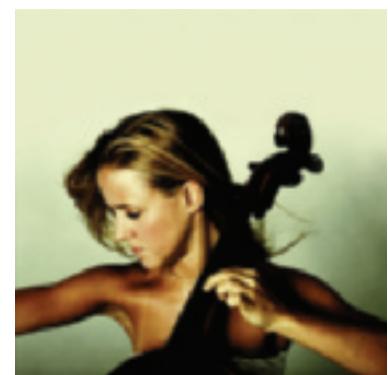




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Hail the new king

Leuven-based InBev buys up America's top beer company

Alan Hope

When Flanders took over America, the fighting was over faster than anyone expected.

InBev, the world's second-largest brewer, based in Leuven, made a bid in June for ownership of Anheuser-Busch (AB) – number four and the brewer of Budweiser – offering \$65 a share and valuing the company at \$46.3 billion.

The bid, as InBev CEO Carlos Brito pointed out in a letter to AB president August Busch, was a fair one. It offered shareholders a premium of 35% over the current 30-day average share price and 18% over the record high of October 2002.

But Budweiser is an iconic American brand, and neither AB nor America was ready to give up so easily. Politicians, including Republican governor Matt Blunt of AB's home state of Missouri and presidential candidate Barack Obama, lined up to express "concern" that a quintessential American company should be sold off to foreigners.

Petitions and websites sprang up, and lawsuits followed. AB, the country's largest brewer, questioned InBev's claim to have the finance lined up. InBev questioned the ability of the AB board to block a bid that shareholders themselves ought to snap up.

And then it was over as quickly as it had begun. Patriotic concerns vanished, and the lawyers and politicians stepped down. InBev had raised its offer from \$65 to \$70 a share. Budweiser's honour, which days before had been unavailable at any price, turned out to be for sale after all. And the price was right.

Anheuser-Busch InBev, as the new company is to be known (within the US at least) is now by far the biggest beer brewer in the world.

Still, there remain a few problems to be sorted out, and not small ones. There are four issues the combined forces of Leuven and St Louis are going to have to tackle soon.

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Arts

Movies, TV, video games. No, it's not a weekend on the couch, it's the Ostend Film Festival, which has figured out how to get young people back into the cinema.

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Active

We've had such good feedback on our expat sports coverage this summer, in this issue we introduce Leander Scherlaeckens' new weekly column *Touching Base*

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Living

Another surprising and quirky Flemish museum takes you through the history of flax in Flanders. Yes, flax.

12

Teenager in hospital after attack in Ostend

Officials are at a loss over how to stem the tide of youth violence

Alan Hope

A 17-year-old youth is fighting for his life in an Ostend hospital this week after another case of senseless violence in the port city, the second such serious incident in three weeks.

One man is in prison and two others charged in connection with the attack on Kenzo Van Cauwenberghe on the evening of 14 August. According to a statement by the victim's girlfriend, who witnessed the attack, the couple were walking past a van when the door opened and one of the occupants struck Van Cauwenberghe on

the head with a skateboard. He was immediately knocked unconscious, bleeding from the ears, while the attackers fled.

The three men were later arrested, and the one who delivered the blow is being held in custody.

The two others were released but will be prosecuted, the prosecutor's office in Bruges said. According to their version of events, the victim struck the outside of the van as it stopped to let him cross the road. A dispute ensued, and then he was

Continued on page 5

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Boterhammen in het Park

The summer is nearly over – but not quite yet. There's one festival left that comes every year at the very end of the vacation period, just so the summer in Brussels ends with a bang.

It started back in 1990 – Boterhammen in het Park, or Sandwiches in the Park, a free music festival held under the trees in the Warandepark. It's now a fixed event in the calendar where office workers mingle with students and the last of the summer tourists stumble onto live music as they emerge from the Fine Arts Museum.

The setting is wonderful: under the ancient trees surrounding the restored iron bandstand in the middle of the park. The audiences squeeze onto the benches every midday to listen to popular Flemish singers, plus some exciting new bands from Flanders and beyond.

The programme this year includes singer Isabelle A (of "Hé Lekker Beest" fame), singer-song-

writer cum rapper Flip Kowlier and Guido Belcanto, a cult singer who started in ballrooms of the 1970s. As one concert promoter, put it: "A curious mixture of self-satire and sentiment. Going to see Belcanto is like taking a bath filled with sweet smells and lukewarm water".

The sponsors set up booths around the bandstand so you can pick up a free newspaper while you listen to the music, and there are also stands selling sandwiches, beer and other, more exotic foods. The festival is free. So take along your kids, dog, grandmother or friends from abroad to show them Brussels at its most relaxed.

Derek Blyth

25-29 August, noon to 14.00,
Warandepark, Brussels

online

www.boterhammeninhetpark.be



Free music in a beautifully restored cast-iron bandstand

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FACE OF FLANDERS



Lieven Van Gils

There is only a six-hour time difference between Belgium and Beijing, but the two are worlds apart – as Lieven Van Gils is discovering. "I've worked in the United States, Australia and throughout Europe – but nothing compares to this," says the 44-year-old journalist, currently covering the biggest sports story of the year for Flemish television station VRT.

Born in Hoogstraten in Antwerp province, the son of educators, Van Gils got his start in radio in 1987 as a presenter with BRT. He jumped into television eight years ago, but you can still hear him on Studio Brussels covering winners and losers in every sport imaginable.

Van Gils also keeps himself busy co-hosting *Phara*, a late-night television chat show on Canvas with Phara De Aguirre. The show delves into politics and hot topics of the day three nights a week. Whether interviewing political party leaders or taking on controversial issues such as banning the chador for Muslim girls in public schools, Van Gils provides a sharp counterpoint to de Aguirre's incisive, thoughtful probing. But both hosts famously manage to keep the mood light enough for guests to get comfortable, let their guard down and reveal what they really think.

But sports are the main thing for Van Gils. Following the Olympics, he'll head off to the US Open. "I've been travelling for close to two months, so I'd like to get back home to see my wife and two kids," he tells me from Beijing. The Olympics in China have been "super-well-organised," he says. His only regret: he has hasn't been able to explore Beijing as much as he wanted.

"First of all, covering the games takes up a lot of my time," he explains. "And secondly, the minute you wander outside of the area designated for the international community, it's hard to find any Chinese person who speaks English. I can't even understand the street signs, so walking around isn't really an option."

Van Gils also covered the 2004 Olympics in Athens. "This year is bigger than that – and bigger than any other sports event I've reported on. To give you an idea of the magnitude: I covered the Tour de France this year, which is always a huge event, and there were 200 cyclists." He pauses. "In the Olympics, there are over 11,000 athletes – in addition to 30,000 journalists covering the games."

At press time, the most exciting moment of this year's games for Van Gils was when American Michael Phelps came from behind a French swimmer and snatched the gold medal – making him the first person ever to earn 10 Olympic gold medals.

In his private time, Van Gils plays a bit of footie and some tennis, "but I'm nowhere near a pro." Who cares? His reporting is Olympic quality.

Steven Tate

online

www.vrt.be

TALKING DUTCH

notes on language



ster

I bumped into an old mucker the other week when I was in England. He'd spent some years here in Belgium in the 1990s and, in the course of the evening, he asked, "Do you still have that weatherman, the one with the funny potatoes?" Don't ask why the conversation took such a turn, but I had to inform him that Armand Pien was no more and that his passing was widely lamented in Flanders not just for his spending a good five minutes talking about the weather every day, which seems an inordinate amount of time for such a modestly sized country, but also for the strange vegetables sent into him by viewers, why, I don't know.

One thing you must realise is that there's no national television service in Belgium. Instead, Dutch and French-language channels fill the ether and can be received anywhere in the country. But don't ask a Fleming who the francophone weatherman is, or vice versa. Unfortunately, a national bilingual channel is beyond even the innovation of the Belgians.

With Armand gone, no one was big enough to fill his boots so he was eventually replaced by Frank and Sabine, who, like Box and Cox, never seem to meet. *Tot morgen met Frank* – Until tomorrow with Frank – is how Sabine signs off. The veg has gone to be replaced by viewers' photos showing the local weather conditions of the day.

Those fascinated by things meteorological should visit the *Volkssterrenwacht Mira* – the "people's star watch" or the Mira Observatory in Grimbergen, north of Brussels. It's at Abdijstraat 22, so just find the abbey in the centre of the town and you'll be almost there.

Various astronomical activities await visitors. An audio guide in Dutch will explain all – and whose voice is it? Frank Deboosere (of *Tot morgen met Frank*), of course. And there's a weather station – *in ons weerstation voel je je net als weerman Frank Deboosere* – where you can feel just like weatherman Frank!

Another Flemish Frank has been in the news: *Frank De Winne wordt mogelijk de eerste Europese astronaut die commandant wordt aan boord van het Internationaal Ruimtestation ISS*. This Frank, who spent some time in 2002 in the Russian space station *Soyuz*, is set to be the first European commander of the International Space Station. He must be quite a guy: as an F-16 pilot he managed to land his plane safely when the on-board computer packed in. *Dit leverde hem als eerste niet-Amerikaan de Joe Bill Dryden Semper Viper Award op* – This resulted in his being the first non-American to receive this interestingly named award.

Back at the observatory, you can star gaze during the day, *als de weerman voor een zonnige dag gezorgd heeft* – if the weatherman has provided a sunny day. Poor Frank, what a responsibility to make everyone's day. The staff is made up of volunteers, and entrance is free, so onwards and upwards.

By the way, the colloquial word mucker comes from the Dutch for pal or mate – *makker*.

Alistair MacLean

online

www.mira.be

FEATURE

A marriage of two beers

Continued from page 1

Patriotism

Anheuser-Busch has a place in America's heart. In St Louis, that's a result of the company's bounty: workers are well paid and enjoy substantial benefits, including two crates of beer a month. Gussy Busch, the current CEO's grandfather, once laid on a concert by The Beatles in the stadium of the St Louis Cardinals – not surprisingly called Busch Stadium.

Nationally, AB has bought its way into America's consciousness. Anyone watching TV right now will be seeing ads for Bud and Bud Light interspersed with Olympic coverage. At another time of the year it might be the NBA, the NHL, the PGA or the Daytona 500. AB spent \$1.36 billion last year on advertising and sponsorship, according to industry paper *MarketWatch*, \$475 million of it on TV, radio and in magazines.

The rest went in large part to sponsorship. AB, together with its distributors, co-sponsors thousands of local sporting groups across the country,

Financing the deal

This is important because InBev needs to save money. To complete the financing package for the takeover, InBev has to realise €7 billion worth of assets, quickly. The company promised to keep all US breweries open, so savings and sell-offs will come from non-core activities. There are essentially two possibilities here: advertising and theme-park holdings.

AB owns a number of parks, such as Sea World in Texas, Florida and California. Theme-park operators Parques Reunidos (owners of Bobbejaanland here in Limburg) are reportedly putting together a bid, worth \$4.5 billion according to the *Sunday Times*, for AB theme parks. Parques Reunidos already has a number of properties in the US, including Mountasia, Wet'n'Wild and Boomers. Merlin Entertainment, the owner of Legoland, could also be a bidder for AB parks.

The parks could be divested without a problem, though some analysts say that the price expected is a little optimistic. The AB advertising budget could be harder to cut into because it sends roots down into so many local communities.

InBev, which spends a paltry amount by comparison, will have to tread carefully unless it wants to lose a great deal of goodwill.

Workforce

In a letter dated 17 July, days after the AB collapse, InBev CEO Carlos Brito wrote to Jack Cipriani, the local representative of the highly influential Teamsters' union, and its national vice-president, pledging that "the Teamsters...

play an instrumental role in what has made Anheuser-Busch and its brands what they are today." InBev would be "relying on the experience and expertise of the brewery employees," Brito said.

The Teamsters are intimately tied in with the brewing industry. The name derives from teams of cart-horses – just like those that still parade the streets of St Louis carrying the AB name. The Teamsters, one of America's most formidable unions, once led by Jimmy Hoffa, are not taken in by Brito's kind words.



