



# FLANDERS TODAY

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Helena must choose between two eligible suitors in the new drama series *De Smaak van de Keyser*

## A taste of the truth

New Flemish drama series takes on personal stories from the Second World War

**Lisa Bradshaw**

“Tell me the truth; it will do you

good.”

“The truth? I don’t know it

anymore.”

With these words, *De Smaak van de Keyser* reaches from the present day back nearly 70 years to 1939, when a young woman’s world was laid out before her in a carpet of

Limburg herbs and the love of two handsome men.

This new Flemish television drama enjoyed the kind of gala premiere rarely even afforded to

feature films. Next month TV één begins *De Smaak van de Keyser* and launched it in Hasselt, where it was filmed, complete with a red carpet, the presence of the all-star

cast and thousands of spectators. Jenever flowed like water.

Serving the divine elixir was

*Continued on page 3*

## Court rules in favour of Fortis sale

But experts will have carte blanche to investigate terms

**Alan Hope**

The commercial court in Brussels last week threw the government a lifeline by rejecting a request for an interim order suspending the sale of bank-insurer Fortis to BNP Paribas. A consortium of small investors, which had brought the action, vowed to fight on to have the sale declared void.

However, the court’s ruling did not all go the government’s way. The court agreed to a demand from investors for a full investigation of the circumstances of the sale. It has nominated three experts to carry out

a complete audit of the transaction, with the power to subpoena reports, letters and emails between Fortis, BNP Paribas and the government.

The experts are Eric Debodt, a lecturer at the University of Louvain-la-Neuve; Dirk Smets, an auditor for the stock market oversight body CBFA; and Jean-François Cats, an auditor in the private sector and chairman of the profession’s representative body. The three independent auditors’ main task will be to find out how the price BNP Paribas paid for Fortis was deter-

*Continued on page 7*



## News

Flemish astronaut Frank De Winne will serve as the first-ever European commander of the International Space Station

## Arts

Flanders’ oldest gallery has seen a lot over 40 years. Antwerp’s Zwarte Panter celebrates four decades of artists, parties and neo-expressionism.

## Interview

Robert Grosset has conducted the Night of the Proms more than 600 times. What does a classical conductor really think of all those pop stars?

## EDITOR'S NOTES

**Rubens Revealed**

The curators at Antwerp's Fine Arts Museum have been taking a close look at individual Rubens paintings in their collection to see what more they can find out about the Flemish Baroque painter and his time. The latest to be put in the spotlight is "The Adoration of the Magi", painted in about 1624 to hang above the altar in the abbey of St Michael.

The work was commissioned by the abbot Mattheus Irsselius, who apparently reeled when he found out how much it would cost. Rubens seems to have appeased the great man by painting his portrait for free.

The portrait now hangs in Copenhagen, but it has been brought back to Antwerp to hang alongside "Adoration" in the Rubens Hall. The museum has erected a two-metre-high platform in front of the altarpiece so that visitors, for the first time ever, can observe the work

from close quarters and see it very much as the artist did as he worked on it.

The aim of the project is heightened understanding of Rubens' work, so the exhibition is accompanied by other paintings, video documentaries and a certain amount of scholarly discussion.

Anyone who is a Rubens scholar is going to want to see this exhibition, or at least read the results in the museum's *Rubensbulletin*. But it also has a certain appeal to the non-specialist, who will come away with a deeper understanding of an artist often dismissed as a painter of endless flesh.

**Derek Blyth**

29 November to 1 March, Fine Arts Museum, Leopold De Waelplaats, Antwerp

**online**

[www.kmska.be](http://www.kmska.be)



Get up close and personal with Rubens' "Adoration of the Magi" in Antwerp's Fine Arts Museum

**FACE OF FLANDERS****Wim Vandekeybus**

Wim Vandekeybus and Ultima Vez have grown up with Flanders. The dance company is 22 years old, and its story has in some way been the story of Flanders' success over the same period. Vandekeybus himself is like a poster boy of Flemish creativity – polymath, multidisciplinary and resolutely international, while rooted in his place and time.

The choreographer is part of a gaggle of creators – Anna Teresa de Keersmaker (dance), Tom Lanoye (literature), tg STAN (theatre), the Antwerp Six (fashion), Wim Delvoye (visual arts) – from the same generation who have shaped a cosmopolitan image of Flanders that will resonate far into the future. It is a fair bet that these names are the ones that mark the face of Flanders for an international audience. Through them, the very term "Flemish" has come to be seen as a logo for the trendy and the achingly hip.

Vandekeybus' parcours was odd, however. He didn't train to be a dancer but started out as a psychology student and quickly veered into theatre after auditioning for a place with Jan Fabre's company, with whom he toured for some time. He then founded Ultima Vez with a group of young dancers in Spain and created *What the Body Does Not Remember*, which burst onto the dance scene, garnering prizes and rave audiences.

The piece was sniffed at by his home audience until Vandekeybus had built up a solid reputation abroad. He has remained a fan of the outside world – often premiering in Spain or Germany – and is currently working in Sweden on an operatic version of Oedipus for Swedish ballet.

The son of a veterinarian, the 45-year-old relishes recounting how he delivered piglets at three in the morning because "his hands were smaller" and watched his father dispatch cattle with calm professionalism. His work has an earthy, gristly physicality; some women have told me that they find it too visceral, but men – even those who don't like contemporary dance – tend to find it exhilarating. It certainly makes you want to get up and have a go.

The Flemish choreographer is now looking back over the last 22 years with a revival of his work *Spiegel* in Brussels' KVS theatre, which he created two years ago for the company's 20th anniversary. "It was time to go back to that first excitement," he tells me.

If you don't know his work, *Spiegel* is a great introduction. It features remarkable scenes from his early work, as well as others from more recent productions and is set to the music of five composers, from Talking Head's David Byrne to Pierre Mertens. Dancers hurl themselves at one another and collide in mid-air in dizzying abandon; bodies thud to the floor like sacks of cement; dancers build rickety castles of wooden pallets and fall, catching each other.

It is a roller coaster of an evening that will open doors into the world of dance and also offer a distinctive Flemish take on life. "There is a great deal to make the spectator flinch in this show – you almost feel the bruises," wrote a critic from *The Independent*. Some will find *Spiegel*'s explosive energy mesmerizing; others will probably say it is a violent assault on the senses. Like Flanders, it's a bit of both.

Now, Vandekeybus wants to reinvent himself. His next piece, which will premiere in Barcelona next spring, will be with a totally new company of dancers. "It's time to learn from the youngsters," he says. "Time flies so fast!"

**Andrew McIlroy**

**TALKING DUTCH****notes on language****pendelaar**

You can always tell the *pendelaar* – commuter: dash to a particular seat, bag stashed away and nose in a book. But not all; some apparently look around them and like what they see. The free *Metro* newspaper that you pick up at the train station has a column with messages and confessions from someone probably sitting in the same carriage as you this morning.

The title of the column is "Kiss & Ride", which reminds me of a drop-off point at a station that had the same words on a signboard. But not for long. It was later replaced with *overstapzone* – transfer area, which certainly lacks the warmth of that farewell peck.

Some messages in "Kiss & Ride" belong in a lonely hearts column: *Eenzame man spoert elke dag van Tienen naar Brussel. Zoekt leuk vrouwelijke gezelschap* – Lonely man takes the train every day from Tienen to Brussels. Looking for pleasant female company. Good luck, lonesome cowboy, though you're probably casting your net a bit too wide.

Short commuting journeys can arouse feelings of longing that call to mind smoke-filled scenes from *Brief Encounter: Aan de knappe vrouw die vanmorgen opstapte in St-Truiden richting Brussel en zoveel boterhammen opat* – To the pretty woman who got on at St Truiden going to Brussels and ate so many sandwiches. Obviously someone who likes a woman with healthy appetites. Then he poignantly adds: *Ik had nog iets tegen je willen zeggen, maar je sliep nog toen ik eraf moest* – I wanted to say something to you, but you were still sleeping when I had to get off. Sleeping off the sandwiches no doubt. He finishes with hope springing eternal:

*Hopelijk kom ik je nog eens tegen* – I hope to meet you another time. Let's hope he brings his own sandwich box.

Others have been carrying the flame for some time: *Elke dag neem je de trein van Leuven naar Brussel* – Every day you take the train from Leuven to Brussels. *Elke dag hoop ik dat ik je zie* – Every day I hope to see you. The moonstruck boy has yet to pluck up the courage to approach the object of his desire: *Ik hoop mijn angsten te overwinnen en je eens aan te spreken* – I hope to overcome my fears and speak to you. And all this is going on while you're doing the crossword.

Some contributors wish their fellow commuters well: *Na 40 jaar is het bijna gedaan; geniet van je tuin; je hebt het verdient* – After 40 years it's almost over; enjoy your garden; you've earned it.

And for those who are attracted to uniforms, the rail staff evoke similar yearnings: to a female conductor: *ik was onder de indruk van je schoonheid en eigenlijk sprakeloos* – I was struck by your beauty and was in fact speechless.

If you're reading this on the train, why not share your *Flanders Today* with the person you've been wishing to talk to for so long?

**Alistair MacLean**

**online**

[www.metrotome.be](http://www.metrotome.be)

**Flanders Today****independent newsweekly**

Editor: Derek Blyth

Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw

News editor: Alan Hope

Agenda: Sarah Crew

Picture research: Esther Bourrée

Prepress: Nancy Temmerman

Contributors: Marie Dumont, Stéphanie Duval, Sharon Light, Alistair MacLean, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Monique Philips, Saffina Rana, Leander Schaerlaeckens, Steven Tate, Christophe Verbiest, Denzil Walton, Rory Watson

Project manager: Pascale Zoetaert

Publisher: VUM

NV Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij  
Gossetlaan 28, 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Editorial address: Waterloosesteenweg 1038

1180 Brussels

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

E-mail: [editorial@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:editorial@flanderstoday.eu)

Subscriptions: France Lycops

Tel: 02.373.83.59

E-mail: [subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu)

Advertising: Evelyne Fregonese

Tel. 02.373.83.57

E-mail: [advertising@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:advertising@flanderstoday.eu)

Verantwoordelijke uitgever: Derek Blyth

# A taste of the truth

Continued from page 1

a perfect touch: *De Smaak van de Keyser* follows the stories of three generations of a family-run jenever distillery in Hasselt. Aside from the premiere at Kinepolis, the 10-part series is now showing in a marathon at Kinepolis cinemas across Flanders, so you can see the whole thing in one nine-hour day before its TV launch on 7 December.

This mixing of cinema and television is reflected in the series: it's solidly based in melodrama but with production values that are most appreciated on a big screen. And, appropriately, there are two directors – one from television and one from the cinema. Jan Matthys has made several episodes of the Bruges-based detective series *Aspe* and most of last year's drama *Katarakt*, also set in Limburg. Frank Van Passel made the films *Villa des roses*, based on the popular novel by Antwerp author Willem Elsschot, and *Manneken Pis*, an internationally acclaimed Flemish favourite in recent film history. Their experiences blends together for perhaps the most ambitious Flemish drama series to date.

The story begins with the death of George in present-day Hasselt. He has been long married to Helena De Keyser, but after his death and through the probing of her granddaughter, Helena starts to reveal the story of her first – and only – true love.

The story then jumps back to 1939 when a beautiful, young Helena stands at the brink of taking over her father's jenever distillery. The sassy George, running a little distillery of his own out of a shack, is madly in love with the freedom-loving Helena and is devastated when she instead chooses his best friend, Alfred.

George and Alfred are drafted into the army and soon become prisoners of war in Germany. It's here that we find that, in George's mind, all's fair in love and war. Seventy years into the future,

Helena and her granddaughter decide to find out why George came home and Alfred did not.

From then on in every episode, the story jumps back and forth from the present day to the 1940s, then to the 1950s, '60s and '70s until it catches up with 2008. Jenever continues to bind the three generations of women: Helena, her daughter and her granddaughter, Alessandra, who loves the tastes, smells and sounds of the distillery as much as her grandmother did.

