



FLANDERS TODAY

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NEWS • BUSINESS • ARTS • ACTIVE • LIVING • AGENDA • INTERVIEW

Powering up 7

A Dutch architect has come up with a €200 billion wind power project in the North Sea that could supply all of Europe's energy needs by 2050. The Flemish government is behind the project, which could yield 700,000 jobs.



Blood beauty 8

The Dutch photographer Erwin Olaf likes to shock with sleek photographs of beautiful women combined with slashed flesh or elderly women posing in bikinis on exercise bikes. Some of his most provocative works are currently on show at the Antwerp Photo Museum.



Black gold 10

The Kempen region of Limburg is dotted with old coal mines that once employed 46,000 people. The last one fell silent in the 1990s and the area is now trying to reassert itself as a centre for high-tech industries and green tourism.



Shall we dance?

Why Flamenco gets its name from the Flemish and not from the flamingo

EMMA DAVIS

Ivo Hermans pours me a glass of Rioja from behind his tiny, candlelit bar in Leuven and plunges into thought with an exclamation of "Hmmm". The Spanish aficionado is about to tell me how the word "flamenco" is connected to Flanders and has, in fact, got nothing to do with pink, wading birds.

It's dark and raining outside, but, within minutes, I'm transported to a colourful world of the Middle Ages with tales of gypsies, the royal courts, artisans and military conquests. It's easy to see how Hermans, who runs a flamenco bar, has managed to knock out several books on the topic, which sell like hotcakes in the Low Countries.

Popular belief is that the use of the word "flamenco" to describe the famously passionate dance and music from Spain's Andalusia region comes from the word "flamingo". Indeed, the strutting dancers with their arched postures have something in common with the graceful birds, which brighten up the shores of Southern Europe and Africa.

What's more, "flamenco" is the Spanish word for flamingo. What could be more obvious in terms of etymology? Hermans, however, concluded after years of research that the roots of the word lie in Flanders – specifically, the many connections between the Spanish and Flemish courts.

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Ministers fly to Motor City

Peeters leads delegation to rescue Opel Antwerp

ALAN HOPE

Flanders region this week sent a top-level delegation to Detroit, Michigan, in the United States, for talks with the management of both General Motors and Ford following the announcement of plans for major closures that could affect Opel Antwerp.

Workers at the Antwerp plant will have to wait until 31 March to find out whether a rescue by European governments will be realised. Last week, Flemish minister president Kris Peeters said he was ready for a cash injection by his government, as part of a possible

European rescue plan. This week he was due to fly to Detroit with labour minister Frank Vandenbroucke and economy minister Patricia Ceysens.

"Our main purpose is to stress the good points of the Antwerp factory; it remains a productive and efficient plant," Ceysens commented. "We'd also like more clarity regarding the company's plans. The last few days have seen all sorts of rumours circulating. We'd like some information first hand."

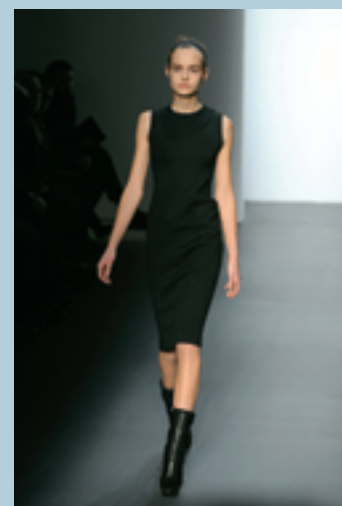
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Runway to success

Herent girl takes off in New York

A 15-year-old schoolgirl from Herent near Leuven last week made her debut on the catwalks of New York, modelling the autumn womenswear collection of Calvin Klein. Louise Maselis won last year's Elite Look Model competition in the beach resort of Sanya in China ahead of 80 girls from 70 countries. She was then given a contract with the world's top model agency in November, and her management moved from Amsterdam to Paris. Elite also represents household names like Cindy Crawford and Monica Bellucci.

"The whole world was turned upside down," said Thomas Maselis, Louise's father. "Last Friday we got the call, and she left on Monday. I had to negotiate a bit with the school, but from next Monday she'll be back in the classroom. This is an enormous chance. It could be her big break, but it could also cause problems." He emphasised that Louise must finish secondary school before she throws herself into the modelling life. "If she scores with Calvin Klein, I suppose we'll have to put on the brakes," he said.



