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Lucas Van den Eynde will portray Adolf Daens in Studio 100's mammoth musical production

Rediscovering Daens

The classic novel that became the beloved film is now a musical

Christophe Verbiest

Never before and never again has a Belgian film been so close to an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film as in 1993. *Daens* lost to the

French dud *Indochine*, but it is still one the most popular films in Flanders, occupying the third spot on the all-time Flemish box office and earning its director a peerage: since the summer of '93 it's Baron

Stijn Coninx.

And now we're about to be hit with *Daens: The Musical*. It's currently being rehearsed and will open in Antwerp on 4 October.

Frank Van Laecke, who co-wrote

and directs the production, does not have cold feet. "I know the movie is still vivid in the collective consciousness of Flanders, but a musical is a different medium."

And theatre has one big advan-

tage over cinema," Van Laecke claims. "Its directness. I sincerely believe that within five minutes the audience will be enthralled by

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News

Elephants are on parade in Antwerp this month as part of an action to protect Asian elephants. There are only 1,500 left in the wild, and time is running out.

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Business

Goedele Liekens launched her much-anticipated new magazine last week. The first Flemish magazine aimed at a more feminist readership, does it live up to the hype?

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Arts

KVS launches its eclectic new season with "a play with two funerals and two weddings". Sharon Light takes a look at how the theatre company reinvented itself to keep up with an ever-changing Brussels.

11

De Gordel enthusiasm dampened by rain

Community tensions caused less disruption than the weather

Alan Hope

This year's edition of the Gordel – the annual Flemish event that encircles the capital – took place on Sunday with less tension than expected, and with heavy rain soaking the cyclists, walkers and spectators.

The Gordel, organised by the Flemish sports agency Blos, has been an annual event since 1981. It involves a variety of walking and cycle routes intended for everyone from families with young children to experienced cyclists.

The event has a political element since

it passes through the Flemish municipalities which ring the capital, including the controversial facility municipalities. Flemish politicians are keen to be seen taking part, including Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters but not, this year, Prime Minister Yves Leterme.

This year, community tensions threatened to overshadow the recreational aspect of the event, with the mayors-elect of Kraainem, Linkebeek and Wezembeek-Oppem warning that they would not allow the display of any political state-

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Portrait Busts in the Low Countries

Artus Quellinus the Elder is the star of the autumn show at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp. Artus who? you ask. The name might not click any links in this country, but he's a major figure in 17th-century Dutch art history.

That's because Quellinus designed the interior of the royal palace in Amsterdam, formerly the town hall and once regarded as the eighth wonder of the world. Born in Antwerp, he spent most of his life in the Netherlands, where he developed the art of sculpture.

You really have to go to Amsterdam to see the full flowering of Quellinus' creativity. He filled the town hall with marvelously creative works representing classic Dutch virtues like thrift and harmony. But something of his genius can be seen in the exhibition titled *Heads on Shoulders: Portrait Busts in the Low Countries 1600-1800*.

The exhibition has been assembled by the Flemish Art Collection, which brings together the fine art museums of Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent. Held in the brick vaults of Antwerp's 19th-century museum, the exhibition sets out to show the role of portrait busts in the baroque

period. Taking their inspiration from classical busts, the sculptors carved vivid portraits that immortalized the sitters, who ranged from politicians and religious leaders to famous actresses. The best of the works capture a fleeting glance or movement of hair, almost as if it was a living person.

For the exhibition, five marble busts by Quellinus have been packed up in cases for transport to Antwerp. One comes from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, another has been lent by the Louvre. They show the daring artistry of Quellinus that made him one of the leading sculptors of baroque Europe.

The exhibition also includes works by François Duquesnoy of Brussels. Maybe that name means something to a few more people, if only because his father made the famous bronze statue of the Manneken Pis that one either loves or hates. Duquesnoy left Brussels (out of shame?) and settled in Italy, where he became known as il Fiammingo, "the Fleming". His sculptures became highly prized, almost as much as those of Bernini.

There are also some casts from antiquity in the exhibition, showing where the sculptors dug around for inspiration. And one final touch that's always good to see: the organisers have created a special trail for children. They are promised fun.

online
www.kmska.be



Artus Quellinus, "Bust of Luis de Benavides Carillo"

FACE OF FLANDERS

Axelle Red

She was born as Fabienne Demal in 1968, but she is known as Axelle Red. Turning 40 this year, Belgium's consummate redhead has just signed on as a model for the Belgian clothing brand Hampton Bays.

It's been nearly 15 years since Axelle put herself on the map with "Kennedy Boulevard", a song that is now part of Belgium's collective memory. After earning a degree in law, she adopted the new name and turned into an international star, thanks to her debut album *Sans plus attendre*.

Though born and raised in Hasselt, Axelle chose to sing her delicate prose in French. But at the same time she was heavily influenced by American soul music and Motown. She recorded her second album *À Tatons* in Memphis with Isaac Hayes and would afterwards frequently return to the Memphis studios.

Axelle's unique combination of fragility and strength, of French refinement and soulful power, turned out to be unforgettable. Her lyrics on intimacy, feminine sensuality and romantic love strike a chord with many at home and abroad.

After a brief foray into Spanish with the album *Con solo pensar*, two other French albums followed. She wrote and produced *Toujours moi* completely on her own in 1999, the same year that she became a mother and that her lyrics veered into a more serious dimension.

The next album, *Face A / Face B*, is notably darker and more rock 'n' roll than the earlier work. From the beginning, her music had always betrayed a profound concern with the world, and *Face A / Face B* explicitly addresses subjects such as drugs, extremism, anti-globalism and child soldiers.

Her latest album, *Jardin des secrets*, dates from 2006, the same year in which she was awarded the highest cultural distinction in France, the Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. It is a utopian album, dreaming up a world without injustice, where love is the antidote to violence.

Axelle is a woman of action, as well. She has been a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador since 1997, who, like Angelina Jolie, uses her fame to turn attention to communities that desperately need help. She has also participated in numerous charity events, like the Antwerp concerts against intolerance dubbed 0110, Live8 and Tsunami 1212. In addition, she has volunteered for the Red Cross and Handicap International.

In May of this year, the University of Hasselt awarded Axelle an honorary doctorate degree for both her extraordinary musical career and her humanitarian commitment. The singer has hinted that she was not only honoured to receive the degree but also motivated to go back to study human rights.

Axelle currently resides in Paris, but she'll be in Antwerp's Sportpaleis next spring for her big 15-year anniversary concert. Her new record, *Sisters of Empathy*, releases next month – her first sung in English.

As for Hampton Bays, a line that mixes a youthful funk with casual wear, she said: "I like fashion, I like clothes. I felt an immediate connection with Hampton Bays. To me, the clothes are well-considered, unique pieces for people with a clear vision and flair."

It looks like they chose the right cover girl.

Stéphanie Duval

online
www.hamptonbays.be

TALKING DUTCH

notes on language



Shutterstock

trappistenbier

If you've signed the pledge, you no doubt regard beer as one of the most pernicious forms of the demon drink. Most others probably associate beer with multinational companies such as InBev. Of course, there are the enthusiastic small brewers that seem to have come back from the dead in recent years. And then there are the Trappists. The Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance produces beers named after the French monastery of La Trappe and which you can recognise from their hexagonal logo. Their beer is not a type of beer but rather an approach to production.

According to the *Internationale Vereniging Trappist*, the International Trappist Association, there are three rules for a beer to be a Trappist – and only seven in Europe qualify:

1. *Het product moet door of onder toezicht van de kloostergemeenschap worden gebrouwen* – The product must be brewed by the monastic community or under its supervision.

2. *Het product moet binnen de muren van de abdij worden gebrouwen* – The product must be brewed within the walls of the abbey.

3. *Het grootste deel van de winst moet aan sociale werken worden besteed* – The greatest part of the profit must be spent on social works.

But there's more to the beer than that. In Westmalle, Brother Benedikt explains how his brewery is run: *ploegenarbeid en overuren bestaan niet* – shift work and overtime do not exist; *de werkdag loopt van half acht tot half vijf* – the workday runs from half past seven to half past four; *men werkt in een familie sfeer*; *er is slechts een 40-tal werknemers, van wie twee monniken* – we work in a family atmosphere; there are only some 40 workers, two of whom are monks.

Which goes towards explaining the recent newspaper headline: *Brouwerij Westmalle houdt vast aan productiebeperking* – Westmalle brewery keeps to production restriction. And this despite the demand for its beer not only in Belgium but also worldwide. But, says the brewery: "De monniken hechten heel veel belang aan een beperkte productie op mensenmaat" – The monks attach great importance to a limited production on a human scale."

The seven Trappist beers are: La Trappe in the Netherlands (not in France); Chimay, Orval and Rochefort in the Walloon Region, and Achel, Westmalle and Westvleteren in Flanders.

Westvleteren, brewed in the Sint-Sixtusabdij, was voted two years ago the best beer in the world by RateBeer.com in a survey of thousands of beer enthusiasts from 65 countries. Where can you buy it? Unlike the other trappistenbieren, only at the abbey. *Een bier met liefde gebrouwen, drink je met verstand* – a beer brewed with love, you drink sensibly.

Alistair MacLean

online
www.trappistwestmalle.be

FEATURE



In the soup: Poor factory worker Nette must care for an entire family – but she finds time to fall in love with newspaper boy, Jan, opposite



“Dirk Brossé is a master at writing melodies that go straight to the heart”

Daens the musical

Continued from page 1

the performances. Did I say five? Well, probably it won't even take that long."

Van Laecke (nicknamed The Wizard) has written screenplays for television and radio and has directed operas, but is mostly known as Flanders' foremost musical director, with productions such as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Sacco & Vanzetti* and *Kuifje en de Zonnetempel* (*Tintin and the Prisoners of the Sun*) to his credit.

The *Daens* project originated at Studio 100, the internationally booming company that focuses on children's entertainment, ranging from highly successful television series (*Samson & Gert*, *Bumba*) to musical groups (K3) to amusement parks (Plopsaland). They have a tradition of "family" musicals like *Sneeuwwitje* (*Snow White*) and *De kleine zeemeermin* (*The Little Mermaid*), but *Daens* will be its first adult musical.

"This project has been germinating for 10 years", recalls Wim Hubrechtse, manager of Theatre and Live Entertainment at Studio 100. "After seeing *Les Misérables* in London, we thought it feasible to stage a similar production on a Belgian theme, and we stumbled upon *Daens*."

The film recounts the struggle of a progressive priest called Adolf Daens against the dangerous working conditions, child labour and low wages in late 19th century Aalst. Daens is a real figure from history – the man who set up the Christene Volkspartij (Christian People's Party) against the reigning Catholic Party and got elected

as an MP. His battle led to a bitter feud with the leaders of the church and the Flemish bourgeoisie, which was mainly francophone, so Daens also became a symbol of the Flemish Movement.

The film was based on the book by one of Flanders' most important post-war authors, Louis Paul Boon, a convinced socialist who, in 1971, published *Pieter Daens of hoe in de negentiende eeuw de arbeiders van Aalst vochten tegen armoede en onrecht* (*Pieter Daens or how in the nineteenth century the labourers in Aalst fought against poverty and injustice*). Yes, that's *Pieter* and not *Adolf* Daens since the novel focused on Adolf's

younger brother, a newspaper editor, who played as important a role as Adolf in the struggle for social justice. But Pieter was relegated to only a supporting character in the film.