The king of beers has a new queen: America's biggest beer company, Anheuser-Busch, will merge with Flanders-based InBev

They've seen, Cipriani said, how InBev behaves once it's taken over other breweries, such as in Canada and Belgium. "InBev has yet to show it can respect and value workers once it takes over a company," Cipriani said in a statement. "The Teamsters will hold InBev to its promises not to lay off AB employees and not to close breweries."

As *Flanders Today* went to press, Teamster representatives were due to meet management from AB in St Louis to begin negotiations on a renewal of the union's contract. They'll be joined by InBev union reps from Canada and Belgium, who fear they, rather than the Americans, could be the victims of cuts.

Competition

Just days before InBev and AB merged came a new competitive threat: a joint venture between SABMiller and Molson Coors, the number three brewer in the states. AB has about 50% of the North American market, and Molson Coors about 30%. But a Miller/Molson deal offers those two companies more advantages on the American market than AB and InBev will enjoy: InBev has hardly any presence on the North American continent, so there are few synergies the new fusion can bring. Miller and Molson, on the other hand, are looking to save a combined \$500 million from pooling marketing, distribution and brewing costs. The new competitor could put more pressure on AB InBev than the bare figures suggest.

online
www.inbev.be

Leader of the six-pack

Carlos Brito, head of the merged Anheuser-Busch InBev, was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1960. He graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering, which took him to Germany to work for Daimler-Benz, then back to Brazil for Shell. Soon, looking for a new challenge, he was accepted for the MBA programme at Stanford School of Business.

The only trouble was, Brito didn't have the money to pay the costly tuition.

That's when he came in contact with Jorge Paulo Lemann – also of Rio de Janeiro, one of the founders of Banca Garantia and the 178th richest man in the world, according to *Forbes*. Lemann agreed to fund Brito's MBA on two conditions: Brito would send him regular reports on his progress, and he would pledge to finance some future student when he reached a position to do so.

Brito graduated with his MBA in 1989, by which time he had forged a solid bond with Lemann through his monthly letter from America. Lemann's bank had just bought Brahma, Brazil's largest brewer, which was then haemorrhaging market shares. Brito became head of sales, then head of operations. At the age of 43, he became CEO of Companhia

de Bebidas das Americas, better known as AmBev.

When AmBev merged with Belgium's Interbrew in 2004, Brito was made head of North America, where he had had contact with Anheuser-Busch. The two units couldn't be more dissimilar in terms of corporate culture. The Americans are local royalty – current CEO August

Busch, latest in a line of Busch bosses, is known as The Fourth. The company is a major sponsor of sport and the arts, and the Busch family, despite their small shareholding, lap up the glory as if they were Medicis.

At Leuven, by contrast, if you want a decent parking space, you



InBev CEO Carlos Brito now has even more beers to choose from

have to arrive early: there are no spots reserved for anyone, not even the chief executive. Brito is usually seen in open-neck shirt and wears a plastic watch. He works at a conference table with close advisers seated around, not in a panelled corner office. He flies economy on flights under six hours. InBev has no corporate jet and not even a company car for the boss.

"I've got no hobbies," Brito recently told the *St Louis Post-Dispatch*. "I have four children and I'm still married to the same woman. I'm actually pretty boring."



Getting to know each other

and the company spent about \$350 million of its promotional budget on these small-scale sponsorships. That's almost as much as on national media and much more than the total paid out by the country's second-biggest seller of beer, the London-based SABMiller, which spent only \$230 million on all American publicity combined.

As a result, sports lovers are exposed to the Budweiser brand at every turn, and when they open their coolers at half time, AB gets its reward.





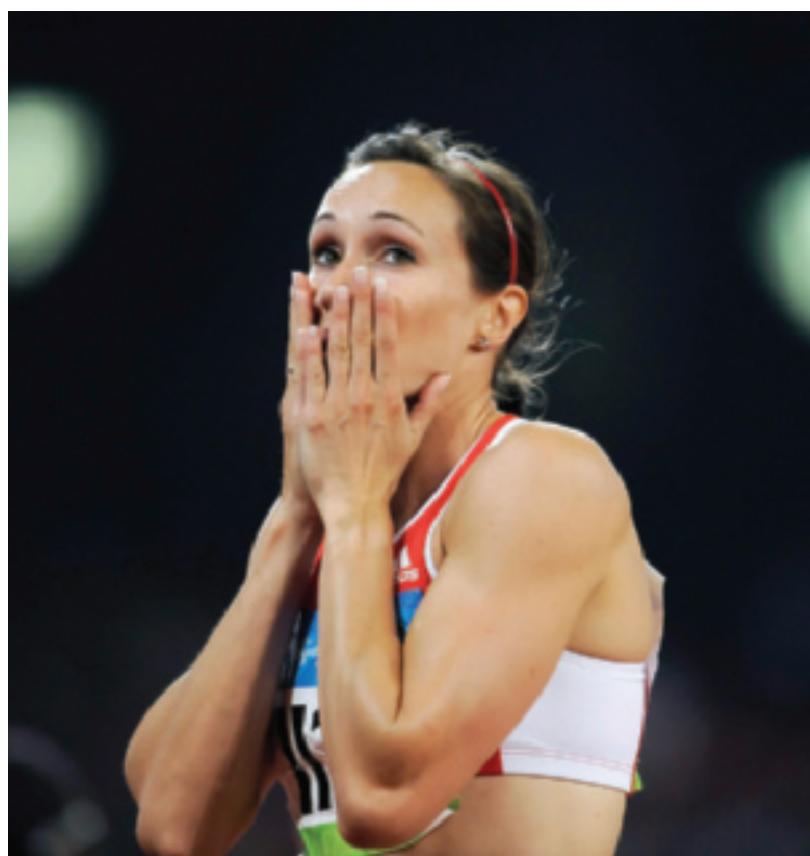
Flanders wants your opinion!

Tell us how Flanders can establish itself as a strong player on the international market.
Take part in the ViA debate on www.vlaandereninactie.be/debate.

The Flanders in Action project ViA (Vlaanderen in Actie) has been set up by the Flemish Government as an inclusive, interactive process for all of society.

The central goal of ViA is to position Flanders as one of Europe's top five regions by 2020.

ViA must break new grounds in terms of both vision and strategy. With a powerful policy plan greater focus will be placed on talent, innovation, internationalisation, logistics and mobility. This policy plan will also concentrate on sustainability and an efficient and customer-oriented government and must enable Flanders to become one of Europe's top five regions by 2020.



"I blew it": a disappointed Kim Gevaert

Medal hopes fade as stars drop off

Three Belgian runners made it through to the semi-final of the men's 400 metres in Beijing this week, as Belgium's Olympic medal hopes seemed increasingly distant.

All three Belgian men competing, Cedric Van Branteghem and twins Jonathan and Kevin Borlée, qualified for the quarter-final of the 400m. Van Branteghem ran 45:54, 0.52 faster than his personal best, to place third in his heat.

Belgian spirits were especially high among football fans, who saw the Red Devils beat Italy 3-2 on Saturday. The match was marked by two penalty goals by Italy and two red cards given by referee Hector Baldassi. Moussa Dembélé scored two of the Red Devils' three goals. The team is ready to face Nigeria in the semi-final on Tuesday, as *Flanders Today* went to press.

At the weekend, bright hope Kim Gevaert failed to make the final of the women's 100m after a mis-timed start. "I moved in my starting blocks and missed the start," she said. "I blew it." As *Flanders Today* went to press, Gevaert was still considering whether to run in the 200m.

Another medal hope, sailor Evi Van Acker, was out of the running for the Laser Radial Medal Race after she placed sixth overall in the qualifying races.

Show-jumper Jos Lansink and his mount Cumano held out some medal hope in the individual qualifications on Monday as *Flanders Today* went to press.

online

www.olympic.be

NEWS FLASH

A 36-year-old man from Brasschaat drowned last week after falling overboard from his nine-metre boat off Vlissingen in the waters of the Westerschelde. Serge Vleugels was a sailing enthusiast with 30 years of experience, and conditions were calm with winds of factor three or four. He was at the wheel when the boat narrowly avoided a collision with a containership, which caused Vleugels to fall overboard. Dutch water police carried out a search operation with no result. The man's body later washed ashore.

The federal food safety agency has given the go-ahead for the second Belgian mussels producer, the Foundation for Sustainable Fisheries Development (SDVO), to harvest its crop from the waters off Nieuwpoort. A crop from producers Reynaert-Versluys was recalled at the beginning of the month on suspicion of being contaminated with a toxin caused by algae. Those mussels, and the waters where the country's only two producers grow their mussels, have since been given a clean bill of health.



Peter Coolemans of the Flemish Fisheries Federation (VVV) samples home-peeled Purus shrimps in Ostend. The Flemish Purus shrimp will in future be peeled on the spot and not sent to Morocco for peeling, the producers announced. Coolemans and partner Willy Versluys unveiled a new shrimp-peeling machine last week. Four of the machines take the place of human peeler, whose talents are in short supply. Because peeler are so expensive, the job had been outsourced to Morocco. "The Purus will be more expensive, but it will be super-fresh," Coolemans said. The shrimps will also no longer require the addition of preservatives now that the seven-day round trip to Morocco is no longer necessary. The machines, developed by a Dutch company in Haarlem, will peel 250 kg a day each – the equivalent of 20 human peeler.



Seattle-based coffee shop chain Starbucks has finally made its entry to Belgium, with the opening last week of an outlet in Brussels Airport. The shop in the departures hall will be open 24 hours a day. Starbucks has said it will consider other outlets in Belgium, including possibly more at the airport. This is despite the recent announcement that the chain is to close 61 of its 84 outlets in Australia and around 600 stores in the United States as a result of poor economic conditions. Starbucks has 15,000 stores in 43 countries worldwide, 11,000 of them in the US. Starbucks-lovers in Belgium had set up an online petition that received over 1,300 signatures.

The royal palace has denied allegations that Prince Filip damaged and sold off furniture belonging to the palace on the Meir in Antwerp. The prince removed items of furniture, 23 chairs and two sideboards, to furnish his offices in Laken and in Brussels, a royal spokesman said. The Empire furniture, designed on a commission by Napoleon, belongs to the royal collection, he said. The palace itself is the property of the Flemish Community.

Two Flemish universities have made it into the Top 100 rankings for the quality of teaching of certain subjects. Leuven made the grade in engineering sciences, as did the French-speaking Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL). Both universities ranked for medical science, and the two, together with Ghent, scored in agriculture and biological sciences. UCL alone made the grade for social sciences, according to the annual ratings produced by Jia Tong university in Shanghai.

Children lose fingers on airport escalators

Three children have had part of their fingers chopped off in the last month in accidents involving escalators at Brussels Airport, and another in a similar case at Woluwe Shopping Centre, VTM news revealed. In three of the cases, emergency services were able to retrieve the finger-joint concerned, which could then be re-attached. In one case, however, the child's finger was crushed and had to be amputated.

A spokesman for Brussels

Airport said he was shocked by the news. "This is a real horror story," said Jan Van der Cruyse. "We immediately had the escalators inspected, but there is nothing wrong with them."

The problem seems to lie with parents kept waiting at gates for lengthy periods, who lose track of their children. The children go off to play on the moving pavement or escalators, and accidents result. The airport advised parents to keep an eye on their children at all times.



Shutterstock

Parents are advised to keep unsupervised children away from escalators

Teenager in hospital after attack in Ostend

Continued from page 1

struck with the skateboard. According to Van Cauwenbergh's girlfriend, he had nothing to do with any dispute.

Van Cauwenbergh is now being maintained in an artificial coma in Ostend's Henri Serruy's hospital, following an operation. His condition is stable, but he is not yet out of danger.

