



## The Medieval Rabab, a Bowed String Instrument with an Arabic-Islamic Past and Present

Conference in Bern, University of the Arts  
Friday 5 to Sunday 7 November 2021

Organised by the Bern University of the Arts (HKB), Institute Interpretation, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

### Call for Papers and Posters

Since 2019, the skin-covered bowed string instruments rabab and rebec have been a subject of investigation as part of a four-year interdisciplinary SNSF research project at the Bern University of the Arts ([www.hkb-interpretation.ch/projekte/rabab-rebec](http://www.hkb-interpretation.ch/projekte/rabab-rebec)). The rabab and rebec both belonged among the most important bowed string instruments of the European Middle Ages and early Renaissance, while the rabab was also essential in the Arabic-Islamic region from the 9th century onwards. Furthermore, the *rabāb* remains a key element of Moroccan *andalusi* music today. During the conference, we will present the research results from the first part of our project (9th–13th centuries) and aim to contrast these with further research on the same and related topics from the fields of musicology, organology, ethnomusicology, performance practice, art history, music iconography, archaeology and cultural transfer in order to discuss them together. Selected papers will subsequently be published in book form (open access).

### Topics:

- The Arabic-Islamic origins of the rabab / cultural exchange
- Arabic and European music theory / organology
- The rabab and its iconographic and textual sources until the 13th century
- The string instruments in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*
- Music iconography as a method in music and art studies
- Ethnomusicological sources on skin-covered bowed string instruments
- The relationship between ethnomusicology and historical musicology

Papers should last 20 minutes (followed by 10 min. discussion). The official conference languages are German, English and French. Submissions should include the title and an abstract (max. 2000 characters incl. spaces), and the name, affiliation, contact information and short CV of the speaker (max. 1000 characters incl. spaces for the CV).

Please email your abstract or proposal for a poster by 15 April 2021 to [thilo.hirsch@hkb.bfh.ch](mailto:thilo.hirsch@hkb.bfh.ch). The confirmation of accepted papers and posters will be announced by 31 May 2021. The conference is currently planned as a face-to-face event.