"When we made the series, we searched for ways to translate those senses, to find a way to literally show the tastes onscreen," explains Matthys. "That goes along with the story of the search for purity and for honesty." It's also reflected in the title: the word "smaak" means "flavour" or "taste".

Unlike many series, where different directors take on specific episodes, Matthys and Van Passel directed every episode of *De Smaak* together. It seems a bit arduous, but Van Passel claims it's the opposite. "As a solitary director, you don't have the physical or mental strength to direct 10 of these episodes. It's like making five movies in a row." And by each working on every episode "we got the consistency that we wanted."

Van Passel is a co-founder of the production company Caviar Content. Although *De Smaak*'s mix of television and cinema is unprecedented for a Flemish drama series, he thinks it's merely the next step in a natural evolution. "The idea that there is still a difference in the methods of working between television and movies is false," he states. "These two audio-visual ways of telling a story are coming closer and closer



The nose knows: Third generation Alessandra can sniff out a family mystery as easily as a good jenever

together."

In Flanders, where, until the last decade, films received little funding but television had big budgets, this is particularly true. "The variety at cinemas now – people go to play video games on a big screen, they go to watch the New York opera live in Kinepolis – it's all just a sign," says Van Passel. "We film people have to realise that it's not about the way it's projected anymore. Audiences want to hear stories, they want to see emotions,

they want us to guide them somewhere. Whatever way we do that is okay."

Caviar, he says, "tries to tear down these walls. We sell 'creative content'. We tell clients, here's how much it will cost, how do you want it?"

Both men think *De Smaak* is also going to tear down some walls in Belgium. "It's a very honest series, and it tried to touch the Belgian spirit," says Van Passel. "The war was such a difficult time

for all Belgian people, and it's still difficult for many of them to talk about. But maybe it's time now. *De Smaak van de Keyser* can be a platform for people to start talking. Not the big, political discussions, but in small, emotional, human ways."

*De Smaak van de Keyser* plays in its entirety on 29 November in Ostend and 30 November in Bruges. Visit [www.kinepolis.be](http://www.kinepolis.be) for dates in other cities.

## REVIEW

### Flemish drama: depressing, or what?

I have upset the directors of *De Smaak van de Keyser* with my very first question: "Why is Flemish drama so depressing?"

"It isn't!" Co-director Frank Van Passel resolutely denies this claim. "Major television drama series from Europe all try to tell a story in the spirit of their countries, and they focus on really difficult moments. In American drama series, they deal with death, but it's in episodes, so there is no real end. In *De Smaak van de Keyser*, there is an end, and there is a big catharsis. That's how Flemish drama is constructed."

Okay. But, still, you've got to hand it to the viewers: with each new television drama, they deal with a lot. A few years ago, *Stille Waters* brought us rape, abortion and paedophilia. Last year's *Katarakt* ended with the main character going blind after her husband committed suicide and the man she fell in love with turned out to be her brother. By the end, I, too, wanted to commit suicide.

"You can't judge it until you've seen the whole series," says Van

Passel. Fair enough, and I'll divulge right now that I only saw the two episodes of *De Smaak* that were shown at the premiere.

Those two episodes are cinematically gorgeous – the camera sweeps across the countryside and peers down at characters far below, emphasising the space and freedom of rural Limburg compared to the stultifying restrictions of a German-controlled Hasselt. Performances, too, are outstanding, drawing on some of Flanders' best television and film talent. Alfred Lenaerts, recently seen in cinemas in *Loft* and *Linkeroever*, is one of my favourite young Flemish actors, and here, too, he doesn't disappoint as a man overcome by his good fortune in finding unexpected love, only to lose it marching off to a war he doesn't want to fight.

The biggest surprise is perhaps a pitch-perfect performance by Marieke Dilles as the young Helena De Keyser. With very little experience to her name, she has to largely carry the 1940s segments, which she does, easily. *De Smaak* is set during the

Second World War, and its brutality is honestly portrayed. But add to this that endless dramatic tragedy – rape, murder, fatal illnesses and endless betrayals – and you have something that eventually becomes exhausting to watch. Still, as the directors know, this goes over well on Flemish television. And it definitely will this time, too. *De Smaak* has a compelling story with beautifully fleshed-out characters. Whatever they put these people through, you'll find yourself wanting to keep coming back to them.

But there is one problem *De Smaak* cannot overcome: the simple passage of time. There are three actresses portraying three generations whose ages don't remotely match the ages the characters would have to be. They are all much too young. Audiences must regularly suspend disbelief in movies and television, but in this case it's just too jarring. If the present-day part of the series had been set in the 1980s, for instance, the same actresses could have been used, and the problem would have been solved. **LB**



Jan Matthys (sitting, left) and Frank Van Passel (sitting, right) directed every episode together



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**PHOTO OF THE WEEK** • The world's biggest ceiling painting on canvas began its descent to earth last week for restoration, which visitors will be able to follow live. The painting, depicting the gods on Mount Olympus, measures 60 square metres and hangs in the court chamber Den Wolsack in the Oude Beurs in Antwerp. Painted in 1772 by

an unknown artist, it is in dire need of restoration, which will be done at the ING building on Lange Gasthuisstraat. Unusually, members of the public will be able to take a guided tour of the restoration as it goes on. Last week the delicate job of removing the 500 kg canvas from the ceiling started. While it is gone, the stability of the whole building,

parts of which date from the 14th century, will be studied and renovation work carried out, if necessary.

#### online

[www.erfgoed-vlaanderen.be](http://www.erfgoed-vlaanderen.be)

## FIFTH COLUMN



### The Spirit is willing

At the turn of the century, Flanders saw the birth of two new parties when the old Volksunie split apart into N-VA and Spirit. From the outset, people doubted the chances of survival for Spirit. Nothing has changed.

After a spectacular founding congress, Spirit remained in limbo for a couple of months. What to do next? Should it brave out the elections on its own, knowing that its electoral base was tiny? Or should it team up with a larger party? And in that case, which one – Open VLD, greens or socialists? It was only after Flemish minister for culture Bert Anciaux – Spirit's most popular politician – spoke out that the direction became clear. Spirit would form a cartel with SPA, the Flemish socialists.

Eight years on, Spirit is in limbo again. The party has known successes, such as the 2003 elections, which the then-trendy SPA/Spirit cartel won. A couple of weeks before, Spirit declared itself the winner of a TV show called *Doe de stemtest*. This allowed people to find out which party suited them best by answering a couple of dozen questions. Due to its broad and rather vague progressive programme, Spirit won about one half of Flemish votes. (This made for a hilarious TV moment when the wife of national football legend Jean-Marie Pfaff refused to reveal her answers, because, like most people, she did not have a clue what Spirit was about.)

Only one year later, the Flemish elections turned out a disappointment result for the SPA/Spirit cartel. A handful of Flemish and Brussels *spirituals* got elected, though, and Anciaux became minister for culture again. The downhill spiral did not stop here, and in 2007, just one Spirit senator got elected, while none entered the House of Representatives.

Bettina Geysen, the former manager of Eén (the public TV channel where she started her career as a presenter) was brought in to turn the tide. A cool lady, Spirit called her. A political miscast, said the commentators. Geysen changed Spirit's name into VlaamsProgresieve, the only result being that the party became even more obscure. Moreover, its abbreviation VI.Pro sounded, according to one commentator, "like a dry fart".

VI.Pro did not work. The only thing that gained any airplay was VI.Pro senator Geert Lambert's spectacular weight loss after a stomach operation. The cameras were there when Geysen stepped down as party president last week, though, after her expense claims as Eén manager were uncovered.

VI.Pro has by now become an almost virtual party. "Dear VI.Pro", the newspaper *De Morgen* wrote a couple of months ago, "maybe it's time to call it quits." The progressives were not convinced. They are hoping for a new start – yet again.

Anja Otte

## THE WEEK IN FLANDERS

### Wednesday 19 November

• Flemish minister president Kris Peeters was awarded an honorary doctorate by the MGIMO University in Moscow, formerly an elite school for Soviet diplomats. He had talks with university authorities over possible future cooperation with Ghent University in the field of biotechnology. • Police in the Westkust zone at the coast could soon be fitted with helmet-mounted cameras. Corps chief Nico Paelinck said the helmet-cams would discourage violence against officers, as well as ruling out false claims about police behaviour. • A mattress, refrigerator and a case of soft drinks fell off trucks on the Brussels ring in a single hour last week, according to reports by drivers sent to VRT radio. The federal police estimates some 10,000 objects fall from vehicles every year. • The royal family will not be awarded a planned 6% increase in their civil list payments, following an agreement between the palace and the government. The cutback follows criticism that the monarchs were receiving pay increases at a time when the population was feeling the effects of the economic downturn. • Former executives at the public broadcaster VRT were shown to have dined at top restaurants, rented BMW cars to cruise the streets of Cannes and used expensive hotel spas. Tony Mary, former director general, organised a lunch at Comme Chez Soi which cost €3,019 for 13 people,

or more than €200 a head.

### Thursday 20 November

• The Brussels pawn shop Berg van Barmhartigheid in the Marollen has welcomed 25% more clients than normal since September. The pawn shop, the last surviving institution of its type in the country, sees 200 people a day and lends €835,000 a month – now on terms as good, if not better, than the banks. • Russian billionaire Suleiman Kerimov has denied rumours that he is taking legal action against Maurice Lippens, former chairman of the board of Fortis, for his role in the bank's crash. Kerimov, a personal friend of Vladimir Putin, is thought to have lost between €400 million and €700 million.

• Two Brussels policemen filmed by security cameras stealing money and pornographic magazines have been suspended from duty. Initially, Brussels police chief Guido Van Wymersch declined to suspend his officers, but he changed his mind after the film became public.

### Friday 21 November

• Internet search giant Google has plans to introduce its popular Street View feature to Belgian cities, but not in the coming months. The feature allows users of Google Maps to view the streets from ground level, based on 360° photos shot by special vehicles. The plan, which would initially cover Brussels, Antwerp and Liege, is currently being studied

by the Privacy Commission. • A man kidnapped by five armed and masked men in his garage in Nijvel on 7 November has been released in the Netherlands. Zanouri Zaraa said he was kept locked, blindfolded and handcuffed, in an unlit room but not harmed. • More than 42,000 motorists caught speeding through the Reyers tunnel in northern Brussels at the end of October will not be fined because police used the wrong measuring equipment. The action came as speed limits on some tunnels went up from 50 to 70 km/h.

### Weekend 22 and 23 November

• The Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, better known as Bozar, will invite celebrated Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas to draw up a master plan for its entrance hall, café-restaurant and the square in front of the main door. The Brussels' arts centre is currently celebrating its 80th anniversary. • Despite the global financial crisis, Belgium's banks are still taking on staff, it was reported. KBC plans to recruit 500 people next year, ING 200-300 and Fortis "hundreds". Only Dexia has put a freeze on new staff. • Police are investigating allegations that a Ghent couple sold a newborn baby to a Dutch couple for at least €10,000. The baby now lives with its new parents in the north of the Netherlands. • Mobile phone operator Base has the best coverage of the top three operators, according to tests carried out by Net Check.

Testers covered 12,000 km by car across the country equipped with three mobile phones.

### Monday 24 November

• The pilot of an emergency medical helicopter was slightly injured when his aircraft crashed on the way to an incident involving a seven-year-old boy who almost drowned in a swimming pool in De Haan. Two other passengers in the helicopter, an emergency doctor and a nurse, escaped unhurt. • The number of Flemish students studying in another EU member state under the Erasmus exchange programme went up 11% this academic year compared to last year. A total of 3,300 students from Flemish institutions of higher education will study abroad, mainly in Spain, France, the UK and the Netherlands. • Flemish environment minister Hilde Crevits is to deploy teams of expert sniffers to deal with complaints of odour-nuisance. Flemish people complain most about smells emanating from their neighbours, such as kitchen extractor fans and burning rubbish. However, noise remains by far the greatest source of nuisance complaints.