The incident comes barely three weeks after another attack on a young man in Ostend, also without apparent reason. On 23 July,

Steven Bryse, 19, was attacked by five youths, struck on the head with a bottle and slashed in the face with broken glass. Two of the five have a previous record of a similar attack, the prosecutor said. The two incidents are not related.

The attacks this summer have revived memories of another act of violence in Ostend in February last year that cost the life of Bart Bonroy. The 18-year-old was stabbed to death by another youth while defending a friend in an argument over a cigarette. In all, nine people died in Ostend last year as a result of

violence, most of them young people.

"In these dramatic cases I always wonder how someone can possibly bring himself to attack and hurt another human being this way," commented local politician Bart Tommelein. "I don't know how to avoid this sort of thing, but don't let this be a reason to paint all Ostendenaars as violent."

Police chief Philip Caestecker, meanwhile, said: "I've been asked by townspeople what measures I'm going to take. But you can't do anything about this form of unpredictable violence."

EDUCATION

International intrigue

Students in one West Flanders college are guaranteed an education abroad and a life-changing experience



The school of life: students from Katho's special education faculty staged trainings for social workers in Romania, led by instructor Wouter Leplae, front

Stéphanie Duval

At the Katho University College in West Flanders, the slogan "Enjoy Lifelong Learning Worldwide" is more than just a pretty phrase. It is a philosophy.

Internationalisation is a top priority at the school of 6,500 students spread across four campuses, so the International Office has committed itself to the IEKS-2000 PLUS project: an international experience for every Katho student.

The Catholic college offers several international experiences. Each year around 170 foreign students come to study at the school, while foreign lecturers are invited to teach special courses. Staff members are also encouraged to take part in exchanges. They return from abroad with international experience they can pass on to students. This way, students are confronted with different perspectives without even leaving Flanders.

But, more importantly, all Katho students have the opportunity – indeed, the requirement – to study abroad in one way or another. The traditional Erasmus programme offers the chance to enrol in a college in a foreign country for one or two semesters. Students can also partake in study programmes, attending special courses at partner colleges abroad for eight to 10 days. Furthermore, graduates can choose to complete their internship or graduation project in a foreign country.

Early this summer, 15 students from the Faculty of Remedial

Education, part of the school of social sciences and special education, went to Romania to complete their Bachelor graduation projects. Together with Belgian non-profit organisations vzw-Oradea, De Kindervriend and Monnikenheide, and endorsed by the Flemish government, these young people employed their three years of education to help the people of Romania, while gaining valuable insight into how their studies can be applied in the real world.

Wouter Leplae, a teacher who helped coordinate one of the projects, states the trip to Romania is the result of a longstanding tradition of wanting to improve life for Romanian citizens. "It all started with the 1989 revolt of the Romanian people against communist dictator Ceausescu. Thanks to the American media, the entire world saw television broadcasts and pictures of children suffering and being dropped in abandoned orphanages."

It didn't take long for Belgian organisations to come to Romania's aid. Several associations were formed, including vzw-Oradea. Dr Patrick Bellinck originally founded the non-profit to send clothing and other resources to Oradea, a border town near Hungary. But he soon learned that his packages weren't being distributed once they arrived.

So the organisation began taking a different approach, setting up solidarity projects in aid of children suffering from a handicap or social exclusion in Oradea. It also stages bilateral sensitisation projects and training sessions between Belgians

and Romanian care professionals. Projects initiated by Katho fall under those programmes.

"When vzw-Oradea came to us 12 years ago with the proposition of staging such education projects, we immediately saw how this would fit our curriculum," says Leplae. Students graduating from the three-year programme are all asked to participate in an external project, which offers them the chance to bring their experience and theoretical background to countries abroad.

Students can choose between several projects, two of them being Training Romanian Professionals (TROP), which focuses on training local care workers, and Speaking With Support of Signs (SWSS), which assists in alternative communications.

TROP trains Romanian professionals from different organisations, who in turn can train their co-workers and spread the knowledge where it is most needed. Seven students and two teachers worked together for a month before leaving for Oradea to compose a programme about prevention. "It's been an intensive two months for them," says Leplae, "but they were able to work out their differences of opinion and put together an outstanding programme."

The students introduced Romanian social workers to several Flemish organisations who work in the area of care for children, explains Daphné Debels, one of the students. "One of the organisations we described to them was Kind en Gezin, for example." The students designed workshops around the

initiatives they wanted to present and encouraged the Romanians to create similar concepts.

"It was a very creative way of teaching something in small groups, and the Romanian professionals were very enthusiastic about our way of working," says Debels. The Flemish students operated as a sounding board and gave tips and advice along the way, plus provided materials the Romanians can put to use in their own ways.

The students wanted to have an effect that would not end when they left Romania. "It's not just about us completing a degree by fulfilling some required project," says Debels. "By sensitising people about prevention in the social sector in Oradea, we hope to implement a lasting change." The students have since found out that the Romanian workers had taken the first steps in the right direction, by starting the design of prevention brochures.

"For us it is very fulfilling to hear we have actually made a difference in Oradea," says Debels. But the TROP project has not come to an end. For the next two years, the project will be followed up with continuing meetings with the Romanians and further training around prevention, counselling and networking.

"Vzw-Oradea has always given us the opportunity to send out many students to Romania," says Leplae, "so we are glad to be able to offer them a substantial and long-term cooperation."

online

www.katho.be
www.vzworadea.eu

NEWS FLASH

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A team of archaeologists from the University of Leuven has discovered the massive head of a statue of Faustina the Elder, the wife of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, who was one of the group that Machiavelli dubbed "Five Good Emperors". The head, 76 cm high and 48 cm wide, was found in the frigidarium, or cold water bath, of the baths at Sagalassos in Turkey. It was first thought to be that of Sabina, wife of Hadrian, whose bust was found last year in the frigidarium. The finds lead experts to think there must be more treasures to be excavated from the 1,250 square-metre bath hall.

An Australian soldier who fell in the attack on Polygon Wood in the First World War has been identified, thanks to DNA investigation. George Storey joined up in 1916 at the age of 20 and died in the attack in September 1917. His remains were among those of five soldiers discovered during the laying of a gas line in 2006, and Storey is the third to be identified.

Wendy Huygebaert from Bredene has been named "Job Student of the Year" by Unizo, the organisation for the self employed. The 22-year-old has worked during the last five annual vacation periods for the Marquise ice-cream parlour in the seaside town to help finance her studies in social work. She was nominated by her employer, who described her as "punctual, friendly, sociable, keen to work and flexible". Huygebaert's prize includes film tickets, flowers and holiday vouchers.

An 85-year-old man died last week after being attacked by a ram he had borrowed from a friend to tackle the long grass in his garden. René Van Nooten was attacked when he entered the field behind his home in Ravels near Turnhout. A neighbour heard his cries and arrived to find the animal butting Van Nooten as he lay on the ground. The victim died of internal injuries.

A painting by Flemish primitive artist Jan Provost, stolen during the Second World War, has been discovered in a museum in Utah in the United States. The painting was the property of the Renders family in Bruges and was sold to Herman Goering. It later made its way to the US via Spain. Recently, a Canadian art history professor claimed the painting was not a genuine Provost. The stolen goods cell of the federal police said they would now try to bring the painting back to Belgium for further examination.

A deadline for public comments on a proposal to widen sections of the Brussels Ring has been extended from early September to 6 November. The Flemish government was criticised by environmental groups after it announced the proposal in the middle of the holiday period. The plan would extend parts of the Ring north of the E40 to 10, 12 and, in some places, 17 lanes.

online

www.mervlaanderen.be

Government seeks to split baggage-handlers' duopoly

The government is looking at ways of extending competition in handling services at Brussels Airport, following a strike last week, the effects of which were still being felt long after personnel had gone back to work.

The strike started when workers at Aviastar, the smaller of the two handling companies, announced a 24-hour stoppage on the evening of 10 August. As they went into talks with management, they were joined in their action by workers at Flightcare, the larger of the two, which handles Brussels Airlines.

The airport ground to a halt as departures were unable to take off, and planes that had landed were unable to turn around and leave. Flights were cancelled for two days, others were delayed and still more re-routed to other airports, such as Liège, Charleroi and even Amsterdam.

Now the state secretary for mobility, Etienne Schoupe, is looking at ways to open up the handling services at the airport – not only baggage handling but also cleaning, catering, towing and more. More competition, he argues, will avoid the kind of stranglehold the duopoly was able to exercise last week.



The federal mobility authority wants to change the way baggage is handled at Brussels Airport to avoid last week's disaster

In fact, the presence of only two handlers in Zaventem is written into Belgian law. When EU rules came into force for the liberalisation of handling, a minimum of two companies was imposed. Belgium decided to take the rule literally and passed a law in 1998 setting the number at exactly two. Those were, at the

time, Sabena Handling and Aviastar. When Sabena went bust, Flightcare is what remained of the handling division. The exclusive licence for the two companies runs until 2011.

However, the government "is looking into the possibilities of amending the law, as well as the contracts with the two handlers,"

a ministry spokesman said. One option would be what is called self-handling, where an airline takes care of its own handling needs. That became a *de facto* necessity last week when Brussels Airlines drafted in office staff to help shift passengers' bags. As a result, only one Brussels Airlines flight failed to take off.

InBev families take stake in Hans Anders

Two Belgian families, both major investors in the InBev brewery giant, is buying a stake in the Dutch High Street spectacles chain Hans Anders. The Mévius and Spoelberch families, operating via a subsidiary of their holding company Verlinvest, will share control with private equity group Gilde, based in Utrecht. The precise shareholding that Verlinvest offshoot Cofintra has taken is not known, but it is believed to be substantial.

Gilde owns Hans Anders, which operates a chain of stores covering the cut-throat market

for spectacles and sunglasses in city centres in the Netherlands, Belgium and France. The equity management group has been looking for a partner for some months to help finance expansion plans. The Hans Anders chain as a whole is worth an estimated €150 million. It wants to double its number of shops to 1,000 within five years by expanding in Belgium and France and to other areas in southern Europe.

online

www.hansanders.be

Tourists charged double by French ATM

Belgians who withdrew cash from ATMs in France between 31 July and 8 August could find themselves paying dearly for the service. According to Atos Worldline, formerly Banksys, which runs the cash-card system in Belgium, some 20,000 holders of Belgian bank accounts had the money they withdrew with a Maestro card debited from their accounts twice.

The total sum involved is estimated at around €2.6 million. In addition to Belgian bank customers, French clients were

also affected. Atos stressed that their system was not to blame. "The problem lies with the French banks," spokesman Jean-Michel Dasnoy said.

In any case, the problem was no sooner discovered than it was resolved. The French system made reimbursement orders on exactly the same date of the double-debit, so the mistakes will have no effect on interest due, overdrafts or other matters. Customers need not contact either Atos or their bank, Dasnoy said. "The problem has been fixed automatically."

French and Norwegians in the running to take over VRT masts

Two companies remain in the running to take over the operation of analogue and digital TV transmission masts, or towers, owned by the VRT. The Flemish government has ordered the public broadcaster to divest itself of the masts, which include the transmitter at Sint-Pieters-Woluwe but not the giant tower at VRT headquarters in Schaerbeek.

The divestiture is necessary, the government argues, to ensure the assets – nine transmitters and the associated equipment and real estate -- are not in the hands of one of the parties who will be lining up to use them in a newly liberalised broadcasting market of the coming years.

In the first phase of privatisation, a partner would take a minority holding, which would later rise to 75% plus one share. The share left in VRT hands would be handed over, for maximum arms-length transparency,

to the regional holding agency. Part of the money raised from selling off the transmitters would be reinvested in VRT.

The two candidates remaining in the race are TDF from France, which already operates a massive range of transmitters in Germany, France, Spain and Poland, and which took in €1.17 billion in 2007; and Norkring from Norway, which, by contrast, is small, with only 108 employees and activities in Norway alone for sales last year of €87 million.

The two companies are currently inspecting the books on the deal and will be presenting a final bid next month, with the successful partner expected to be announced at the end of September. Other potential partners, such as Belgacom, Telenet and Mobistar were ruled out because of their various interests in the TV market.



