

Les Cowboys Fringants: la voix d'un peuple, groupe emblématique de la culture québécoise

The enormous outpouring of love and sadness in Québec following the loss of Karl Tremblay, voice of Les Cowboys Fringants, in November 2023 clearly demonstrates the pre-eminent place the group occupies in expressing and celebrating Québécois identity and values. Les Cowboys have gained a growing international and multi-generational following in the over twenty years since their break-out album, *Break syndical*, was released in 2002. Their July 17, 2023 show at the Festival d'été de Québec before an audience of ninety thousand fans, their nine performances at the Centre Bell as well as their twenty-two Félix awards provide an indication of the ever-increasing recognition, admiration and affection the group has generated, both in Québec and in Europe.

The focus of this panel is to examine the ways in which Les Cowboys Fringants and their music are emblematic of contemporary Québécois cultural values through the consideration of recurring themes in their *oeuvre*, including, but not limited to, engagement in environmental protection, social/political commentary and a close-up view of life in Québécois society, past and present. While preference will be given to paper proposals (in either French or English) which include pedagogical applications of the music of Les Cowboys, other areas of exploration are welcome. The intent of the panel is also to capture the energy, enthusiasm and exuberant enjoyment shared by the musicians and their audience at live performances by Les Cowboys which are contagious and serve as an inspiration both for teachers' pedagogical revitalization and students' appreciation of Québec culture.

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