**Breaking news**  
for breaking news, see  
[www.flanderstoday.eu](http://www.flanderstoday.eu)  
under "press room"

## Frank De Winne to lead space station crew

Flemish astronaut Frank De Winne has been named commander of the International Space Station (ISS) mission beginning in May 2009, making him the first European space commander in history.

De Winne (photo) will serve as flight engineer, as well as carrying out scientific experiments. Next October, he will take command of a new crew of the station, lasting until his return to earth in November.

Until now, only Soviets, Russians and Americans have commanded space flights. De Winne will take over from Gennady Padalka, a Russian with long experience on the Mir space station. "I am responsible for making sure that everything goes well and efficiently, and for team spirit," he explained. "I have every confidence in the professionalism of my colleagues."

On the scientific side, he will work as chief operator of a Japanese-built robot arm on Expedition 20 – the 20th long duration flight of the ISS since it came into service in November 2000. German astronaut Thomas Reiter was the first European on board in 2006. Since then astronauts from 16 countries have visited, as have five space tourists, among them South African entrepreneur Mark Shuttleworth.

### 5 facts about the ISS

**Mass:** 300,000 kg  
**Orbiting altitude:** 350 km  
**Average speed:** 27,743.8 km/h  
**Orbits per day:** 15.72  
**Number of orbits completed:** 57,715

#### online

[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)

[www.esa.int](http://www.esa.int)



## De Lijn to release map of violence hot spots

Flanders' public transport authority De Lijn this week unveiled its "safety monitor" to police, magistrates, local authorities and unions. The monitor consists of a detailed plan of all bus and tram routes giving a safety ranking for each one. The map is the result of two years work, based on reports by drivers, inspectors, dispatchers and others. De Lijn also gets information from police about incidents that involve public transport.

The aim is to allow a better allocation of resources, including buses equipped with cameras, extra inspectors and "spotters" – personnel in plain clothes whose job is to monitor incidents and call for help if necessary.

Most controversial will be the designation of "hot spots", which take account of the number of incidents reported, the level of crime and social disadvantage in the surrounding area. Some hot spots may be more dangerous at night, while others, for example those close to schools or recreation areas, might be worse during the day.

The hot spots will be divided into three categories: those where action is needed by De Lijn alone, such as extra vigilance by drivers; those where permanent attention is required, including the cooperation of groups in the area like schools or sports clubs; and those that require the assistance of police and community and youth workers.

The list of hot spots will be made public early next year. "We know that's rather delicate," said De Lijn director general Ingrid Lieten. "This information will probably be misused by populist elements. We have no intention of stigmatising particular areas, but we mustn't stick our heads in the sand."

## Action needed to help young homeless

Flanders needs to spend more money to help keep young people out of homelessness, welfare minister Steven Vanackere said this week, following an announcement that the number of homeless young people and families is higher this year than ever before.

"Homelessness used to be a problem of single people," said Edwin Van Hollebeke, director of the Albatros shelter in Brussels. "But recently we've been faced more and more with entire families."

Experts in the sector blame the general economic downturn and the rise in rents. It is estimated that one in four people in Brussels is now living under the poverty line, Van Hollebeke said. "You're scarcely able to find accommodation for a family with five children for less than €1,000."

Women and young people appear to be the most vulnerable. "We are now working full-out on a policy initiative which will bring more attention and more resources to the target group," Vanackere said. "The aim, among other things, is to prepare young people in care for self-sufficiency. That could be done by allowing them more independence before they turn 18, in managed housing, for example."

Elsewhere, this Monday saw the start of Operation WINTER, run by the ministry of defence to give support to organisations who aid the homeless. The army will make a barracks available in every province to take in homeless people, as well as handing out clothing and blankets.

Last week the first-ever homeless census took place in Brussels, revealing that there are around 2,000 people living rough in the capital. Detailed figures will be released next month.

## Suspect in 1981 bombing arrested in Canada

A man suspected of being involved in a bomb attack in the Antwerp diamond quarter in 1981 has been arrested by police in the Canadian capital Ottawa. Hassan Diab, 55, is being sought by French magistrates in connection with another attack near a Paris synagogue in October 1980, which killed four people and injured 20. Canadian authorities are now considering a request to extradite Diab to France.

The Antwerp bomb went off on 20 October a year later, planted in a delivery van on the Hoveniersstraat. Three people died and 106 were injured. The street is in the middle of the diamond quarter and also close to a synagogue.

Diab, who is of Lebanese-Canadian origin, is a professor of sociology and anthropology and teaches at Ottawa and Carleton universities. According to reports, the French state security service DST only tracked him down

a year ago, after investigating the owner of the Suzuki motorcycle used in the Paris attack.

Moreover, in a break worthy of a James Bond movie, Diab's handwriting happened to match that of Alexander Panadriyu, identified as the bomber by a Paris prostitute he had slept with at the time of the attack. He was also identified by witnesses who saw robot photos of the suspect published in *Paris Match*.

Meanwhile, Jewish organisations in Belgium have asked prosecutors to investigate the possibility of bringing Diab to trial in Belgium. "For the victims of this cowardly terrorist and racist attack and their families, this case is still important even after so many years," said Diane Keyser of the Forum of Jewish Organisations. "It might have happened 30 years ago, but the victims still demand justice." A spokesperson for the prosecutor's office in Brussels said magistrates were cooperating with their French counterparts on the case.



Sketcher Hassan Diab, suspected of the 1981 bomb that killed three in Antwerp

## FLANDERS UNCOVERED

The magazine *Libelle* and Radio 2 programme *De Madammen* polled 14,000 people in Flanders in September to get a picture of their day-to-day habits. Here's what they found.

- 15% don't brush their teeth in the morning
- 1 in 3 leave their clothes for the day out the night before
- 1 in 4 men reads on the toilet
- People with kids drink twice as much coffee in the morning as those without
- Men take 15 minutes in the bathroom in the morning, women twice as long
- 60% have a regular shower in the morning
- One-half takes a packed lunch to work
- 44% cook for themselves in the evening: half of women, and 1 in 4 men
- 10% leave the TV on when eating with family or friends
- 1 in 10 eats *frietjes* on Friday
- 1 in 10 eats fish on Friday
- Half follow a regular bedtime ritual: watch TV, brush teeth, check the doors
- 95% watch TV every evening
- 41% fall asleep in front of the TV
- 87% go online every evening
- Barely 10% go out in the evening
- 40% said their working days are all the same
- 1 in 4 uses a mobile phone as an alarm clock, rising to 1 in 2 for young people
- 28% have a siesta at the weekend
- Men go more often to the hairdresser than women do
- For 50%, sex is a weekend fixture
- 71% of 26 to 34-year-olds have weekend sex
- 1% only have sex if there's something to celebrate
- 5% of couples sleep in separate beds
- More than half eat croissants and rolls for breakfast on Sundays
- 25% keep their socks on in bed – mainly women
- 66% have never worn a sexy nightie or lingerie
- Half never sleep naked
- 83% think the weekends should be more relaxed, but ...
- ... 20% have every weekend fully booked in advance
- Women do twice as much housework as men
- 29% never use frozen or prepared meals

## Fortis auditors' remit could unleash wave of damage claims

Continued from page 1

mined. Small investors claim the French bank paid too little – a fact which effectively reduced their own holdings to virtually nothing.

Their appointment, particularly with such a mandate to dig deep, could cause pandemonium within the banking world as well as political circles. In the first place, their power to subpoena documents is likely to run up against resistance from the three main parties involved. Further, should they happen to turn up incriminating material of any kind, it could provoke a new wave of lawsuits from ruined shareholders suing anyone from former Fortis executives to the Belgian state itself.

One of the groups of investors is represented by the shareholders' rights bureau Deminor, whose spokesman Erik Bomans explained: "This case has already provided us with a lot of useful information over the question of liability. Our opponents have had to give up a great deal of information, which gave us good insight. The three experts will give us further insight into the liability issue."

The shareholders' case rested on the contention that the government had no authority to sell Fortis, let alone to determine the

sale price. The court rejected that argument, ruling that the sale to BNP Paribas was a case of *force majeure*.

The government, meanwhile, expressed relief at the ruling. "The government takes note that all of its judgements and decisions, often taken under enormous time pressure, were the only realistic and possible ones to take," prime minister Yves Leterme said.

Leterme had previously made an unprecedented – and heavily criticised – statement about the case while it was ongoing. Shareholders risked losing everything, he said, if the court's decision had gone the other way and turned the clock back to 2 October, the day before the sale of Fortis took place. If such a ruling were to result from the lawsuit, Leterme said, the government would turn its back on Fortis. His words were criticised not only for the harsh tone, but also because a prime minister commenting on an ongoing court case is in violation of the constitutional separation of powers.

However, now that court chief justice Francine de Tandt has ruled out the option of turning back the clock, others agreed with Leterme's sentiment. "A nullification of the sale or a decision to

Belga



Mischaël Modrikamen, lawyer for the small shareholders, promised to appeal the ruling

let the shareholders decide on its approval threatened to create new panic among customers with accounts with Fortis. A new run on savings could not be ruled out, possibly with disastrous consequences for the bank and for thousands of Fortis employees," wrote an editorialist in financial daily *De Tijd*.

Lawyer Mischaël Modrikamen,

who represented another group of shareholders, decided immediately to appeal against the ruling. There was enough indication in the ruling, he said, to show that the court did not consider the sale an irreversible fact. Additionally, the court of first instance had considered the shareholders an interested party in allowing the interim procedure in the

first place.

The sale of Fortis still has to be approved by a court in Amsterdam ruling on a similar case. Following that, the European Commission must pass the sale on competition grounds. Finally, the government hopes the whole case can be closed by 4 December – just days after an AGM on 1 and 2 December.

## Vitaya to launch lifestyle magazine

Lifestyle TV channel Vitaya is to launch a new magazine, probably in the spring. Vitaya was launched in August 2000 after winning a licence to broadcast a year earlier. The channel shows a large number of cookery, makeover and property shows from home and abroad and in October of last year launched the health channel Vitaliteit, which is only available on digital TV.

The two channels are run by limited company Media ad infinitum, having for the last few years successfully evaded rumours of takeovers. The company has been profitable since 2005 and enjoys a growing audience.

The new magazine will be published by Sanoma, which already has a large number of lifestyle magazines in its stable. Sanoma publishes, among others, *Living*, *Libelle* and *Story*, as well as *Humo* and the recently launched *Goedele*, a magazine centred on TV personality Goedele Liekens. Won't Vitaya magazine compete with *Goedele*? "Vitaya will have a completely different positioning," Sanoma CEO Sandra De Preter told *Flanders Today*. "A development team is meeting right now to determine the magazine's exact profile. There won't be any direct competition."



Cooking with Vitaya

The second issue of *Goedele* has been counted a success, with sales of 75,000 – down on the launch issue's 120,000, but still promising. "We appear to have found a gap in the market," De Preter said.

The new Vitaya magazine will probably start publication in the spring, and an editor has yet to be appointed.

online

[www.vitaya.be](http://www.vitaya.be)

## InBev and AB drink to completion of takeover

AB InBev last week became officially the world's biggest brewer, when the deal in which the Leuven-based InBev took over America's Anheuser-Busch was closed.

The new company will control production of 450 million hectolitres, or 30 *pintjes* for every man, woman and child on the planet. The three main brands remain Stella Artois, Beck's and, in the US, Budweiser. The company's sales are estimated in the region of €26.4 billion, with profits of €7.94 billion. AB InBev will employ 120,000 staff in 30 countries, with its headquarters in Leuven and led by CEO Carlos Brito (pictured). "This is day one for what is now one of the world's top five consumer product companies," Brito said after the deal was done.

The final signature means an end to the AB share on the New York Stock Exchange, with its iconic ticker symbol BUD. The new merged company will trade as ABI. August Busch IV, known as "The Fourth", gets a seat on the board and keeps the company's North-American headquarters in St Louis. "We will be able to reach our goals more quickly together than if the companies had worked alone," he said in a statement, all thoughts of his previous hostility to the takeover now forgotten.