VRT must divest itself of several antennae towers, but not the massive one at its headquarters in Schaerbeek, above

BUSINESS FLASH



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Ford

Ford motor company has recalled some 600 cars in Belgium as part of a Europe-wide action affecting Focus, Focus CC and C-Max cars. The recall concerns cars constructed in April and May of this year, after research showed some fell short of specifications regarding steering. Owners have been contacted and asked to return the vehicles to the dealership where they were bought.

Studio 100

Mark Kiekens, one of the main forces behind the development of TV production house Studio 100 into an international multi-media concern, has quit his position as chairman. According to CEO Hans Bourlon, the parting of ways was entirely amicable. His place will be taken by Steve Van den Kerkhof, currently director of the group's Plopsaland theme parks.

Fortis

A document produced by investment bank JP Morgan laying out a plan for banking and insurance group Fortis to overcome its current difficulties, was greeted by markets with alacrity last week, pushing Fortis share prices up 4.7%. The so-called "roadmap" advises Fortis to sell off d5 billion of non-core activities, including Portuguese insurer Millennium, as well as Polish and Turkish subsidiaries. Fortis has capped its asset-sales at d2 billion, which, according to JP Morgan – and, apparently, the markets – doesn't go far enough.

Galapagos

Mechelen-based biotechnology company Galapagos has signed a contract with UCB to carry out chemicals research via its UK subsidiary BioFocus, acquired in October 2005. Chemicals concern UCB said the deal, worth up to d4 million, was part of its strategy of farming out first-phase research. Galapagos could also receive up to d500,000 in success payments if certain conditions are met.

InBev

The Leuven-based brewer (see front page) announced second-quarter profits higher than expected at d542 million, compared to a forecast d490 million. But production volumes were slightly below expectations at 68.4 million hectolitres. Sales were also slightly down on forecasts at d3.71 billion.

Fragile

The Antwerp-based designer clothing company, which specialises in fashions for pregnant women, will open a store in Moscow in September. Last weekend the brand's flagship store in Antwerp was re-opened after major renovation and enlargement. Fragile opened a shop in the Hague in March. The Moscow store will be run by a Belgian woman who already lives in the Russian capital, who identified the gap in the market and brought the plan to Fragile.

FILM

The sands of cinema

Ostend puts together a film festival for the rest of us

Lisa Bradshaw

Every eight hours, somewhere in the world, a film festival begins.

That is a lot of competition, and last year Film Festival Ostend entered the fray. The city knew they had one thing already going for them: they're on the beach. "Film festivals on the coast have a special atmosphere" says Peter Craeymeersch, programme director. The inference to Cannes and Venice is unmistakable, but, instead of

aspiring to such heights, Ostend has taken rather the opposite approach to set itself apart: TV shows and video gaming.

Some aficionados would gasp at the idea of powering up *Guitar Hero IV* to "unleash your inner rock star" during a proper film festival. But Ostend, under the moniker "Film in the 21st Century", is tapping into an under-served festival audience – one that views its computer and television as its generation's cinema. "You have people who don't visit the cinema anymore,

and by doing all these kinds of things, we want to attract them back," says Craeymeersch. "We have the facilities to stage events in the cinema that you're not used to seeing there."

For game geeks, the opportunity is indeed irresistible. In a cinema on your own in the "PlayStation Dome", you can play new versions of games that haven't been released yet and then share your opinions with the game designers, who will be at the festival. The new *MotorStorm* racing game, *Pacific Rift*, makes

its debut, as does *Saints Row 2* and, most notably, the fourth instalment of the insanely popular *Guitar Hero*. Festival-goers will be among the first in the world to play the latest release of the legendary game series.

"Youth are enormously interested in gaming," says Craeymeersch, and Ostend pulls in teenagers and 20-somethings, who otherwise often steer clear of film fests. "We will have musicians here who can play *Guitar Hero*, and we do presentations to explain how the game is made and how it works," says Craeymeersch. "Then you can hire the room to play against your friends." There is even a competition, and the final is played on the closing day of the festival.

Another youthful enterprise is the festival's annual theme of "Music and Sound". This sounds suspiciously close to what happens in Ghent during Flanders' biggest film festival of the year in October, which hosts the World Soundtrack Awards. But it's different, maintains Craeymeersch. "We're not going for musical scores," he explains. "We're not looking at music that's composed for a film, but at the influence of pop and rock on film."

This lends itself to some excellent programming, including the priceless *Nina Simone: Love Sorceress*, director Rene Letzgus' 1998 film that includes Simone's 1976 Paris concert. Confrontational and surreal by turns, Simone admits to being high, while she forces the audience to acknowledge their own idol-worship behaviour. The festival also programmes *Lou Reed's Berlin*, the recent Bob Dylan biopic *I'm Not There* and Abel Ferrara's latest movie *Chelsea on the Rocks*, in which the renegade director wanders the halls of the infamous bohemian New York hotel, talking with its residents to fantastical effect.

New this year is *Sound on Screen*, in which several classic concerts from Nirvana to Marvin Gaye are shown on big screens in area cafes – with the volume turned up to 9. "The sound system is such that it feels like you're actually at the concert," assures Craeymeersch.

This focus on music reaches out into the live music community as well, in the form of the "Master Selection". Last year the master of choice was Arno, and this year it's Tom Barman, the highly influential Flemish front man of the band dEUS, who chose a handful of personal favourite films. Barman is particularly appropriate for the job, since he's also a filmmaker – his 2003 *Any Way the Wind Blows* is a cult

favourite in Flanders. Barman is "passionate about film, and he's very artistically driven and original," confirms Craeymeersch. "He's also passionate about Ostend; he told me that he spent a lot of his holidays here with his aunt. When he came to the coast, he always came to Ostend."

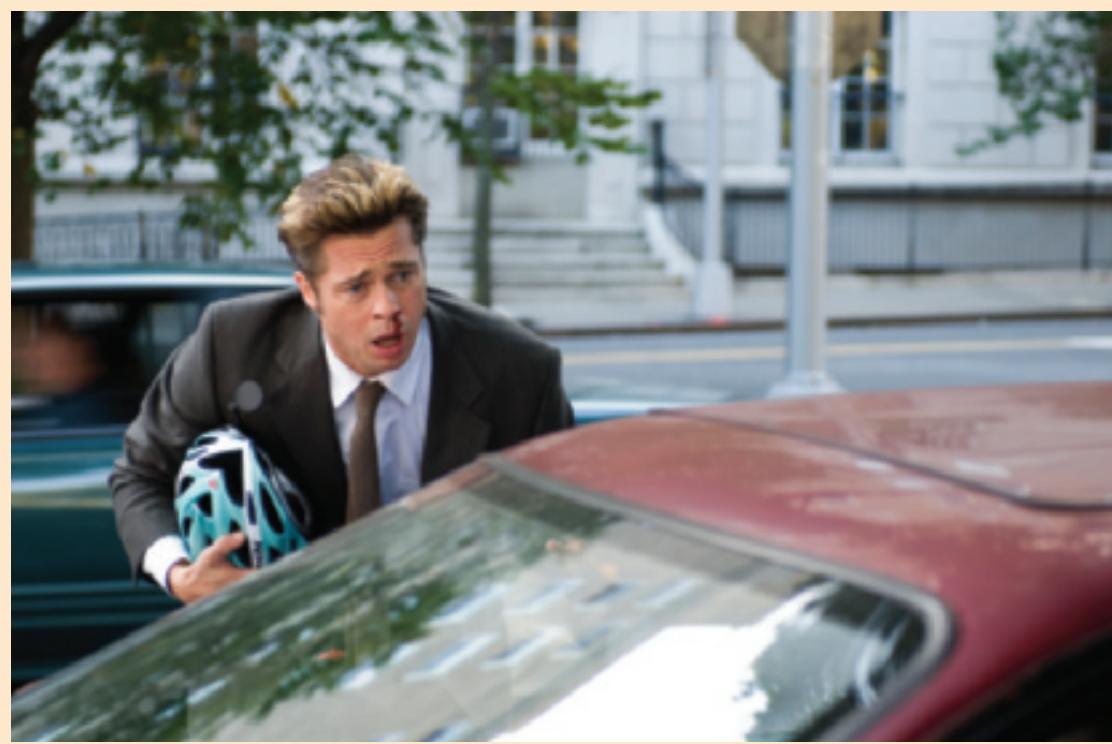
Interestingly, Barman chose all comedies for his 11 films. "Comedy doesn't get a lot of attention in festivals, and he wanted to turn that around," explains Craeymeersch. "He says it's not easy to get people laughing." Barman will be in Ostend quite a lot during the festival and will introduce several of his selections, which include Woody Allen's *Broadway Danny Rose*, the 1992 Belgian film *C'est arrivé près de chez vous* (know in English as *Man Bites Dog*) and episodes from the American television series *House MD*.

The festival is also programming a huge number of TV shows – American, British and Flemish. British comedy legend Hugh Laurie, star of the award-winning American series *House MD*, will also show up in *A Bit of Fry and Laurie*. There are brand new, never-been-seen episodes of some shows, such as *Flikken*, but mostly it's pure vintage: *The Bionic Woman*, *Fame*, *Seinfeld* and *Are You Being Served* are among the more than 40 series on the programme.

Yes, there are full-length movies, too. About 35 of them and mostly Belgian premieres, like *Le Silence de Lorna*, the new film by Belgian brothers Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, fresh from its world premiere at Cannes. You'll also be the first in Belgium to see *Mamma Mia!*, the film version of the smash Broadway musical based on the music of Abba, and *Gomorra*, director Matteo Garrone's shockingly accurate adaptation of the best-selling Italian novel about a mafia network based on the Camorra family.

Gomorra is "very confrontational and very well made," says Craeymeersch. The festival programme director is also psyched about providing the Belgian premiere of the new Coen brothers movie *Burn After Reading*. "No Country for Old Men is such a great film, and this one also has a very strong cast," he says. "Everybody wants to see a new Coen brothers film."

28 August – 6 September at Kinepolis, Cinema Rialto and other venues across Ostend



Top picks

Top: Secret memoirs of a CIA agent wind up in the hands of a simple gym employee in *Burn After Reading*. Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Tilda Swinton and John Malkovich under the capable hands of the Coen Brothers. From Italy, meanwhile, is the Cannes Grand Prize winner *Gomorra* (left), the much-anticipated adaptation of the best-selling novel about a Neapolitan crime family by author Roberto Saviano, who now requires a police escort. Belgium's own Dardenne brothers introduce their new film *Le Silence de Lorna*, starring Arta Dobroshi, right, as an Albanian immigrant in Liège with simple dreams – but one dangerous plan to realise them. Below, one from Tom Barman's *Master Selection*: the hilarious 1984 Woody Allen farce *Broadway Danny Rose* in which a talent agent gets mixed up with the girlfriend of a Mafioso, a cast-against-type Mia Farrow, who is indescribably enticing.

online

www.filmfestivalostende.be

MUSIC

A slap in the face

The Klara Festival shakes audiences out of their classical stupor

Marie Dumont

Some people like classical concerts because they know exactly what to expect: a gentle, civilised moment among like-minded aesthetes, a safe retreat from the chaos of modern life. These people should probably stay away from the Klara Festival.

Those, on the other hand, who don't mind being surprised and challenged, listen to Haydn and Elliot Carter with equal pleasure and think Bach and Mozart belong in the street as much as in a concert hall, will no doubt be enchanted by it.

The Klara is one of seven festivals bearing the Festival of Flanders tag and staged around Flanders throughout the summer and early autumn. Held in the first two weeks of September in various Brussels venues – mostly Bozar and the Beursschouwburg, but also more outlandish locations such as train and metro stations and even private homes – Klara is easily the most urban and raucous of the lot.

