This is the soundtrack of our identity:
National mythscapes in music and the construction of collective identity through music in early Flemish radio (1929–1939)

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Introduction

This article is a condensation of a larger study on discourses and music programs in Flemish radio in the interwar period, which is to be published as a doctoral dissertation (in Dutch) later this year (Goessens forthcoming). Basis of the study is the scrutiny of discourses in both radio magazines and newspapers as well as the program of Flemish radio stations.[1] Both article and larger study are informed by a constructivist ontological and epistemological view of meaning and identities. Firstly, both identities and the meaning of music are viewed as social and thus discursive constructs. Secondly, the relation between collective identities and music is described in two ways: 1) Music is considered to have a strong emotional appeal and a catalytic function that enables it to produce strong feelings of togetherness. This makes music a common driving force in social and national movements. 2) Music can be used in an emblematic way to express identity. This expression of identity is however mainly the expression of an ideal, and thus itself a contribution to the construction of that identity.

In this article it will be argued that early Flemish Catholic radio used music both in a catalytic and in an emblematic way to further Flemish cultural emancipation and to construct a Flemish cultural identity. This

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1   Radio broadcasts were scarcely preserved and could not be used for this study. However, the radio magazines of the Flemish broadcasters reflect very thoroughly on their radio programs and offer therefore a rich source for this study.

was done not only through music programming, but also through the concomitant discourses.

Flemish music was firstly meant to speak to feelings of togetherness and imagined community. Secondly, the meaning of Flemish music was discursively constructed in the program notes of the radio magazine *De Vlaamsche Radiogids*. Thirdly, both this discourse on Flemish music and the specific Flemish repertoire choices reflect an interpretation, and thus the content and color of Flemish cultural identity.

The emblematic use of Flemish music and the interpretation of Flemish identity that it holds are illustrated by examining the very first music program of the Catholic Flemish broadcaster in October 1929. This detailed analysis makes clear that music programs were not only an expression of collective identity, but also directed the meaning of that identity towards a specific interpretation, reflecting the norms and values of the Catholic broadcaster.

The context of early Flemish radio

Before 1830, two main languages were spoken on Belgian ground: French (and many Wallonian dialects resembling French) and Dutch (and, but only in the North, many Flemish dialects resembling Dutch). After Belgian independence, Flemish vernacular and culture were considered—mostly by Flemish men of letters—to be typically Belgian and were used to differentiate Belgium on the one hand from Holland, from which it had only recently won its independence, and on the other hand from France, which had annexed Belgium in the past (Gevers et al. 1998, 39; Vos 1999, 92; Wils 2009, 27). This interest in Flemish vernacular and folk culture was a symptom of romanticism and the concomitant interest in authentic cultural elements (Wils 2005, 154; Wils 2009, 97; Vos 1994, 127). At the same time, a powerful francophone bourgeois elite in Belgium made a resolute choice for the French language and culture to 1) ensure more national coherence through a unified language (Zolberg 1974, 192) and 2) raise Belgium's national prestige by associating it with a language of liberalism and high culture (Vos 1999, 91–92).

From the interest for the Flemish heritage of Belgium, a Flemish movement emerged that concerned itself with the preservation and revival of Flemish culture. A growing idolization of Flanders and Flemish culture (called *flamingantisme*), especially in the arts—in particular literature and music—awakened a sense of Flemish community. In the 1930s, this led to a full-blown Flemish nationalist movement that opposed the Belgian state and aimed for a separate Flemish nation-state, or at least federalism. However, this full-blown Flemish nationalism did not become a dominant political ideology in the years between the wars. Belgium only became a federal state in 1993. Most *flamingantisme* did not and still does not necessarily contradict Belgian patriotism. The Flemish collective identity did not contradict a Belgian identity, but was part of it. Between the wars, the collective identity of Flemings was becoming stronger every day and became a form of sub-nationalism that acknowledged Flanders as a separate entity without becoming disloyal to Belgium. For many Flemings, Belgium was only a state and had nothing to do with their national identity (Wils 2005, 209). Politically, the difference between Flemish sub-nationalism and Flemish nationalism in the interwar years was the difference between the minimalist and the maximalist Flemish political programs. The minimalist program, propagated by mainstream political parties (socialist, Catholic and liberal), was mainly concerned with language legislation acknowledging Flemish in the North. The maximalist Flemish nationalist program, put forth by the Flemish nationalist political parties VNV and Verdinaso, demanded a far-reaching separation of Flanders from the rest of the country (see among others Vos 1999, 95–98; Witte et al. 2005, 193–99; Witte et al. 2009, 171ff.).

Flemish radio was not only a mirror of these cultural and political evolutions. Radio as a cultural institution also contributed to the growing feeling of community amongst Flemish people by providing them with daily Flemish broadcasts. Especially noticeable in early radio history is radio's focus on Flemish music and art. Before engaging more thoroughly with the significance of Flemish radio music programs, it is

necessary to clarify the theoretical assumptions on which this study is based.

On identity, symbolic resources and mythscapes

The nature of social identities

This article is based on the constructivist premise that there is no such thing as an objective social reality. Meaning is always constructed. Something can only »mean« when it is given meaning. This meaning is attributed through communication and works via systems of representation (Hall 1997). Meaning is always dependent upon the socio-cultural context in which it functions and is given through expression, through communication for, as Foucault says, there is no meaning outside of language (Hall 1997, 45).

When we speak of the construction of meaning through language, language is understood not only as a system of written or spoken words, but as any symbolic or semiotic system in which people can communicate; including clothing, music, etc. In this sense, art can also be considered a language. The assignment of meaning to elements in a symbolic system is a socio-cultural and historical process that takes place through the practice of expression itself, not prior to it.

Identity or identification is a process by which we give meaning to ourselves and the social world around us. Identity is a tool with which we structure social life (see e.g. Jenkins 2008, 13) and is thus not something we think *about*, but something we think *with* (Gillis 1996, 5). Jenkins describes identity as »the human capacity—rooted in language—to know ›who's who‹ (and hence ›what's what‹)« (Jenkins 2008, 5). Identities have a close relationship with »social categories« or »social roles.« These are abstractions that are used to structure social life (Fairburn 1999, 20–21), ranging from categories such as gender, religion and nationality to marital or occupational status. They never exist in a »pure« form, but always intersect with other categories, other roles, and other identities (Wodak et al. 2009, 16).

Identities such as national identities are not a given with a tangible essence, but—just like other meanings—are constantly challenged, confirmed, enforced, revised and reinterpreted. Identity is not a way of being, but it is a constant state of becoming (Jenkins 2008, 5; Hall 1996, 2–3; Frith 1996, 122). This means that identification is conditional and historical. For example, what it meant to be a Fleming or a woman in the 18th century was undoubtedly very different from what it means to be a Fleming or a woman in the 21st century.