The seeds of the musical were sown almost 10 years ago, but they only took root in 2002. It then took until 2005 before Studio 100 could reach an agreement with the 13 copyright-holders, ranging from the editors of the book to all the creative forces behind the film. Enter Van Laecke, who didn't have to ponder the offer for a long time.

"As soon as I knew I could work with a team of people I trusted,

I willingly accepted the offer." One of those key collaborators is Dirk Brossé, who composed the score for the film and again for the musical, albeit a different one. "He's a master at writing melodies that go straight to the heart," says Van Laecke. "And he accepts that a musical is a dramaturgical art, which means that he's flexible enough to alter, if necessary, his compositions to suit the words."

Van Laecke could choose the actors he wanted, and his enthusiasm for them is impossible to temper. "It's an incredible mix of strong actors and first-rate musical people, and that's what a story like *Daens* needs – not only good singers, they have to be superb actors too."

The prolific television and movie actor Lucas Van den Eynde (Guido from *Aspe*) has what some

might consider the burdensome task of playing the lead character, following on popular film actor Jan Decleir's heroic (and award-winning) incarnation of Adolf Daens in the film. Van Laecke doesn't worry. "The medium is totally different, and Lucas fits the bill perfectly. He plays Daens as a vulnerable and very honourable man, so he promptly wins everyone's empathy." (And, in fact, Van den Eynde is one of the most versatile and talented actors of his generation.)

Stijn Coninx, the film's director, is also on board as artistic director of the musical. "He was involved in the project from the start," Hubrechtse says, "giving advice about the emotions the musical needed to convey. And he mapped out its dramatic structure."

Van Laecke notes that the creative team "started from the film script, not from the book," so Coninx's input was essential. Moreover, "Coninx had done a lot of research before writing the script, so it would have made no sense to start from scratch."

The key question remains: can a modern audience find relevance in Daens' 19th-century struggle? "Our story starts in 1888, but I'm utterly convinced it still resonates with people in the 21st century," maintains Van Laecke, "because labour conditions haven't changed drastically. In European countries they have, but on some other continents they sadly haven't. Child labour hasn't been abolished yet. So this world still needs a Daens."

And apart from that, he notes, "there's a marvellous love story between two young labourers that has an eternal ring to it."

online
www.daens.be

From postal department to splashy musical

Anyone who drives to Antwerp on the E17 or enters the city by train knows the building. A few kilometres before reaching the Berchem suburb, two nested blocks loom on the horizon, adorned with a logo that every Belgian resident knows by heart: the red stylised horn of De Post.

Until 2006, the greyish building was known as "Antwerpen X", the region's main mail sorting centre. But now it's been bought by real estate developer Robelco, which wants to convert it to high-class condominiums with offices and shops below. But the company is still waiting for approval, so, in the meantime, it's being converted to a performance space for the musical *Daens*. It's the first – and probably the last – production in the building.

It was an arduous quest to find the right space for the production. Studio 100 first mapped out its desiderata. Technically, they needed a stage that was larger and deeper than usual, so they could attain what Van Laecke describes as a "cinemascope" effect. But they also wanted to give the spectators the chance to chill out in the foyer after the perform-

ance, whereas in classical theatres, you're chased out rather quickly. In the end, only the Casino in Ostend met the demands, but it was ruled out for its peripheral location.

The biggest of the two blocks, one continuous space of 100 x 120 meters, has been completely transformed into a theatre with 1,840 seats plus a stage almost twice as large as usual for musical theatre. The foyer has a catering capacity for 500.

That's a lot, but Studio 100 is really hoping that many spectators will be dining in house. "We're opening two hours before show time!" exclaims Wim Hubrechtse, Studio 100's Theatre and Live Entertainment manager.

The building has its own parking space, and there are two additional parking areas within five minutes' walk of the building. And there is of course the train station across the road.

Studio 100 hopes to sell 150,000 tickets in an extended run of the show. "Then we'll be more than breaking even," notes Hubrechtse.



All you need to know about banking services on arriving in Belgium

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ING 

Rain keeps Gordel crowds away

Continued from page 1

ments in their territories. The three French-speaking mayors are at the centre of a controversy after Flemish interior minister Marino Keulen refused to ratify their nominations to the posts because they breached the language law when they sent out official voter registration cards in French.

As a result, Flemish nationalist activists from the Vlaams Belang party, Voorpost and the Language Action Committee (TAK) protested by taking part in the Gordel with banners and placards. Much attention centred on Kraainem, where the mayor-elect had last week threatened to make arrests. None of the three mayors took any action, and police reported only two minor incidents in Wezembeek in which two men were detained: one struck a police car, and another tried to tear a Belgian tricolour from the facade of a house. Elsewhere, in Lennik, mayor Willy de Waele was cheered and toasted with champagne for his action in removing the tricolour from his town hall (reported in *Flanders Today* last week).

Supporters of the French-speaking mayors-elect, meanwhile, threatened to organise their own march alongside the Gordel. While their event went ahead, the two groups never came into contact. Prior to the weekend, there were



Flemish deputy Eric Van Rompuy (second from left) and minister-president Kris Peeters (in red) ride the 50km route together from Zaventem

various reports of nails strewn on the roads due to be used by Gordel cyclists and signposts vandalised or (in the case of Zaventem) removed entirely.

Rather than community clashes, it was the weather which put the biggest damper on this

year's Gordel, according to Blosco director-general Carla Galle. According to estimates, 58,000 people took part, just over half of the 112,000 record set in 1993 and well down on the 100,000 participants in 2005.

First-hand Gordel report: p.13

Thousands say goodbye to Kim

Olympic medal-winning athlete Kim Gevaert retired from active sport last week with a win in the 200m at the Memorial Van Damme meeting. She was given a standing ovation from the crowd at the Heysel and taken for a lap of honour in an open-top car to the sounds of Andrea Bocelli. Flemish pop-stars Clouseau sang a specially-composed song in her honour. Gevaert thanked her family and Prince Filip for his "friendly phone calls" following her Olympic disappointment in the 100m. "I can't quite believe it's over," she said.



One of the 71 decorated elephant statues standing (or sitting) around the centre of Antwerp from now until mid-November. On 13 November the models will be auctioned off at Antwerp Zoo to benefit the Elephant Hospital, a Thai organisation that works for the protection of Asian elephants, and Plankendael's own elephant project. There are only an estimated 4,500 Asian elephants left alive, 1,500 of them in the wild.

online

www.elephantparade.be

Hospital treatments crippled by lack of isotopes

Hospitals across the country went into emergency status on Monday as diagnostic treatments were stopped because of a shortage of radioactive isotopes.

The worldwide shortage has come about due to a reduction in activity at nuclear power stations, which produce them. The Mol power station in Antwerp province happens to be down at present for maintenance, as is the one at Petten in the Netherlands. Three of the five reactors that produce the commonly-used isotope molybdenum-99 are closed to allow work to be carried out. The isotope is produced from radium, but since it only has a half-life of three days, it cannot be stockpiled for situations like the current one.

Molybdenum-99 isotopes are used in a variety of medical procedures, including heart and kidney function tests and bone scans. While ongoing treatments will be given priority, doctors warned that a cutback in diagnostic work could leave many diseases undiscovered, putting patients in danger.

In some cases, other tests can be substituted, like the MRI scan which uses a giant magnet. In most cases, however, radioactive procedures are the best or only option. The shortage could last for up to six weeks, according to the Association of Imaging Producers & Equipment Suppliers (AIPES).

Meanwhile, the Vienna-based European Association of Nuclear Medicine issued a statement by president-elect Professor Wolfram Knapp: "Urgent measures must now be taken by the politicians both at EU and national level so that such situations are prevented in the future and also to better regulate the import of medicinal radionuclides from non-EU countries."

online

www.eanm.org

Solar panels now permit-free

Homeowners in Flanders wishing to install solar panels on their roof may now do so without first applying for planning permission, under a change to the law introduced by the Flemish government this month. Previously, a permit was required for panels exceeding 20% of the roof's surface.

"We want as a government to give tax support to the installation of solar panels," said planning minister Dirk Van Mechelen, "but some people were having problems obtaining planning permission. In future, that won't be necessary."

The change will not apply, however, to listed buildings, or where panels are explicitly forbidden in a subdivision's lease. In those cases, a simplified permit application will be available through the local municipality.

The installation of solar panels on homes in Flanders has been growing steadily from 103 in 2003 to 2,713 last year. The region's energy regulator estimates that some 25 million kilowatt-hours will be produced by panels this year, or enough to supply the total energy needs of more than 7,000 families.

FIFTH COLUMN



Crembo

Defense is rarely a hot topic in this country. Until recently, when the subject did come up, it was often in a context of ridicule. These days, however, the army and the tasks it should fulfill regularly fill the newspaper columns. Could it be because the new minister of defense is Pieter De Crem? The man does have a knack of drawing attention to himself.

Before he became minister, Pieter De Crem was mayor of Aalter, a small town in East Flanders that is best known for... having Pieter De Crem as mayor. Apart from that, the only thing of note is its oversized town hall, mockingly named the Crem-lin. Sharp, witty and with a cynical sense of humour, De Crem was never far from controversy as he rose through the ranks of the Flemish Christian Democrats. Every party member held his or her breath in 2004 when he challenged the far more bland Jo Vandeurzen as president of his party. The campaign for party president turned out to be very civil, which was, well, not what people had expected from De Crem, who often says the right thing at the wrong moment.

As an opposition man, he never ceased to attack André Flahaut, his predecessor at defense, whom he accused of favouritism and incompetence. A slapstick comedy emerged, with De Crem and Flahaut becoming the Laurel and Hardy of Belgian politics. The two were forever bickering, so that it seemed as if the one could not exist without the other. The battle is still going on, with Flahaut ignoring the unwritten rule that former ministers should keep silent about their old departments for at least a year. The attacks are so vicious that one tends to forget that Flahaut is not a member of the opposition.

De Crem has always openly been an Atlantist, one of the few in Belgian politics. His critics paint him as a macho man, eager to go to war – any war – alongside the Americans. In a popular political cartoon, he is called "Crembo". When a Belgian general last week called out for not just Belgian fighter planes but also ground troops to be deployed to Afghanistan, everyone assumed that he was acting as his minister's voice. After all, De Crem wants Belgium to be "a small but reliable partner" in an international context. Therefore, the army should, according to the minister, "return to its core business," rather than concentrate on "humanitarian missions with no risks involved".

When, just one day later, a Belgian soldier died in Lebanon on what was considered precisely that sort of riskless mission, De Crem found out that defence can be a minefield, even for Crembo. He may not be short on self confidence, but this has been one shaky week. At present, there are no plans to send ground troops to Afghanistan.

Anja Otte

NEWS FLASH



Belgium's National Criminology Institute is desperately seeking science graduates with an interest in ballistics, DNA, toxicology or microspores. They are needed to tackle a growing shortage of trained staff to handle real-life CSI investigations. The Institute used last weekend's job advertising supplements to put out a call for budding Horatios. "Anyone who has graduated in biology, physics or chemistry can work here. We'll take care of the extra training ourselves," promised Institute director Jan De Kinder.

Flemish space expert Kris Capelle last weekend directed the decoupling of the space cargo vessel *Jules Verne* from the International Space Station. The European Space Agency mission director previously took charge of the ship's coupling manoeuvre in April this year when it arrived to deliver fuel and other necessities. The *Jules Verne* was also used to move the ISS out of the path of some "space junk", which might have collided and damaged the craft. The *Jules Verne*, now filled with space-station waste, is expected to enter the Earth's atmosphere at the end of the month and burn up.