"That's hardly difficult," says Ostend-born composer and festival director Patrick De Clerck. "Of all the Festivals of Flanders, the Klara Festival is the only one to take place in a truly big city – and a multicultural one at that, where Flemings are only a minority. We target the people of Brussels – those who live here but also the 600,000 or so who come to work here every day. I'm relatively new to the city, and I never stop being amazed at its diversity."

A gaunt giant with a soft voice and peering, enigmatic eyes, De Clerck has spent the best part of the last decades travelling the world: working in advertising in Italy, teaching at the Moscow Conservatory and composing sophisticated avant-garde works that are performed as far as Japan. In just over a year and a half at the head of the Klara Festival (this is his second edition), he has managed to shape the event in his image: an engrossing, cosmopolitan, opinionated event that shuns neither provocation nor bad taste.

An engrossing, cosmopolitan, opinionated event that shuns neither provocation nor bad taste

"Classical concerts often bore me to death," he says. "I can't help being angry when I hear a mediocre pianist or violinist who've somehow managed to get themselves a reputation playing the same old piece in the same old way. A concert should be an experience, something you take home with you and think about



Classical with street cred: Patrick De Clerck (top) is "tired of being bored to death" by traditional classical concerts; the Living Room series (left) gets you out of the concert hall; Glamorous cellist Sol Gabetta (above) performs an odd little Latvian piece

– and that may even make you a little uneasy."

The bulk of the programme consists of three daily performances: intimate lunchtime concerts, grander evening dos, and intriguing late-night events that confront two different sound-worlds – free jazz and classical piano, say, or plangent folk songs from Israel and Bach miniatures played on a Baroque lute.

them. But the lights may suddenly go out or a famous actor may walk on stage to insult them..."

De Clerck has carefully hand-

Meanwhile, in Antwerp...

Eight years away from the spirit of the Klara Festival and held just before it, *Laus Polyphoniae*, the Antwerp leg of the Festival of Flanders, traditionally focuses on early and Baroque music performed on period instruments and with the greatest attention to authenticity.

It's a style of playing known as HIP, or Historically Informed Performance, and this year's programme revolves around the music of the Hanseatic League, the maritime and commercial network of northern European cities that amassed formidable wealth and power in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. They also commanded vibrant musical scenes, snatches of which will be heard here: stately fanfares that would have been heard at official ceremonies and dainty

picked every musician. Several are defiantly unfashionable, such as Idil Biret, a Turkish pianist who produced countless recordings in

lute works composed for private performances, but also the famous Abdenmusik concert series organised by Dietrich Buxtehude in Lübeck's Marienkirche.

Much of it will be new to modern ears and many composers' names will sound unfamiliar. Performers, on the other hand, have been culled from the *crème de la crème* of today's early music scene: Konrad Junghänel's Cantus Cölln, Paul Van Nevel's celebrated Huelgas Ensemble and Zefiro Torna, an exciting Flemish ensemble that will stage a riveting revival of a 16th-century Finnish songbook.

23-31 August 23 to 31, across Antwerp

online

www.festival.be

the 1990s but afterwards somehow fell out of favour with concert organisers. "Her playing is utterly natural, like water flowing from the top of a mountain into the sea," muses De Clerck. "Hearing her play Ligeti, you'd never think it was contemporary music."

Other artists are more in the limelight but will be playing a very different kind of repertoire than they are known for, such as Dutch cellist Pieter Wispelwey, who, tired of being forever associated with Bach's cello suites, will present sonatas by Kodály and Escher in a lunchtime concert.

Or the great Russian conductor Valery Gergiev who, helming the Mariinsky orchestra, will first coax his audience with Tchaikovsky's violin concerto (with Sergei Krylov as soloist) before veering into positively weird sounds by two contemporary composers: the Ukrainian Valentin Silvestrov and the formidable Russian Galina Ustvolskaya, also known in avant-garde circles as "the lady with the hammer".

One of De Clerck's proudest achievements is to have taken classical out of the concert hall and into Brussels' streets, parks and metro stations. Even Brussels Airport will be filled with live string quartets and cabaret numbers on the festival's final day. Other concerts will take place in people's homes, not just, says De Clerck, "to help city dwellers meet their neighbours, which in itself is a good thing, but also because the intimacy of it all makes the whole concert experience much more intense."

The title of this year's edition, *Forza Musica!*, captures the Klara Festival's peculiar mixture of earnestness and irreverence. A hint at the programme's strong Italian flavour, it also sums up De Clerck's belief that music has the power to reach out to people and make a significant impact on their lives.

"But that power doesn't need loud noises or grand gestures," he points out. "It can be expressed in the softest pianissimo." Any resemblance with Forza Italia, Silvio Berlusconi's political party, is far from accidental – De Clerck intends it as a slap in the face of "all nationalistic people, wherever they are."

"We take a lot of things seriously," he adds. "That gives us a right to have fun now and then."

29 August to 12 September, across Brussels

online

www.klarafestival.be

SPORTS

Leende Scherderkens



Grand day out: the Ghent Arcadians play the Brussels' 12 Stars in rare balmy weather

Sticky wickets

Still dominated by the expats, cricket approaches its 200th anniversary in Belgium

The Battle of Waterloo was preceded by a cricket match between the Guards and attended by the Duke of Wellington, according to legend.

Almost 200 years on and not 20 kilometres further, the blonde bowler of the Ghent Arcadians is struggling to get the 12 Stars Cricket Club out. He toils with the same purpose as a red-jacket must have done.

A dry thud meets his next bowl and sends the ball soaring into the treetops in the park in Tervuren for a long, wide mid-off six. Amit Kumar, the 12 Stars batsman who delivered the bruising smash is acknowledged by his teammates. The English cheers, ranging in accent from Trinidad and Tobago to India by way of Britain and Australia, echo over the British School of Brussels' artificial pitch – which has become infernal thanks to a 30-degree day.

Belgian cricket is rife with history. Fifty-one years after Napoleon's final defeat, the then-mayor of Brussels, Jules Anspach, opened the Brussels cricket ground. It was 1866, according to an 1870 painting in the Lord's Cricket Ground's pavilion in London.

The Belgian national cricket team has been operational since 1905, which makes it a year older

than the national football team. In 1910, the Brussels Exhibition saw the national side play the famous Marylebone Cricket Club and the Netherlands. (Belgium lost both of its matches.) The Brussels Sports Club's cricket team played British soldiers in 1965 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the battle of Waterloo. The match was attended by the Duke and Duchess of Kent and ended in a draw.

Today, the means of the sport are still limited in Flanders. There are no subsidies from the Flemish or Belgian governments, and this year the Belgian Cricket Federation (BCF) received only €58,000 from the International Cricket Council. That means that reasonable ambitions such as a full-time administrator, a full-time office, grass wickets and a national ground have to be shelved for now, according to Ken Farmiloe, president of the BCF.

Clubs like 12 Stars play on football pitches. Although lined by a beautiful park, the British School's field is far from ideal. The artificial pitch makes it lightning quick, making 4s the norm rather than the exception. The sides of the pitches are so close to the creases that 4s are counted as two runs and 6s are counted for four runs. Only to the long ends do the regular rules

apply. And the ball frequently gets lost in the woods.

"There are not so many cricket grounds available in Belgium," says Anthony Brand, captain of the 12 Stars. "It means that often there are two or more clubs sharing one ground. Some teams have no regular ground of their own." An additional difficulty is

were created following an influx of South Asians during the 1980s.

But 193 years after the Brits bowled Napoleon's empire in 1815, they still dominate Belgian cricket, a sport which, despite having only 700 or so players in the entire country, might well be Belgium's oldest.

The clubs are mostly made up of

"It's hard to see the appeal of a sport that takes seven or eight hours to play"

presented by Belgian law. Since it's considered construction, in order to lay a wicket, clubs need a building permit.

The 12 Stars have to pay a fee every time they want to use the ground, and they have to compete for time with rugby, hockey and football clubs. "If we had our own ground, it would be easier for us to practice during the season," explains Brand. "This would help us to develop as players."

Belgium now counts 17 cricket clubs: 14 are based in Brussels and Flanders, two are homeless (and play only away-matches) and one is in Luxembourg. Most

expats from the traditional cricket-playing countries, mostly from the British Isles but also from South Asia, Australia, South Africa and the Caribbean. "And that's the trouble," explains Paul Farrar, a British logistics expert for Exxon Mobil, who's been playing on the 12 Stars on and off for 16 years. "This is an international society. People come and go quickly. They also often travel during the week and so want to stay at home at the weekend. Or they go home on vacation for two months."

The abundance of expats in the region is at once a strength and a weakness. Although it elevates the level of play, it also leads to insta-

bility. "Even if you have many players in theory, it's sometimes difficult to get a full team out," says Brand, a human resources analyst for Toyota from Trinidad and Tobago. "On match days, you may find yourself scratching around for a team."

"It has always been difficult to get native Belgians involved in cricket, as it's a game and language foreign to their culture," says Ted Vorzanger, Chairman of the Royal Brussels Cricket Club. This makes it very hard to create sustainable clubs that are less vulnerable to a sudden exodus of expats.

"It's hard to see the appeal of a sport that takes seven or eight hours to play," notes Mahesh Krishnamoorthy.

"Our Belgian colleagues think we just go to have tea and eat sandwiches," says Paul Davis.

"But it's more tiring than people realize," Farrar adds as he, Krishnamoorthy and Davis sit under the shade of a tree, looking on as their teammates carve up the Arcadians and awaiting their turn at the crease. Indeed, batting for what can be several hours is mentally draining. One badly played ball can be the end of your day and derail your team's efforts. Standing in the field for several hours more on high alert for balls hit your way is equally strenuous.

"Hardly anyone understands cricket," says Brand. "And sometimes they don't think of it as being very sexy." Cricket is not generally seen as a sport that requires a high level of fitness. "But to play does require a high degree of athleticism, plus hand-eye coordination," says Brand. "But in a cafe you may tell a lady that you play cricket, and she thinks you're playing croquet, which can be a blow to any guy's ego."

Some clubs have more luck than others in recruiting

young people. "Ghent is very big on training kids," says Nikki Lin, a Belgian who's been playing for 18 months and is the Arcadians' 12th man (reserve player). "In the Ghent area, the national coach visits schools."

As a result, Ghent now has seven Flemish kids who come regularly. This kind of commitment offers a shot at continuity. "But it's hard to make a [youth] team because the players have to be in the same age category," Lin explains. "The biggest problem is that [cricket] is not broadcast, so Belgian people don't know the rules," making it even harder to turn kids on to the sport. Most of the kids with a natural curiosity for the sport come from cricket-countries and go to international schools, creating the same expat problems as they grow older.

So most of the clubs grow organically. The 12 Stars, who were named after the European Union flag to represent their close ties with EU institutions, were turned from a group of guys coming together to play once a week into a full-fledged club by a few British School parents.

Founded 19 years ago, the 12 Stars 1989 and the first president was the leading conservative politician Sir Leon Brittan, who became European Commissioner for Competition.

"Ours is a typical club in these parts with a high turnover of players," says Patrick Lambert, one of the 12 Stars' founding members and the honorary president. As a result, the clubs, who play eight formal league matches a year, rarely appear with the same team more than once a season. Consequentially, one club's level can vary tremendously throughout the season, hinging on which of its players are available when. As such, the level of play across Belgium's four divisions is very similar. Which is why, most unusually, the captain and another star

player of the national team play in third division.

Surprising to a lot of players, they are also asked to contribute towards the club's operational costs. "In India, nobody pays," says Krishnamoorthy. "There's so much money in the sport that all costs are covered, no matter what level you play."

But, like all of the other 300 players in Flanders, he doesn't much mind coughing up the €100 per season, plus €5-€8 per match in order to play (not to mention an initial cost of €250 for equipment). Neither does he mind that the absence of a supporting cast (ie wives and girlfriends) means that the players have to bring their own tea

and sandwiches to matches.

"It takes a lot of investment but it's worth it for it's a beautiful game," Lambert says. "Lots of money is coming into the sport now. It's on the rise."