<div align="center">Symbolic resources and mythscapes</div>

This article focusses on the symbolic expressions that contribute to the construction of collective (e.g. national or regional) identities. The concepts provided by A. D. Smith are points of departure in this matter. In his ethno-symbolic approach to the formation of ethnic or national identities,[2] Smith focusses on the importance of symbolism on the one hand and people's understanding and active remembrance of the past on the other hand. »Social reality is inconceivable outside of symbolism,« Smith states (Smith 2009, 25), continuing that it is largely through the interpretation of the past that the present is given meaning. This is why the »psychological center« of a nation is its »myth-symbol complex« (Smith 1986, 15, 57). A myth-symbol complex is a complex or network of myths and symbols that is used as a carrier for the norms and values of a community. Ethno-symbolists consider cultural elements such as symbols, myths, memories, values, rituals, and traditions crucial to ethnicity and nationhood (Smith 2009, 25). Likewise, these elements can be important for other kinds of collective identity and community.

Smith borrowed the term »myth-symbol complex« from Armstrong (1982) and used it exclusively in his earlier writings. Later he abandoned the term, but preserved the concept. In his 2009 summary of his own work, he refers to the »symbolic fund« of the nation, a similar term, albeit slightly vague. He also speaks of the »cultural resources« for nation

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2   On the ethno-symbolic approach to ethno-genesis and nation-formation see Smith 1986, 1998, 1999, 2009.

formation. Among the cultural resources of the nation, Smith mentions myths of origin and descent (which he calls »mythomoteur«), the image of a golden age, the idea of sacred places, etc.

To circumvent Smith's inconsistency in terminology, I have chosen in this article to use the concept coined by Duncan Bell (2003): »*mythscape.*« Bell introduced the term to overcome Smiths entangled use of the concepts of myth, history and memory. Scholars of national identities, Bell remarks, have used the terms myth, history and memory almost interchangeably (think about the use of the term »collective memory«), which leads to theoretical confusion, especially about the concept of memory. Bell acknowledges however that the complex of myths, history and memories is essential for (national) communities. By introducing the term mythscape to indicate the complex of all of these elements, Bell safeguards the differences between the three concepts for other research.

Bell defines *mythscape* as

> the temporally and spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of people's memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested and subverted incessantly. The mythscape is the page upon which the multiple and often conflicting nationalist narratives are (re)written; it is the perpetually mutating repository for the representation of the past for the purposes of the present. (Bell 2003, 66)

This conception of mythscape is very similar to what Smith called a myth-symbol complex or a community's symbolic fund, with the exception of symbols, which do not figure in Bell's mythscape, and real memories, which do not figure in Smiths myth-symbol complex. For my own purposes I have blended these concepts to include both the history-myth-memory complex and the myth-symbol complex. I use the concept of mythscape here to refer to the network of history, memories, myths, symbols, traditions and other symbolic resources that together constitute a communal identity with its own values.

Mythscapes are narratives as well as repertoires of symbolic resources that we can draw upon to represent community. A mythscape is also a

symbolic environment (a mental landscape as it were) in which we encounter meanings and implant other meanings while constructing our collective identities. The more symbolic resources we put into the mythscape, the more resources later generations have at their disposal to express their »collectiveness.« These mythscapes comprise essential symbolic processes such as boundary delineation, name-giving, symbolic cultivation, differentiation of »us« and »them,« cultivation of internal sameness and external difference, etc. (Smith 2009, 46-52). A mythscape is, as it were, the psychological fabric from which a community is woven.

Despite its name, a mythscape is not only about myths. A mythscape contains a mythomoteur (the dominant, constitutive myths of a community's origin and past) as well as other stories/myths drawn from history, mythology or collective memory; containing heroes, memorable events, the image of a golden age, references to a real or fictitious territory, idealized or romanticized landscapes, and so on. It also includes self-stereotypes and diverse symbols.

Symbolic resources or symbols are products of symbolic expression that have come to signify more abstract concepts (e.g. a nation). A straightforward example of a symbol is an emblem (a flag is an emblem of a nation), but symbols can be far more complex than emblems. Symbols can be purely mental, but also visual or auditory. Architecture, works of art and music, but also *lieux de mémoire* (places invested with memories, myths and thus meaning; Nora 1989), traditions, and rituals can become symbols and be integrated into a mythscape. For music, W. J. Allenbrook (1983) proposed the term »topoi,« to refer to musical material that carries extra-musical meanings or associations (see also Dibben 2003). Both musical topoi and whole pieces of music can be considered symbolic resources on which one can draw to express, for example, collective identity. Symbolic resources can be carriers of a community's mythscape and at the same time themselves become part of this mythscape.

A meaningful past, art and imagined community

Almost all of the elements that make up a mythscape provide a connection with the past. They bring the past into the present, at the same time bringing meaning into the present. In a way, present meanings and identities are always made out of elements of the past, which are constantly redefined and rearticulated to contribute to the present. This can happen explicitly, but more often happens rather unconsciously. We constantly connect new things with what we already know. A mythscape fixes the past in a meaningful way. It creates a »we«-feeling, because it provides a group of people with a common past and a common culture.

Mythscapes are powerful for the formation of identity, because they offer us a self-image. A mythscape gives us information about who we are and where we come from—it is a meaningful carrier of community values. Even if we don't believe the so-called facts contained in the mythscape, or the mythscape is mainly fictitious, it can still define who we are and where we come from. Drawing from Benedict Anderson's standard work, we can describe a mythscape as a powerful complex of symbolic resources that help us to imagine community. »Communities,« Anderson explains, »are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined« (Anderson 2006, 6). The mythscape is the nation's image of itself.

Although Anderson's work has been used mainly to explain the dynamics behind national communities, it is equally useful in the study of other types of community. What is important in Anderson's work is the observation that cultural products and media have the power to distribute symbolic resources that create a feeling of community among people who have never met and will likely never meet. This is true for literature and newspapers, Anderson's own cases, and likewise for art and music (Anderson 2006). While historians and intellectuals have always contributed to the formation of mythscapes, artists are most often the ones who give substance to the abstract concept of community (Smith 2009, 86). Artists provide a fund of symbolic resources. »If the schools and armies provided the conduits and vehicles of the national idea,« Smith writes about national communities, »it was the poets, artists

and musicians who infused it with imaginative content and gave it tangible, and often memorable, form« (Smith 2009, 90).

The same can be said about other types of social movements. Eyerman and Jamison (1998) describe how music made a large contribution to the social movements of the 20th century. Music constituted not just an expression of these social movements, but more importantly an impulse for them. Music is a symbolic expression which can be crucial in the formation of collective identities. Music is not only a driving force behind social movements, but also preserves the memory of those movements and thereby provides a source and inspiration for later movements.

Mythscapes in music and music in mythscapes

Part of music's power in these social movements has been music's mobilization of tradition:

> Tradition, the past in the present, is vital to our understanding and interpretation of who we are and what we are meant to do. As such, it is a powerful source of inspiration for social movements and emergent cultural formations. These include most obviously traditions of protest and rebellion, but also, more subtly, forms of living and underlying sensibilities […] Such structures of feeling can be embodied and preserved in and through music, which is partly why music is such a powerful force in social movements and in social life generally. (Eyerman and Jamison 1998, 161)

Music as symbolic expression is, as Georgina Born emphasizes, multitextual. It comprises multiple layers or texts, each of which can generate meaning: sound, notation or visual form, technology, performance, words and/or narrative structure, and the discourses (e.g. theoretical) built around it (Born 1995, 16–18; Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000, 37). Music's engagement with tradition, with the past or with a mythscape, can be found on any of these levels. The most obvious connection of music with a mythscape is the use of historical and mythical themes. These themes can be mirrored in the title, in the text of vocal

music or in the text from which the music drew inspiration (e.g. symphonic poems). Music in itself can also establish a connection with the past and can mobilize tradition in a purely musical way; by re-using musical elements from earlier contexts in a new way and with a different meaning, but still carrying the meaning of the original context. Nationalist composers for example have made ample use of folk songs or folk dances to give their music an authentic national character, and musicians of the civil rights and black power movements in 1960s America drew upon the black musical tradition of spirituals and blues (Eyerman and Jamison 1998, 74–105). On a more abstract level, text and music can be felt to embody the virtues a community bestows on itself.

