

Script and Sound Seminar 2026

Early Music Research at KBR



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Virtual Conference
26 November 2026

KBR

KU LEUVEN



**ALAMIRE
FOUNDATION**

Script and Sound Seminar 2026: Early Music Research at KBR

26 November 2026, 4:15–6:30 p.m (CET)

The 2026 edition of the seminar will exceptionally take place online only.

The Script and Sound Seminar provides a platform for early music research at KBR – Royal Library of Belgium, with particular attention to the sources preserved there. It takes place in the context of the FED-tWIN programme *From Script to Sound*, which frames a long-term collaboration between KBR and the Alamire Foundation, aimed at studying the musical heritage from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

This year's edition places particular emphasis on issues of performance, showcasing the different types of sources preserved in modern libraries that make it possible to reconstruct its history and understand its cultural impact. These include not only manuscripts and prints that enable us to recover the music of the past, but also concert programmes, liner notes, and album covers that reveal its modern significance.

Convenor

Antonio Chemotti (KU Leuven / Alamire Foundation / KBR)

Registration

The event is free but registration for virtual attendance is required. Register [here](https://forms.gle/p1rA9ZRE3Z9jKqtX6) (https://forms.gle/p1rA9ZRE3Z9jKqtX6) by 24 November 2026. You will receive a link with the login details for the streaming one day before the seminar begins.

Programme

4.15-4.30 p.m.

Antonio Chemotti (KU Leuven / Alamire Foundation / KBR),
Welcome Address and Introductory Remarks

4.30-5.00 p.m.

Tim Braithwaite (Cappella Pratensis / Amsterdam Conservatory),
*"The Golden Mass: Performing Dufay's Missa Ecce Ancilla Domini
from B-Br MS 5557"*

5.00-5.30 p.m.

Grantley McDonald (University of Vienna),
"Polyphony, Print and Piety: The Lofzangen (1515) as Political Program"

5.30-6.00 p.m.

Benjamin Ory (KU Leuven / Alamire Foundation),
"Programming the Past: Belgium and the Early Music Performance Tradition"

6.00-6.30 p.m.

Bartłomiej Gembicki (IS PAN Warsaw),
"From Performance to Product: Packaging Polyphony Today"

Speakers

Tim Braithwaite

Tim Braithwaite is an English singer, conductor, and music theorist specialising in the historical performance of Renaissance and Medieval music. In 2025, he was appointed Artistic Director of Gramophone Award-winning Cappella Pratensis, one of the few professional ensembles in the world performing directly from historical notation rather than modern choral scores. Tim began his Early Music career as a countertenor with ensembles including Amsterdam Baroque, Vox Luminis, and the Nederlandse Bachvereniging. He teaches Renaissance counterpoint and analysis at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, as well as historical solmisation and singing from historical notation. He is a sought-after guest lecturer and has given workshops and masterclasses at institutions including the Royal Academy of Music, Yale Institute of Sacred Music, and the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague.

Grantley McDonald

Grantley McDonald researches and teaches music from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries at the University of Vienna. His PhD in musicology (Melbourne) was on the musical writings of Marsilio Ficino. His PhD in history (Leiden) was on the impact of Erasmus's New Testament edition. He has performed and recorded with many ensembles, including The Huelgas Ensemble, Fount & Origin, The Brabant Ensemble, Cappella Pratensis, Diabolus in Musica, Chœur de Chambre de Namur, and Trinity Baroque. He spends much of his time in obscure archives and libraries, elbow-deep in parchment, and publishes widely on Renaissance music and philosophy. Over the past decade his focus has been on music at the Habsburg courts between 1440 and 1530.

Benjamin Ory

Benjamin Ory is an FWO Junior Postdoctoral Fellow at KU Leuven. He received his PhD in musicology from Stanford University in 2022, and has since served as a Harvard University Villa I Tatti Digital Humanities Fellow, as visiting assistant professor of musicology at Williams College, and as a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford. He is the founder of *The 1520s Project* (<https://1520s-project.org>), an open-source repository of sixteenth-century music. Ory's research focuses on sixteenth-century polyphony as well as the early history of Renaissance musicology.

Bartłomiej Gembicki

Bartłomiej Gembicki is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences (Department of Musicology) and editor of the *Muzyka* quarterly. He holds a musicology degree from the University of Warsaw, where he defended his PhD dissertation *Psalms, Myths, and Memes: Vespers in Venice from Willaert to Gardiner* in 2020. He currently leads the NCN Sonata project *Narrating History Through Discs*, examining the intersections of phonography and early-music historiography. In 2026, he was awarded an FWO grant as a Visiting Scholar at KU Leuven. His interests encompass early-music reception, historiography, and music–visual arts relations.

Alamire Foundation

The Alamire Foundation is an internationally recognized centre for the research and valorization of early music. It focuses in particular on plainchant and polyphony from the Low Countries and brings unknown and unexplored material to the digital and public space and the worldwide stage. The Alamire Foundation makes the existing expertise on music and musical life in the Low Countries accessible through knowledge building, international valorization, and artistic realization.

Using state-of-the-art methods in the field of digitization and auralization technology, the musical repertoire is being made digitally accessible and given its place in artistic practice on and off the stage. Partnerships and contacts with the worlds of academia and the performing arts, heritage institutions, and the cultural sector result in international conferences and practice-oriented laboratories, festivals and concerts, exhibitions, and multimedia applications.

The scientific discussions and conclusions find their way into, amongst others:

Journal of the Alamire Foundation: a scientific journal that provides a critical forum for the most recent and outstanding research on music in or related to the Low Countries up to the end of the Ancien Régime. It appears twice yearly.

Leuven Library of Music in Facsimile: the series presents high-quality reproductions of primary music sources of outstanding aesthetic, historical, and cultural value. Each edition is accompanied by extended commentaries, written by leading experts.

Integrated Database for Early Music (IDEM): this interdisciplinary and multifaceted database of manuscripts and printed books focuses on the musical heritage of the Low Countries from the early Middle Ages until 1800. IDEM contains high-quality images digitized by the mobile Alamire Digital Lab, the high-technology photography centre of the Alamire Foundation. Each source is described in detail with accompanying metadata.

Alamire Foundation Editions: recordings with Franco-Flemish polyphony, which aim to bring the unexploited musical heritage from the Low Countries back to the public.

alamire.tv: the Alamire Foundation's video platform features film productions on polyphony and plainchant. In these documentaries, the musical heritage from the Low Countries is unravelled by experts and performers from all over the world in the form of brand-new recordings and interviews.

www.alamirefoundation.org — www.idemdatabase.org — alamire.tv

KBR

KBR, the national scientific library of Belgium, serves as a repository of the country's rich cultural heritage. Its early music collections are primarily housed in two departments: the Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, which preserves music manuscripts and printed books from before ca. 1600, and the Music Department, which holds materials from after ca. 1600. These collections include both religious and secular music, notably from the chapels and libraries of the Burgundian-Habsburg court and its entourage. Among the treasures are manuscripts produced by the renowned workshop of Petrus Alamire (ca. 1470–1536).

In 2012, KBR partnered with the Alamire Foundation, a collaboration that was further enhanced in 2022 through the joint FED-tWIN program *From Script to Sound*. Funded by the Belgian government, this initiative aims to disclose, study, and valorize the library's early music heritage.

www.kbr.be