The Indian Premier League, a brand-new super-league of Twenty20 cricket (a much faster variant of the game) is turning over several billion US dollars, despite having been in operation for only a year and having a short season. Chances are, this unprecedented wealth will eventually trickle down and allow Flemish cricket to expand.

online

www.cricket-belgium.com

TOUCHING BASE



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Welcome to "Touching Base", where every week I'll keep you in the loop about what's going on in the world of Flanders' Anglophone "minority sports" – baseball, cricket, American football and rugby. Although they don't have professional standing, these sports are played seriously in Belgium and have about 12,000 players between them.

This week in:

Baseball

Hoboken Pioneers have lost a game in the Elite Division for the first time to **Merksem Greys**, although they had beaten Merksem the previous day. The Pioneers, which have been dominant all season, have virtually assured themselves of a spot in the Belgium Series. The teams who end first and second in the Elite division will play in the best-of-five.

Elite Division Standings:

Won	Lost
1 Hoboken Pioneers	13 1
2 Merksem Greys	7 3
3 Mortsel Stars	7 5
4 Namur Angels	6 8
5 Brasschaat Braves	3 9
6 Borgerhout Squirrels	2 12

The first two teams of the Promo Division, which is made up of the two last Division 1 teams and the four top Division 2 teams of the first half the season, will be promoted or remain in Division 1 next year. Currently the **Merchtem Cats** and **Brussels Kangaroos** lead the charge to the flagship division. The **Junior national team** has won the European Championship A-Poule qualifier. In Sweden, the Belgians defeated Great Britain in a closely fought final by 6-5.

Cricket

The **U-17 national team** has already made its mark on the European Division 2 Championships by tidily defeating Gibraltar, Greece, Spain and Switzerland in group-matches at the tournament in Germany. They will play Italy or Israel in the final.

American Football

The Flanders American Football League is looking for **officials** (umpires and referees) for the juniors and seniors whose upcoming seasons run from September to November and February to May respectively. There will also be opportunities to work Brussels American School, International School of Brussels and SHAPE games. Clinics and instruction is provided, and new recruits – no prior experience required – will be introduced to real games gradually. Officials received a small stipend. Contact Christophe Geldhof at oige@telenet.be for more information.

Rugby

The **Brussels Celtic Rugby Club** is looking for new players for the upcoming season. Members are launching a second team, and spots on both teams are available to players of all levels. The teams play Rugby Union in fourth and fifth division, respectively, and train at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) two nights a week. All matches are on Sundays. The season runs from September through April, and the club places a strong emphasis on socialising. Any new players, including those interested in touch rugby, can contact Paul Moody at paulsmoody@yahoo.co.uk.

Leander Schaerlaeckens

Want me to write something about your club or league? Contact me on sport.flanderstoday@gmail.com.



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MUSEUM



WA

Flax nation

Flanders' youngest curator is putting a fresh face on an old industry

Monique Philips

Although every single Flemish town has a square called Vlasmarkt, you'll be hard pressed to find someone who can tell you what vlas is. The times when flax was an important commodity on the market seem long gone, but its finished products are still very much around.

We walk on it (linoleum), we smoke it (cigarette paper) and soon we can ride on it. Next month

former top cyclist Johan Museeuw will start selling his newly invented extra-cushioning bicycle frame made of flax fibres.

"Linen has been the most self-evident finished article of flax for a long time," says Lies Buyse, curator of Kortrijk's Vlasmuseum, or Flax Museum. "But linen, more than wool or cotton, requires such an extensive production process that all of flax's components have been put to use, too."

The list is endless: seeds to put

on *pistolets*, linseed oil to lose weight or to make fuel, fibres to make ropes, paper or insulating material for houses and cars. You can put your dollar bills in a washing machine thanks to its resilient Flemish flax fibres. It's quite unique for one single raw material to result in so many diverse industries and without leaving any residue.

Appointed just last spring, Buyse, 23, is the youngest curator in Flanders and finds the unknown

importance of flax in past, present and future riveting.

"Its story is very old, yet hardly known outside the region of Kortrijk," she laments. "Its heydays were the 19th and early 20th centuries when the local population worked its hands raw growing and processing flax, first at home, later in factories."

After a major crisis in the 1960s, however, the remaining flax production companies were forced to change track and innovate. "Inspired by similar local success stories, the honorary consul of Belarus is said to hope similar innovations will rescue his country's dwindling flax industry," explains Buyse.

"The Golden River" (otherwise known as the Leie) was particularly legendary for producing the best quality and colour of flax. English buyers loved its golden shine.

Like the lone, red poppy in the flax field above, the flax flower's pale, blue bloom is short-lived; left, Flemish flax workers from the early 20th century

The trick was to leave flax to rot (though the proper term is "ret") in the Leie's supposedly special waters for days on end. In reality, it was the only river in which rotting was legally allowed. Other methods involved dew, stagnant water or hot steam ovens. (The resulting smell was legendary, too.)

Since 1943, retting and its ensuing biological pollution has been banned from the Leie and now flax is left to dry on the fields and turned mechanically. If you ever see a flax field in bloom by the end of May, keep watching to see its waves of blue and white. Its blue hue might be gone within half an hour, its delicate petals blown off by the next passing wind.

In addition to its flax museum, Kortrijk has invested in a new bicycle route: the Vlastocht takes you through 40 kilometres of the Leie valley. The history of the flax industry is visually evident: on the Flemish bank of the river, the agricultural landscape still dominates, whereas the French bank is lined with a string of abandoned indus-



trial plants, which used to manufacture the by-products of flax, brought across the border by boat.

Adriaan Linters is a spokesperson for the Flemish Association for Industrial Archaeology (VVIA), and he wonders if it wouldn't have been better to conserve flax-related real property, such as these plants, first, as plenty of historic real estate has been disappearing at top speed during the last 10 years. It is true: the province of West Flanders has barely started doing an inventory of sites of interest, and the Kortrijk city council just approved plans to destroy a warehouse of La Liniére de Courtrai, a former 19th-century flax factory in the Gentsesteenweg.

On their latest field trip to the annual summer Flax Festival in Haute-Normandy, France, the VVIA team was impressed by our French neighbour's boldness in successfully promoting an entire region around a single traditional local product. Doudeville, the "capital of flax", for instance, has in fact little real property to show for it, but festival goers flock to see ecological flax fields, small flax cooperatives like Terre du Lin (recently visited by president Sarkozy) and flax art in the local *chateau*. Stalls sell Flemish flax beer and flax cheese (which, by the way, don't contain any flax).

While the VVIA looks to France in envy, French flax enthusiasts look admiringly at Kortrijk's Flax Museum. Set up by one man, Bert Dewilde, in 1982, and later continued by his daughter Annick, this large 19th-century farmstead not only houses the best and most

complete collection of flax artefacts but also has a wing dedicated to linen and lace.

Plenty of visitors, including George Bush senior and Mikhail Gorbachev, have enjoyed the exhibitions in four languages, including the 30 life-size dioramas, which let you see, hear and feel flax, from plant to rope. The mannequins' faces, hands and feet have been moulded from real-life local flax workers.

Buyse truly enjoys meeting locals who helped set up the museum and still remember the flaxen days vividly. "Sometimes they'll introduce themselves by saying I'm the second man behind the horse." The museum thrives due to these volunteers, who regularly pass through to give demonstrations on the machines or to lovingly straighten up the stalks of flax on display.

Look at the myriad photos on www.beeldbankvlas.be, and you'll see how plenty of women and children did their fair share of the workload, weeding fields on hands and knees or giving the pulled flax that special twist to make it stand up in sheaves (dubbed *kapellen* in Dutch, which means "chapels").

The displayed process of weeding, sowing, pulling, staking, turning, retting, de-seeding, crushing, rippling, drying, bleaching, breaking, scotching, combing and hacking is long and arduous. Next the flax stalks are sent off to the second part of the museum, which explains the further process of weaving.

The Industrial Revolution introduced machinery and massive



I'm the girl next to the horse: curator Lynn Buyse slips into one of the Flax Museum's 30 dioramas, which demonstrate sewing, drying and combing flax – along with about 20 steps in between

unemployment, resulting in an exodus of impoverished workers, who took their knowledge and skills in growing and manufacturing flax first to France and later to America and Canada.

The museum is planning a re-organisation and re-launch in 2010. "I'd like to see the social-economic side of the story stressed a bit more," notes Buyse. "In our

library we have some great oral interviews of flax workers in juicy dialect." She's also like the link to today's industries to be clearer, "to somehow show all those many by-products, so interwoven into our day-to-day reality."

Based on Kortrijk's foundation in design, Buyse also sees designers and artists "interested in authentic craftsmanship" to create

work use the museum's spinning and weaving tools. "Those present and future aspects make my work as a curator much more complex – but fascinating, too," she says. "I'm quite sure I'll enjoy my job for a long time to come."

online
www.kortrijk.be

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Classical & New Music**Brussels**

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be

AUG 29 20.00 Aldo Ciccolini, piano:
Schumann

AUG 30 20.00 Grand opening of the
KlaraFestival: Lille National Orchestra
and La Monnaie choirs, conducted by
Evelino Pido, with Pino de Vittorio,
tenor and Queen Elisabeth Singing
Competition 2008 prizewinners: Bel
Canto

Miniemerk

Miniemerstraat 62; 02.511.93.84,
www.minimes.net
Midis/Minimes Festival:
AUG 25 12.15 Melodies of Uzbekistan:
traditional Uzbekistan music
AUG 26 12.15 Capriola di Gioia:
Ostinato, Frescobaldi, Sanchez,
Monteverdi
AUG 27 12.15 Axis Ensemble: Leclair,
Guillemain

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
Concerts at 12.15 (part of Midis/
Minimes Festival):
AUG 20 Philippe Ivanov piano:
Debussy, Ravel **AUG 21** Yu-
Fen Chang, piano: Villa-Lobos,
Granados, Ginastera **AUG 22** Michael
Frohmeyer, piano: Schubert's sonata D
959 **AUG 28** La Chorale conducted by
Benoit Giaux: Franck, Fauré, Delibes,
Pierné **AUG 29** Les Muffatti conducted
by Peter Van Heyghen: Handel's cantata
HWV 99

Jazz & blues**Antwerp**

Cafe Mambo
Vlaemarkt 3
AUG 20 & 27 21.00 Marcelo Moncada
Quartet

Brussels

Bizon
Karperbrug 7; 02.502.46.99,
www.cafebizon.com
AUG 25 21.30 Blues jam session hosted
by Roman

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45

Get your tickets now for...**Emmylou Harris**

25 September, 20.00, Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 25. Tickets from
02.507.82.00 or www.bozar.be

There aren't many left like Emmylou Harris: an old-fashioned, down home, country music original. Though her look is modern and sleek, she still belts out the kind of scratchy-voiced bluegrass that would make Loretta Lynn proud. In the business for 40 years and a breath of fresh air compared with the powder-puffed flash of all those "new country" Barbie dolls, Harris will bring plenty of selections from her new album *All I Intended to Be*, which features covers of songs by Tracy Chapman and Merle Haggard, as well as Harris originals. This show will sell out, so order tickets now and remember: "Some morning when you wake up all alone, just come on home to your blue Kentucky girl".