Music's meaning is affected by the context wherein it took form, the context wherein it was performed and experienced in the past and the one wherein it is performed and experienced in the present. The meaning of a musical text and performance is above all a socio-cultural construction: meaning is not inherent in the musical forms and properties themselves, but is »being brought to life in and through the interplay of forms and interpretations« (DeNora 2000, 22). Musical meaning is largely constructed through the discourses built around music. These can be philosophical or theoretical discourses created by composers or musicologists and the like, but can also be more popular discourses, for example the discourses disseminated by radio stations. Frith is convinced that radio is one of the most important sources of popular musical discourse, »defining genres and genre communities, shaping music history and nostalgia« (Frith 2003, 96).

Music is not only able to refer to elements of a mythscape, music can also become part of it. Music might become a symbol of something important to the community or of the community itself (e.g. folk songs as a symbol for the authenticity of the community). Music can come to embody a myth of community; musical elements such as composers, instruments or musical features can become strongly associated with a particular community and also with nationality. By becoming part of a community's symbolic resources, music can also bear references to a community's musical past. One way in which this often happens is

through a composer's reputation and/or the discourse around his or her music. Applegate and Potter explain how, for example, Wagner established himself as a German nationalist composer not only through his music, but also through his ability to write about music. His nationalist agenda is obvious in his writings and activities, and his music has become associated with this agenda. As a result, »Germanness« in music eventually came to denote Wagnerism (Applegate and Potter 2002: 11–12). In other words, Wagner in his music referred to mythical elements of the German mythscape, but both Wagner and his style also themselves became part of the German mythscape. Musical references to Wagner's music and style can be understood as references to German identity, but also as references to nationalism per se. In the course of time, music can accumulate layers of meaning through the functions that have been ascribed to it and through the discourses wherein it has been used. The favorable position of Wagner's music in Germany during World War II, for example, has put a new layer of meaning onto this music.

Music and mythscapes are thus in constant interaction: music can use elements of the mythscape and thus be a carrier of that mythscape, or the music itself and the artists involved can become part of the symbolic resources of a community, and thus contribute to its mythscape.

Media and mythscapes: negotiation and naturalization

Collective identification can be influenced by explicit engagements, but even more by daily, casual references. According to Michael Billig (1995), it is in particular the confirmation of collective (e.g. national) identity on a daily basis and in everyday life that has a naturalizing effect and makes it a strong part of people's individual identity. This daily confirmation of collective identity is provided by, for example, newspapers and broadcasting media.

Mass media have a close connection to collective and social identities. They are, have been and will probably always be important public sites where identities are constantly constructed and reconstructed. Many scholars, often inspired by Anderson, have shown how media have

always been influential instruments in the creation, confirmation and delineation of imagined communities, more specifically national communities (see e.g. Cardiff and Scannell 1987; Scannell and Cardiff 1991; Waisbord 1998; Van den Bulck 2001; Dhoest 2003, 2004; Smith and Philips 2006). Media provide conditions under which national or regional communities can foster by connecting people on a national or regional scale, giving them a feeling of togetherness, and making them imagine a community with people they have never even met. Media however also contribute to the interpretation, the content and the meaning of collective identities. Media can give, as it were, color and taste to an identity (Smith 2009, 14–16). By their connection to the art world and to the entertainment world, broadcasting media offer us a range of symbolic resources that co-construct the collective identity of the community, giving this identity a specific content and meaning. Media make certain myths, memories and symbols part of the everyday life of every individual (Hobsbawm 1990, 141–42). Media thus make mythscapes part of the life of every individual, and also have the power to negotiate these mythscapes.

Since modern times, media have provided a link between the art world and people's daily lives. While nowadays our most important connection with the world of art and more specifically music is probably the internet, this service was formerly provided by the broadcasting media. In the 1920s and 1930s, the period discussed below, radio was an important source of music in Western people's daily lives.[3] Since music was not yet as available on recordings as would later be the case, many people turned to the radio to provide them with daily musical entertainment. This gave radio a unique position as everybody's DJ. Radio more or less decided which music its community could listen to.[4] From this unique and rather dominating position, radio has played an important role in the »shaping of a nation's taste« (Doctor 1999), but also in the stimulation of musical

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3   In Belgium television was introduced as late as 1953, while regular radio broadcasts had already been provided since 1923.

4   You could, of course, always listen to foreign radio stations.

culture (on the Belgian case see Van den Buys and Segers 2013; on Ireland see O'Neill 2000). By shaping a nation's taste, radio was also able to negotiate music's position in the mythscape.

Belgian radio identities[5]

Belgium's first radio station, Radio Belgique, started in 1923 as a politically neutral commercial station. It was patriotic and made an effort to support »Belgian music« and it was French-speaking (see Putseys 1987; Goessens et al. 2013). Although Flemish composers were not absent in the musical programming, Flemings complained about the lack of representation of Flemish culture. The station was seen as un-Flemish by Flemings, as anti-Flemish by Flemish nationalists, as too liberal by Catholics and as too capitalist and bourgeois by socialists. Too many, in other words, felt left out because they could not find the basic contours of their collective identities in the programming of Radio Belgique.

This led to the foundation of Flemish radio associations. From 1928, some of these associations started airing specifically Flemish broadcasts by buying airtime on Radio Belgique. Eventually, a second Belgian wavelength was designated for Flemish broadcasts. Catholic organizations built a radio station in Flanders and Flemish broadcasts were provided on an almost daily basis after the end of 1929. Not until 1931 was a Belgian national broadcasting institute founded.

In the beginning, in 1929, there were two main radio associations that provided Flemish broadcasts: a Catholic broadcaster called Katholieke Vlaamsche Radio-Omroep (KVRO) and a socialist broadcaster called Socialistische Arbeiders Radio-Omroep voor Vlaanderen (SAROV). Their early broadcasts were driven by discontentedness about the lack of Flemish language and representation on Radio Belgique. They were also motivated by the lack of support for Flemish culture in general in Belgium, and by their wish to express their political or religious ideas via

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5   For a more elaborate history of Belgian/Flemish radio, see De Cang et al. 2010; Goessens et al. 2013; Goessens 2014 [t.b.p.].

radio. This led to overtly pro-Flemish, political and religious broadcasts. In a 1929 issue of its radio magazine, the KVRO wrote:

> We aim at the refinement and moral enlightenment of the Flemish people through the dissemination of healthy art and beauty. There will be no short-sightedness in our program choices, but enough pride and racial consciousness to dare to flaunt with all the beauty of our Catholic life and our Flemish culture. All our broadcasts, our existence, our magazine and our work will be Flemish.[6] (*De Vlaamsche Radiogids*, Dec. 8–14, 1929)

Alongside their Flemish identity, the broadcasters also displayed a political identity which intersected with their national identity.[7] This intersection is noticeable in the way the two broadcasters resorted to and constructed different versions of the Flemish mythscape. In both their magazine and their broadcasts, KVRO and SAROV made reference to a Flemish mythscape that reflected both their Flemish and their political/religious identity. Their identity was also reflected in their music programming. The programming of Flemish music, for example, was one of the ways in which the Flemish broadcasters gave expression to their Flemish identity.