Air Libre, the association of residents living under the flight-paths to Brussels Airport, has entered a claim for damages of €50.06 million for over 10,000 alleged breaches of noise levels measured between July 2007 and April 2008. According to a court ruling in 2007, Air Libre has the right to damages of €5,000 for each infringement. The association claims the federal government has failed to bring in measures which would prevent the noise-nuisance suffered by residents.

Corporate guests of the telecoms giant Belgacom at the Memorial Van Damme athletics meeting last week were treated to a self-published book purporting to be written by Belgacom CEO Didier Bellens describing his version of recent events in which he came close to losing his post after criticism from his board. It also covered his experiences over the last 15 years with the company. The book was in fact ghost-written and published by consultancy Mach Media. Copies will be given away to Belgacom employees at a later date.

More and more children in Flemish schools are choosing Latin and Greek as part of their studies, according to education ministry figures reported in the magazine *Klasse*. Teachers who support the spread of classics point to studies from the University of Leuven which suggest studying Latin and Greek at school can eventually lead to better results in other studies.

online
www.nieuws.be

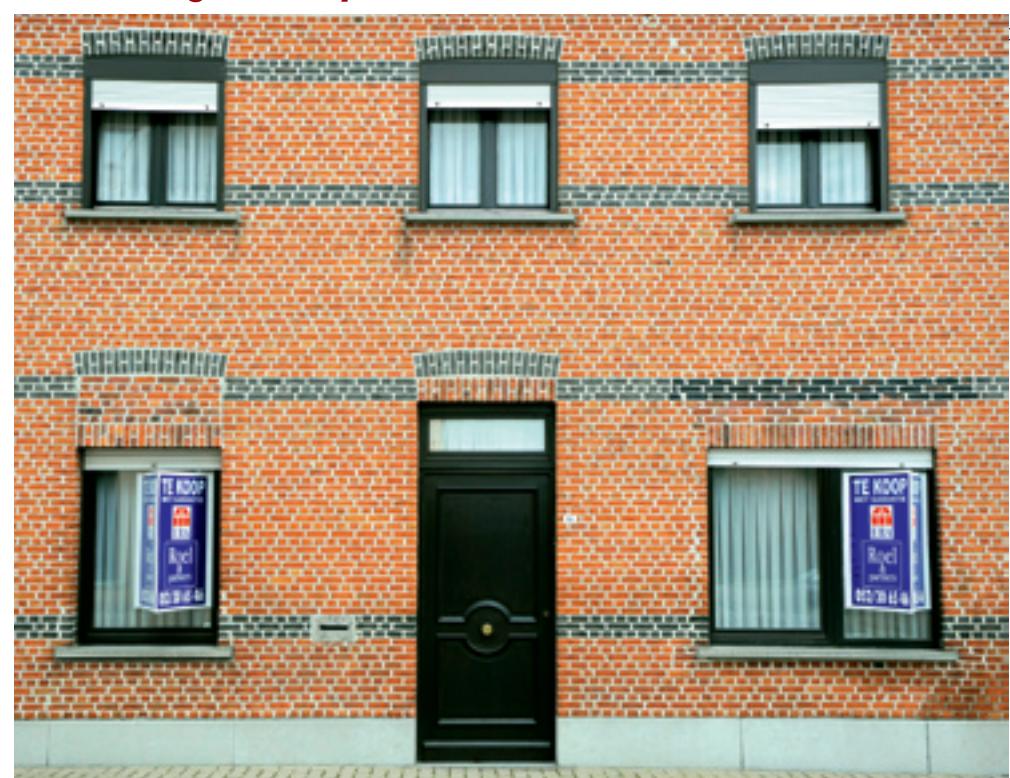
Brussels too expensive for the average family

Brussels is the most expensive part of the country in which to buy a house, with an average price of €307,000, making it impossible for most first-time buyers taking home €3,500 a month to afford a property outside of the communes Anderlecht, Ganshoren and Molenbeek.

The cheapest province in Flanders is Limburg, with an average price of €155,000 for a house. However the fact that rural houses tend to be larger disguises the real price difference, which is seen in the cost per square metre. In Brussels that comes to €1,853, whereas in Limburg it is only €160 – a factor of more than 10.

Flemish Brabant is also expensive as far as house prices are concerned, at an average of €277,000, but its area costs are much lower than Brussels', at only €323 a square metre.

West Flanders, however, is far and away the most expensive province for apartments, with average prices of nearly €200,000, according to statistics from the economy ministry. The reason, aside from high demand for properties at the coast, is the shortage of apartment property in most of the province. By contrast, Brussels (€178,000) and Flemish Brabant (€170,000) are only "expensive" according to a survey by *Trends* magazine. The least expensive apartments in the country on average are in Liège province (€115,000) and Henegou-



wen (€114,000).

Not surprisingly, Brussels is also the dearest place to build a house, with land costing an average of €308 a square metre, compared

to €105 in Limburg. All of Flanders is more expensive, though, than all of Wallonia. In Liège province, for example, building land costs only €36 a square metre.

Foreigners and Brusseleers move to Flanders en masse

Flanders experienced positive migration among foreigners in 2006, with 40,042 people coming to live in the region, while 24,385 residents left to live elsewhere.

The figures are provided by the Study Service of the Flemish government. At the same time, the region also showed a positive balance with Brussels in exchange of residents.

The largest group of newcomers by far was the Dutch, at 9,977. At the same time, 4,038 Dutch residents of Flanders left, leaving a balance of 5,939.

In all, there was a positive balance of 6,956 foreigners moving to the region. The other main source countries were Morocco, Poland and Turkey.

Interesting is that more than 800 of the Poles living in Flanders left to return home. In addition, according to the service, most of today's newcomers from Poland are men, usually working in the building trades, whereas previously the majority of arrivals were women, working as cleaners. Women still form the majority of arrivals from Morocco and Turkey, often in the context of reuniting with family.

Among Belgians, 10,930 left Flanders to live in Brussels region, while 19,373 moved to Flanders, mainly the communes around the capital.

online
www.tinyurl.com/vlmigration

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



200,000

The number of Belgians who have opted for a high-interest online savings account with one of the main banks since they were introduced in the summer. Fortis leads the field with 140,000 customers.

58

The average age of viewers of the evening news bulletin on één, according to figures from the study section of the VRT. Viewers of *The Simpsons* are on average 26, viewers of 24 are 41, and the average age of viewers of toddlers' favourite *Bumba* is 40 years old.

2

The number of national teams for whom footballer Mémé Tchité has already played – Burundi and Rwanda, making him ineligible ever to play for the Red Devils, according to information from FIFA.

20m

The height of the window from which 3-year-old Matthias Goyvaerts of Mechelen fell last week. He survived with only a ruptured spleen and a concussion.

€650

The new end-of-year premium to be paid out to civil servants, up from €317 last year. They will also get three extra long-weekend holidays on 2 January, 22 May and 20 July 2009.

€18,000

The total bill for the visit by sport minister Bert Anciaux to the Olympic Games in Beijing with a two-member delegation, according to the ministry itself. Previously rumours had estimated the cost at nearer €50,000.

150%

The tax relief proposed by Flemish budget minister Dirk Van Mechelen for businesses that invest in the preservation or restoration of Flemish heritage properties. The minister pointed to the success of a tax-relief plan for investing in the film industry as a model for the proposed scheme.

€62.76

The annual cost to every man, women and child in Flanders of being governed. The cost, calculated by the Lijst Dedecker party includes the expenses of all deputies, ministers and cabinets from municipal to federal level. "It should be much cheaper," said LDD deputy Rob Van de Velde. The overall cost comes to €383.9 million.

30%

The increase in the number of applications for courses in fisheries and dredging at the Mercator Maritime Institute in Ostend, up to 136 this year after years hovering around 100.

47,000

An estimate of the number of cases in the backlog of the police courts in Brussels that deal with traffic offences. One of the court's judges has resigned in protest at the backlog, which means many fines are never paid.

1 in 75 million

The chances of winning last weekend's Euro Millions six-time rollover jackpot of €118 million. The jackpot was won by a Portuguese and a Spaniard. Two Belgian players each won just over half a million.

€70 million

The sales of music media in the first six months of the year, down 7.5% on the same period last year. At the same time, downloads of music were up 17% to €5.42 million.

29.85 million

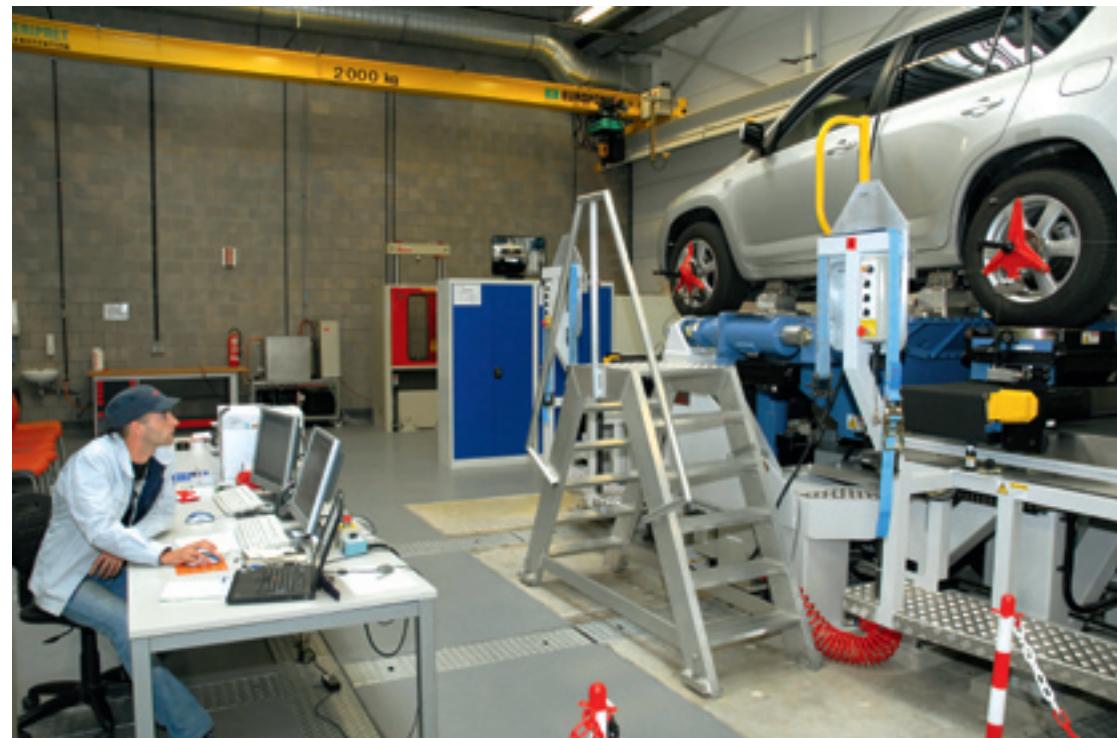
The number of overnights booked by visitors to Belgium in 2007, up 1.6% on 2006, according to figures from the economics service of the government. Brussels accounted for just over 5 million, a rise of 5.4%.

€1 billion

The estimated shortfall in tax income this year, according to the finance ministry. The federal government had budgeted for an increase in the tax take of 6.85%, but figures from the first seven months have led to a revised forecast of growth of only 3.5%.