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News in brief

ALAN HOPE

Postal unions have announced a three-day strike from 2 to 4 March inclusive, in protest at reorganisation plans which they say will damage services. De Post plans to sort ordinary mail automatically and use more part-time mail carriers. This is the biggest industrial action by postal unions since a 24-hour strike in November 2004. ♦

The annual spectacle of parents camping outside Dutch-speaking schools in Brussels resurfaced again last week at Sint-Jan Berchmanscollege in the city centre – two weeks before registrations begin. Lower schools have few admissions left over once siblings and the disadvantaged are found places. Places are also reserved for children from Dutch-speaking families, but not enough to satisfy demand. One family this year spent €1,000 on a rented mobile home, while others made do with tents on the pavement. ♦

An Ostend youth who stabbed two party-goers because they had no cigarettes to give him has been sentenced to 18 years in prison by a court in Bruges. Kenny Bolle, 20, was charged with murdering Bart Bonroy in the coastal town in February 2007, as well as with the attempted murder of Bonroy's friend Jilles Coopman. The prosecution had asked for a sentence of 22 years. ♦

Dr Luc Beaucourt last week gave his final lecture on the dangers of drunk driving in a café on the main square in Kontich, north of Mechelen. Dr Beaucourt, an emergency medicine specialist, has spent the last 15 years giving talks to small audiences across the region after he became tired of always treating the same – in many cases avoidable – traumas caused by drinking and driving. Part of his talk was a set of slides of accident victims, intended to stress the dangers and lifelong consequences. "You can't get people interested in figures and percentages," he said. "So I just let them see what we would get in at the emergency room. That way I could hold their attention for an hour." ♦

Two policemen in Germany who shot and seriously injured a Hasselt man have been suspended from duty pending an investigation. The man was parked in his van next to the road near Grosslittgen, where police were involved in a search for the perpetrator of a robbery. When approached by

Tobback offends with "war criminal" comment

Leuven mayor Louis Tobback almost caused an international incident last week after he said that he wanted to rename the city's Marshal Foch square, named after the French military leader whose orders in the First World War sent hundreds of thousands to their deaths in pointless military operations.

"Nobody can deny that Ferdinand Foch sent hundreds of thousands of men out of the trenches as cannon-fodder," Tobback said. He also referred to the general as a "war criminal".

Meanwhile at Foch's birthplace museum in Tarbes in the Pyrenees, Tobback's words were described as "seriously exaggerated". The French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner was said to be preparing a response. "You can hardly call Foch a war criminal," a museum spokesperson said. "Throughout the world, he's seen as a hero".

"Foch is, like many military men, the victim of mistaken perception," said Luc de Vos, professor of war history at the royal military school in Brussels. The politicians who pushed the generals to win terrain have more victims on their conscience."

"Tobback needs to learn his history correctly," said a spokesman for the Flemish war veterans. "He needs to put events from that time in their proper context."

Leuven city council agreed last week to redesign the square, currently a busy bus terminus. ♦



Ferdinand Foch

armed police, the man panicked and drove off. The German officers fired on the vehicle, wounding him in the lung. He is now recovering in a hospital in Trier. ♦

Father Damien, the Tremeloborn priest who dedicated his life to the lepers of Molokai, will be canonised by Pope Benedict on 11 October. The soon-to-be saint himself died of the disease in 1889 at the age of 49 and was beatified in 1995. The town of Tremelo plans to invite President Barack Obama to visit the town for the event. "Damien and Obama have Hawaii in common," mayor Vital Van Dessel said. ♦

President Obama was voted Man of the Year in the annual Humo Pop Poll, winning more than 5,000 votes, with Flemish Olympic athlete Tia Hellebaut chosen as Woman of the Year. Runners-up among the men were Yves Leterme (610 votes) and Loft director Erik Van Looy (368). Van Looy also won as best TV personality for his quiz show *De Slimste mens ter wereld*. ♦

A bus carrying Flemish tourists from Genk to a skiing holiday in Austria, was involved in an accident in the Austrian Tauerntunnel last weekend. The co-driver was seriously injured, and four passengers suffered minor injuries. Fire services said the accident happened when the bus ran into the back of a truck. ♦

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Editor: Derek Blyth
Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw
News editor: Alan Hope
Agenda: Sarah Crew, Robyn Boyle
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 Schaeerlaeckens, Steven Tate, Denzil Walton
Project manager: Pascale Zoetaert
Publisher: VUM

NV Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij
Gossetlaan 28, 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden
Editorial address: Gossetlaan 30
1702 Groot-Bijgaarden Tel.: 02.373.99.09 _ Fax: 02.375.98.22
E-mail: editorial@flanderstoday.eu
Subscriptions: France Lycops
Tel: 02.373.83.59
E-mail: subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu
Advertising: Evelyne Fregonese
Tel: 02.373.83.57
E-mail: advertising@flanderstoday.eu
Verantwoordelijke uitgever:
Derek Blyth

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"We offer job security, which sounds even more attractive in these times. We're getting eight applicants for every vacancy."