In the following I will go deeper into the function of music in general, and Flemish music specifically, in the expression and formation of collective identity by these early broadcasters.

Symbolic functions of music for Flemish broadcasters

When we consider the music of the very first KVRO and SAROV programs, it is striking that it is almost exclusively Flemish music performed by Flemish artists. On the surface, providing indigenous music instead of

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6   All English excerpts from *De Vlaamsche Radiogids* or other Flemish magazines or newspapers are translations from the Dutch by the author.

7   Although we can, from a theoretical point of view, question the terminology of »national identity« to designate Flemish identity, it was, in effect, experienced as a national identity by the broadcasters. They speak about Flanders as a homeland, a country, a people, etc.

the French music that had been flooding the Belgian concert halls and Radio Belgique was an act of national pride. In a socialist newspaper, the socialist broadcaster wrote the following about its first broadcast from Brussels in 1929:

> The concert was exclusively dedicated to works of Flemish composers […] Many thousands of Flemish listeners will have been satisfied. It feels strange to our people to hear, from the capital of our country, our wonderful Flemish language and the works of our composers, transmitted throughout our regions. (*De Volksgazet*, Apr. 13–14, 1929)

However, there was more going on than just national pride. Choosing Flemish music was a sign of belief in the power and symbolic function of music. This strategy is important on two levels: 1) The emotional impact of music (its catalyst function) enhanced a collective feeling of belonging; and 2) As a symbolic expression of collective identity (the emblematic function of music) music was closely related to (versions of) the Flemish (or political) mythscape, and thus enhanced Flemish identification and emancipation.

Emotional impact: music as catalyst for collective identity formation

Music has the ability to enhance collective feelings of belonging. It is a catalyst of the collective identification that lies at the root of social movements (Eyerman and Jamison 1998, 7; on the catalyst function of music see Hammarlund 1999, 94; cited in Folkestad 2002, 156). Whether music indeed influenced social change in Flanders by encouraging collective identification is something I cannot determine conclusively based on this research. However, in some published letters by members of the KVRO audience, people described how they and their family jumped up when they heard »De Vlaamsche Leeuw« (the anthem of Flanders, which at that time was not yet an official anthem) and started singing along so loudly that they could no longer hear the speaker. This is one of the few examples I have that indicate the real emotional impact of music in these first Flemish broadcasts. I am however able to ascertain that the broadcasters themselves believed in the catalyst function of music, which

had a significant influence on both their music programming and on the way they wrote about music.

The first Flemish radio broadcasts in Belgium were emotional events. Flemish music provided them with an even more profound emotionality and enhanced the involvement of their listeners. This can be illustrated by the following account of the very first KVRO broadcast on October 6, 1929, published in December in the first issue of the KVRO's radio magazine, *De Vlaamsche Radiogids*:

> See how they're sitting there; ear on the receiver, tuning buttons in hand, one turn left, one right, one lamp lights up, another goes out, adjusting the window to the left, to the front … and all the while this whistling, hissing, creaking, whining, really maddening. Mother and the little rascals crowd around the radio set … »Dad, when will it begin?« … dance music … »Boys, I think I've found it« … ah no, it's Toulouse … one turn left, right … Until suddenly: »Allo, allo. Hier Veltem! Katholieke Vlaamsche Radio-Omroep« … Hurray! What joy! And triumphantly the »Rubensmars« [march by Peter Benoit] starts. Good, because now »the Carrillon will play from every tower« [this refers to the text of the »Carillon Song« from Benoit's *Rubenscantate*]. Thereafter sounded the tuneful and appropriate »Moederspraak, mij lief als geen« [»my mother tongue, so dear to me«, from the song »Mijn moederspraak,« again by Benoit]. In spite of the terrible hissing and whistling everybody sang along: »Diep roert me uw zoet geluid« [»your sweet sound moves me deeply«]. Not only emotional listeners felt a shudder of pure emotion because their language, their mother tongue was being broadcast across the world. (*De Vlaamsche Radiogids,* Dec 8–14, 1929)

This account illustrates the emotional effects of this particular music. The choice of these pieces for the first KVRO broadcast was certainly not a coincidence, but conscious and meticulous. Many of the songs included in this broadcast (see appendix) can be considered part of the standard repertoire of the Flemish movement and are thus associated with the emotionality of Flemish emancipation. This emotional layer of

meaning within Flemish music contributed to the meaning of the first broadcasts.

The songs that carried the Flemish movement since the 19th century often originated in or were cultivated by either the Flemish folk song revival or the Flemish *liedbeweging* or song movement and the *zangfeesten* or sing-along festivals (Willaert and Dewilde 1987). These songs were cultivated during evenings and festivities where people sang together. Consequently, they were probably known by many people and singing along was integral to them. Heightening the involvement of the audience through the act of singing along was encouraged even more by publishing the lyrics of the songs broadcast. This contributed to a heightened feeling of togetherness among the audience.

Singing together is described by Anderson as an activity that enhances the imagining of community. He talks about »unisonance« to indicate a situation, for example singing a national anthem, in which many people sing the same words at the same time and feel part of a collective or community. Music, in such cases, is indeed a catalyst that arouses feelings of togetherness (Anderson 2006, 145).

Crucial to the experience of sharing created by radio is radio's reach on the one hand and its simultaneity on the other hand. Listeners everywhere in Flanders listened to the same songs at the same time and maybe even sang the same songs at the same time, giving them a feeling of unisonance and thus of unity.

David Hesmondhalgh is convinced that the excitement or sadness experienced when listening to a piece of music »can be intensified through the sense that such […] are shared, or even potentially shared« (Hesmondhalgh 2008, 329). He refers to both collective listening at live performances and to an individual listening while imagining others sharing the experience, as is the case with radio. Although the experience of sharing a common culture can be felt through many other cultural expressions, music might be the most powerful, because of its link to the emotions (Hesmondhalgh 2008, 329–30).

Based on interview material, Tia DeNora demonstrated how music has real power in everyday life. It influences the way people compose their bodies, how they behave, how they experience the passage of time or how they feel in terms of energy and emotion (DeNora 2000, 17). This means that »[t]o be in control, then, of the soundtrack of social action is to provide a framework for the organization of social agency, a framework for how people perceive (consciously or subconsciously) potential avenues of conduct« (DeNora 2000, 17).

As radio makers, KVRO and SAROV saw the opportunity to exploit music's social and emotional powers. Music was supposed to heighten the emotional involvement of the audience. Music was also supposed to stimulate certain patterns of thinking and behavior by means of identification.