Toyota to build test track in Zaventem

The multi-surface track will help tailor Toyota's production vehicles to European conditions



An engineer at Toyota's technical centre in Zaventem runs checks on a production vehicle

Alan Hope

Japanese car manufacturer Toyota is to invest an estimated €80 million in building a test circuit in Zaventem, the company's first in Europe. The circuit will see the creation of about 250 jobs. Toyota currently employs 800 at its technical centre in Zaventem, as well as 1,200 at its company headquarters in Evere. The logistics centre in Zeebrugge and the parts warehouse in Diest bring total employment to over 3,000. The new test circuit jobs would put Toyota above Opel Antwerp post-restructuring and above Audi Brussels, although Toyota does not actually produce any cars on Belgian soil.

The technical centre, where the circuit will be situated, opened in 1987 and was expanded in 2006 at a cost of €75 million. The company has invested a total of more than €200 million in its Zaventem centre.

Presenting the company's plans at a press conference last week, the CEO of Toyota Motor Europe, Tadashi Arashima, said, "Belgium is without a doubt our European home." Accompanied by Flanders' minister-president Kris Peeters, Arashima said the 1.3 km, three-lane track would be in operation by mid-2010. The track will feature a variety of typical European road surfaces and reflects Toyota's increasing concern with tailoring cars to the markets in which they are sold.

"European cars have to be more sporty because

the average speed here is higher," explained R&D vice-president Kazuhiko Miyadera. "Previously it was simpler," continued Arashima. "We made cars for the Japanese market and exported them to Europe." But research carried out at the Zaventem technical centre has shown the demands of drivers in different parts of the world are not the same: the European driver, for instance, prefers a comfortable car with more sporty handling, a manual transmission and a diesel engine.

They also favour symbols rather than text on the dashboard controls. The thickness of the steering wheel is also a factor: European hands are smaller than American, but larger than Japanese. The centre even tests paint resistance to European-style car wash equipment and to road salt and sand, fired at the test cars from a special cannon. The Yaris, Avensis and Auris are three Toyota models developed in Zaventem and manufactured in Europe to European tastes.

Until now, Toyota has rented test-track time across Europe from other manufacturers. They will now go through the lengthy process of obtaining the necessary planning and environmental permits. But Arashima was already prepared to promise residents living near the centre that the noise generated by the presence of the new track (not a race-track, the company is careful to stress) will not be any more than they experience already.

Small businesses put employment on hold during crisis

Small businesses with fewer than 100 employees have suspended hiring as the economic situation continues to bite, cutting drastically into Flanders' job market opportunities, according to figures from consultancy SD Wurx.

In the first three months of this year, the job market grew by 1.1%, but that fell back to a mere 0.3% between April and July. Last year the figure stood at 3.4%.

The situation locally is often even worse. In Brussels and in East and West Flanders, the number of jobs even fell, albeit only by 0.2-0.3%. More important than the actual figure, however, is the reversal of a years-long trend of growth.

The number of job offers submitted to the government's agency for work and training, VDAB, fell

between January and August by 3.4% compared to 2007, to 187,000 jobs. That's the first fall since 2003. And the drop in temp-agency work was more than twice as serious: the sector saw a reduction in work of 2.8% in June and 7% down on the year.

At the same time, the fall in the number of available jobs was expected to have little effect on the unemployment figures. The jobless total across Flanders at the end of August stood at 187,000, 7% down on last year at the same time, but in line with the year-to-year increases seen in earlier months. In other words, the fall in available jobs is not translating into an increase in unemployment – or even a slowing in the downward trend. From province to province, the figure ranges from 5.3% in West Flanders to 12.1% in Limburg.

BUSINESS FLASH



Shutterstock

Dexia

Belgo-French bank Dexia (in which Flemish municipalities have a significant interest), is to streamline its local retail operation by closing some 80 branches of its 1,000-strong network. The move is a delayed result of the 2001 merger between Dexia and Artesia that brought the total number of outlets to some 1,500, a number that has dropped steadily ever since.

Publigaz

The holding company Publigaz (which maintains the gas interests of the Belgian communes), is to gain control of Fluxys, the gas distribution company that was part of the GDF-Suez energy group. The deal is part of an elaborate asset-swapping operation linked to conditions set by the European Union in approving this year's merger between Gaz de France and Suez. Meanwhile, GDF-Suez keeps control of the LNG terminal in Zeebrugge, western Europe's main entry port for natural gas.

Fortis

The Belgo-Dutch financial institution Fortis has appointed executive search consultant Russell Reynolds to find its next CEO following the departure last July of Jean-Paul Votron. Votron took the blame for the bank's poor performance and for mishandling its communications following the controversial acquisition of Dutch bank ABN-AMRO.

Kraft approves

Côte d'Or chocolates, Lu biscuits and Philadelphia cheese have seen their status confirmed in the most recent brand review by their owner, US-based conglomerate Kraft. All three have production facilities in Flanders and employ some 3,000 people here.

InBev

The world's largest beer group, based in Leuven, is considering selling its Korean activities, Oriental Breweries, as one of the options to finance part of its recently-approved acquisition of US-based Anheuser-Busch. Other parts of the InBev empire that could be spun off include some of the company's German brands acquired in 2001 and its interests in China's Tsingtao brewery. Parts of Anheuser-Busch, such as the group's theme parks and the packaging division, could also be sold.

Barco

The Kortrijk-based imaging technology and electronics group Barco has sold its maritime security and warning software division to the French Thales electronics company.

Johnson Controls

The US-based automobile equipments manufacturer Johnson Controls, which employs some 1,500 workers in its five local production units at Diegem, Vilvoorde, Ghent, Geel and Assenede, is to restructure. No redundancies have been announced so far.

Jan de Nul

The Antwerp-based dredging company Jan de Nul has ordered four dredgers with a capacity of 3,700 cubic metres each from the Chinese Tianjin Xinhe shipbuilding company. The new ships will be delivered in 2011 and 2012.

Brussels Airlines

British Airways and American Airlines are believed to be making last-ditch proposals to acquire Brussels Airlines from under the nose of Germany's Lufthansa. The auction is hotting up, with the Zaventem-based carrier's shareholders expecting up to €200 million for the company, significantly more than Lufthansa's offer last week.

Katoen Natie

Port logistics company Katoen Natie will invest €65 million in Ghent harbour and create an estimated 500 jobs in a new project based on 25 hectares of land formerly owned by Volvo. The land will house warehouses, as part of a project planned for completion in 2015. Katoen Natie runs 154 logistics operations in 24 countries, employing a total of 9,300 people.

Guerrilla in high heels

Goedele magazine hits the shelves, but the message is muddled

Lisa Bradshaw

Last week, the first issue of *Goedele* hit the shelves at every newsagent in Flanders – and many outlets across the border in the Netherlands. It did not do so quietly: amid great fanfare and newspaper headlines, the front cover screamed out: *Eindelijk, een écht kutblad*. For anyone whose Dutch does not extend to dirty words, *kut* is slang for a woman's genitalia.

Goedele Liekens, the glamorous former Miss Belgium and current sex educator and Goodwill Ambassador, is making her intentions loud and clear. She's reclaiming a word to put its power where it belongs – with women. This is a magazine for real women, she is saying, that is not afraid to talk frankly about sex.

Goedele the person is indeed very good at talking about sex. Through her books, interviews and television programmes, she breaks down taboos around women and their sexuality. *Goedele* the magazine is very good at this, too.

Goedele wants to provide Dutch-speaking women with a magazine that will do more than provide make-up tips and recipes, and Flemish women could certainly use that. There is a chasm-sized gap in that market, so *Goedele*, published by Sanoma magazines, is smart both business-wise and socially.

"A glamour guerrilla!" Goedele's co-editor exclaimed to her in the months leading up to the magazine's launch. "You're someone who wants to make the world a better place, but on high heels." So in issue number one, Goedele chose to base the magazine around two concepts: guerrilla and high heels.

This is where *Goedele* stumbles. There is a world of difference between a feminist guerrilla and a high heel, and the magazine has a hard time reconciling the two.

The first issue contains some sharp and eloquent writing by some of Flanders' best journalists, including Goedele herself, who writes about girls being prostituted in Cambodia and does an honest and sensitive interview with a young



woman whose son was abused – and died – at the hands of her new boyfriend. There is also an excellent interview by Ineke Van Nieuwenhove with a Dutch doctor who does designer surgery on vaginas. When he finally, towards the end of the interview, loses his cool under her tough – though fair – questions, it's both funny and revealing about his own culpability in unnecessary cosmetic surgeries.

Every issue of *Goedele* will contain an erotic story, and the first is by the young, heady Saskia de Coster – a smart choice. *Goedele* is also not afraid to poke a little fun at herself – there is a fabulous photo of a drag queen in Antwerp who "does" *Goedele*. (The resemblance is indeed amazing.)

And then there are the puzzles. *Goedele* interviews the famous Flemish artist Kamagurka, for instance, and there are three full-page colour photos of *Goedele* and Kamagurka looking sexy together – one where she straddles him, red high heel planted in his crotch. And not one image of the man's work.

In the "Gallery" section, meanwhile, is a completely tasteless piece of furniture in the form of a woman's legs (on high heels). Seemingly bent over, there is a drawer where her body should be. On the next page are swim fins for diving – on high heels. "Ideal for snorkelling – but walking or swimming is not an option."

Possibly most disturbing, though, is the columnist Hugo Borst's ramblings about what it would be like to have sex with *Goedele* – and what her "Billy" might look like. Does she think about his "Billy"? (Heavens, let's hope not.)

Goedele appears to be terrified of being tagged as "too radical," so she's providing plenty of proof to the contrary. Perhaps she – and her publishers – are trying to appeal to the masses but, in doing so, we're given radically mixed messages.

The magazine is strong on the guerrilla side, but doesn't exactly know yet how to incorporate its high heels. Do that, and you will be giving Dutch-reading women what they really need. Hard-hitting, woman-focused articles, plus fashion, fiction, funk and feminism. And sex.

online
www.goedelemagazine.be

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MUSIC

Fifty years young

The Festival of Flanders-Ghent welcomes throat singers and choirboys to celebrate its half-century

Alan Hope

The classical and new music extravaganza that is the annual Festival of Flanders began 50 years ago, just as Belgium was undergoing World Expo fever. The brainchild of Jan Briers, a BRT radio director and university professor, who started with concerts in Ghent, it became a region-wide festival in 1972, when Briers decided to bring concerts in other towns into the fold.

It almost immediately became an international festival, with some of the most prestigious names of the day. There are now festival "branches" in Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Limburg, Mechelen (see sidebar) and Flemish Brabant, as well as Ghent, whose activities begin this weekend.

The whole festival is now the responsibility of Jan Briers, Jr, the son of the founder. Briers has been responsible not only for continuing with the world-stage ambitions of

his father, bringing the likes of Sir Simon Rattle and Esa-Pekka Salonen to Belgium for the first time. He has also been responsible for developing a programme of what he calls "formats": mini-festivals within the festival.

The approach has been criticised by purists who claim he approaches classical music like a soap merchant. Briers welcomes the analogy. In an interview with *De Standaard*, he took it to his heart: "The Festival of Flanders should not, in my view, be any more than a quality label, something like Proctor & Gamble in the business world," he said. "That stands for a company with good managers who deliver quality goods, but who sell a variety of things, like Pampers, Dreft and Dixan."

The main "format" this year in Ghent is called Odegand, which supplements a classical programme featuring rising young pianist Lisa de la Salle and the



Choir boys: Andrew Houston

Order those tickets now if you'd like to see the King's College choir boys in Sint-Baaf's Cathedral (above) or American phenom Joshua Bell solo in *The Four Seasons* (below right)

George Onslow celebrated in Mechelen programme

Meanwhile, to the east, Mechelen has its own programme for the Festival of Flanders. Without a doubt, the star of the show is Liebrecht Vanbeckevoort, who last year took sixth place in the Queen Elizabeth Competition, as well as lifting the public prizes from both the RTBF and VRT.