Until AUG 23 20.30 The Toine Thys
Organ Trio

Pop, rock, hip-hop, soul**Brussels**

Fuse
Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
AUG 23 23.00 Arpiar Label Night:
Raresh

Deurne

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,
www.openluchttheater.be
Concerts at 20.30:
AUG 20 & 21 Gabriel Rios with Jef
Neve and Kobe Proesmans + Selah Sue
AUG 24 Racoon + An evening with
Milow **AUG 27** The Ideal Husband
+ José González **AUG 30** Daan solo
with Isolde Lasoen **AUG 31** Errors +
Mogwai

Ghent

De Nauwe Zak
Edward Anseeleplein 2
AUG 22 20.00 Rooty Tooth; blues,
bluegrass, swing

Flanders Expo

Maaltekouter 1; 09.241.92.11,
www.flandersexpo.be
AUG 23 13.00 Marco Borsato,
Soul sister

Rector

Stalhof 5
AUG 22 23.00 Dancehall party with
residents Raggamuffin Whiteman &
Dough + guests

World, folk**Brussels**

Atelier de la Dolce Vita
Liefdadigheidstraat 37a; 02.223.46.75,
www.atelierdolcevita.be
AUG 23 17.00 & 19.00 Blue Grass Blues
with Steve and Jefferson Louvat
AUG 30 17.00 & 19.00 O Tchalai,
Romanian, Greek and Balkan jazz
Live Music Café
Anspachlaan 90-92;
www.live-music-cafe.be
Until AUG 21 22.00 Dju-Bebe
Until AUG 27 22.00 Puchó (Cuba)
Until AUG 30 22.00 Kalema and

K-Tribe

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
Until AUG 23 21.00 The Toine Thys
Organ Trio
AUG 26-30 21.00 Rey Cabrera Cuban
Combo

Visual arts**Antwerp**

**Contemporary Art Museum
(MuHKA)**
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
Until AUG 31 Visual art and sound
installations by British artist and
composer Cornelius Cardew
Until SEP 21 Fantasy, intervention by
Koen van den Broek

Fotomuseum

Waalse Kaa 47; 03.242.93.00
Until SEP 14 Focus on sports, a
selection of the best sports photographs
from the Belga agency (part of Summer
of Photography)
Until SEP 14 Guy Bourdin,
retrospective of work by the French
photographer (1928-1991), famous
for his contributions to fashion
and advertising (part of Summer of
Photography)
Until SEP 14 Summertime,
photographs by Verne

Rockox House

Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50
Until SEP 21 Ensor pays a visit to the
Rockox House, A Confrontation

Bruges

Groeningemuseum
Dijver 12; 050.44.87.43
Until DEC 31 Leuven loans, 15th-
and 16th-century paintings and
woodcarvings from Leuven's Van der
Kelen-Mertens museum

Brussels

Atomium
Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72,
www.atomium.be
Until OCT 19 Expo 58: Between
Utopia and Reality, documents, plans,
objects, films, photographs and scale
models of Expo 58
Until OCT 19 Lucien De Roeck's Star,
design of the famous symbol of Expo 58
Until OCT 19 The Pavilion of
Temporary Happiness, built from
33,000 drink crates to house screenings
and exhibitions about World Fairs (near
the Atomium on Louis Steensplein)

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80,
www.stripmuseum.be
Until NOV 16 Smurf for All, All for
Smurf, original drawings and documents
celebrating the famous characters created
50 years ago by Belgian comic strip artist
Pierre Culliford, known as Peyo

Belvue Museum

Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25, www.belvue.be
Until AUG 31 Today's China,
contemporary Chinese art (free
entrance)

Until SEP 14 Magritte and Mariën, My
Accomplices: sketches photographs
and correspondence between Jacqueline
Nonkels, Marcel Mariën, René and
Georgette Magritte, as well as an
accompanying collection of Surrealist
works, including poetry and literature

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33
Until AUG 30 Chapitre II, book
bindings by Florent Rousseau

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
Until AUG 24 Architecture in the
Pictures/Flanders Architectural
Yearbook, photographs of 37 projects
offering an overview of architectural
developments in Flanders in 2006 and
2007

Until SEP 14 It's Not Only Rock
'n' Roll, Baby!, works by musicians,
including Alan Vega, Brian Eno, Laurie
Anderson, Patti Smith, Pete Doherty
and Yoko Ono

Until SEP 21 Sioux in Paradise,
sculptures, installations, video, models
and drawings by Johan Muyle
Until SEP 21 Mapas abiertos (Opening
maps), overview of contemporary
Caribbean, Central and South-
American photography (part of
Summer of Photography)

CIVA

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71, www.civa.be
Until SEP 19 Documents on the
gardens designed by René Pechère and
Jacques Boulanger-François for Expo 58

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50
Until SEP 30 Profiel, textile creations
by Isabelle Marquet
Until DEC 30 Van New Look tot
Expo 58, women's fashion from the
time of Brussels' 1958 World's Fair,
with evening gowns, wedding dresses,
cocktail dresses, suits, coats and
accessories

Czech Centre

Troonstraat 60; 02.213.94.30
Until SEP 5 Illustrations and
installations by Czech artist Kveta
Pacovská

**De Elektriciteitscentrale European
Centre for Contemporary Art**

Sint Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.31
Until SEP 28 Fables, photographs by
Karen Knorr

De Loge Architectuur museum

Kluisstraat 86; 02.649.86.65
Until SEP 28 Belgique/Belgique 58,
architectural and decorative forms at
the time of Brussels' 1958 World's Fair,
with drawings, photographs, models,
posters and furniture

Erasmus House

Kapittelstraat 31; 02.521.13.83
Until SEP 16 Anatomie van de
Ijdelen (Anatomy of the Vanities), the
museum's 75th anniversary show, with
works by Hieronymus Bosch, Jan Fabre,
Hans Holbein, Marie-Jo Lafontaine, Aïda
Kazarian and Quinten Metsys

Espace Photographique Contretype

Verbindingslaan 1; 02.538.42.20
Until SEP 21 Voyage Out, photographs
by Chantal Maes

Huis der Hertogen van Brabant

Grote Markt 19; 02.540.85.10
Until AUG 31 An exhibition of over
200 works by Salvador Dali, to mark the
20th anniversary of his death

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until SEP 26 White Noise, ceramics by
Caroline Andrin and ten guest artists

Jacques Franck Cultural Centre

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20
Until AUG 24 Mer: agitée à peu agitée,
photographs by Jacques Debacker (part
of the Summer of Photography)

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
Until OCT 5 One Family, photographs
by Vardi Kahana

La Maison de la Bande Dessinée

Keizerlaan 1; 02.502.94.68
Until SEP 7 Over 150 original drawings
published in the Belgian weekly *Spirou*
(founded in 1938), by Jijé, Franquin,
Morris, Will, Tillieux, Peyo and Roba,
among others

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
Until AUG 24 Les Enfants d'Abraham
(Abraham's children), photographs
on Christians, Muslims and Jews by
Magnum photographer Abbas (part of
Summer of Photography)
Until AUG 24 Vodou/Vodounon,
photographs by Jean-Dominique
Burton

Museum van Elsene

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22
Until AUG 31 The Belle Epoque,
sculpture by Alexandre Charpentier
and the museum's collection of posters
by Toulouse-Lautrec, among other fin-
de-siècle works

Royal Army Museum

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33
Until NOV 30 A Paintbrush in the
Barrel, World War One paintings,
drawings and etchings by soldiers

Royal Library

Kunstberg; 02.519.58.73
Until AUG 23 Eugène Ysaÿe, exhibition
on the Belgian violinist and composer,
with photographs, letters and
instruments

Until AUG 24 In de ban van boeken
(Under the Spell of Books), Belgian
book collectors, 1750 to 1850

Royal Museum of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11
Until SEP 30 België op opticaprenten
(Belgium on Optical Prints), some 400
views of Belgian cities dating from the
17th and 18th centuries

Until SEP 14 Jeanne d'Arc: the Myth
and the Image, visual representation
of Joan of Arc in France from the early
days of photography (part of Summer
of Photography)

Until SEP 14 Vudoptik, young
photographers' views of their favourite
Brussels' monument (part of Summer
of Photography)

Until SEP 21 Expo '58 Through
the lens of Gérard Castello-Lopes,
photographs of the World's Fair (part of
Summer of Photography)

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23
Until SEP 21 The Joy of Looking, painting biennale with works by Philip Akkerman, Georg Baselitz, Jean Brusselmans, Francis Picabia and Roger Raveel, among others (see also Roger Raveel Museum in Machelen-Zulte)

Ghent

Caermersklooster
Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10
Until SEP 14 Disappearing Worlds, photographs of indigenous peoples in Australia, New Guinea and South Africa by Danish anthropologist Jens Bjerre
Until SEP 14 Eighty-four: in pek op papier (in Pitch on Paper), large-format drawings by Flemish artist Richard Simoens

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99
Until OCT 12 Design from the 1950s and 1960s
Until OCT 12 Design with a smile, designs with a surrealist touch
Until OCT 12 Hommage to Hans Wegner, exhibition in recognition of the contributions of the famous Danish designer
Until OCT 12 Helena Schepens: Perpetuum Mobile, designs by the Flemish silver- and goldsmith

Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95, www.museumdrguislain.be
Until SEP 7 Circus or Science: The Roca Collection, anatomical wax models from the late 19th and early 20th centuries
Until SEP 7 Jean Rustin, retrospective of work by the French painter
Until SEP 7 I live in the painting, work by the late Flemish artist Marc Maet

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be
Until SEP 21 Electrified, installations combining visual, sound and electronic arts, by Ronald Kuivila and Edwin van der Heide

Hasselt

Modemuseum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21
Until AUG 31 Looks: Mode 1750-1958, Two-hundred years of fashion history

National Jenever Museum
Witte Nonnenstraat 19; 011.23.98.60
Until AUG 31 The Orange Bulb Alambfleurics, olfactory installation by Flemish artist Peter De Cupere

Z33
Zuivelmarkt (Beguinage) 33; 011.29.59.60
Until SEP 29 1% Water, art and design relating to global water issues

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation, Westakker
Hulsterstraat Noord; www.verbekefoundation.com
Until NOV 16 Vision in Motion – Motion in Vision, new exhibition of moving art

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
Until SEP 21 The Joy of Looking, painting biennale with works by Georg Baselitz, Jean Dubuffet, Asger Jorn, Constant Permeke, Robert Rauschenberg and Roger Raveel, among others (see also Dhondt-Dhaenens Museum in Deurle)

Mechelen

Congres en Erfgoedcentrum Lamot
Van Beethovenstraat 8-10; 015.29.49.00
Until SEP 14 Van Pijl tot paviljoen, 20 models of the pavilions at Brussels' 1958 World's Fair

Cultuurcentrum

Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00, www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be
Until SEP 14 Happy Days, collector's items and music of the 1950s recreating the atmosphere of Brussels' 1958 World's Fair

Ostend

Modern Art Museum

Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18
Until AUG 31 Georges Vantongerloo: Pionier van de moderne beeldhouwkunst (Pioneer of Modern Sculpture), retrospective of work by the Flemish artist (1886-1965)

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum

Grote Markt 34; 057.23.92.75
Until SEP 7 Man, Culture, War: Multicultural Aspects of the First World War, a panorama of the diverse origins of those who fought in Belgium during WWI
Until NOV 12 Off the record, work by artist-in-residence Wendy Morris

Festivals & special events

Belgium Roller Parade

Until SEP 29 Weekly rollerskating parades in Brussels and other towns www.belgiumrollers.com

Summer of Photography:

Contemporary photography festival
Until SEP 14 in venues across Belgium 02.507.82.00, www.summerofphotography.be

Antwerp

Cultuurmarkt van Vlaanderen: Stands provide information on Flanders' new cultural season, along with free concerts, literature, stand-up comedy, classical music and theatre
AUG 30-31 in Antwerp centre 03.203.95.85, www.cultuurmarkt.be

Het Theaterfestival: Annual competitive theatre festival featuring the most intriguing pieces from Flanders and the Netherlands

AUG 22-27 at DeSingel, Desguinlei 25, and other venues in Antwerp www.theaterfestival.be

Laus Polyphonia 2008: Festival of polyphonic music from Hanseatic cities. The programme also includes organ and lute music
AUG 23-31 at venues across Antwerp www.festival.be

Zomer van Antwerpen (Summer of Antwerp): arts festival including avant-garde theatre, concerts in neighbourhood squares, circus performances, outdoor film screenings and a live "sunset show" every night

Through AUG in venues and public spaces across the city 03.224.85.28, www.zomervanantwerpen.be

Bonheiden (Antwerp province)