<div align="center">The soundtracks of identities</div>

In their musical programming, the broadcasters searched for music that fitted their cultural ideals and national and political identity. Hammerlund and Folkestad speak about the emblematic function of music (Folkestad, 2002, 156). To use music emblematically means to use music as an expression of social/collective identity. According to Frith, music is constructive of our sense of identity »through the direct experiences it offers of the body, time and sociability, experiences which enable us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives« (Frith 1996, 124). Music is part of the imagining of our identity (Frith 1996, 109) and thus also of the imagining of our collective belonging. What Frith suggests is not just that social groups share certain values which they express in music or other cultural activities, but »that they only get to know themselves as groups […] through cultural activity, through aesthetic judgment« (Frith 1996, 111). By offering what they considered appropriate music, Flemish broadcasters hoped to influence not only Flemish identity, but also the coherence of the audience.

KVRO often wrote about music in its radio magazines. One of the ideas developed in these magazines was that Flemish music helped Flanders to develop its self-awareness as well as a belief in its own possibilities. By

making the audience familiar with Flemish composers, it hoped to cultivate more pride and self-awareness and thus through music produce an ideal Flemish nation. In the same way a mythscape resonates with the ideals of a community, with its values and its images of the future, music also resonates with an »ideal identity.« By identifying certain composers, genres or even instruments as »Flemish« (and omitting others), these broadcasters constructed the meaning of »Flemish music« and at the same time constructed the meaning of »being Flemish.«

The suitability of music for broadcasts was in large part dependent on its relationship to a (politically or ideologically) desired version of the Flemish mythscape. KVRO, for example, interpreted Flemish identity as a Catholic identity. This is reflected in the use of a Flemish mythscape containing Christian and Catholic elements, and in a preference for Christian music or music that propagated Christian values. This interpretation was obviously not shared by the socialist SAROV. The cultural profile of KVRO was relatively high-brow, because the goal of Catholic radio (or its »ideal identity«) was a cultivated, Christian and emancipated Fleming. Because of its own preoccupation with the »soul« of Flanders and Flemish music, the broadcaster also had a preoccupation with national schools of music. National music was considered an acoustic manifestation of the *volksgeest*, the national character. By arranging music broadcasts by the nationality of the composer, listeners were led to become inclined towards the national in music, making music the national product *par excellence*. Moreover, the programming of national music from around the world served as an example: the support and acknowledgment these national schools received elsewhere was presented as a model for Flanders.

The socialist broadcasting association devoted its attention above all to the social needs of Flemish laborers. This is why it provided social lectures, but also light entertainment music to satisfy its target audience, which was not familiar with »high« musical culture. Music was perceived as »refreshing« for the mind of the everyday laborer in between his work and the (socialist) lectures. At the same time music was considered a means to »cultivate« the laborer, because the eventual goal of socialist

radio (or its »ideal identity«) was an emancipated Flemish laborer. Although its repertoire was much more international than that of the KVRO, Flemish music was especially important in SAROV's initial broadcasts and on special occasions. On these occasions Flemish music played a symbolic role. SAROV's musical preferences inclined towards Flemish leftist composers such as Jan Broeckx or Jozef Van der Meulen. In articles on international music, sympathies went out to leftist composers and conductors around the world, but also to artists and composers who stood up against or were victims of Nazi Germany. By associating music with politics, repertoire choices sometimes became political statements.

Music programs as expressions of a Flemish collective identity

Context and meaning

Since it is the socio-historical context of music that defines its (layers of) meaning, one can only come to understand music's contribution to social and national cohesiveness by studying the performances of, contexts of and, in particular, discourses constructed around music. In the research on which this article is based, both the music programs of Flemish radio broadcasters as well as the discourses they built around their repertoire were studied within their historical context to understand the music's place in the construction of Flemish identity.

Based on the insights we have gained so far, the remainder of this article will consist of an analysis of KVRO's music repertoire, framed within the context of accompanying articles in KVRO's own radio magazine *De Vlaamsche Radiogids*. To make the analysis more comprehensible, the focus is mostly on the very first KVRO program on October 6, 1929.

As first program it is most telling 1) of the ways in which KVRO used Flemish music both as a catalyst and in an emblematic way; and 2) of how the music programming reflected the Flemish mythscape or Flemish identity as represented in the discourses of KVRO. The analyses are based on a study of the program as a symbolic expression or semiotic system, using those properties that could be found in the published

schedule and aided by a discourse analysis of the magazine. An analysis of the musical scores is not included, rather only properties that were directly accessible to broadcasters and audience alike such as the titles of the works, the language and content of the texts (if any), the composers, the text writers, the style and genre, and the instrumentation and performance (musicians, performance character, etc.). These properties were all mentioned and even thoroughly discussed in the magazines, which means it is possible to verify their meaning in this particular context. Of course this also means that many other properties were ignored.

The initial program was also compared to the overall repertoire of KVRO to determine how representative the broadcast was. While the first broadcast of SAROV was an exception to its overall program, the first program of KVRO was very similar to its everyday programs.

Through a detailed analysis of KVRO's first music program and KVRO's discourse on Flemish music, I have aimed to demonstrate the relation of music to and music as an expression of one version of the Flemish mythscape. I have also aimed to demonstrate how collective identity can be expressed and even propagated through music programming. An overview of the repertoire of the first KVRO broadcast can be found in the appendix.

Signification of the composers and songwriters

Composers

The image that early Flemish broadcasters created of Flemish music was a reflection of their image of Flemish cultural identity. Composers were praised and programmed whose accomplishments were considered valuable for the reputation of Flemish music and for Flemish cultural identity. Based on an analysis of KVRO's discourse on Flemish composers, we found six categories of composers that the KVRO deemed important for Flemish music and identity: 1) the Flemish »polyphonists« (15th–16th centuries); 2) the collector/arranger of Flemish folk songs; 3) Peter Benoit and his Flemish contemporaries; 4) composers active in the song movement, especially in the *Liederavonden Voor Het Volk* (people's

#sing-alongs); 5) Flemish composers who developed a more international outlook on music while at the same time remaining true to their Flemish roots; and finally 6) composers who contributed to the development of Flemish ecclesiastical and religious music.

Each of these six categories at the same time refers to a story. Each category represents part of Flemish music history as narrated by KVRO. We might even be able to discern a specific musical Flemish mythscape, because these narratives contain references to golden ages, ages of struggle and revival, composers figuring as heroes, both historical and more recent memories, and many traditions and symbols. By writing about Flemish music, its mythscape and significance, and by putting together music programs based on this musical Flemish mythscape, KVRO inserted pieces of Flemish music history into a general Flemish mythscape.

When we take a look at KVRO's first music program on October 6, 1929 (see appendix), the first thing we notice is that only one of the composers in the program (Lodovico Grossi da Viadana) is not Flemish. The ten remaining Flemish composers together represent all six categories of important Flemish composers. Analysis of the complete interwar period 1929–1940 showed that approximately 21% of the musical pieces on the programs were works of Belgian composers, mostly of Flemish origin (it is not always possible to distinguish between a Flemish and a non-Flemish Belgian composer). The general top five KVRO composers were Franz Schubert, Johann Strauss II, Franz Lehár, Peter Benoit and Emiel Hullebroeck. Two of the five are Flemish.