Born in Mechelen, Vanbeckevoort will play no fewer than five concerts as part of the festival in towns in the area, beginning on 25 September in Geel, where he'll appear with the Kölner Akademie in a performance of Beethoven's *Coriolanus Overture*, followed by the *Second Piano Concerto*, which was actually the first Beethoven wrote – a work of youthful charm that owes a lot to Mozart.

The third item on their programme is the first symphony by George Onslow, sometimes called the French Beethoven. Onslow was born in 1784 to a British father and a French mother and was famous in his lifetime for his 80-string quartets and quintets. His cello quintet is said to have inspired Schubert, and Beethoven was a big fan. Schumann, meanwhile, considered his chamber music fit to stand beside that of Mozart and Haydn. He also composed four symphonies.

Onslow provides a thread running through the festival. The Solisti del Vento plays his Opus 79 septet in its concert with Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden, as well as a sextet and sonata by Beethoven. Le Salon Romantique plays his Opus 24 string quintet together with a Schubert trio and a Beethoven quintet. The Trio Ysaÿe perform one of his Opus 14 trios. And there are more besides.

Other featured composers are Debussy, Cage, Ligeti, Messiaen and Bartok. The Vlaams Radio Orkest and their choir, together with the orchestra of the Royal Music Chapel of the Guides, perform music by two Belgian composers who made names for themselves in Paris: François-Auguste Gevaert and François-Joseph Fétis.



The star of the Mechelen show: Liebrecht Vanbeckevoort

Vlaams Radio Orkest (sometimes referred to as the Brussels Philharmonic, not to be confused with the Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra). Odegand also offers world music from a broad spectrum of acts. Those range from glass organ players Anna and Arkadiusz Szafraniec from Poland, to the other-worldly throat singing of the Egschiglen ensemble from Mongolia.

On the classical front, the festival features an "experiment" based around Mozart's well-known serenade *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, in the theatre of the Royal Artistic and Literary Circle and the Justice Palace. A number of ensembles – including Oxalys and the HERMENSENSE Ensemble – and young aspirants, like German group Atonor and tuba virtuoso Berlinda Deman, will bring their own vision to the Mozart piece.

The big names include tenor Christoph Prégardien with Concert Köln in Sint-Baaf's Cathedral, with works by Bach, Handel and Durante. Rachel Podger will conduct the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and play violin in Bach's A minor concerto, Vivaldi's concerto in D and Bach's little-played *Concerto for Three Violins*. A merican wunderkind Joshua Bell



Chris Lee

will play *The Four Seasons* with the UBS Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra, which he'll also conduct in Schubert's *Der Tod und das Mädchen*.

One of the biggest draws will be the top-hatted boys of King's College Choir, Cambridge, best known from the *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at Christmas*. They'll be singing a packed programme of works by Taverner, Orlando Gibbons and Vaughan Williams in the cathedral, their numbers supplemented by 14 grown-up male voices.

They'll also be playing later in the Jan Palfijn Hospital in Ghent, as part of the Festival's social side. You won't be able to buy a ticket because the concert is for patients, relatives and staff. It's only one of the ways the Ghent leg of the Festival of Flanders puts something back into the community, explains

Barbara Stevens, who runs the social programmes.

"The idea is to remove the barriers some groups have to attending concerts and enjoying classical music," she says. "In the case of people in hospital, we bring the concert to them. For poor people there are tickets available at a symbolic cost of €1."

To eliminate cultural barriers that keep people away from concerts, the festival is presenting a pre-concert "briefing" by Klara radio personality Lies Steppe, including an explanation of the programme and a run-down of how a concert proceeds, how long it lasts and when it's appropriate to clap. Says Stevens: "We want to take the fear out of concerts."

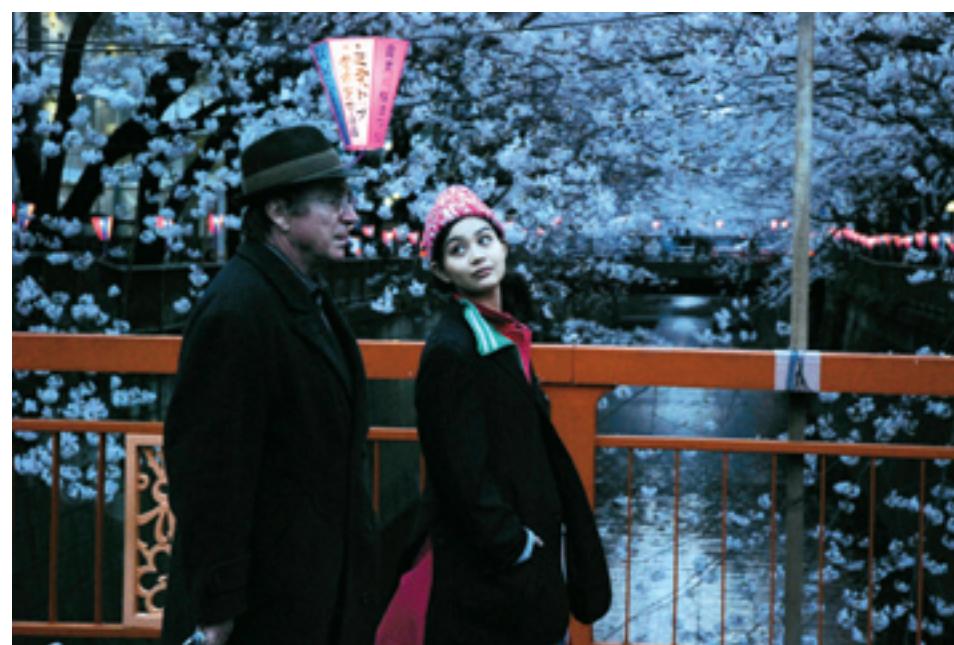
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FILM

Original cinema

A new festival of women filmmakers launches in Brussels



A German man's search for family takes him to Japan in Doris Dörrie's award-winning *Cherry Blossoms*

Saffina Rana

This month sees the launch of a new international film festival in Brussels. The Elles Tournent at the Botanique will host an eclectic range of avant-premieres, dramas, comedies, animation, documentary, shorts and rare historical films – all made by women.

"It's quite a unique opportunity to see the world through the eyes of women, outlooks which aren't visible enough in our

male-dominated mainstream cinema," says festival organiser and filmmaker, Marie Vermeiren.

The festival has attracted some big names. A frank and personal film about celebrated rock photographer Annie Leibovitz by her sister Barbara will screen ahead of its official release in Belgium next month. There is also a premiere of *Cherry Blossoms* by German author Doris Dörrie, based on her award-winning novel of the same name, which

follows one man's journey as he copes with family relationships and his losses in life.

Vermeiren has encountered some skewed perspectives when talking about the festival over the last few months. "Some people think that because all the filmmakers are women, the films are only about women or only for women," she grimaces. "The films are made by women, for everyone and cover a diverse range of subjects. Our only criteria for choosing them was that they were inspired, moving or fun and made by women. None of it is predictable."

Even some of the harsher subjects raise a laugh, like *Three Stories about Love*, a satirical mockumentary about three violent relationships by Croatian director Snejana Tribuzon. "Domestic violence is not funny, and generally films about it are not funny," says Vermeiren. "This is the only film we know that is made with humour." There's also offbeat humour in Miranda July's *You and Me and Everyone We Know*, which evokes nervous laughter in matters of life and death.

Spanning 16 countries, the 39 films chosen for the festival come from as far afield as China, South Africa, Afghanistan, Guadeloupe, Turkey and Singapore. The documentaries in particular provide an insight into different societies and cultures. *Do Girls Want it?* by Nikki Comninou "is very powerful, it completely shakes me," says Vermeiren. "It follows how three very different young women in South

Africa regard their virginity and live their lives; one preaches celibacy at universities, while another submits herself to traditional virginity tests."

Meanwhile, closer to home, *Mijn Zus Zahra...or How I Tried To Change My Father in 52 minutes* is Limburg director Saddie Choua's first documentary, made in 2006. It has already caused a stir on Flemish television, as Choua tries to reconcile her Flemish-Moroccan parents to her younger sister's homosexuality. "I had to make it," explains Choua. "My father still doesn't want to see the film. Although my parents can't yet really accept that my sister is a lesbian, an upshot of the film is that much of the tension surrounding it within the family has gone."

Choua and many of the other filmmakers will be on hand to present and discuss their work with the audience after each screening. Informally, the festival also provides women filmmakers a rare networking opportunity, "So many women filmmakers coming together and exchanging their experiences also makes the festival special," says Vermeiren. "This doesn't happen in Brussels ever."

18-21 September, Botanique, Koningsstraat 236, Brussels

online

www.ellestournent.be

SCULPTURE

Where statues go to die

In a corner of Antwerp's open-air museum, public sculptures await their fate

Monique Philips

After a stressful period of road works and renovations, a couple of Antwerp squares are finally reaching their completion. One of them is the Leopoldplaats behind the National Bank on the Frankrijklei. Soon you'll again be able again to have a quiet drink on one of the terraces bordering the square. The last obstacles are being removed, pavements swept, spotlights strategically set in place, banners put up for the grand opening. Inhabitants approvingly inspect the fresh laid stones and masonry. They've been waiting for five years. But one thing is still missing. Didn't there used to be a statue on that high pedestal instead of a lonely terrace chair?

Just as impatiently, in a remote corner of the open-air Middelheim Museum, the statue in question – of Leopold I on horseback – awaits his final discharge from the statue infirmary. His fellow patients look a bit sore as they still have some healing to do before being put in the spotlight again. Some might even rest here in peace forever if restoration proves impossible.

A row of white robed 19th-century sandstone figures, famous composers and local heroes alike, stand in line patiently. Before retiring here, they used to adorn prominent Antwerp squares and parks. Road works squelched their careers in the 1960s. After sitting in city warehouses,



King Albert and his mighty steed are finally ready to be discharged

they were carted off to gardens outside the city walls, where private Antwerp families were allowed to have them "for safekeeping".

When the public interest in 19th-century sculpture revived, the statues were tracked down and brought back to Antwerp, to this corner of the Middelheim. Housed at the

museum are the headquarters of the commission Beeld in de Stad (Sculptures in the City), which advises the city council on the use and outlook of art in public spaces and on the future of these statues. The Rodin "heads" in front of the Museum of Fine Arts on the Leopold de Waelplaats and the statue of the painter Antoon van Dyck on the Meir, for instance, have been reinstated through their efforts and instigation.

So, next on the list to head back to town is the 3.5 ton statue of King Leopold I and horse. Personnel at the Middelheim, have become a fan of the capsized sculpture, having been able to marvel at its many intrinsic details up close these several years. The uniform, the stirrups, even the medals were masterly formed by Joseph-Germain Geefs. Although the royal statue was not commonly popular at its inauguration in 1865, it will soon return as a showpiece of craftsmanship to its eponymous square. The bronze has been expertly restored, polished and waxed with a coating designed to protect it from acid rain and pollution.

Let the festivities begin!

online

<http://museum.antwerpen.be/Middelheimopenluchtmuseum>

THEATRE

A reinvented life

How KVS transformed its vision and work, making itself relevant all over again



The back of the refurbished building, known as the KVS Bol and KVS Top and the new, glass encased theatre on the Arduinkaaai, the KVS Box. "It's about being a Brussels city theatre," says Jan Goossens, photo right

Sharon Light

The last decade has been all about renovation for the KVS, both inside and out. It started with the upgrade of the physical structure, located in the centre, back in 1999. Forced from their home base and out to the Molenbeek area during the works, the theatre staff came face-to-face with the realities of today's Brussels.

