamy and Packay, among others, using the artist name “Peter Wilkins” or “Wilkie.” See Christian Van den Broeck, *Who is Peter De Greef?* (Geraardsbergen: Belgatone, 2012): 67.

[30] De Greef did not work exclusively for Faecq, but also provided art work for many other Brussels music publishers, warehouses, newspapers, etc. Interestingly, De Greef’s class (1916–1922) at l’Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles proved to be most fruitful, with some of his fellow students being painter Paul Delvaux, comic book author Edgar P. Jacobs (of Blake and Mortimer), and his good friend, painter René Magritte (Van den Broeck, *De Greef*, 14–15). Several of his former class mates, including Magritte, would also take up commercial work such as sheet music covers.

[31] A large selection of De Greef’s work can be found in Van den Broeck, *De Greef*, passim.

[32] *Music*, 1932 (April), no. 80: no page number.

[33] Stuart Nicholson, *Jazz and Culture in A Global Age* (Lebanon: Northeastern University Press, 2014): 182–83. Nicholson lists a total of sixteen early European jazz publications between 1921 (*Jazz und Shimmy: Brevier der neuesten Tänze* by Franz W. Koebner) and 1930 (Goffin’s *Aux Frontières du Jazz*, although officially published in 1932). Faecq later nuanced the advertised statement by clarifying that Goffin’s book was the first in

its genre written in French. (*L'Actualité Musicale*, 1949 (April), no. 59: 16.) Even then it is preceded by the 1926 publication by Coeuroy and Schaeffner.

[34] Walter van de Leur, "'Pure Jazz' and 'Charlatanry': A History of *De Jazzwereld* Magazine, 1931–1940," *Current Research in Jazz*, 4 (2012).

[35] For *Metronome's* conversion from general music magazine to dedicated jazz journal, see Bruce D. Epperson, *More Important Than the Music: A History of Jazz Discography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013): 33.

[36] As can be learned from the editorial in the final issue of *La Revue du Jazz*, Grégor's reasons for discontinuing his magazine were the lack of enthusiasm from publishers, record label owners, and other music professionals, as well as the critique on the presumed bias of the magazine.

[37] van de Leur, *Jazzwereld; Music*, 1930 (February), no. 56: 193.

[38] *Music*, 1934 (January), no. 100: 5. It appears this article is an excerpted translation of the 1926 publication "Sure System of Improvising For All Lead Instruments" by Samuel T. Daley.

[39] *Music*, 1932 (March), no. 79: 136. Many middle-class Flemish understood French, and had little trouble reading the French-written *Music*. Still, a subscription to *De Jazzwereld* allowed them to read about jazz in Dutch, their maternal language. Also see note 2.

[40] In 1920, following the Treaty of Versailles, Belgium annexed a small part of Germany as a (partial) retribution for the losses caused by the First World War. The East Cantons, as this small region was named, had (and continues to have) German as its main language, making it the third official language in Belgium besides Dutch and French.

[41] It is possible that this was a reaction to the recent arrival of *Jazz Hot*, the newest competitor on the French jazz magazine market. As an aside, note that *Jazz-Tango* was once again billed without "Dancing." It seems its editors could not decide on a definite name.

[42] The foreign journals were offered abroad at the same amount as they were in the country of origin, save the extra cost for international postage.

[43] *Music*, 1931 (February), no. 67: front matter.

[44] Since the 1927 recordings by Remue, only a handful of other Belgian bands recorded, among them Packay (under the name The Red Robins, 1928), Bee (with his Red Beans, 1928), the Bistrouille A.D.O. (1929), the Minstrels Club Orchestra (1929), once more Remue with his band (1929), and the orchestra of Lucien Hirsch (1931). Belgium as yet did not have a high quality professional studio, so most recordings were done by local mobile units or abroad. See Pernet, *Discography*, passim for more details.

[45] For more on the creation of Le Hot Club de France, see William A. Shack, *Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story Between the Great Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001: xv; and Jeffrey H. Jackson, *Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004): 159–60.

[46] *Music*, 1932 (March), no. 79: 111. It seems that Faecq and Goffin were already discussing the creation of such a club in 1931 (*Music*, 1936 (February), no. 125: 9).