To allow comparison of the music programming with the discourses and of the first program with the overall musical repertoire of KVRO, the figure below (Fig. 1) shows those Belgian composers most often broadcast by KVRO. The second most broadcast composer, Emiel Hullebroeck, was aired mostly during the KVRO children's hour and will thus not be considered in the following analyses of the musical programs.
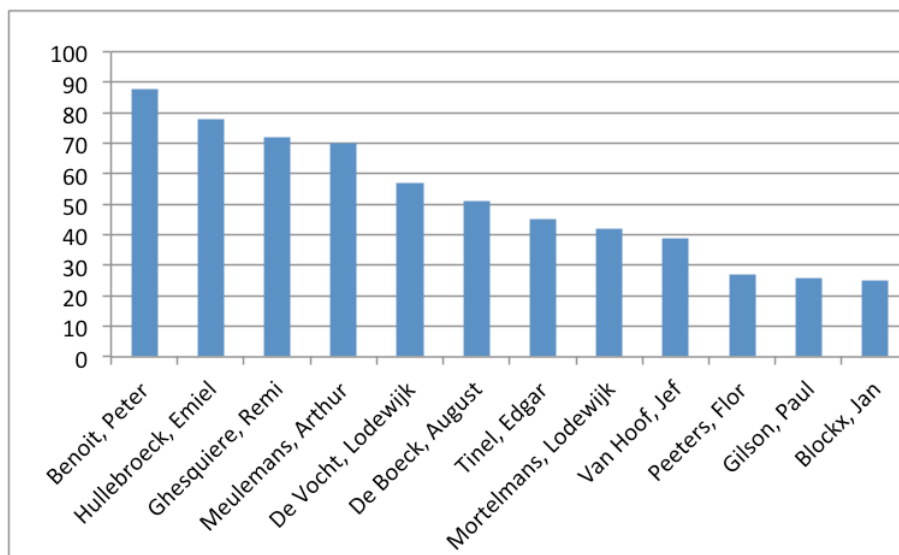
Fig. 1: Overview of the Belgian composers broadcast most often in KVRO music programs between 1929 and 1940. This is based on an analysis of one of four broadcasts.

The KVRO described the age of the Flemish polyphonists as the golden age of Flemish music. The international success and glory of these composers is something to which KVRO hoped Flemish composers might once again aspire. On the first KVRO program, Jacob van Berchem from Antwerp and Ludovicus Episcopus from Mechelen represent this category. The song by Episcopus was known in Flanders in 1929 because it was republished by Florimond Van Duyse at the beginning of the century. The KVRO considered Van Duyse's folk song anthologies evidence of a Flemish *volksziel* (soul of the people) that had survived centuries despite foreign occupations. Songs from his collections were played regularly by KVRO. On the initial program under consideration here, Van Duyse was present a second time in a composition by Arthur Meulemans based on Van Duyse's arrangement of »Van twee coninckskinderen,« a folk song based on a medieval text. By selecting two pieces based on old folk songs and two motets from the 16th century, KVRO made a connection to a distant past and suggested continuity in the history of Flemish music and identity.

The program also showcased three pieces by Peter Benoit. Benoit was the founder of the first Flemish conservatory and has therefore generally been considered the father and founder of the Flemish school of music. KVRO described him as the man who »invented« Flemish art music, without whose struggles Flemish music would never have had a chance to flourish. His accomplishments, and even his personality, were strongly romanticized in the magazine. The only composer romanticized more than Benoit was Beethoven. Benoit figured in the musical mythscape of KVRO as a founding father and in the general Flemish mythscape as a hero, a fighter for Flemish rights in Belgium. He was one of the most popular composers in the programs of KVRO. Although not programmed as much by SAROV, Benoit was also one of their most popular Flemish composers. Of all his works, Benoit's »Mijn moederspraak« was aired most often on KVRO, both as a song and as an arrangement for orchestra, organ, strings, cello or carillon. It was much less popular on SAROV. The lyrics of the song describe the emotional bond of Flemings with their mother tongue, which is why the song has such emblematic power.

The Flemish-minded Jan Blockx, also on this program, was Benoit's successor at the Flemish conservatory. Blockx's music is often evaluated in relation to Benoit's. Because of his importance for the development of Flemish music, Benoit's style and Benoit himself came to denote »Flemishness.« Up until the 1930s, the music of Benoit often served as the standard against which the Flemish heart of other composers was measured. KVRO described Blockx as the only true successor to Benoit. Blockx's works aired most by KVRO were the serenade from his ballet *Milenka* and his *Vlaamsche dansen*. The same pieces were played regularly by the other broadcasters and can be considered part of a standard Flemish repertoire.

Although KVRO sometimes described the music of Benoit and his contemporaries as old-fashioned or esthetically uninteresting, their spirit, their reputation and their importance to the development of Flemish music were considered sufficient reason to put them on the repertoire. This means that socio-cultural significance was more important to

KVRO programming than aesthetic significance. That's why the composers who were involved in the Flemish movement figured prominently not only on this particular program, but on all KVRO programs. Through music programs like this first one, Flemish people got to know those who were considered by KVRO as the »heroes« of Flemish music, making them part of the Flemish mythscape.

Renaat Veremans, Jef Tinel and Arthur Meulemans are composers of the fourth category, composers active in the Flemish *Lied* movement. They composed for, organized and conducted musical events of the Flemish movement that mostly involved singing in smaller or larger groups. According to KVRO, the *Lied* or #sing-along movement awakened the self-awareness of the Flemish community and aroused the demand for a specific Flemish song repertoire. Consequently, composers active in this movement were represented in the main by their vocal repertoire, though some of them wrote many non-vocal works. Jef Tinel did not write much and was not aired much in the programs of either broadcaster, but Veremans was well known and loved by KVRO, especially for his song »Vlaanderen.« Arthur Meulemans was the third most-aired Belgian composer in KVRO programs (*children's hour* not included) and the seventh most-aired composer in general. He also figured prominently in KVRO's discourses on Flemish music. This can be explained not only by Meulemans's Flemish allegiance, but also by the fact that Meulemans was the conductor and programmer of the KVRO radio orchestra from 1929 until 1931. He was in more than one way a figurehead of the Flemish Catholic radio movement. SAROV, for example, almost never aired his music. Two other popular KVRO composers who do not figure on the first KVRO program but belong to this category of composers are Jef Van Hoof and Emiel Hullebroeck. None of these composers were aired more than once or twice a year by SAROV.

Composers from the fifth category were the only composers lauded for their symphonic achievements. They were described as composers who gained international recognition by combining international musical developments with a Flemish musical idiom. The discourse on these composers is very similar: their spirit is national, but their techniques

international. This means that KVRO often looked for signs of »Flemishness« in their music. It is these composers the KVRO counted upon to write Flemish music back into the international history of music. One of the composers most representative of this category is August de Boeck. He was mentioned as one of the finest impressionists in Flanders, but also as an exuberant romantic, renowned for his technical qualities. On the first KVRO program, we find one of his orchestral pieces with explicit reference to the Flemish identity of the composer. The program also showcased one of his songs based on a Flemish text. Lodewijk Mortelmans was also lauded as an important representative of impressionist music in Flanders, keeping his Flemish identity while working under foreign influences. Remarkably, Mortelmans's only works in the KVRO repertoire were his songs. The symphonic works of two other impressionists, Paul Gilson and Arthur Meulemans, were more popular. However, Meulemans' symphonic music was again not as popular as his songs. The first program aired an orchestral piece by Meulemans, and a song based on a Flemish text. By selecting Meulemans', Mortelmans' and De Boeck's more obviously Flemish pieces, KVRO highlighted their identity as Flemish composers even in their orchestral works. Of these composers, only Lodewijk Mortelmans (again mostly his songs) was aired regularly by SAROV.