The grassroots opposition, which led to calls from US politicians to reject the bid (and a word of caution from the then candidate for the Democratic nomination for the presidency, Barack Obama) may not be so easily stilled. AB unions, led by the mighty Teamsters, have always feared that InBev would move in and start cutting jobs – and the Leuven company's record under Brito suggests that their fear is entirely justified.

To make matters worse, the world financial climate is today a lot gloomier than it was in July when the deal was launched. There had been concern over recent months that Brito might have trouble scraping together the financing required to buy AB – reckoned to be about €36 billion, or €56 a share.



The banks who were lined up to provide the credit included Fortis, ING, Deutsche Bank and BNP Paribas, some of whom have suffered worse from the crisis than others. In addition, InBev planned a capital increase of €8 billion to help pay for the takeover, and that, too, was for a time in danger.

InBev now claims there never was any question that the capital increase and bank credit would be forthcoming. What seems to have played a major role is the fact that even in times of crisis, and perhaps especially then, there is still a market for beer.

## SCIENCE

Leah Heiss



Australian designer Leah Heiss has designed jewellery and clothing incorporating a button-sized MicroArray Patch, which administers insulin through thousands of tiny needles applied to the skin. More information at [www.subtletechnologies.com.au](http://www.subtletechnologies.com.au)

## Stefano Siggia

**H**ow does the future look to the people who are creating the new technologies? You can find out the answer in a book that has been put together by the Leuven-based research organisation IMEC along with Brussels-based Ad!dict Creative Lab.

The two organisations have worked together for about a year on a book titled *in.tangible.scape.s* which looks at some of the innovative ideas bubbling up in universities, museums, artist's studios, design centres and research labs around the world.

The major aim behind the book is to encourage creative people to develop new ideas on emerging technologies at the sharp end of science. "We have worked closely with universities, research labs and design centres to focus on what is happening across the world in art, design and technology," explains Imke Debecker, IMEC's Outreach Communication Coordinator.

Ad!dict Lab researcher Giovanna Massoni launched the project along with IMEC, bringing together contributions from a wide range of creative minds. The big names include

Philips Design, the Science Gallery in Dublin, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the National University of Singapore.

Some of the technologies presented in the book are close to the limits of the imagination. The National University of Singapore has designed a new GPS system for cars quite different from the one sitting on your dashboard right now. Gone is the robotic voice telling you to turn right, *here*. In its place is a stick that bends according to the direction you have to take.

The Paris-based Le Laboratoire has developed an organic filter that can clean out toxic wastes in the air. Other inventions include robotic pets that you can create yourself and a table that interacts with the electronic devices placed on it. But maybe the most extraordinary invention is a shape-changing chair – still in development – that slowly emerges from a cube.

Even the book itself is made from a new technology that uses paper produced from sugar cane fibre and chlorine-free bleach. The paper is produced by South African company Sappi in one of the few mills around the world

equipped to produce it.

The partnership between IMEC and Ad!dict has been going on for some time. About a year ago, IMEC decided to bring together the world of science and design as a means of encouraging creativity in the technology sector. The result was a 2007 publication on nanotechnology called "The Nano Research". Workshops and events were hosted throughout the year in support of the project.

The book *in.tangible.scape.s* is the second joint effort. "The collaboration was very successful, and we have further plans for the future," says Debecker.

The organisers have already planned a series of events and educational programmes based on the new book and are working with Leuven's Stedelijke Academie on a student project involving nanotechnology seen from an artistic perspective. "Next year we would like to do a project with artists," says Debecker.

Book launch on 21 November at 20.00 at IMEC, Leuven. Registration required at [www.imec.be/intangiblescapes](http://www.imec.be/intangiblescapes)

# Touching the intangible

## Incubating new ideas on technology

## BUSINESS FLASH



### Bio • Oleon

The Ghent-based bio-fuel producer Oleon has been sold to the French Sofiproteol group, which specialises in transforming and producing vegetable proteins and oils. The move is part of the consolidation of the sector as long-term demand points to a dramatic increase of production of bio fuels.

### Books • FNAC

The French-based books, videos and electronic products retailer has opened a store in Bruges, its eighth in Belgium. The company wants to further develop its presence in Flanders as part of its international expansion.

### Brewing • AB InBev

The Leuven-based beer group has finalised its \$52 billion acquisition of Anheuser-Busch, its US competitor, to become the world's largest beer group and one of the leading food companies worldwide. The new company will be rebranded as AB Inbev.

### Construction • Locorail

Locorail, a consortium created by the Belgian CFE, the French Vinci and the Dutch BAM building groups, has won an €841 million contract to construct the Liefkenshoek railway tunnel under the Scheldt at the Port of Antwerp. Scheduled to open in 2014, the new tunnel will link the two banks of the river to facilitate container handling and transfer to other parts of the port area.

### Diamonds • Rosy Blue

The world's leading diamond trading company, Rosy Blue, is alleged to be involved in the vast diamond fraud network uncovered by the Antwerp city police recently. Rosy Blue's chairman, Dilip Mehta, was recently ennobled by King Albert for his services to the country.

### Dredging • Deme

The Zwindrecht-based dredging and marine environment engineering company has won contracts worth some €220 million for dredging work in Mexico, Panama, Taiwan and the Philippines.

### Pharmaceuticals • UCB

The pharmaceuticals and chemical products group UCB has obtained permission from the regulator to launch Cimzia, a medicine to cure rheumatoid arthritis. It will be available on the market next year.

### Ports • Sea-Invest

The Ghent-based port management company is to invest some €300 million over the next five years to build additional oil-storage tanks in the port of Antwerp. The company recently inaugurated a €100 million bulk terminal that will be the main European storage area for china clay shipped by the French Imerys company.



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## GALLERY



Zwarte Panter founder Adriaan Raemdonck (left) and artist Fred Bervoets in the chapel of 1980

# Black is beautiful

Antwerp's signature gallery celebrates 40 incredible years

## Ian Mundell

**D**e Zwarte Panter in Antwerp turns 40 years old on 5 December, making it the oldest contemporary gallery in Flanders and the second oldest in Belgium. Adriaan Raemdonck, its founder, has become a key figure in the Belgian arts scene.

Although his face peeks out from every corner of the exhibitions celebrating his gallery's anniversary, Raemdonck insists that this celebration is not about him. "A gallery is not simply about the owner," he says. "It's about the collectors, the artists, the critics, the museums... A gallery is a biotope."

De Zwarte Panter (The Black Panther) certainly felt like a living, breathing community on the November weekend I visited. It was bustling with visitors, including 20 or so listeners to Flemish radio station Klara, who were touring the anniversary exhibitions across Antwerp. They ended up in the former chapel that is the hub of the gallery, drinking wine from the bar that Raemdonck has installed behind the altar and chatting to him about modern art and the business of selling it.

Later on, a couple from Chicago passed by the office to ask the price of one of Michael Bastow's St Alexis drawings, then on show, while the artist himself had taken a break from compiling limited-edition prints of his work to go and have a beer in a neighbouring bar.

Surprisingly, Raemdonck is not a native of Antwerp. Born in Flemish Brabant, he studied at the

Sint-Lucas art school in Brussels and, by the late 1960s, had already mounted a successful first exhibition. This enabled him to take a painting course at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, at which point he fell in love with the city. "At the end of the '60s, Antwerp was a very free town, very open," he says. "I felt right away that, with its artists and the people around them, it was a very rich world."

It was also a time when the authorities were clearing out a lot of the rougher buildings in the city centre, and many artists were taking advantage of the situation to set up temporary studios. When someone pointed out a former bar on the corner of Wisselstraat and Oude Beurs, Raemdonck immediately thought it would make an excellent gallery.

"They said, 'when we decide to demolish you have three months to get out.' I said, no problem! I had no intention of becoming a gallery owner. It was for my friends, to throw parties and so on." The bar was already called De Zwarte Panter, and Raemdonck saw no reason to change it. He later learned that it had been a brothel of some repute – which only added to the attraction.

Raemdonck had two aims in starting the gallery. One was to provide somewhere for young local artists to exhibit at a time when the options in Antwerp were limited. The other was to explore the possibilities offered by traditional artistic methods.

"I wanted to champion the

tradition of painting – but not the dumb tradition!" he says, quickly explaining himself. "It is very, very difficult in this country. If you say you want to champion local artists, people look at you sideways and say: 'Oh, you're like that are you?' or: 'Listen, Belgian art doesn't exist.' But we have a long tradition in this country of collectors and artists. Personally, I love this country precisely because we have a mixture, on the one hand of Flemish expressionism and on the other surrealists like Magritte and Delvaux."

It is often forgotten that revisiting traditional methods was part of the period's art movement. "The '60s were interesting precisely

because they had two aspects," he explains. "One said New! New! New! The other asked: What is paper? What is ink? What are the possibilities for using photography? What can one do in a studio? What can artists give of themselves so that their art becomes something else?"

When the time came for the original Zwarte Panter to be demolished in 1970, Raemdonck had to decide whether to carry on as a gallery owner. The decisive factor was that the authorities offered him the Chapel of St Julian on Hoogstraat. It was a space for exhibitions but also opened up the possibility for performances, concerts and film screenings.

Then there were two important artists Raemdonck really wanted to work with. One was Fred Bervoets, a neo-expressionist who already had a considerable reputation in the late 1960s. The other was Jan Cox, co-founder in 1945 of the Jeune Peinture Belge movement, who had left Belgium in the 1950s for an academic career in the US. Both men became strongly associated with the gallery, with Cox returning to Belgium in 1974 to devote himself entirely to painting.

De Zwarte Panter has remained true to its commitment to figurative art – mainly painting but also sculpture and photography. "It was pretty tough because in the 1970s conceptual art was so dominant," Raemdonck says. "But we always believed that it was the right path."

In its 40 years, De Zwarte Panter has hosted more than 400 exhibitions, making a reputation for itself with both neo-expressionists such as Bervoets (who has a room to himself in the gallery) and post-conceptual figurative artists such as Jan Vanriet and Hugo Heyrman. From its simple use of the chapel, it has expanded to take in adjoining buildings, opening up several exhibition spaces and a courtyard for sculpture. It has also established silkscreen printing and etching studios, which produce posters for shows and limited edition work by the artists.

Naturally, the role of the gallery has changed over time. "You start as a pilot gallery or a 'galerie de combat', as they say, and, after a certain time, you feel as if you have become a promotion gallery," Raemdonck says. "I'm happy that now we play a different role. Lots of young people – students from the university or the academy – come here to look through the archives. It's not simply a point of sale."

And, even after four decades, he doesn't seem the least bit jaded. "Art is feeling and having fun with people," he says. "You can make another world with that."

## online

[www.artsite.be/zwartepanter](http://www.artsite.be/zwartepanter)

## Black Panther parties

**D**e Zwarte Panter celebrated its 40th birthday a little bit early on 20 November, with a panel discussion in Antwerp's FotoMuseum and a night of music and revelry in the gallery itself. Meanwhile, Antwerp is marking the anniversary with two exhibitions.

In the Koningin Fabiolazaal (Jezusstraat 28, until 30 November) there is a show of silkscreen posters and print editions produced by the gallery over the years (photo, right), which shows the range of its activities and the development of its distinctive style.

And in the Museum Plantin-Moretus print room (Vrijdagmarkt 22, until 25 January) there are print editions and works by some of the gallery's most loyal artists – in particular their attempts to immortalise owner Adriaan Raemdonck in oils or more exotic materials like wood. There is also a canvas by Raemdonck himself, dating back to the pre-Panter



days.

The gallery's history is set out in a lavishly illustrated book by the art historian Johan Pas, mainly in Dutch. *Een andere avant-garde* (€35) is published by Lannoo.

Finally, De Zwarte Panter (Hoogstraat 70-74, until 1 February) is mounting an exhibition of work by regular artist Hugo Heyrman, continuing his exploration of city life and body language.