International Folklore Festival: 34th edition of this music and dance festival, which includes groups from Portugal, Mexico and Poland

AUG 21-24 at Gemeenschapscentrum 't Blikveld, Waversesteenweg 11 015.51.56.49, www.dekrekels.be

Brussels

Boterhammen in het Park 2008: Free outdoor festival of Flemish and Dutch music

AUG 25-29 12.00 at Warandepark, Koningsstraat and Paleizenplein www.boterhammeninhetpark.be

Brussels Summer Festival: Outdoor festival including theatre, street entertainment, film and children's activities

AUG 22-31 13.00 in venues and squares around the city www.brusselssummerfestival.be

Ca rebondit sur cour Festival: Festival of string and Baroque ranging from world and jazz to French chanson, classical and traditional, all on the theme of water

Until AUG 30 at Domaine de Rouge-Cloître (Ouderghem) 02.223.46.75, www.atelierdolcevita.be

Drive-In Movies: Outdoor festival with music, barbecue and films projected on a giant screen on Friday and Saturday evenings

Until SEP 13 20.00 at Jubelpark, Ridderschaplaan www.driveinmovies.be

Ecran Total: Festival showing a wide variety of films, including classics, reprises, documentaries, Japanese Nouvelle Vague and animation
Until SEP 9 at Cinema Arenberg, Koninginnegalerij 26 02.512.80.63, www.arenberg.be

Feeërieën 2008: Free outdoor music festival organised by Ancienne Belgique. International artists performing folk, jazz, cabaret, chanson, classical and Klezmer

AUG 25-29 20.00 at Warandepark, Koningsstraat and Paleizenplein 02.548.24.24, www.abconcerts.be

Fiesta Latina Festival: Latin-American music festival with concerts, DJs and parties

AUG 29-30 all day Until 2.00 in Louizalaan www.fiesta-latina.be

International Brigittines Festival: A collection of theatre and dance performances

AUG 21-SEP 6 at Les Brigittines, Korte Brigittinenstraat 02.506.43.00, www.brigittines.be

KlaraFestival 2008: International music festival including contemporary music and jazz around the theme Forza Musical, the strength of music

AUG 29-SEP 12 in venues and public spaces around Brussels 070.21.02.17, www.klarafestival.be

Midi Fun Fair: Annual fair stretching from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan

Until AUG 24 02.279.25.31, www.fete-foraine.be

Midis/Minimes 08: Series of weekday lunchtime concerts, exploring classical and new music rarely performed and new Belgian and international artists

Until AUG 29 12.15 at Kapel van de Miniemen, Miniemstraat 62, and the Royal Music Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30 02.512.30.79, www.midis-minimes.be

Shuffle #3: Two festive weekends of international dance and theatre to introduce Kaaitheater's new season

AUG 30-SEP 6 at Kaaitheater, Sainctelettesquare 20, and other venues 02.201.59.59, www.kaaitheater.be

Tour of the Royal Palace: The Royal Palace is open to the public

Until SEP 7 at Koninklijk Paleis, Brederodestraat 16 02.551.20.20, www.monarchie.be

Dansen in 't Park: World dance festival, including tango, swing and salsa demonstrations and lessons

AUG 22-24 in Azaleapark, Azaleastraat and Achterstraat (Sint-Amandsberg) www.danseninhetpark.be

Jazz in 't Park: 15th edition of this free outdoor jazz festival, featuring Moker Jazz Band, Mimi Verderame & the Victor Da Costa Quartet, Jacques Pirotton Quartet and more, plus Jazz on Film open-air screenings

AUG 22-31 in Zuidpark, Zuidparklaan 09.269.46.00

Parkkaffee: Music, shows and children's entertainment

Until AUG 31 at Parkkaffee,

Don't miss this week



Het Theater Festival

22-30 August, across Antwerp. Tickets from www.theaterfestival.be

Last week, we heralded the coming of Kaaitheater's double-weekend dance and theatre festival Shuffle, but if you live a little further north, Het Theater Festival is every bit as good. This annual competition is held every year in Brussels or Antwerp, and this year the port city puts on the show. Or, rather, 15 theatre groups do: each one stages a production that they premiered over the last year, selected by a jury of theatre critics and art directors. Twelve of the productions are Flemish, three are Dutch, and all are powerful – either in their position as an example of the driving forces in the modern theatre scene or in their desire to question the parameters of theatre itself.

A highlight is *Tien Geboden: Part 1* (photo), a collaboration between NTGent and the Dutch theatre group Wunderbaum. In this stage version of the first five episodes of Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski's TV series *Dekalog*, five people in a cheerless Warsaw apartment block are each given one chance to change their fate. Another must-see is *Abattoir Fermé's Tourniquet*, a disquieting little meditation on ritual, trance and exorcism by the award-winning Mechelen-based theatre troupe. Some performances are in Dutch, some in English and many are without dialogue. There's already a "wait list" for a few of the performances, so don't leave your plans in the hand of fate – book now.

Groenestaakstraat 37 (Mariakerke) 09.227.99.94, www.parkkaffee.be

Tokyo Drums: Japanese music show

Until NOV 5 at Capitole, Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5 0900.69.00

Hasselt

Het Grote Verlangen: Flemish/Dutch literary festival with writers, poets and performers

Until AUG 31 in various locations across Hasselt 011.26.17.87 www.literairmuseum.be

Herselt (Antwerp province)

(Ge) Varenwinkel Festival: Blues & roots weekend featuring Jim Cofey, The Electrophonics, Thorbjørn Risager, The Legendary Johnny Trash and more

AUG 29-30 at Gevarenwinkel, Wolfsdonksesteenweg 160 0496.81.67.44, www.gevarenwinkelfestival.be

Temse (East Flanders)

Temse in de Wolken (Temse in the Clouds): Hot air balloon rides, fireworks, concerts and entertainment along the Schelde

AUG 23-24 on Wilfordkaai 03.710.12.70, www.temseindewolken.be

Turnhout

Turnhoutse VRIJ-dagen: Free music festival with Don McLean, Soulsister, Ketnet Band and Helmut Lotti, among others

Fridays Until AUG 29 20.30 (kids' programme from 15.30) on the Grote Markt 050.630.430; www.artnocturneknocke.be

Watou

Poëziezomer (Poetry summer): Annual indoor and outdoor festival of contemporary art, architecture and poetry

Until SEP 7 in venues across Watou 0900.69.001, www.sherpa.be

INTERVIEW

Karel Goddeau

Karel Goddeau is a brewer at the Slaghmuylder Brewery in Ninove, East Flanders, a family-run business for five generations.

Grain merchant Emmanuel Slaghmuylder established the brewery back in 1860, and it's still Slaghmuylder owned and operated, right?

There are three cousins, all descendants of the original Mr Slaghmuylder. With Michel Slaghmuylder having passed away in 2006, his son and the two cousins have had to take over his role. So it's essentially those three who are furthering the tradition of an independent family brewery, of which there are so few left in Belgium. In 1800, there were about 4,000, but today we'd be lucky to count 70 small breweries that are still entirely independent and family-run with their roots in Flanders. Here in Ninove, we are the only remaining brewery. So the region's rich brewer past is now entirely concentrated on Slaghmuylder, whose survival we've ensured by adapting to the times. For example, we offer both low- and high-fermentation beers. We have our own pubs that serve our products. In addition, we are exporting – to Scandinavia, the Netherlands, France, the United States and Japan.

How important is export?

Export is becoming more important every day. Due to the pressure to keep costs as low as possible in Belgian supermarkets, the small breweries simply cannot compete. These days, it is the store that determines the prices. Fortunately, we have been able to capitalise on the excellent reputation we have at Belgian beer festivals, where we have acquired a certain fame among the connoisseurs. That has taken our name beyond the Belgian border. We just got back from a week in Finland, where we were treated as honourable guests during a tour of some of the establishments that carry

our assortment. Our beers come with a higher price tag over there because they appreciate the knowledge and experience we have here in Belgium. That is our strength, and we should use it more to our advantage. We must step away from our characteristic Flemish modesty and be rightfully proud of what we have to offer. Nowhere else in the world can you find such an enormous variety of beer types over such a small area. And it is not the number of litres that matters most to the importers but the quality of the product.

Surely your most popular beers are the Stimulo, Dubbele Pater and Tripel from the Witkap Pater assortment. Where does the name Witkap Pater come from?

The person who first developed the recipe for these beers also served as an advisor at one of the Trappist breweries. He witnessed the Trappist monks there, each with a white hood over his head, on their way to the church to pray in the middle of the night. Because the advisor had such a good relationship with the monks, he was allowed to use the name Witkap Pater [White Hood Father].

And your Tripel first carried a Trappist label, didn't it?

Yes, that's correct. We were even the very first to put the blonde Tripel on the market in 1907, something for which we are praised in all the best books on beer. It wasn't until 1966 that the Trappist label became protected. As we are not Trappists, we no longer refer to it as a Trappist beer. Though we are, in fact, standing on 'holy ground'. The brewery is enclosed in the old walls of the abbey of Ninove. The abbey's property was once one of the largest in Flanders, but now only the church remains, as well as this wall.

Robin Boyle



From left: Karel Goddeau and cousins Benedicte Slaghmuylder, Thomas Slaghmuylder and Luc Verhaegen brew Belgian beer the old-fashioned way

Can you tell me a bit about your specialty Christmas and Easter beers?

Well, they received the regional product label from the Flanders' Agricultural Marketing Board because they are low-fermentation beers that are a bit heavier and are made with hops from the first harvest. Only available during their respective periods throughout the year, the Christmas and Easter beers sell quite well. People enjoy having a seasonal beer. Even in Japan, they'll be drinking Christmas beer from Ninove.

You also have some lesser-known lower alcohol beers, Tafel Hell and Oud Bier.

Table beer [2% alcohol content] is facing tough times. Up until 1995, colleges would purchase it by the keg to sell to their students. Due to changing legislation, that's no longer allowed. Table beer is now mostly consumed in rest homes and by people who use it in cooking.

Is beer good for you?

Beer is good for you. We stand behind the website beerandhealth.com, where scientists report on every aspect of beer and its health benefits. Even the alcohol contained in beer protects against heart disease. As with everything, of course, moderation is essential. Three glasses a day, for example, is what every doctor should prescribe.

With exporting, comes a much bigger need for a good website...

The website is like our billboard to the world. People in other countries who have heard of Witkap beers and the Slaghmuylder Brewery can now send us emails, so all our administration actually occurs by way of the site. It will become increasingly important in the future when we give importers the option to place orders online and so forth. We are waiting for the Flemish government to fulfil their promise to provide further support in this area.

Speaking of globalisation, what are your feelings on its effect on the beer industry?

Taking the United States as an example, the 'Belgian Style Ales' are exploding in popularity there. They are even trying to bring over Belgian brewers to make the beer locally. But what they should do is leave our market for what it is and promote the import of our beer. The more the better! Globalisation can have a negative effect, as well. When a large brewery takes over a number of smaller ones and starts combining styles, that's when a lot of specific types of beer start to disappear. When a merger does occur, they should avoid tampering with the distinctiveness of the individual beers.

Interview by Robyn Boyle

online

www.witkap.be

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying in Flanders

One too many

"I don't approve of Michel Daerden's behaviour, but he is not the only politician with a drinking problem. He's just one of the few that everyone knows about. There are plenty who know how to hide it."

Sports minister Bert Anciaux on his Walloon counterpart, after scenes in Beijing

Debt wave

"We're expecting more families with financial problems. Especially single mothers and young low-income families. The big shock will come around New Year."

The Flemish Centre for Debt Arbitration on soaring fuel prices

Jailhouse rock

"A pleasant experience, although we'd better leave out numbers like 'Keep on Rockin' in the Free World'."

Bart Verwaetermeulen of cover-band Frituur Paula, who play this weekend in Mechelen prison

BrandingFlanders Handmade Furniture BrugsBeertje Rugby GeertBourgeois Colruyt The LowCountries FlandersInAction next week in Flanders Today