The category of composers who stimulated the development of Flemish ecclesiastic and religious music is personified mostly by Edgar Tinel. As director of the interdiocesan institute for ecclesiastic music or *Lemmensinstituut*, he contributed greatly to the development of Flemish ecclesiastical music, but he also added much to the Catholic repertoire as a composer of Flemish religious music (oratorios, cantatas, religious songs etc.). His most popular work on Catholic radio was his oratorio, *Franciscus*. That Tinel disliked nationalist tendencies in Flemish music and that he seldom spoke Flemish (Willaert and Dewilde 1987, 68) was of course never mentioned by KVRO. Obviously, KVRO favored a combination of Christian and Flemish elements in music. Meulemans, who was a student of Tinel, often also combined Christian and Flemish elements in his vocal music. Tinel's song, »'t Pardoent,« chosen for the first KVRO

program is one example. However the other piece by Tinel, the march from *Klokke Roeland,* was not religious, but one of his few overtly Flemish works. Tinel did not figure on SAROV's programs except for the non-religious, Flemish music from *Klokke Roeland.*

Songwriters

Four songs on the program were based on texts by Guido Gezelle, a Catholic priest and poet and contemporary of Benoit who was one of the figureheads of the Flemish movement in West Flanders. While he was still alive, Gezelle was already a symbol for both the Flemish movement as a cultural movement and for the Catholic interpretation of Flemish identity. His texts were often set to music. He was an important symbolic resource in KVRO's Flemish mythscape, which is illustrated by its first program. Julius Sabbe, who appeared twice in the program, was a very Flemish-minded but liberal poet-essayist and friend of Peter Benoit, about whom he wrote one of many glorifying books. Julius Sabbe, Willem Gijssels and the hidden Julius de Geyter were all active in the Flemish movement. Florimond van Duyse, a collector and arranger of folk songs, was a writer-composer of the very first generation of the Flemish movement, which was mainly preoccupied with the Flemish language. This means that except for the motets based on bible texts, all texts within the program were written or published by poets active in the Flemish movement.

Again, this proves how meticulously the KVRO choose the repertoire of its first broadcast to call upon feelings of collective Flemish identity. The program reflects the six categories of important Flemish composers identified within KVRO discourses. One part of the meaning of this music is derived from the reputation of these composers and the stories that connect to them. Another part is derived from the context and authors of the textual sources. Each piece of music brings its own story with it. A story which is tied to the context in which it originated. Through this story, each piece of music brings meaning into a music program.

Themes

Not only the composers and songwriters give these pieces of music their meaning, but also the text's topics and the references these pieces make to elements of the Flemish mythscape. Examples of the topics, symbols and references that can be found in this broadcast's program are: the Flemish language, an idealized Flemish landscape, bells and carillons, Catholic traditions in Flanders, significant artists and Flemish traditions and folk music.

Two songs on the program express the importance of the Flemish language and imply that speaking your mother tongue is a form of freedom. Language is associated with family and with art, and described as something that we carry in our hearts. The account of the broadcast cited above links the emotional qualities of these songs to the emotional experience of hearing Flemish over the radio for the first time:

> In spite of the terrible hissing and whistling everybody sang along: »Diep roert me uw zoet geluid« [your sweet sound moves me deeply]. Not only emotional listeners felt a shudder of pure emotion because their language, their mother tongue was being broadcast across the world. (*De Vlaamsche Radiogids*, Dec 8–14, 1929)

Veremans's emblematic song »Vlaanderen« (»Flanders«) was a popular song in early Flemish broadcasts. The first stanza of the song is an ode to the landscape of Flanders, with its fields, meadows and rivers, its villages and its cities. Flanders is described as a *locus amoenus* or an idealized place where one can feel safe and at home, where nature is peaceful and beautiful. In the second stanza the poet describes how the identity of Flanders can be found in the art of its people. The refrain repeats the association of Flanders with its nature and affirms the song's pro-Flemish character.

Three songs on the program refer to bells. The first one is the »Rubensmars,« a march based on themes from Benoit's *Rubenscantate*. The cantata itself is a tribute to Pieter Paul Rubens, one of the most famous Flemish painters. In their account of the program however, KVRO refers to the text of the »Beiaardlied« (»Carillon Song«) from the

Rubenscantate, »then the carillon will play, from every tower.« The song refers to the symbolic function of bells and carillons in Flanders. Bells, high in their city towers, used to have a signaling function for the community. Bells were used to gather citizens for meetings, but more importantly warned them in case of dangers such as fire or war. Carillons were festive instruments that functioned as radios *avant la lettre* (Beyen, Rombouts and Vos 2009). Because of this utterly communal function, bells and carillons came to denote community. They were symbols of pride and prestige for Flemish cities, but also maintained their association with a readiness to defend. KVRO used both bells and towers as symbols for the combativeness and self-awareness of the Flemish community.

In Tinel's march from his cantata *Klokke Roeland (*named after a famous series of bells in Ghent) the bells remind us to defend our freedom with our own hands, like the heroes of the *Guldensporenslag.* The *Guldensporenslag*, a 1302 battle, figures in the Flemish mythscape as the first manifestation of Flemish community. Just like in the »Rubensmars,« the text is not heard on the program, but it is implied, since both works were familiar to a large part of the audience.

The third reference to bells is the song »'t Pardoent,« a religious song about the pardon or forgiveness conferred by church bells. This brings us to another topic found throughout the program: religion. The Flemish mythscape of KVRO has a decidedly Christian interpretation. KVRO considered Catholic traditions in Flanders as Flemish traditions and aimed at preserving or reviving them. The veneration of Mary is especially strong in KVRO's mythscape. Mary is mentioned in both »'t Pardoent« and »Ave Maria,« two of the six religious works on the program.

The two orchestral pieces by Blockx and de Boeck refer to Flemish traditions in both their titles and their music. Both are based on Flemish folk music, the first on Flemish folk dances and the second on two Flemish folk melodies.

Genres

Twelve out of eighteen pieces of music chosen for the first broadcast were vocal, and only six were not. Even those composers who were praised for their technical skills in writing symphonic music were represented in the program with a song. According to Jan Dewilde, Benoit's preoccupation with language and vocal music might have been one of the reasons Flemish music, especially music by more nationalist composers, developed mostly on the vocal terrain, while a symphonic tradition remained underdeveloped in Flanders and was the terrain of more cosmopolitan composers (Dewilde 2001). Another explanation is the importance of the Flemish language in the Flemish movement, stimulating the production of vocal music. KVRO believed that songs are strongly connected to national movements. Songs grow on people and songs that play an important role in a national movement will always accompany that people. In its preference for Flemish vocal pieces, KVRO expressed its own connectedness to the Flemish #sing-along movement. Songs like »Mijn moederspraak« are described as songs in which you can feel the »Flemish soul« tremble. Songs that are the »mental property« of the Flemish community and with which it can express its national feelings. In other words, KVRO itself considered these songs a musical part of the Flemish mythscape. It is perhaps telling that SAROV also aired the songs »Mijn moederspraak« and »Vlaanderen« on its first broadcast in Belgium on December 20, 1928[8] and that the Flemish-nationalist radio founded in 1930 also chose »Mijn moederspraak« for its very first program on March 6, 1931. This proves the emblematic values of these songs.