## MUSIC

# Getting down with the Kelstone

A Flemish musician has invented an entirely new instrument

**Alan Hope**

The last time a truly new musical instrument was invented, it was in Belgium, the inventor was Adolphe Sax and, without his innovation, we'd never have enjoyed Charlie Parker, Ornette Coleman or Lisa Simpson.

The next radical new instrument is also going to come out of Belgium. Its working title is the Kelstone, and it's the invention of Jan Van Kelst, a musician and tinkerer from Rotselaar, a place so remote it's described as "near Wezemaal". He lives in part of a farmhouse, which combines apartment and workshop, and that's where he's developing the world's next musical instrument.

The saxophone combines the reed mouthpiece and keys of the clarinet with the ringing metallic sound of the brass. The Kelstone is also a hybrid, combining the strings of a guitar with the percus-

sive technique of a keyboard. You can pluck it, strum it, use a bottleneck or slap it like a guitar or bass, but you don't have to wear it around your neck, and you have more freedom to use both hands. "This is a new creature, as different from the guitar as the snowboard is different from skis," Val Kelst says.

For 15 years Van Kelst played the Chapman stick, an upright, stringed instrument that looks like a guitar neck without the body. It's played by tapping on the strings with both hands.

The Kelstone takes that principle of allowing both hands to be fully-functioning, like they are on a piano, and brings it to the next level. By moving the axis from vertical to horizontal, the Kelstone presents a number of advantages. The instrument is easier to play from an ergonomic point of view: unlike with other stringed instruments,

the wrists are under no tension, especially using a string-tapping technique, which in the Chapman stick is extremely wearing.

"For the last 20 years, all innovation in instruments has been by computer," Van Kelst explains. "This is the first time in a long time there's been an innovation based on physical properties – probably since the invention of the bass drum pedal and the development of the drum kit."

The basic Kelstone model has nine strings, covering a four-octave spread in normal circumstances. The strings, in fact, can be arranged as the player pleases from bass to treble. There are 26 frets, quite a few more than the guitar.

But that's not all. With the Kelstone, you can also play a double instrument, Van Kelst explains, launching into a demonstration. (There are more than 30 videos

on YouTube explaining methods and techniques). But, unlike the piano, which goes in one direction from low to high for both hands, the double Kelstone can easily be arranged so that they mirror each other, making playing identical for both hands.

Yes, it does require its own playing technique, Van Kelst admits. "The more people forget what they've learned on other instruments, the easier it goes," he says. "With two instruments together, the possibilities are endless. You can play accompaniment and solo, or bass and guitar. The configuration is up to you."

The strings are normally tuned in fourths, meaning you really only need one major chord, which can then be played in any position, up and down the fretboard. A beginner with one major, one minor and one seventh chord could go a long way.

The price, however, is not for beginners. At around €1,300, it's as expensive as a proper Fender Stratocaster – not a copy, according to a trawl around music shops in Brussels. Few people, with the exception of rock stars, are going to be able to buy one just to check it out.

"The price will go down," promises Van Kelst. "In two to three months it should be possible to bring a model to the market costing about €800-900. We want to make it affordable for young people, so we'll be looking for endorsement deals. One successful person taking it up would be enough."

**online**  
[www.kelstone.be](http://www.kelstone.be)



It's a bird, it's a plane! No, it's the Kelstone, a brand new musical instrument invented in the wilds of Flanders

## FLANDERS EYE



## Fatal Footprint

In Cambodia, Laos, Ethiopia and many other regions in the world, innocents often take just one step too far. Men, women and children tread upon land mines and hidden cluster bombs with grotesque regularity, and three Belgian photographers have the pictures to prove it.

In a free, open-air exhibition in Brussels, the reality of the situation is poignantly, though often subtly, exposed. Tim Dirven, Gaël Turine and John Vink have travelled the world, catching ordinary people at work and play, some missing an arm but most a leg. With a prostheses nearby, one man goes for a swim, one girl works on her homework. Other photos show the inadequate facilities for fitting manufactured arms and legs or the simple reality of needing only one shoe.

The photo left was taken by Nieuwpoort-born photographer Gaël Turine in Colombia. It shows Hugo, who often takes to his hammock to relieve himself of needing his prosthetic leg. He occasionally still works his old job in the fields, which, he says, has been made much harder now.

Handicap International, which sponsors the show, works to find suitable jobs and activities for people who've lost their limbs due to unexploded munitions. *Fatal Footprint* is just a reminder for the rest of us strolling along in Brussels that not everyone in the world can so safely take such a simple walk.

**Lisa Bradshaw**

28 November – 30 December, Albertinaplein, Brussels

**online**  
[www.fatalfootprint.be](http://www.fatalfootprint.be)

# Free your inner folk

## Boombal has taken Flanders by storm

Denzil Walton

**A**dance rage is sweeping through the cultural centres, town halls and inner city bars of Flanders. Any place with a large enough room – particularly in a student town – is regularly packed with hundreds of enthusiastic, heavily perspiring dancers trying out their routines.

It's called Boombal, and it's the big new thing – except that it's not really new at all. Boombal has its roots in traditional folk dances like the Scottish céilidh and the English country dance. The difference is that where céilidhs and barn dances have a rather stuffy, middle-aged image, Boombal has made dancing to folk music incredibly popular and – amazingly – cool. Though there are plenty of older participants, most of the crowd are teenagers or 20-somethings.

Boombal's originator is Wim Claeys, an accordion teacher from Ghent who plays in various folk groups. After teaching his students new versions of old folk dances, he decided to go public. The first Boombal was held in September 2000 in an old furniture shop in the Boomstraat (hence the name). Ten accordionists played to five dancing couples. But Claeys believed it would gain in popularity. He was right. Soon over one hundred people were showing up, and they outgrew their shop.

The event was relocated to the Volkshuis, but space ran out here too. The next move, in 2002, was to De Centrale cultural centre in Ghent, where up to 600 people – mainly students – began to turn up every fourth Tuesday.

Similar events were organised in Leuven and Brussels, with the same huge response. Now, Boombals are regular events at youth clubs, community centres and wedding feasts. The four-day Boombal Festival in Lovendegem



Steven Nels, photo/Gentlogt

Funky folk: The Boombal Festival in Lovendegem attracts thousands, who dance to punked-up Flemish folk songs

has become an annual event, this year attracting 9,000 dancers. The concept is now spreading to the Netherlands, where it's organised under the name Folkbal.

Claeys is no longer involved, and Boombal is now run by a full-fledged organisation. But the emphasis is still very much on fun. Dancers take part in pair, ring, line and string dances. An instructor is on hand to demonstrate and call the steps, while live folk music adds to the ambience.

Part of its attraction is that you can learn the dances simply by

joining in and following the people around you. However, some of the routines are pretty complicated and you might get more from your evening if you prepare in advance by signing up for one of the many Boombal dance lessons. These are available throughout Flanders – in the major cities like Antwerp, Ghent, Leuven and Brussels, as well as in smaller towns like Aalst, Bornem, Halle and Herk-de-Stad.

Generally a beginners' course consists of seven 90-minute lessons for €60. After your course, you should have mastered a handful of

dances such as the Andro, Hanterdro, Scottish, Polka, Mazurka and Waltz.

Unfortunately, Boombal is a victim of its own popularity, and there is clearly a lack of instructors to meet demand. Your reporter signed up for a beginner's course in Leuven, supposedly to be given by an "experienced instructor", only to find that the teacher was an accordion player, who admitted from the outset that he had little experience giving dance lessons. When asked whether a particular dance began with the left or right

foot, he jovially replied: "I don't know; I've never thought about that, but I'm sure it's important!"

Thankfully, a few of the 25 beginners on the course had been to a Boombal before and could show the rest of us what to do. Ultimately, we all muddled through and had a lot of fun – which, of course, is the point.

**online**  
[www.boombal.be](http://www.boombal.be)

## TYRE TRACKS



### Temse and the Scheldt

This ride wends through wilder and wilder terrain, exploring some of the natural parks that line the banks of the Scheldt and Durme rivers. Start in Temse at the intersection between the riverfront and Consciencestraat, taking the path along the river away from the bridge. The cafes are plentiful here (good to remember since this is also where the ride

ends). At the austere red brick Molens Van Temse building, the road curves to the right to confront the weathered gray stones of the gothic church. Bear left and then stay left, following signs for bike path 76. The path detaches from the road here, returning to the Scheldt and leading through a more developed section on the way out of town; floating docks and riverboats dot the water's edge. Follow the path as it curves to the right. At the roundabout, turn right; at the intersection, turn left. You'll soon see a sign for the quiet town of Tielrode. Turn left, down from the main road past orderly rows of brick houses. At the church, built with the same red bricks as the rest of the town, turn left back to the river and the bike paths. This is the beginning of the more wild section of the ride: the confluence of the Scheldt and Durme creates a space of marshes crawling with mist where groups of painters erect their easels to capture the scene.

Turn right at the sculpture of the sailor and follow the banks of the Durme, a smaller river than the Scheldt, where mudflats rippling like the roofs of Flemish houses pad the banks to the left and farmland opens up to the right. Pass under the highway and turn left, crossing the bridge over the Durme. Turn left to follow the path back towards the Scheldt on the opposite bank. This area is a natural preserve and a Mecca for birds; the benches lining the way offer excellent spots to stop and listen to their songs. Rejoining the Scheldt opens up another exceptional viewpoint. The path follows the river now, ultimately curving away to the Taverne Dreigoten, a secluded pub with rooftop views of the river. Turn left at the tavern, heading uphill. Follow signs for bike route 6 – even as they lead back down to the water! A free ferry takes bikes and pedestrians across the river. The ride is just a minute long, offering a perspective not quite possible on a bike.

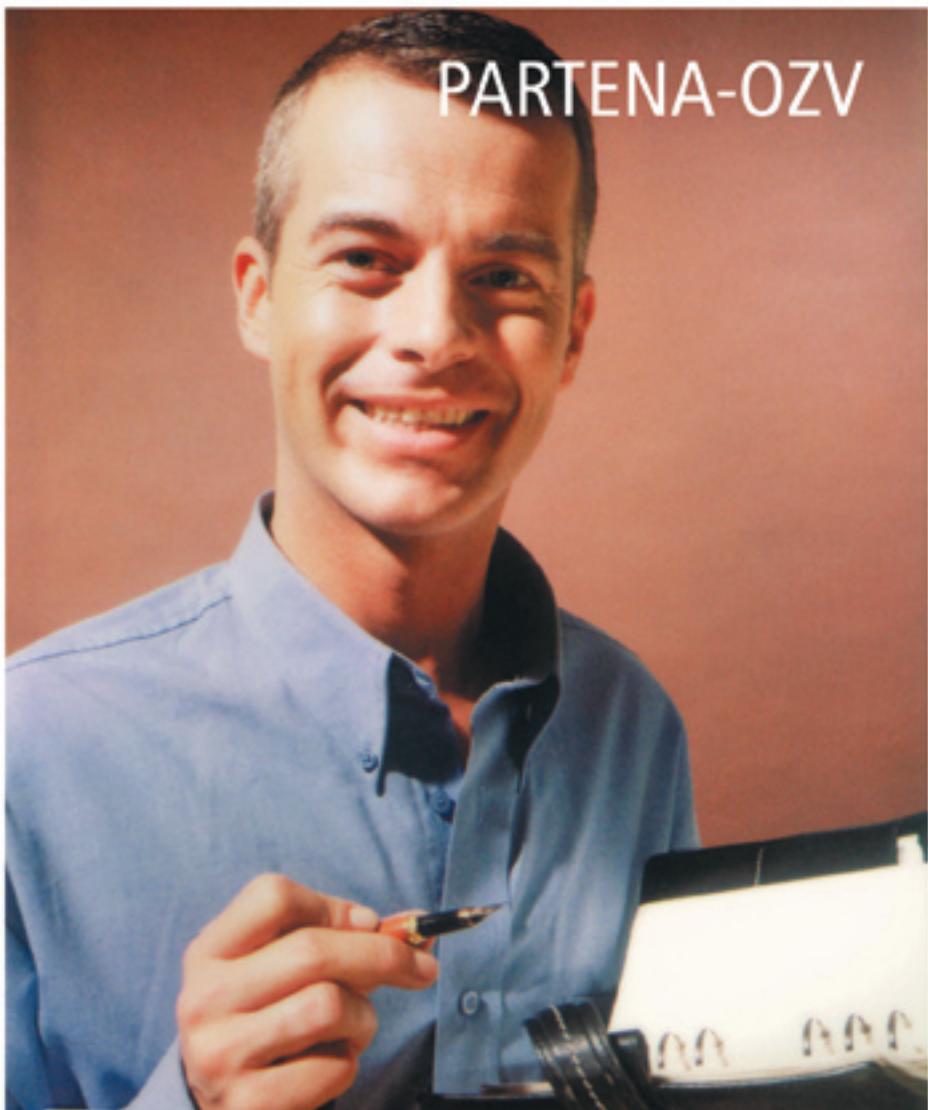
Once off the ferry, simply turn left and follow the wide, paved path back upstream. This side of the river is more agrarian, with sheep grazing on the median between bike paths. The church in Temse rises on the horizon. Cross the bridge and then curve to the left on the other side back to the riverfront cafes.