[47] Hot club-styled organizations were also founded in many other countries, but as a comprehensive work on the history of such clubs has yet to be written, it is difficult to map this widespread phenomenon. Besides the Hot Club de France and the Jazz Club de Belgique, the Netherlands had their own club, the Nederlandsche Hotclub, since the fall of 1933 (in 1935 renamed the Nederlandsche Jazz Liga), and its British pendant, No. 1 Rhythm Club, was founded in July 1933. (See C.A.T.M. Wouters, *Ongewenschte Muziek: De Bestrijding van Jazz en Moderne Amusementsmuziek in Duitsland en Nederland, 1920–1945* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999): 27; and Roberta F. Schwartz, *How Britain Got The Blues: The Transmission and Reception of American Blues Style in The United Kingdom* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007): 10.) In Switzerland, similar clubs came into being in September 1934, and as of 1935 also the U.S. had its hot (or "rhythm") clubs in cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Boston (Mario Schneeberger, "Jazz in der Schweiz 1924–1976—Zeitdokumente des Hans Philippi aus Basel. Das Verzeichnis: Orte," *Studies in Jazz* (2006): 23, <http://www.jazzdocumentation.ch/mario/philippi/3orte.pdf>; and DeVeaux, "Emergence," 10, and Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997): 278). It is likely that also other countries had hot clubs on a national or regional scale.

[48] *Music*, 1932 (March), no. 79: 111.

[49] Once more the parallels with jazz journals from the surrounding countries become evident. Also *Jazz-Tango* and later *Jazz Hot* included the Hot Club de France's official bulletin, whereas the Nederlandsche Hotclub was closely linked to *De Jazzwereld* (Wouters, *Ongewenschte Muziek*, 34).

[50] *L'Actualité Musicale*, 1952 (September–October), no. 90: 10.

[51] Chris Hayes, *The Dance Band Diary: Volume One, 1926* (Ventnor: Chris Hayes, 1985): 8.

[52] Wouters, *Ongewenschte Muziek*, 35; "Der Kampf Um Das 'Goldene Band' der Jazz," *Neue Freie Presse*, 24156 (January 13, 1931): 13, <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nfp&datum=19311213&seite=13>; *Music*, 1928 (March), no. 3: page number missing. Not much is known of the Belgian 1928 contest. It is possible that a notated "improvisation" analogous to the aforementioned "hot chorus" sheet music supplements in *Music* was the goal of this competition, rather than an actual performance in front of a jury.

[53] *L'Actualité Musicale*, 1952 (November–December), no. 91: 13.

[54] During the war, Faecq did manage to set up the occasional competition, but these did not have the same impact as the interwar initiatives. Also note that contrary to popular belief, jazz continued to thrive during the first two years of the German occupation of Belgium (May 1940 to September 1944), the highly publicized concert of Django Reinhardt with the Belgian big bands of Stan Brenders and Fud Candrix in March and April of 1942 being a prime example of this local lenience towards "Entartete Musik." There were, however, strict conditions to this permissive policy, for example in the prohibition to play Jewish, British, or (after 1941) American music.

[55] *Music*, 1932 (December), no. 87: 469. Some of the finer nuances, including the pompous grandeur of the original text, are lost in translation: "Mise sur pied d'un programme de réformes pour supprimer le scandale de la carence actuelle de l'I.N.R. en matière de jazz."

[56] Faecq later noted that he was the real driving force behind the J.C.B. (*L’Actualité Musicale*, 1952 (July–August), no. 89: 10). Judging from correspondence found in his personal archive (in the Robert Pernet Fund) this is indeed a fair claim. Also many of the other events organized by the J.C.B. seem to have been primarily Faecq’s doing, such as the jazz tournaments and the negotiations with the I.N.R.

[57] Alyn Shipton, *A New History of Jazz* (London: Continuum, 2001): 558.

[58] *Music*, 1932 (December), no. 87: 469. Some of the signed petitions can be found in the Robert Pernet Fund. They show a variety of signatories, ranging from anonymous “auditeur[s] hot” to some of Belgium’s top jazz musicians (Bee, Hamy, Robert De Kers, Jean Omer, Jean Pâques), and even include signers from as far away as Montevideo, Uruguay.