Conclusion on the KVRO program

The brief analysis above of KVRO's first music program shows us that it was meant as a summary of Flemish music history. It contained those styles, genres, composers and movements deemed most emblematic by

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8   An earlier broadcast by SAROV was made at the studios of the Dutch socialist radio in Hilversum.

KVRO. The meaning of the music selected derived both from the Flemish allegiance of the composers and songwriters, and from the context in which the works (supposedly) originated. Whether the songs originated during the golden age of polyphonic music, during the foundation of the first Flemish music school or during the Flemish #sing-along movement, all of these contexts establish the meaning of these pieces as testimonies of Flemish cultural emancipation.

The stories behind each composer, each songwriter or piece of music in this KVRO program, or the themes and symbols carried by the music, constitute a Flemish mythscape with a Christian leaning in which music is given a central place. While Flemish identity was constantly negotiated in the magazines, it was given substance through its musical expression. In this manner, the broadcasters were able to create a »soundtrack« for their preferred collective identity.

The program's preoccupation with vocal music has much to do with its invitation to participate. By selecting songs that had a clear standing in the Flemish movement—and also by publishing the lyrics—KVRO invited participation (by singing along) and maximum emotional involvement.

General conclusion

Collective or social identities are social constructs that result from specific socio-cultural circumstances. They are constantly questioned, confirmed, revised and negotiated. This negotiation takes place through the expression of identity: to express identity is to construct it. National communities express and construct their identity by constructing mythscapes. Mythscapes provide a community with a sense of continuity and cohesiveness, they give sense to the past and they provide structures for present social agency. They also provide community members with a fund of cultural symbols with which they can give expression to their communal identity, to their community. If national communities are *imagined*, mythscapes are the material with/through which they are imagined.

If a large amount of people, e.g. a nation, are to imagine their community similarly, mythscapes need to be disseminated among these people. Media have been most influential in the dissemination of symbols and myths of and discourses on national identity. Media connect people on a large scale; who thus come to share cultural material on a daily basis. Among other things, media make mythscapes part of everyday life. Through daily confirmations of national identity through discourses and other symbolic expressions—such as music—media naturalizes national identities. This also gives media the power to negotiate these identities.

In this article, the thesis was developed that one of the ways in which radio confirms and negotiates national identity is through its music programming. Music's emotive qualities make it a powerful motor behind social agency and can be consciously used to enhance identification. At the same time, music has symbolic qualities, which make it a likely candidate to either disseminate mythscapes or itself become a part of a national mythscape. Music can fulfill an emblematic function, giving expression to identity, but music also constructs that identity through the musical expression thereof.

Based on research on Flemish radio, this thesis was illustrated by demonstrating how the Catholic radio broadcaster in the interwar years 1) constructed the national meaning of music discursively in its radio magazine; 2) made use of the emotional association of Flemish music with Flemish emancipation to enhance Flemish identification during its broadcasts; and 3) negotiated the character of this Flemish identity through musical expression thereof.

Appendix

Title	Composer	Birth Place of Composer	Genre	Songwriter	Language	Main Themes
Rabensmars[9]	Peter Benoit (1834–1901)	Belgium (Flanders)	march, secular	—	—	tribute to P. P. Rubens, a famous Flemish painter; based on musical themes from the cantata *Rubens-cantate* (lyrics by Julius de Geyter, 1830–1905)
Mijn moederspraak	Peter Benoit (1834–1901)	Belgium (Flanders)	song, secular	Julius Sabbe (1846–1910)	Flemish	the emotional bond with the mother tongue

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9   An account of that first broadcasts suggests that this concerns the march and »Beiaardlied« (»Carillon Song«) from Benoit's *Rubenscantate*, also called *Vlaanderen's kunstroom*.

Waltz, from *Charlotte Corday*	Peter Benoit (1834–1901)	Belgium (Flanders)	waltz from lyrical drama, orchestral, secular	—	—	—
Exultate Justi	Lodovico Grossi da Viadana (1560–1627)	Italy	motet, sacred	Based on bible texts	Latin	praise
O Jesu Christe	Jacob van (Jacquet de) Berchem (1505–1565)	South-Netherlands (Flanders)	motet, sacred	Based on bible texts	Latin	sorrow, mercy
Ave Maria	Jacob van (Jacquet de) Berchem (1505–1565)	South-Netherlands (Flanders)	motet, sacred	Based on bible texts	Latin	Hail Mary

Jesu wijs en wonder-machtig	Jef Tinel (1885–1972)	Belgium (Flanders)	song, religious	Guido Gezelle (1830–1899)	Flemish	Jesus, humility
't Pardoen	Edgar Tinel (1854–1912)	Belgium (Flanders)	choral, religious	Guido Gezelle (1830–1899)	Flemish	»pardon« by the church bells, Flemish tradition, Virgin Mary
Vlaamsche dansen	Jan Blockx (1851–1912)	Belgium (Flanders)	symphonic	—	—	Flemish folk dances
Fantaisie op twee Vlaamse volks-wijzen	August de Boeck (1865–1937)	Belgium (Flanders)	symphonic	—	—	Flemish folk songs
Ick seg adieu	Ludovicus Episcopus (1522–1595)	Belgium (Flanders)	choral, secular	original folk song, republished by Florimond van Duyse (1843–1910)	old-Dutch	old farewell song

De Vlaamsche tale	Lodewijk Mortelmans (1901–1984)	Belgium (Flanders)	song, secular	Guido Gezelle	Flemish	the Flemish language
Van twee conincke-skinderen	Arthur Meulemans (1884–1966)	Belgium (Flanders)	choral, secular	original folk song, from anthology of Florimond van Duyse (1843–1910)	old-Dutch	separated lovers, fate (based on medieval story)
Serenata voor orkest	Arthur Meulemans (1884–1966)	Belgium (Flanders)	symphonic	—	—	—
Hymne aan de schoonheid	Renaat Veremans (1894–1969)	Belgium (Flanders)	choral[10]	unknown	n.f.	n.f.

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10 Information on this piece of music was not found.

Wierook	August de Boeck (1865–1937)	Belgium (Flanders)	song, religious	Guido Gezelle (1830–1899)	Flemish	praise, thanks
Vlaanderen	Renaat Veremans (1894–1969)	Belgium (Flanders)	choral, secular	Willem Gijssels (1875–1945)	Flemish	glorification of Flanders, its nature and its art
March, from *Klokke Roeland*	Edgar Tinel (1854–1912)	Belgium (Flanders)	orchestral march from a cantata, secular	Julius Sabbe (1846–1910)	—	Klokke Roeland (the famous bells of Ghent); the *Guldensporenslag* of 1302

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