**Dave Meyer**

**Distance:**  
18 kilometres

**Difficulty:**  
Easy. Good bike paths nearly all the way, often well removed from the nearest road.

**Time:**  
One hour, 15 minutes



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## BREWERY SERIES

# True to form

A stubborn determination to hang onto tradition pays off for a West Flanders' brewery



## Robyn Boyle

**F**arming and brewing often went hand in hand, and in my family it was no different," begins Karl Verhaeghe, who, together with his brother and sister, owns Verhaeghe Brewery. A full understanding of the history behind the hops requires a visit to the village of Vichte in West Flanders – and in particular its listed 12th-century castle that has been home to the Verhaeghe family since the late 1800s.

Past the bridge and moat and through the imposing entrance, several period buildings surround a spacious garden with cobbled paths leading up to the beautiful residence. "In the past, every small community had to be self-sufficient," Verhaeghe explains. "This castle farm played an important role in Vichte's survival because it was here that the farmers came to trade grains and other supplies for their agricultural needs."

Because farmers always experienced a sort of "down time" in the winter, distilling jenever and brewing beer were very common activities during those months. After all, the basis ingredients – water, barley, yeast and hops – were readily available. "There was definitely a distillery on site and possibly a brewery as well," says Verhaeghe, pointing towards an open area where the buildings once stood before being destroyed during the First World War.

But even before the family took up residence in the castle, Verhaeghe's great grandfather Paul had already started a brewery and malt house just down the road. The brewery's location (next to the train line between Kortrijk and Brussels), combined with the family's political clout, enabled them to build up an important clientele in Brussels. Especially popular was La Blonde

des Flandres, a beer esteemed for maintaining its golden clarity even after long transport.

It was a beautiful beginning for Verhaeghe, but it came to an abrupt end with the start of the First World War. Paul Verhaeghe refused to brew beer for the occupying German troops, which resulted in the dismantling of the brewing installations. To make matters worse, the Germans introduced the local population to a new beer style, the pilsner. Bottom-fermented at cold temperatures, it was something completely new to the Belgians, who were only familiar with the traditional high fermentation method.

But by the end of the Second World War, it seemed everybody was ordering pilsner at their local cafe. This trend, together with the overall effects of industrialisation, led to the definitive closing of hundreds of small breweries throughout Belgium. Although Verhaeghe Brewery adapted to the times by introducing pilsner beers, it nonetheless remained true to regional specialties such as its old Flemish red-brown beers and Echte Kriek.

The Verhaeghe's efforts were rewarded in the 1950s when a sort of "back to the roots" movement took place that saw beer lovers returning to their old favourites. Echte Kriek was just one of the many beers from Verhaeghe that won international prizes during this period of revival.

Echte Kriek (True Kriek) earns its name because it is only made with sour cherries from the Limburg region, not with syrups or other artificial flavours. The cherries are added during the maturation process to

wooden casks of aged Vichtenaar, typical West Flanders red-brown ale. Echte Kriek (6.8%) is, therefore, a blend of one-, two- and three-year-old beers. Poured into a tall glass with a foot, this beer has a lovely ruby red colour, light pink head and cherry aroma. It has a refreshing quality, even with the underlying sweetness, thanks to its lively carbonation and tart aftertaste.

Duchesse de Bourgogne is another of Verhaeghe's beers made in the traditional style using oak wood barrels. During the maturation period – which can be anything from eight to 18 months – "tannins from the wood come free to give the beer its fruity character," explains

Verhaeghe. Duchesse de Bourgogne (6.2%) is indeed fruity, although it contains no fruit. Made with different malt varieties and hops aged more than one year, it is the most refined example of West Flanders red-brown ale you can find.

Echte Kriek and Duchesse de Bourgogne bear the Belgian Family Brewers label, afforded to beers with an authentic quality true to Belgian tradition. This label is of particular importance to those brewers who rely heavily on export, like Verhaeghe. "I think so long as we can continue exporting, the future of truly special Belgian beer is secured," Verhaeghe says with a smile.

To find more  
breweries with the  
Belgian Family Brewers  
label, visit [www.belgianfamilybrewers.be](http://www.belgianfamilybrewers.be)

online

[www.brouwerijverhaeghe.be](http://www.brouwerijverhaeghe.be)

## TOUCHING BASE

### the week in sport



#### Baseball

A flurry of transfers in the First Division's transaction window could change the outlook of the league next year. The Port of Antwerp Greys, newly crowned national champions, managed to poach Sam D'Oliveira from runners-up Hoboken Pioneers. The latter retorted by bringing Marc Janssen and Nicky Mertens over from the former. The Pioneers managed to beef up their squad with nine players, most notably Johnny Peerens, to make up for seven departures to other Belgian clubs and that of Thomas de Wolf to professional baseball in the United States.

#### American Football

Bad weather forced the Flanders American Football League and its French-speaking counterpart to cancel last weekend's play-off series, which were to determine the participants in the Junior Bowl. The Liège Monarchs and the Brussels Black Angels junior teams will play the Junior Bowl on account of their undefeated seasons in regular season play in Sint-Agatha-Berchem this Sunday. The final regular season standings were:

##### West Division

Rank	Team	Won	Lost	Tied
1	Black Angels	5	0	1
2	Tribes	4	2	
3	Gators	2	2	1
4	Titans	2	4	
6	Cougars	1	4	

##### East Division

Rank	Team	Won	Lost	Tied
1	Monarchs	6	0	
2	Bulls	5	1	
3	Tigers	4	2	
4	Lions	3	3	
5	Centaures	1	5	
6	Diamonds	0	6	

#### Rugby

Because of rain and snow, only two matches were played in National First Division men's rugby last weekend:

Boitsfort 3-15 ASUB  
Frameries 11-6 Dendermonde

ASUB maintains its lead at the pinnacle of Belgian rugby, trailed by Kituro and Frameries. In National Second Division, Kibubu beat Laakdal 39-6 and Antwerp beat Standard 24-8. BUC and Kibubu share the lead, although BUC has played only five matches to Kibubu's six.

In the Ladies' First Division the scores over the past weekend were:

Boitsfort 22-0 Kituro  
Leuven 30-0 Antwerp  
Mons-Frameries 8-0 Dendermonde  
Brussels Barbarians 5-29 Gent

Leuven and Mons-Frameries share the lead with 16 points each, just ahead Boitsfort and Dendermonde, each with 14 points.

Leander Schaerlaeckens

## Classical &amp; New Music

## Antwerp

**Amuz**  
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28  
NOV 29 21.00 HERMEnsemble, conducted by Marco Angius, with Wibert Aerts, violin: Loevendie's Six Turkish Folk Poems, Abliger's Ohne Titel, Van Camp's Concerto for Violin and Ensemble

## deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be  
NOV 27 20.00 Orchestre des Champs-Elysées and Collegium Vocale Gent, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe: Haydn's Die Schöpfung NOV 29 20.00 deFilharmonie, conducted by James MacMillan: Stravinsky, MacMillan NOV 29-30 14.00-17.30 Public masterclasses with pianist Richard Goode DEC 2 20.00 Richard Goode, piano: Beethoven's Sonata op 81 Das Lebewohl DEC 3 20.00 Richard Goode, piano: Bach, Chopin

## Bruges

**Concertgebouw**  
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02, www.concertgebouw.be  
NOV 29 20.00 Viktoria Mullova, violin; Kristian Bezuidenhout, forte piano: Beethoven's Sonatas Nos 3 & 9, Schubert's Rondo, Sonata op 162 DEC 3 20.00 Orkest De Volharding, conducted by Jussi Jaatinen: new music by several Flemish composers

## Brussels

**Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be  
NOV 28 20.00 Gala concert: Royal Symphonic Band of the Belgian Guides conducted by Lieutenant Yves Segers: Van Campenhout, Simar, Bender, Wambach, Bach, Berlioz NOV 29 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Roger Bausier and Brussels Choral Society: Brahms' A German Requiem NOV 30 11.00 Julien Libeer, piano: Brahms, Chopin DEC 3 20.00 Folia Pianistica (concert organised by the Centre for Turkey in

Europe and Association of Artists for Peace)

## De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be  
NOV 28 12.30 La Monnaie String Trio: Mozart's Divertimento KV 563

## Espace Senghor

Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40, www.senghor.be  
NOV 29 14.00 Focus on young composers with Nahandove Ensemble

## Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be  
NOV 28 12.30 Queen Elisabeth Music College (Piknikmusik)

NOV 30 11.30 Remus Azoitei, violin; Eduard Stan, piano: Kreisler, Enescu, Beethoven, Brahms, Saint-Saëns/Ysaye (brunch concert)

DEC 4 20.15 Jean Fürst & Bénédicte Davin: Bério, Davin & Wathieu, Fürst

## Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 0900.28.877  
NOV 30 11.00 Ensemble Mosaïc: Glinka, Ibert, Lysight, Ravel

## Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37  
NOV 27 20.00 Symfonieorkest, conducted by Ronald Zollman with Hrachya Avanesyan, violin: D'Haene, Sibelius, Dvorak  
DEC 3 20.00 Royal Music Conservatory Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Endré Kleve

## Hoeilaart

**Maison de la Musique**  
Edgar Sohierstraat 41; 02.657.96.52, maisondelamusique@skynet.be  
NOV 29 18.00 Claudio Orloff and Burkard Spinnler piano duo: Messiaen's Visions de l'Amen

## Opera

**Brussels**  
Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be  
NOV 27 19.00 Freiburger Barockorchester and RIAS Kammerchor, conducted by René

**Win tickets!**  
For a free pair of tickets to see the Brussels Choral Society on 29 November in Bozar, email editorial@flanderstoday.eu by noon on 28 November. Winners will be notified by 14.00.