[59] The demands are specified on the petition form (in the Robert Pernet Fund). It is interesting to note that in December 1933 also *De Jazzwereld* distributed a petition among its readership demanding the creation of a radio jazz orchestra. In April 1935 the A.V.R.O. (the Dutch pluralistic broadcasting corporation) created the A.V.R.O. Decibels, led by trumpeter Eddy Meenk. By March 1936 the band was disbanded after an improper “romantic escapade” by Meenk (Wouters, *Ongewenschte Muziek*, 49). By that time also the V.A.R.A., a rivaling Dutch radio station, engaged its own jazz orchestra, the V.A.R.A. Dansorkest (which was in fact pianist Theo Uden Masman’s The Ramblers), and the A.V.R.O. felt compelled to assemble yet another broadcasting orchestra, the A.V.R.O. Dansorkest, led by saxophonist Hans Mossel (*ibid.*, 47–49).

[60] *Music*, 1933 (February), no. 89: 36; *Music*, 1933 (March), no. 90. Faecq incorrectly remembers Prosper Poulet as the Minister of P.T.T., but between 1933 and 1934 this office was held by Pierre Forthomme. At that time Poulet was Minister of Foreign Affairs, although he led the Ministry of P.T.T. between 1919 and 1920.

[61] *Music*, 1935 (June), no. 117, 5.

[62] *Music*, 1936 (January), no. 124: 3–4. It is unclear what spurred the I.N.R.’s decision since we do not have any official documentation on the creation of this orchestra, nor on the I.N.R.’s jazz policy before World War II. Upon the German invasion of Belgium in 1940, personnel of the I.N.R. destroyed much of the documentation (and broadcasting material as well) so that nothing of use survived for the occupiers. Hence all available sources only deal with one side of the story, that of Faecq and the J.C.B.

[63] *Music*, 1935 (December), no. 123: 3.

[64] The J.C.B. continued to exist until at least 1989, when it received the title “Royal Society” from King Baudouin I of Belgium (letter from the King’s Cabinet, in Robert Pernet Fund).

[65] *Music*, 1938 (February), no. 149: front matter.

[66] *L’Actualité Musicale*, 1949 (April), no. 59: 15. As early as October 1933, Faecq wrote an article that was critical of the German music policy (“L’Hitlérisme et le Jazz,” *Music*, 1933 (October), no. 97: 225). Although he was never active in the Belgian Resistance (or at least not that is documented), he was interrogated and arrested by the Gestapo in 1941–1942 on suspicion of breaking the rules of the Propaganda-Abteilung Belgien, the local department of Joseph Goebbels’s Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. Faecq was released after three weeks, but was henceforth forbidden to organize any public concerts or events (Els Buffel, “Jazz Als Protest? Een Onderzoek Naar de Toonaangevende Organisatoren van Jazzevenementen en Orkestleiders in Bezet België (1940–1944)” (Master’s Thesis, Universiteit Gent, 2008): 82.

[67] For the folding of *Jazz Hot*, see its online archive on <http://jazzhot.oxaxis.com/PBSCCatalog.asp>. For *De Jazzwereld*, see van de Leur, *Jazzwereld*.

[68] Buffel, “Jazz Als Protest,” 79.

[69] Robert Pernet, “Hot Club de Belgique,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, 2nd ed., 2001. Grove Music Online, <http://www.grovemusic.com>

[70] Tim Lambrechts, “Het Jazzliefhebbersmilieu in België (1919–1948): Een Onderzoek Naar De Drie Toonaangevende Belgische Jazztijdschriften, Gekaderd in De Ontwikkelingen van De Amerikaanse Jazz” (Master’s Thesis, Universiteit Gent, 1997): 114. Unfortunately, membership numbers for the J.C.B. are not available.

[71] The H.C.B. disbanded in the mid-1960s, although Bettonville and de Raditzky remained active within the Belgian jazz milieu.

Author Information:

[Matthias Heyman](#) is a Ph.D. researcher at the University of Antwerp (Belgium), where his research involves attempting to contextualize the bass playing of Ellingtonian Jimmie Blanton (1918–1942). He obtained his MA in Jazz Performance (Double Bass) at the Royal Conservatoire Antwerp in 2009. He led a national research project in 2011 on Belgian jazz heritage, and he continues to specialize in his country’s jazz history. Heyman is also active as a freelance double bassist, and he serves as lecturer of all jazz history and research courses at the Jazz Studio (Antwerp) and the LUCA School of Arts (Leuven).

Abstract:

This article examines the history of *Music*, the pioneering Belgian jazz journal founded by Félix-Robert Faecq.

Keywords:

Music, Belgium, jazz, Félix-Robert Faecq, periodical, journal, history

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For further information, please contact: [Michael Fitzgerald](#)



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