That Brussels featured a French-speaking majority, significant Maghreb communities and little interest in classical theatre – all significant changes since the establishment of the Flemish theatre in 1852. "That area is very characteristic for Brussels – in a heightened, intense way," says KVS Artistic Director Jan Goossens. "Nobody speaks Dutch, few people have a higher education, people have low incomes. The traditional audience refused to go out there. At the same time, the Flemish, repertoire-based productions were not attracting our new neighbours."

Thus began the internal reinvention of the KVS, which stands for Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg, or Royal Flemish Theatre. KVS began to see itself as representing a strongly protected minority, that of Dutch speakers in Brussels. But the young team thought they could do more than actively defend Flemish identity.

"We asked ourselves which repertoire does not yet exist in Brussels and which repertoire does this city need?" explains Goossens. "Which community does not have a voice? Which community has a hidden cultural life that we don't see?" All they had to do was look around them. "We connected very much with the Moroccan community in Molenbeek, we developed work with the African community,

particularly the Congolese, and we began working with francophone artists."

With Goossens at the helm from 2001, the team turned its focus to these less powerful, less

affluent minorities of the capital. In perhaps their most brazen move, they began working with the French-speaking community, offering French surtitles to their Dutch performances, and encour-

aging crossover between the two artistic communities.

KVS has by now moved back into its beautifully refurbished building on Lakensestraat, as well as a new facility across the street on Arduinkaaai. Meeting with Goossens in this refreshingly modern building, it is easy to see that their surroundings now run parallel with their mindset.

The company has taken further steps to strengthen its mission in recent years. They no longer rely on subscriptions, which now make up only a small portion of ticket sales. Demographically, more than 30% of their audience is under 26, and one-quarter is French-speaking – not groups inclined to subscribe to a Dutch-language theatre.

Moreover, KVS does not want subscriptions. "In terms of our audience, we start from scratch on each production," Goossens says. They want to put together programming to attract a diverse crowd, even though that means each individual is likely to attend fewer performances. "We would like everybody in Brussels who is interested in theatre to have a

good reason to come here at least once a season. If we can do that, we'll be happy."

KVS is very much aware of Brussels' role as the capital of Europe. They are eager to engage English speakers and offer English surtitles on an increasing number of shows each season. They also seek to cross language barriers by including substantial servings of dance and music in the programme. "It's about being a Brussels city theatre in order to tell that story to Flanders, Belgium and, more and more, internationally," notes Goossens.

As you might expect, KVS is now committed to new work. The team of 10 artists and dramaturges work together to develop each season. Productions grow out of relationships with artists, or sometimes are added "fully formed" as productions that were previously staged elsewhere.

Co-productions are common both with Flemish and Dutch companies, as well as with the Théâtre National, who are co-sponsoring this month's Toernee General. A follow-up to the 2006 event, this mini-festival features the best of Dutch-language theatre from the past year performed at the Théâtre National, with French-language performances at KVS.

"We want to give our community a chance to see the really fascinating work that has come out of the *other* community in the past two years," explains Goossens, "and that's very much about defending Flemish culture. But for me, that's a side effect. It's primarily about sharing our theatre in an open, collaborative way."

Season's greetings

The best of KVS 2008-2009

Baloji: Twenty-five years after immigrating to Belgium from the Congo, Baloji (photo below) received his first message from his mother: "Tell me about your life." His recently released album, *Hotel Impala*, is his response. This concert promises an eclectic combination of musical styles, as KVS kicks off its Bal in de Box series of dance parties on 27 September. Bonus: there are fireworks.

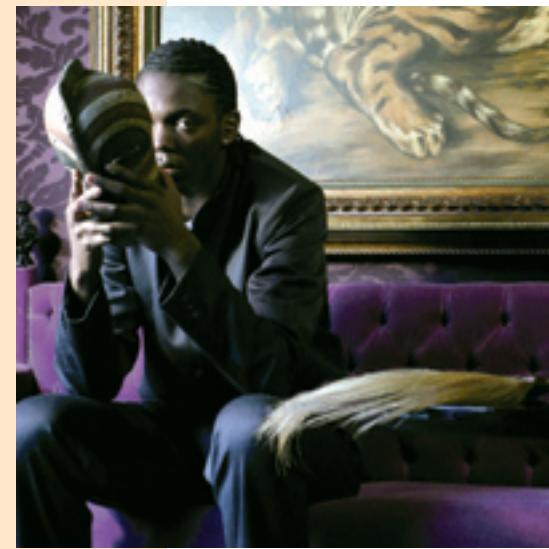
Project Kristian Smeds: Smeds, a Finnish artist, remains intrigued by the development of the European Union, what the dialogue about Europe could be and should not be. Flash-forward to 2069, when Finland makes a last stand against the EU's ban on cultural diversity and national traditions by hunkering down in a shipping container with a lifetime's supply of reindeer, alcohol and the requisite sauna. Find out what happens next February.

More...Future: KVS has established artistic exchanges with several Congolese artists, among them Faustin Linyekula. This season's production next May is Linyekula's reaction to the lack of involvement of Congolese artists in the problems of their own country. *More...Future* asks exactly that: how successful artists can give more of a future to their country.

Gewonnen brood/Pain perdu: Two artists filmed interviews with three left-wing political leaders. Young adults from across Brussels watched the interviews and discussed their reactions with author Pol Hoste, who wrote a text based on those discussions that 14 other young adults will perform. *Got it?* Running in November, this new play by the KVS company explores role models (and the lack thereof) and the hopes and dreams of today's youth in Brussels. Enter at your own risk, but do enter.

Missy: The great success of the 2007-2008 KVS season, this monologue exploring the missionary experience in the Congo returns in April for a brief run. Tickets are sure to be snapped up, so plan ahead.

Peeping Tom: Another returning collaboration, this Brussels' dance ensemble incorporates music, theatre and dance in its trilogy, *Le Jardin* (The Garden), *Le Salon* (Salon) and *Le Sous Sol* (Basement). It performs all three parts throughout October.



online
www.kvs.be



Stephan Vanfleteren



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.

CYCLING

A bicycle built for Ghent

A simple event with the city's usual weird twists

Lisa Bradshaw

Last weekend, the biggest cycling event of the year – the family-friendly Gordel – was staged in Flemish Brabant. This weekend's bike day is certainly smaller but makes up for it in that offbeat manner that only the capital of East Flanders can pull off.

Gent Fietst (Ghent Cycles) is an annual celebration of biking – though that's a bit redundant in a city that is obsessed with this cheap and easy mode of transport. On any given day, Ghent resembles Amsterdam in the ratio of bikes to cars; the city has made so much of its downtown area car free, it's the most efficient way of getting around the centre.

But on 14 September, Ghent pumps up the volume: the ring around the city – traditionally a safe haven for cars – will be shut to motorised vehicles and become a bike tour. The rest of the celebration takes place on Sint-Pietersplein in the university district. The graffiti shop Artifex hosts Pimp Up Your Cycle, where you can choose from a variety of paints and patterns to give your bike a distinctive new look – with artistic help, of course, so you don't wind up just embarrassing your-



Film director Nic Balthazar will join many other cyclists at Gent Fietst

self and your bike.

There is also Bike Boulevard, a show of ultra-cool and antique bikes, and a market for new and second-hand bicycles and accessories. Another workshop shows you how to make simple bike repairs, and there are both races and a BMX course for the more wild riders. Dujoli Circus, a big hit at the recent Gentse Feesten, will do a bike acrobatics show. The day ends with a musical performance by, believe it or not, film director Nic Balthazar and actor Michael Pas, a duo billing themselves as The Humble Egos.

Gent Fietst has been organised for the last four years and has gone so well that the city has decided to be next in line to plan a car-free day, like the annual events in Brussels and Antwerp. But Ghent doesn't want to demonise vehicles, so the name of the day puts an emphasis on the presence of walkers and bikers rather than on eliminating cars. The first Dag van de Zwakke Weggebruiker, or Day of the Vulnerable Road User, will be in the summer of 2009.

online

www.gent-fietst.be

The circle of Hell

Only 58,000 walkers and cyclists turned out for this year's Gordel the lowest number ever. But our correspondent kept going to the end

It's 8.30, and I'm in Zaventem to register for the 100km Gordel Classic. It's absolutely bucketing down. I never go cycling when it's raining; I must be mad. Around me are other mad cyclists. I register and receive my participant's card that has to be stamped at each control point. "Enjoy your day!" says the smiling administrator from the confines of her dry tent. I smile weakly back, eyeing her steaming mug of coffee.

After half an hour of cycling through Zaventem, Kraainem and Sterrebeek, I realise that I am near my own house and briefly consider creeping back home. But then I pass an elderly woman cycling...and singing! "What are you singing?" I ask. "Summertime!" she replies. Her fortitude inspires me.

The political tension leading up to this year's Gordel has been higher than in previous years. In Overijse I ask one of the organisers if there has been any sabotage. "More than normal," he replies. "A lot of the signposts have been taken down, and there have been hundreds of drawing pins thrown on the cycle paths. We've been working since four this morning to sweep up the pins and re-mark the routes." In the Gordel centre in Sint-Genesius-Rode, the repair tent is busy mending punctures.



I push on, heading through the pleasant countryside of Sint-Anna-Pede and Itterbeek (although it's not looking its best in the torrential rains). In Groot-Bijgaarden some surprisingly steep hills almost – but not quite – force me to get off my bike and push. The hot soup in the Zandloper cultural centre in Wemmel restores my energy.

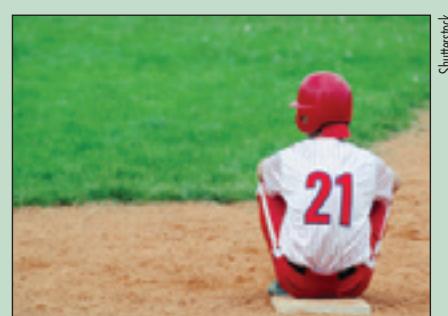
Along the route, other freebies were on offer. Bottles of sports drink and apples supplied by local farmers were extremely welcome. But I couldn't bring myself to accept the ice cream on a rainswept car park in Vilvoorde.

Ten kilometres to go – the toughest of them all. With a gale force wind in my face, I feel like I'm being driven backwards. But by 15.30 I had made it back to Zaventem. I hand in my stamped card – virtually papier-mâché by now – to the administrator, who is no longer smiling; she's wet and cold, too. She hands over my medal without a "well done"; I'll have to wait until I get home to receive that.

Ah, home! A warm bath, dry clothes, a steaming cup of tea. There's just one problem. It's four km away. By bike.

Denzil Walton

TOUCHING BASE the week in sport



Shutterstock

Baseball

Following their successful qualifier in Sweden earlier this year, the Belgian Junior (U-21) national team got to compete in the **U-21 European Championships** last week. Against fierce competition, a heavily Flemish Belgian side placed last, despite some respectable performances against strong countries.

EC U-21, Pamplona, Spain,

3-7 September

Italy 10 – 1 Belgium
Belgium 3 – 7 France
Belgium 0 – 18 Germany (7 innings)
Russia 6 – 5 Belgium
Slovakia 9 – 8 Belgium

"It was a very young team; we had six players who were 18 and under," said coach Tom Lorrentop. "But we've gained some invaluable experience on the international level. We played countries with real baseball academies. Kids there go to schools where they're being groomed to play baseball. That we could compete is very positive."