## Don't miss this week



## Spiegel

26, 29 & 30 November, KVS Bol, Lakensestraat 146, Brussels. Tickets from 02.210.11.12 or www.kvs.be

The revival of this celebration of 20 years of Ultima Vez rounds off an awesome month of dance in the capital. Premiering two years ago, *Spiegel* (*Mirror*) is an exercise in trust. Dancers throw bricks into the air and wait for another dancer to pull them out of the way; others hurl themselves from scaffolding, hoping to be caught. Flemish choreographer Wim Vandekeybus has cobbled together pieces from several of his more visceral shows for this "best of", which is perfect as an introduction to the Brussels-based company or as a visit to an old friend. **Lisa Bradshaw**

Jacobs: Mozart's Idomeneo, re di Creta, KV 366

## Ghent

**Vlaamse Opera**  
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02, www.vlaamseopera.be  
NOV 28-30 20.00 The Rape of Lucretia by Benjamin Britten, a new co-production with Operastudio Vlaanderen, conducted by Elgar Howarth, staged by Carlos Wagner

## Jazz &amp; blues

## Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82, www.deschaduw.net  
NOV 30 16.00 intojazztic #16 + jam session

## Bruges

**De Werf**  
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29  
NOV 26 20.30 Fes

## Brussels

**Archiduc**  
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52, www.archiduc.net  
NOV 29 17.00 JazzFact  
NOV 30 17.00 Marie-Laure Béraud

## Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98, www.atelier210.be  
DEC 1 20.00 La Palma + Jazz Cats

## Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193-195; 02.733.13.78  
NOV 26 20.30 Original Cosy NOV 28 20.30 Tangawissi NOV 29 18.00 SoniCorchestra DEC 3 20.30 Acoustrees Quintet DEC 4 20.30 Jazz Station Big Band

## Sass'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; www.sazznjazz.be  
NOV 27 20.30 Jazz & Jam Session  
NOV 29 20.30 Coco Royal  
DEC 4 20.30 Barsabruxa Reunion

## Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50, www.soundsjazzclub.be  
NOV 27 21.00 The Singers Night NOV 28 22.00 Fabien Degrise Trio NOV 29 22.00 Artet DEC 1 22.00 Master session  
DEC 2 22.00 Tuesday Night Orchestra: Big Band DEC 3 22.00 Caribe Con K, Caribbean music

## The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
Concerts at 20.30:  
NOV 27 Cachito Pa'Querer NOV 28 Sabine Kühlich & Arne Van Coillie Trio NOV 29 Phil Abraham & the New Look Trio DEC 1 CoraLee & No Trouble Blues Band DEC 3 Attic

## Théâtre Marni

Vergniestraat 25; 02.354.43.68  
NOV 28 19.00 Celebration for the 30th anniversary of the Igloo label (part of Skoda Jazz): Greg Houben Trio, Cécile Broché/Etienne Bouyer, Mathilde Renault, piano, Pascal Mohy Trio, Eve Beuvens Trio, Thomas Champagne Trio DEC 2 21.30 Wofo

## Pop, rock, hip-hop, soul

## Antwerp

**Lotto Arena**  
Schijnpoortweg 119; 0900.26.060  
NOV 26 20.00 The Kooks

## Borgerhout

**Hof Ter Lo**  
Noordersingel 30; 03.543.90.30  
NOV 27 20.00 Satyricon  
NOV 30 18.30 Metalfest 2008: Arsis + Keep of Kallessin + Marduk + Kataklysm + Morbid Angel  
DEC 3 19.00 'Eastpack Antidote Tour': Flogging Molly + Street Dogs + Skindred + Time Again

## Bruges

**Het Entrepot**  
Binnenweg 4; 050.61.02.48,

www.het-entrepot.be  
NOV 28 22.00 OhStyle

## Brussels

**Ancienne Belgique**  
Anschaal 110; 02.548.24.24  
Concerts at 20.00:  
NOV 26 Opeth DEC 1 Herman Dune  
DEC 2 Dandy Warhols

## Beursschouwburg

Auguste Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be  
DEC 3 20.30 Sukilove

## Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89  
NOV 29 23.00 Fuse resident night: DJs Deg & Pierre

## Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15  
DEC 1 20.00 Everlast  
DEC 3 20.00 Share the World, with Natacha Atlas & The Mazeeka Ensemble, Dani Klein and more

## Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32  
NOV 27 20.00 Yoko Sound

## Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34, www.recycleart.be  
NOV 28 21.00 Burnt Friedman & Jaki Liebezeit, Tim Exile, The Emperor Machine, Kelpe + DJ Solariumface  
NOV 29 21.00 Lightning Bolt, oVo, Kill Me Tomorrow

## Stekerlapatte

Priestersstraat 4; 02.512.86.81, www.stekerlapatte.be  
NOV 27 21.30 The Screaming Bitches NOV 29 21.30 AËL

## VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07, www.vkconcerts.be  
NOV 27 20.00 I'm From Barcelona  
DEC 3 20.15 Jennifer Gentle + The Dodos

## Vorst-Nationaal

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50, www.soundsjazzclub.be  
NOV 26 20.30 Bobby Solo & Boogie Boy + Jerry Lee Lewis  
NOV 29 20.00 Nancy Ajram

## Ghent

**Handelsbeurs**  
Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01, www.handelsbeurs.be  
NOV 26 20.00 Jolie Holland

## Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060, www.vooruit.be  
NOV 26 20.00 A Brand + The Subs + Malibu Stacy

## NOV 27 20.00 The Black Box

## Revelation + Mystic: London

## Elektricity, Spirit

## NOV 30 20.00 Club Midi: Squarepusher

## Hasselt

**Muziekodroom**  
Bootstraat 9; www.muziekodroom.be  
NOV 28 19.00 Cryptopsy, Bury Your Dead, Beneath the Massacre, Pushing the Extreme 2  
NOV 29 19.30 Battelore, Kivimets, Druid, Falchion, Korpiklaani

## Kortrijk

**Budascoop**  
Kapucijnenvest 10; www.dekreun.be  
DEC 4 20.00 Valgeir Sigurdsson

## Concertstudio

Conservatoriumplein 1, www.dekreun.be  
NOV 28 20.00 Trio Valore

## Leopoldsburg

**CC Leopoldsburg**  
Kastanjedreef 1; 011.34.65.48, www.cleopoldsburg.be  
NOV 28 20.15 Steve Forbert  
NOV 29 20.15 Wim Ophrouck & Ets Dottermans  
NOV 30 20.15 De Schedelgeboorten

## Leuven

## Het Depot

Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03  
NOV 27 20.00 The Subs + Malibu  
Stacey + A Brand  
DEC 3 20.00 Stereo MC's

## World, folk

## Antwerp

**Zuiderpershuis**  
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00, www.zuiderpershuis.be  
NOV 28 20.30 Asif Ali Khan (Pakistan)

## Brussels

**Art Base**  
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
NOV 28 21.00 Trio Valiz, Iranian/Arabian inspired music

## Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98, www.atelier210.be  
DEC 3 21.00 What the folk! series: Iza

## Espace Senghor

Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40, www.senghor.be  
NOV 27 20.30 Reem Kelani (Palestine)

## Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50, www.soundsjazzclub.be  
NOV 26 22.00 Chamaquiendo, salsa

## Dance

## Antwerp

**deSingel**  
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be  
NOV 28-29 20.00 La Pornographie des âmes, choreographed by Dave St-Pierre

</div

## Brussels

### Kaaistudio's

Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vlaakstraat 81; 02.201.59.59, [www.kaaitheater.be](http://www.kaaitheater.be)  
**Until NOV 29** 20.30 Blijf/weg (Stay/away), performance by and with Tine Embrechts and Frank Vercruyssen (in Dutch)

### KVS Bol

Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.12, [www.kvs.be](http://www.kvs.be)  
**NOV 29-DEC 6** 20.30, 15.00 Gewonnen brood by Pol Hoste (in French and Dutch with French and Dutch surtitles)

### The Warehouse Studio Theatre

Waelhemstraat 69a; [www.shaksoc.com](http://www.shaksoc.com)  
**NOV 28-29** 14.30, 18.00, 20.00 Dancing at Lughnasa by Brian Friel, staged by Nick Roche (in English)

### Theatre Saint Michel

Pater Eudore Devroyestraat 2; 02.732.70.73  
**NOV 26** 20.30 Looking for Mr Castang by Edouard Baer, musical direction by Gérard Daguerre

### Zinnema

Veeweidestraat 24-26; 02.555.06.00, [doek@zinnema.be](mailto:doek@zinnema.be)  
**NOV 28-29** 14.00 DOEK! Theater & Storytelling: storytelling workshops (without dialogue)

### Ghent

Theater Tinnenpot  
Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60, [www.tinnenpot.be](http://www.tinnenpot.be)  
**NOV 28-DEC 7** 20.00 De Jossen by Tom Lanoye (in Dutch)

## Visual arts

### Antwerp

#### Contemporary Art Museum (MuHKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.260.99.99, [www.muhka.be](http://www.muhka.be)  
**Until DEC 7** Broodthaers & friends, works by Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers shown with works by Panamarenko, Robert Filliou, Bernd Lohaus, Guy Rombouts and Walter Swennen

#### Fotomuseum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00  
**Until DEC 7** Chris Marker: Staring Back, photography by French filmmaker Chris Marker  
**Until JAN 4** Gérald Dauphin, retrospective of work by the Antwerp photographer (1938-2007)  
**Until JAN 4** Een wereld zonder einde (A World Without End), retrospective of work by Belgian photographer Marie-Françoise Plissart

#### 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 61; 03.828.13.50, [www.middelheimmuseum.be](http://www.middelheimmuseum.be)  
**Until DEC 14** Rodin: Balzac, story of a masterwork, tribute to the French sculptor's famous work

#### Zilvermuseum Sterckshof

Cornelissenlaan; 03.360.52.52  
**Until JAN 18** Fifties Silver, Belgian civil and religious silver design from 1950 to 1970

### Bilzen

Landcommanderij Alden Biesen  
Kasteelstraat 6; 089.51.93.42  
**Until DEC 14** Limburg in 't geweer, 300 years of military history in Limburg province, with paintings, drawings, weapons and models

### Bruges

Arentshuis  
Dijver 16; 050.44.87.11

**Until DEC 7** Günter Brus, retrospective of the avant-garde Austrian on his 70th birthday

### 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  
**Until JAN 4** Stradanus: Artist at the Medici Court, retrospective of Bruges-born artist Johannes Stradanus, with paintings, drawings, prints and tapestries

### Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media  
Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03, [www.argoarts.org](http://www.argoarts.org)  
**Until JAN 3** Interstitial Zones, 15 artists offer a critical alternative to the mass media's coverage of modern history

### Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33  
**Until FEB 28** 25 Years of Passion Shared, hand-crafted bookbindings since the Renaissance

### deBuren

Leopoldstraat 6; 02.212.19.30, [www.deburen.eu](http://www.deburen.eu)  
**Until DEC 12** World One Minutes Brussels, the best one-minute videos from 90 countries

### De Elektriciteitscentrale European Centre for Contemporary Art

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.35  
**Until JAN 11** Réfléchir le monde (Reflecting the World), photographs, video and installations by contemporary French artists on the occasion of the European Union's French Presidency

### De Markten

Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25  
**Until DEC 21** Ware Liefde! (True Love!), group show

### Design Flanders

Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60  
**Until DEC 31** Design Verpakt, jewellery and objects by contemporary Flemish designers

### Flemish Cultural Centre Op-Weule

Sint-Lambertusstraat 95  
**Until DEC 7** Parallel Worlds, work by Polish photographer Ola Jezowska Minarik

### ING Cultural Centre

Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92  
**Until MAR 15** Oceania: Signs of Ritual, Symbols of Authority, sculptures, masks, artefacts, weapons and utilitarian objects from Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia

### Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63  
**Until DEC 28** Inedit, Idel Ianchelevici's sculptures photographed by Stephen Sack

### Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.226.12.57  
**Until NOV 30** Habeas Corpus, group show on the theme of the body, with contemporary paintings, drawings, videos and sculpture

### Royal Museum of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11  
**Until MAR 8** Continental Superstar, mechanical organs from the Ghysels collection, with recreated dance floor, bar and lighting

### Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11, [www.fine-arts-museum.be](http://www.fine-arts-museum.be)  
**Until JAN 4** Meunier in Séville, 80 paintings made in Spain by 19th-century Belgian artist Constantin Meunier  
**Until JAN 18** Landscapes and portraits by Belgian artist Lismonde  
**Until JAN 25** Breuk en erfenis (Separation and Heritage), show marking the European Union's French Presidency, with 1970s works by French

artists

**Until FEB 15** CoBrA, major retrospective on the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Cobra movement

### Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49  
**Until MAR 31** That's Opera: 200 Years of Italian Music, a look behind the scenes of the making of an opera, travelling exhibition by music publishers Ricordi

**Until APR 26** It's our Earth!, interactive exhibition on sustainable development, with interventions by Belgian and international artists

### WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33, [www.wiels.org](http://www.wiels.org)  
**NOV 29-FEB 22** Un-Scene, works by young Belgian artists

### deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens  
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23,

**Until NOV 30** Projections and shadow puppetry by American artist Kara Walker

**Until NOV 30** Photography and sculpture by Belgian artist Kris Martin

### Ghent

Caermersklooster  
Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10  
**Until DEC 21** Glans en duister (Glossy and Dark), photographs by Eric Standaert  
**Until DEC 21** Harold Lloyd, tribute to the famous American actor and director (1893-1971)

### Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99  
**Until JAN 26** 100 years Demeyere, stylish cooking utensils by the Belgian manufacturer

**Until JAN 26** Retrospective of German Jewellery designer Hermann Jünger (1928-2005)

### Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30, [www.gent.be/spa](http://www.gent.be/spa)  
**Until MAR 29** Flemish wall tapestries from the 15th and 16th centuries

### Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, [www.smak.be](http://www.smak.be)  
**Until JAN 3** Faux Jumeaux (False Twins), carte blanche to Belgian artist Michel François

**Until JAN 18** Anyth\_=, paintings by Werner Mannaers

### Witte Zaal

Posteernestraat 64; 09.267.96.77, [www.francekunstart.be](http://www.francekunstart.be)  
**Until DEC 6** Moments in Time, show exploring the relationship between time, image and the surrounding space

### Hasselt

#### Modemuseum

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21  
**Until JAN 4** Ten dans gevraagd (Invitation to Dance), dance costumes by fashion designers and artists from 1920 to the present day

### Z33

Zuivelmarkt (Beguinage) 33; 011.29.59.60

**Until JAN 4** The Great Exhibition Part 1: Europe, a project by Ives Maes linking world exhibitions to science fiction

### Maaseik

#### Maaseik Museum

Lekkerstraat 5; 089.81.92.99

**Until MAR 31** The Terracotta Army of Xian: Treasures of the First Emperors of China, warrior sculptures from the world-famous Terracotta Army shown with 200 artefacts from the Qin and Western Han dynasties

### Machelen-Zulte

#### Het Roger Raveelmuseum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00

**Until FEB 22** Ensor & Raveel: Kindred

Spirits, drawings and paintings by the Belgian artists

### Meise

#### Kasteel van Bouchout, Meise

Botanical Garden

Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20

**Until FEB 1** Plantenportretten (Plant Portraits), watercolours by the garden's illustrators

### Ostend

#### Kunstmuseum Aan Zee

Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18,

[www.pmmk.be](http://www.pmmk.be)

**Until DEC 15** In the Cherished

Company of Others, drawings, sculpture, paintings and installations by Marc Camille Chaimowicz, shown with works by international artists

### Tervuren

#### Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11

**Until AUG 31** Omo: People & Design, Hans Silvester's photographs of southwestern Ethiopia's nomadic tribes and objects from the museum's collection

## Festivals & special events

### Antwerp

Antwerp Antiques Open Door Days: Promenade tours among the city's antique dealers in the 30th edition of the annual event. Focus on new generation of art dealers

**NOV 28-30 & DEC 5-7** across Antwerp [www.antiquairs-antwerpen.be](http://www.antiquairs-antwerpen.be)

**Art-Event Living 2008:** Art and lifestyle fair with more than 400 artists exhibiting

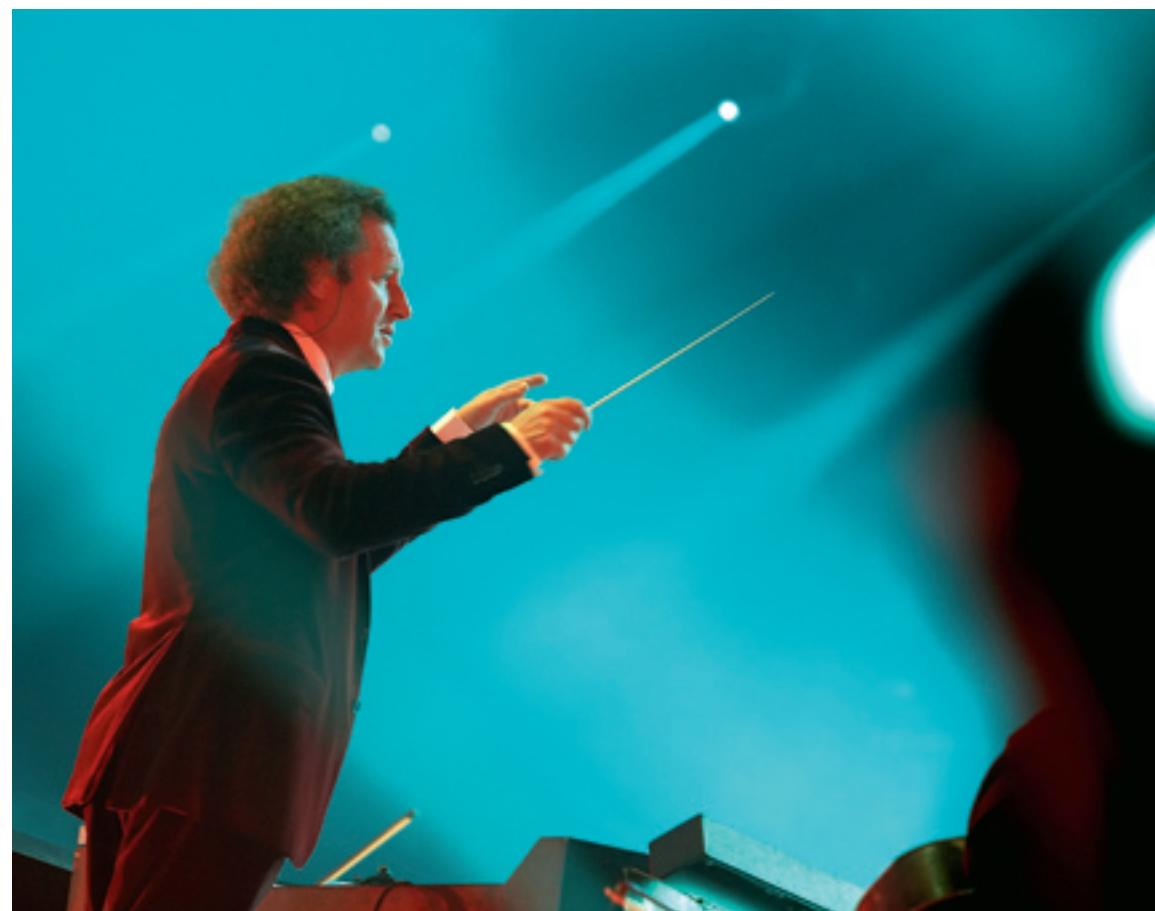
**NOV 28-30** at Antwerp Expo, J Van Rijswijkstraat 191 03.766.48.13, [www.art-event.nl](http://www.art-event.nl)

**Jewish Culture Festival:** Exhibitions, theatre, music and film exploring local and international Jewish life

**Until DEC 2009** across Antwerp [www.joodsc](http://www.joodscultuurfestival.be)

## INTERVIEW

# Robert Groslot



**Robert Groslot conducts Night of the Proms, a pop-meets-classical music phenomenon that attracts huge crowds across Western Europe**

Next year, the Night of the Proms celebrates its 25th anniversary, and more than seven million people will have attended one of the performances. Robert Groslot has conducted 623 of them.

The proms concept was launched in 1985 by Belgian university students Jan Vereecke and Jan Van Esbroeck, who staged the first-ever concert in the Antwerp Sportpaleis. It has since then spread by word of mouth (and ear). The initial idea to combine the classical Royal Philharmonics of Flanders with jazz artist Toots Thielemans and British pop icon John Miles has since then filled the Sportpaleis and venues abroad every year.

In 1991, Groslot led his very first proms in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, after having played piano in one of them three years earlier. The same year he came on as conductor, he also founded the event's

house orchestra Il Novecento, 70 enthusiastic classically trained musicians, who were later joined by the Fine Fleur choir.

Mechelen-born Groslot looks back on a multifaceted career. He started out as pianist – and winner of the prestigious Queen Elisabeth competition – and became a piano and chamber music teacher at the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp. Today, he combines his work with Novecento with composing, film projects and painting. "Versatility is a key word; I couldn't live doing just one thing," he says.

When classical music is combined with pop artists like James Brown, Alphaville, Shaggy or Joe Cocker, one of the first questions is whether every note is penned down in sheet music, and, if so, is there any room for improvisation? Groslot, 57, soon found that communication with pop artists is not that difficult. "I've gradually

adapted to the guest artists of the proms and the music they play," he says, "and I've learned to speak their language. It's not that they play in chaos – they're very structured in fact. It all comes down to getting acquainted with these structures and terms. Communication is easy with musicians who don't read sheet music. There are

## "I've gradually adapted to the pop artists of the proms, and I've learned to speak their language"

some pop artists who read and understand scores, of course, but they're usually not very fluent in it."

Groslot notes that some cross-pollination takes place when playing with pop artists. He refers to composer Witold Lutoslawski,

who said that "a composer feels some kind of duality when listening to other composers: he listens to the musical piece and then wonders how to implement the idea". The same thing happens during the proms.

Throughout the years, Groslot has been a privileged witness of the development of the Night of the Proms – its audience, artists and approach. The "pop meets classical music" show with such humble beginnings has grown an spilled over international borders. "I feel a change in tone and emotion from one show to the next – with the traditionally more relaxed concerts on Saturday or Sunday to the really hectic extravaganzas on weekdays when students take over the arena," he says. "When you compare the international audiences, the difference is phenomenal: the Germans, for example, sit out every song politely before bursting into applause."

As the conductor, Groslot feels completely responsible for the success of each programme. "I'm the captain of the ship," he says. "It's my duty to provide comfort to the artists and allow them to perform at their best. That can be

thing had to start from scratch with basic monitoring and sound reinforcement, to the 2008 edition where the technical crew provides over 30 wireless microphones and some 22 in-ear monitoring systems," Groslot explains. "Every musician on stage has his or her own microphone and monitoring system and can adjust the sound to his or her own instrument, to the orchestra or to the total sound on stage. This is really a technical tour de force."

This year's Night of the Proms, which wrapped up earlier this month in Antwerp, featured Simple Minds, Sinead O'Connor and Live, among others, and was slightly different from previous programmes: the Fine Fleur choir was replaced by the acclaimed Angels in Harlem Gospel Choir. Groslot feels that it's a maturing process for the Proms. "I have a very good feeling with this 2008 edition: no weak points, an extremely high musical expertise and a rhythm and content that is pretty much my habitat."

The Flemish conductor, who took the Novecento orchestra to play in Paris on the Champs-Élysées before an audience of 600,000 last summer, notes that life on the road is quite demanding – almost two months of touring for the Night of the Proms is not the same as conducting a night at the opera. "But the whole concept, however exhausting it may be, is so fun to do and full of variation. We get the chance to meet so many people, and it's an enrichment that will last for many years."

**Marc Maes**

**online**  
[www.notp.com](http://www.notp.com)

## THE LAST WORD

### what they're saying in Flanders

#### Caught napping

"The snow had been forecast for days, and yet the chaos in some places was total. I'm afraid the maintenance service severely underestimated the cold spell."

**Danny Smaghe**  
spokesman for Touring  
on last weekend's heavy  
snowfall

#### Good sport

"Eleventh place is absolutely okay for me. The children from Georgia deserved to win. Really catchy."

**Olivier Symons, 15,**  
from Sint-Job-in-'t-Goor  
who represented Belgium at the  
Junior Eurovision in Limassol,  
Cyprus

#### Hold the pepper

"Who am I to tell someone like Geert Van Hecke, chef of De Karmeliet in Bruges, you put too much pepper here or there?"

**Anonymous chief inspector**  
of the Michelin Guide,  
interviewed by De Standaard

**Cobra** **FestiveGiftGuide** **Kids**  
**Movies** **Sinterklaas** **ZwartePiet**  
**DixieDansercoer** **Arno**  
**next week in Flanders Today**