Cricket

The Belgian national U-17 team has won the **Division II European Championship** in Moenchengladbach, Germany. In its final match, the Belgians won against Italy by seven wickets, despite having just one over left.

Italy set Belgium a target of 178, following its 177 for nine matches, which was severely hampered by some nice fielding work by Belgium. A tense ending saw Belgium reach its target in a race against the clock. Akshat Sanghvi was selected as Man of the Match by the umpires for the final after smashing his way to 35 runs on just 34 balls without making an out.

American football

The Flanders American Football League is looking for **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.

No experience is required; clinics and thorough instruction will be provided. Officials receive a small stipend. Contact Christophe Geldhof at oige@telenet.be for more information.

The **Junior League** (16-19 years old), meanwhile, will begin on 27 September. Teams are still actively recruiting new players of all levels. For more information, visit www.americanfootball.be.

Rugby

On 20 September the Flemish Rugby Federation will hold its annual **Mega Rugby Day**, when Flemish rugby opens its doors to anyone wanting to learn about the fast-growing sport. On 14 September, **rugby action will resume** around the region as the newly formed Flemish regional league kicks off. The Flemish Rugby Federation is looking for new **coaches and referees**. For all rugby info, visit www.vlaamse-rugby-bond.be. Leander Schaerlaeckens

Classical & New Music**Antwerp**

AIR Antwerpen
Oosterweelsteenweg 3; 03.202.46.49
SEP 13 15.00-23.00 AGiiR, Mauro Pawlowski, Sean Bergin & Rogério Bicudo, Barkin' 23.00 Film/video art: The Wayward Canon & Giles Round present Simon and the Radioactive Flesh + late night DJ party (Part of Follow the Sound Festival)

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be
SEP 12 20.00 Anima Orchestra and Choir conducted by Jos van Immerseel: Haydn, Mozart
SEP 17 20.00 Champ d'Action and Bl!ndman in a tribute to late American composer James Tenney: Tenney, Scelsi, Grisey, Sleighim, Verstockt

Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen (MuHKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.260.99.99, www.muhka.be
Until SEP 11 20.00 Film: Off the Road by Laurence Petit-Jouvet (Fr 2007), with music by Peter Jacquemyn, bass
SEP 11 19.00, 20.00 & 21.00 Barkin' #1, #2, #3. 22.00 DJ Ipiki (Part of Follow the Sound Festival)

Brussels

Abdij Ter Kameren
Emile Duraylaan; 02.736.01.29, www.solisten.be
SEP 13-14 18.00 Solisten: Sinéad O'Connor, José Van Dam, Billy Paul, Lu Yu Chen, Catherine Lara and a Queen Elisabeth Singing Competition 2008 prizewinner in a promenade concert conducted by Dirk Brossé, followed by fireworks

Atelier Marcel Hastir

Handelsstraat 51; 02.281.78.85, ateliermarcelhastir@gmail.com
SEP 14 17.00 Philippe Liéart, piano: Beethoven's Eroica Variations, Prokofiev's Tales of an Old Grandmother op 31, Satie's Sports et Divertissements

Beursschouwburg

Auguste Orstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be

Klara Festival:

SEP 10 12.30 Aviv Quartet: Beethoven's String Quartet Opus 95, Shostakovich's String Quartet No 3. 22.00 Määk's Spirit and Spectra
SEP 11 12.30 Christian Poltera, cello; Cédric Tiberghien, piano: Beethoven's Variations on a theme by Mozart, Debussy's Cello and Piano Sonata, Weil's Cello Sonata. 22.00 Cristina Zavalloni/Wibert Aerts: Nono

SEP 12 12.30 Idil Biret, piano: Chopin, Liszt, Ligeti. 22.00 Final night party with Tom Gaebel Big Band

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
SEP 10 20.00 Alicia Nafé, mezzo; Gabriel Rios, Geike Arnaert, Girls in Hawaii: improvisations
SEP 11 20.00 Orchestre des Champs-Elysées conducted by Philippe Herreweghe: Bruckner's Symphony No 8
SEP 12 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Walter Weller, with Sol Gabetta, cello: Schubert's symphonies No 5 & 6, Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No 2, Vasks' Das Buch
SEP 14 15.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Walter Weller, with Sol Gabetta, cello: Schubert, Shostakovich

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
SEP 13 20.00 Anne Schwanewilms, soprano; Manuel Lange, piano: lieder by Strauss, Mahler

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be
SEP 12 20.15 Bruno Walter Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jack Martin Händler, with Fazil Say, piano: Telemann, Berger, Mozart, Beethoven (part of Spoken World Festival)

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 0900.28.877
SEP 14 11.00 Seenu Singh, piano: Chopin

Saint Michael and St Gudula Cathedral

Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.217.83.45
SEP 14 10.00 Bruges Cathedral Choir conducted by Ignace Thevelien: De Hondt

Opera**Antwerp**

Stadsschouwburg
Theaterplein 1; 077.37.38.39
SEP 12-20 Puccini's Turandot conducted by Patrick Fournillier, with Elisabete Matos, soprano; Zoran Todorovich, tenor

Bruges**Stadhuis**

Grote Markt; 070.222.007, www.ideefix.be
Until SEP 13 21.00 Outdoor production of Rossini's The Barber of Seville conducted by Eric Lederhandler, staged by François de Carpentries

Brussels**De Munt**

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be

Until SEP 23 19.00 The Monnaie Opera Orchestra & Chorus in Pelléas et Mélisande by Claude Debussy, conducted by Mark Wigglesworth, staged by Pierre Audi

Jazz & blues**Antwerp**

Café King Kong
Volksstraat 58; 03.202.46.49
Until SEP 14 22.00 FTS Club Sessions

Borgerhout**De Roma**

Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.235.04.90, www.deroma.be
SEP 12 20.00 The Valerie Solanas XL (free)
SEP 18 20.30 The Clement Brothers

Brussels**Ancienne Belgique**

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
SEP 16 20.00 Esperanza Spalding

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193-195; 02.733.13.78
SEP 12 20.30 Tricycle

Le Grain d'Orge

Waversesteenweg 142; 02.511.26.47
SEP 12 21.30 One Way

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34, www.recycleart.be
SEP 12 20.00 Richard Pinhas + Catalogue, avant garde, electronic and free jazz

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
SEP 11 12.30 Micheline Van Hautem
SEP 18 12.30 Stash

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

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
SEP 14 20.00 Scars on Broadway
SEP 15 20.00 Meshuggah
SEP 17 20.00 Colbie Caillat

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
SEP 13 23.00 Monika Kruse

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
SEP 18 20.00 Guapo

Schaerbeek Cultural Centre

Lochtstraat 91; 0496.08.76.36, www.paprikasbl.be
SEP 12 20.00 L'Analphabète + The Astronaut

VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07
SEP 17 20.00 Ponytail + Polysics

Kortrijk**De Kreun**

Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44
SEP 12 20.00 All I Know + Stab + We Seem to Have Misplaced Our Igloos

Leuven**Stuk**

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20
SEP 13 21.00 Showstar

World, folk**Antwerp****Stadsschouwburg**

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900
SEP 15 20.00 Tribute to Johnny Cash by Flemish musicians Wim Opbrouck, Axl Peleman, Guy Swinnen, Patrick Riguelle, Willy Willy, Raf Walschaerts and Wigbert van Lierde, among others

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00, www.zuiderpershuis.be
SEP 18 20.30 Compañía María José Franco, flamenco

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wenzestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82, www.deschaduw.net
SEP 12 20.30 McBee's Brewery

Brussels**Art Base**

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
SEP 13 21.00 Takis Mendis & Stergios Papdopoulos (Greece)

Ghent**Capitole**

Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5; 0900.84.100
SEP 12 20.00 Tribute to Johnny Cash by Flemish musicians Wim Opbrouck, Axl Peleman, Guy Swinnen, Patrick Riguelle, Willy Willy, Raf Walschaerts, Wigbert van Lierde, among others

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01
SEP 17 20.00 Maria José Franco

Theatre**Brussels****KVS Bol**

Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.12, www.kvs.be
Until SEP 12 20.00 Kroum by Hanoch Levin (in Dutch with French and English surtitles)

Dance**Brussels****Théâtre les Tanneurs**

Huidenvettersstraat 75; 02.512.17.84
SEP 14-24 Louis et nous, community project choreographed by Karine Ponties

Ghent**De Ingang**

Land van Waaslaan 78; 09.220.82.96, www.de-ingang.be
SEP 12 20.00 Il Ballo della Folia by La Cetra d'Orfeo conducted by Michel Keustermans, choreographed by Lieven Baert, with Caroline Weynarts, soprano: medieval music and dance

Visual arts**Antwerp****Fotomuseum**

Waalse Kaai 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

Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten/Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
Until DEC 14 Head on Shoulders. Portrait busts in the Low Countries, 1600 – 1800: likenesses of politicians, scientists, philosophers, mythical figures, writers and actresses

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34
Until SEP 21 Sculptures 1985-2007 by Philip Aguirre y Otegui

Modemuseum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70, www.momu.be
SEP 12-FEB 8 Maison Martin Margiela '20' The Exhibition
Until OCT 12 MoMu prize winner Andrea Cammarosano presents www.crazyssimo.com

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;

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

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
Klusstraat 86; 02.649.86.65
Until SEP 28 Belgie/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, Aida Kazarian and Quinten Metsys

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

ISELP
Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until SEP 26 White Noise, ceramics by Caroline Andrin and others
Until OCT 11 Daisaku Nagai, paintings
Until OCT 11 Lights by Françoise De Smet and jewellery by Alice de Wrangel

Jacques Franck Cultural Centre
Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20
Until OCT 5 Peres, video work and photographs of Gaza by Palestinian photographer Paysir Batniji

Jewish Museum of Belgium
Minimenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
Until OCT 5 One Family, photographs by Vardi Kahana

Le Botanique
Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
Until OCT 12 Retrospective of work by Palestinian photographer Rula Halawani

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 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)

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11, www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until SEP 21 The British Royal Collection: From Bruegel to Rubens, more than 50 paintings from the Queen Elizabeth II's collection, with major works by Hans Memling, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Peter Paul Rubens and others, shown alongside masterpieces from the museum's collection

Until SEP 21 Expo '58: Contemporary Art at the World Fair, revisiting the 1958 exhibition entitled 50 Years of

Modern Art

Until OCT 5 Art and Finance in Europe, 15th-century masterworks highlighting the social and historical representation of money by Rogier van der Weyden and Hans Memling, among others

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
Until SEP 28 Naabas Traditional Chiefs of Burkina Faso, outdoor exhibition of large-scale photographs by Jean-Dominique Burton (part of Summer of Photography)
Until OCT 19 Expo 58, films and photographs, ethnographic objects, plants, artwork and animals that were displayed in the seven pavilions dedicated to the Belgian Congo at Brussels' World's Fair in 1958

Stadhuis

Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50
Until SEP 28 Oriental Fascination, Japanese etchings from the Feliks Jasinski collection in Krakow, shown alongside works by 19th- and 20th-century Belgian artists influenced by Japanese graphic art, including Fernand Khnopff, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Rik Wouters and others

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33
Until NOV 2 Kelley Walker, works with appropriated and recycled images
Until NOV 2 Nothing More Natural: drawings, computer and video art exploring the relationship between sex and technology in contemporary society by Belgian artist Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven

Watermael Station

Taillilaan 2
Until SEP 15 Een picturale reis (A Pictorial Journey), paintings by Mig Quinet

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 and Roger Raveel, among others (see also Roger Raveel Museum in Mechelen-Zulte)

Ghent

Caermersklooster
Vrouwbroersstraat 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, work with a surrealist touch

Until OCT 12 Homage 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

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

Zuivelmarkt (Beguinage) 33; 011.29.59.60

Until SEP 29 1% Water, art and design relating to global water issues

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation
Hulsterstraat Noord; www.verbekefoundation.com
Until NOV 16 Vision in Motion – Motion in Vision, 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 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

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum
Grote Markt 34; 057.23.92.75
Until NOV 12 Off the record, work by artist-in-residence Wendy Morris

Festivals & special events

Open Monument Day: Flanders' annual celebration of European Heritage Day. This year's theme is "20th edition - 20th century", with more than 600 buildings and monuments open to the public, displaying the diversity of the past century's culture and architecture

SEP 14 across Flanders
www.openmonumentendag.be

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

Antwerp

Antwerp Expat Welcome Party 2008: Annual free event with a buffet dinner, live entertainment, practical information, a tombola and the chance to meet other expats and locals
SEP 11 18.00 at Radisson SAS Park Lane Hotel, Van Eycklei 34 events@ackroyd.be, www.xpats.com

Follow the Sound Festival: Contemporary and improvised music festival
Until SEP 13 at venues across Antwerp www.followthesound.be

Brussels

Brussels Movie Days: International film festival, with music and literary events, plus special programmes for children.

10-14 SEP at Wolubilis, Paul Hymanslaan 251 www.brusselsmoviedays.be

Design September: International festival of architecture and multidisciplinary design. Includes Designers Open Doors and a film programme
Until SEP 30 across Brussels
www.designseptember.be

Disco Kids@atomium: Pete Um + Mandrill Smith-Humbleconk + Echokrank + Felix Kubin (free family-oriented event)

SEP 14 14.00-18.00 at the Atomium www.recyclart.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

Don't miss this week



Antwerp Art Weekend

11-14 September, Antwerp Zuid, www.tzuid.eu

Antwerp Zuid has been changing over the past decade from sleepy residential district to hip art quarter. Now they want people to visit. Last year museums and galleries organised an art weekend. It was a big success. (How could it not be?) So they are doing the same this year. The idea is simple. The museums have got their agendas synchronised so they all launch their big autumn shows over one weekend. There's portrait busts at the Museum of Fine Arts (previewed on page 2), Martin Margiela at the Fashion Museum (reviewed by our fashion critic next week) and a short film by Bjorn Tagemose starring Juliette Lewis at the Photography Museum.

Wait, there's more. There will be music in various locations, guided tours on different themes and Sunday breakfast in the fine arts museum. A single ticket costing €12 gets you into all four museums over all three days. It's worth every cent just to find out what exactly is meant by the *Ultra Light Piano Piece* for MuHKA by Stefaan Quix.

Elles Tournent: First edition of the film festival featuring avant-premieres, dramas, comedies, animation, documentary, shorts and rare historical films made by women.

18-21 SEP at Botanique, Koningsstraat 236 www.ellestournent.be

European Festival of Intercultural Dialogue

EU project celebrating cultural diversity with workshops, debates, concerts and film
SEP 12-13 at Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein 18 www.flagey.be or www.civworld.org

For the Common Good

The Literary Canon: the kick-off to a series of debates on literary, cultural, historical, scientific and European canons organised by Dutch cultural centre deBuren. First speaker is Geert Buelens, professor of Dutch Literature and director of the Dutch Department at the University of Utrecht
11 SEP, 20.00, at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23 02.212.19.30, www.deburen.eu

KlaraFestival 2008

International music festival including contemporary music and jazz around the theme Forza Musica!, the strength of music
Until SEP 12 in venues and public spaces around Brussels 070.21.02.17, www.klarafestival.be

Marni Jazz Rendez-Vous: Festival celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Travers jazz club, including Belgian and international artists

Until SEP 12 at Théâtre Marni, Vergniestraat 25 02.354.43.68, www.theatremarni.com

Spoken World 08: New multidisciplinary festival exploring global arts and issues in association with Flemish-Dutch centre deBuren. Includes the Interdependence Forum 2008, European Festival of Intercultural Dialogue and theatre and music performances

Until SEP 13 at Kaaithéater, Sainctelettesquare 20 02.201.59.59, www.kaaithéater.be

Toernee General: Joint venture by the national theatres of the Dutch- and French-speaking communities. Each theatre will present projects by theatre students in French and Dutch and dance performances

SEP 16-27 at KVS, Arduinkai 9, and Theatre National, Emile Jacqmainlaan 115 www.kvs.be or www.theatrenational.be

Ghent

Accent: Annual international exposition featuring a guest country of honour, which this year is India

SEP 13-21 at Flanders Expo, Maaaltekouter 1 www.accenta.be or www.flandersexpo.be

Festival of Flanders-Gent: The international music festival celebrates its 50th anniversary with more than 140 concerts. This year's theme is 1001 Nights of Music, and the programme includes classical and world music, contemporary dance and theatre

SEP 13-OCT 4 across East Flanders 070.77.00.00, www.festivalgent.be

Gent Fietst 2008: Annual bike ride in and around the centre, where the entire city ring is car-free, plus workshops, races, second-hand bicycle market and entertainment

SEP 14 14.00-19.00 at Sint-Pietersplein 09.225.72.90, www.gent-fietst.be

Gent Rockt: Outdoor rock festival showcasing new talent with Gorki, Vive La Fête, Woodface, Les Truttes, Damn!, The Door is Closed, Cosmic Fools

SEP 13 15.30 at Claeys Bouuaert (Mariakerke) 070.345.645, www.pesco.be

Tokyo Drums: Japanese music show **Until NOV 5** at Capitole, Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5 0900.69.00

Heers

Wild Plant and Dahlia Festival: Garden fair with rare plants, roses and vegetable gardens on display
SEP 13-14 at Hex Castle, Hekslaan 1 www.hex.be

INTERVIEW

Wilfried Pas



Wilfried Pas, 68, is one of Flanders' most appreciated sculptors. His personal work finds figures emerging from (or sinking into) sticks and mud, whereas his commissioned work depicts famous writers like Willem Elsschot, Anton Van Wilderode or Karel Van de Woestijne on a larger scale in bronze. But whatever the size or material, somehow he always knows how to capture personalities to a T. On 13 September Pas will unveil of his latest work on the grounds of St Willibrordus church in Antwerp: a life-size sculpture of fellow artist and actor Julien Schoenaerts, who died of Alzheimer's disease in 2006.

Your latest work is of actor Julien Schoenaerts. Where will be the statue be placed?

Right around the corner. The local neighbourhood committee A Statue for a Monument rallied for this sculpture, so it will be put at the St Willibrordus church, thus bringing some art into this less

popular side of town. And it's close to the former Ring Theatre where Julien used to play. It burned down, and now Jan Fabre's home base, Troublyen/Laboratorium, is there.

You and Julien are both Antwerpenaars, and you were friends. I heard that this is the first time you've made a statue of someone you knew personally.

I knew Julien well, for 30 years. We met when we were still young in the artist night cafe De Muze. It makes it a bit easier to work by memory if you've seen someone's physique and movements – how they walk and talk. That's quite important because you're trying to fixate a life, an idea. For my other commissioned work, like Paul van Ostaeijen, I only had photos and pictures to go on. I did make a preliminary photo series of Julien 10 years ago.

Schoenaerts is a Flemish acting legend, having been in movies like *De Leeuw van Vlaanderen*, *Taxandria* and *Daens*. How did you decide what aspect of the man you wanted to capture?

That's a matter of searching, analysing and feeling about. I've made him very modest. He'll be on a low stage-like pedestal, not high up like a heroic general. He was a people's person. There will be benches surrounding him so people can sit and chat. Have you seen him act? Most people know him from *Daens* probably. He's intriguing to watch, isn't he? And that's only through the medium of film. He was a truly charismatic actor, his movements modest. He was a man of words, of language. It wasn't about the theatrical taking possession of space, but the capturing of the audience. He owned the public. Yet physically he was a tiny fellow. His power was to communicate through very modest means.

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying in Flanders

No more muddling

"We are not prepared to put our trust in the federal government for another year if it is going to carry on muddling through."

Urbain Vandeurzen
chairman of employers' organisation Voka

Child abuse

"Every year dozens of children die on the roads. It seems to be the price we pay for our mobile society. This might be putting it a bit strong, but for me it's bordering on child abuse."

Ankie Vandekerckhove
Children's rights commissioner

On your bike

"The bicycle will be my mode of transport next month anyway."

Tom Boonen
Belgian cycling champion
reflects on a two-month driving ban for speeding

This weekend, Wilfried Pas will unveil his latest work – a life-size sculpture of fellow artist and almost mythical Flemish actor Julien Schoenaerts

It's a bit similar to what you do. Your style isn't exactly rigid. Contours are blurred leaving the spectator room for his or her own interpretation. Even with your statue of King Boudewijn.

Of course, the person's description prescribes the figure, but within that figure you're free to choose your own style. I try to infuse vitality into my work, to create an illusion of reality – fixating rhythms and movements of a person. And I try to do this with very simple and modest means. It's not unlike single dots that finally make a painting.

In your sculptures, the swoops of clay are also testimony of your own vitality, it seems.

A good work needs to give the impression that it was made within 10 minutes, so to speak. It should never give the impression of having been a major undertaking. If you're looking at a work of art, thinking: "that must have taken a long time to make, then the artist is off base, in my opinion."

Do you still enjoy sculpturing?

Of course! Otherwise you shouldn't do it. It's a talent I wish on everybody. Of course not everybody enjoys working alone. And, sure, the beginning is always a battle. A battle against gravity. You need to slab the clay on. And it's a frustrating period before you can recognise something, a shape taking form. Then suddenly you discover something, and you can continue along those lines – step by step until you see that it's finished. Or you're finished [laughs].

Was Julien's sculpture difficult to cast?

That's been done by artisanal bronze casters. This sculpture was fairly simple and consists of six parts that will be put together

again. Right now it's receiving its colour and patina. Bronze is a very rich material, but I equally enjoy working with other, very simple scanty materials in my person work. Rags and sticks. I like their frugality and sense of poorness.

Your personal work resembles mummies, archaeology.

I'm inspired by lots of things, and I'm intrigued by Indians – their burial sites, their philosophy. In my monograph, I include a beautiful letter by Chief Seattle, who said: "how can you buy or sell the sky?" Of course they'd taken everything from him.

You don't like to comment on your own work. Will you speak at the unveiling?

A sculpture should speak for itself.

Julien didn't die so long ago, so people might still remember him personally.

He died when he was 80, two years ago. That's still very recent. Linked to the unveiling there will be a small exhibition at the f-RT Gallery where you'll be able to see all the scale models I've crafted as preliminary studies. Also, a book will be presented with Julien's graphic work. In his last two years he regularly went to the studio of a friend, Jacques Goris, to make etchings and little poems. He was already quite sick, so he didn't manage the actual printing himself, but it's really nice work. He enjoyed it very much. I also hope that people who didn't know or see him personally, might one day sit at the base of his statue and wonder: "Who was that man?" That's important.

Interview by Monique Philips

Wilfried Pas will unveil his sculpture of Julien Schoenaerts at 15.00 on 13 September at St. Willibrordus Church on Kerkstraat, Antwerp

Maison Martin Margiela Los rook
vrij Brussels Open Monument Day
Irma Firma Barbie Bangkok Cycle
Route Interchange Network
next week in Flanders Today