An army recruitment spokesman on the resurgence of military service as a career option



Flemish dialects dying out, warns Unesco

The dialects of West Flanders and Limburg could be threatened with extinction, according to the latest *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*. The *Atlas* lists around 2,500 languages – 230 of which have been extinct since 1950. Languages are organised in categories ranging from "not safe" – still spoken by children but only in restricted circumstances, such as in the home – to "critically endangered", where the youngest surviving speakers are grandparents.

West Flemish has about 1.5 million speakers in Zeeland, West Flanders and French Flanders. Limburgian-Ripuarian, meanwhile, is spoken by about 2.6 million people, 1.6 of them in the Dutch and Belgian provinces of Limburg and the rest over the border in Germany. Limburgian is ranked "not safe" by Unesco. Other languages under threat in the area include Walloon ("endangered"), Lorrain and Picard in Northern France ("severely endangered") and Luxembourgish ("not safe").

The main threat to surviving dialects, according to experts, is the decision by parents not to teach the language to their children, often because dialect is considered "incorrect". While the dialect may continue to be used, speakers grow inevitably older and are not replaced by young speakers.

Among the languages now listed as extinct are traditional Cornish and Manx, as well as Alderney French from the Channel Islands, Norn from the Shetland Islands and Kemi Saami from Northern Finland. Yiddish, meanwhile, is listed by Unesco as "endangered".

➔ www.unesco.org

Minister under fire over fish drink

Interior minister Guido De Padt came under fire this week from green politicians and animal rights organisers after he took part in the traditional Carnival celebrations in Geraardsbergen, where he is a member of the municipal council. The annual "Krakelingenworp", which is said to go back six centuries, involves town notables drinking a draught of red wine containing live fish, which are swallowed whole.

The practice has been the subject of legal action by animal rights organisation Gaia, which lost its attempt to ban the event on appeal. However, recent changes to the municipal law mean cafes can no longer sell *the visjesdrank*, or fish drink. The privilege is now reserved for members of the council and aldermen.

De Padt, who took over as interior minister in December from Patrick Dewael, has a long history of taking part in the event, going back to when he was first mayor, then chairman of the local social aid agency. "It is animal abuse to swallow fish whole," said Gaia chairman Michel Vandenbosch. "The courts have already recognised the fact but allowed local politicians to go on doing it. Unbelievable."

Groen! party chair Mieke Vogels added: "This is typical. [De Padt] is obviously doing this to provoke a reaction."

"As a member of the council I have the right to do this," De Padt responded. "The judge said so. Let the animal rights people protest. That's their job."

FIFTH COLUMN Election frenzy

The former prime minister, Yves Leterme, is set to return to the Flemish Parliament. When minister Hilde Crevits, one of his protégées, asked him to stand on the West Flanders Christian Democrat (CD&V) list, it was an offer he could not refuse.

Leterme will be last on the list, but there is no doubt that he will get elected. So will Jo Vandeurzen, who heads the Limburg list of CD&V. This will be some form of rehabilitation for Vandeurzen, who resigned as justice minister last year amid suggestions that he had violated the strict rules on separation of powers.

This appears to imply that Leterme and Vandeurzen have moved away from the federal level. But does it really? Leterme has yet to announce whether he actually will take up his seat in the Flemish Parliament. He has also suggested that he may become *gemeenschapssenator* (community senator), which would mean that he becomes a member of both the Flemish Parliament and the federal Senate. All options are open.

Leterme and Vandeurzen are not the only Flemish politicians who move back and forth between the regional and the federal levels. Politicians of all parties do the same. Whenever they stand as a candidate, they solemnly pledge their commitment to the assembly they want to get elected in... until the next elections come around, and their presence is suddenly needed elsewhere.

With regional elections every five years and federal elections every four, this makes for a permanent state of electoral frenzy. To some commentators, it leads to a lack of courage in our politicians, since they are constantly afraid of paying the price at the ballot box.

In French-speaking Belgium, this electoral frenzy is even worse. This explains why no institutional agreements are possible before the regional elections: no-one wants to give in while elections are on the way.

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters (CD&V) found this out the hard way. Last week, he had to admit that the "guarantees" the French speakers had given him earlier were anything but. Peeters' stubbornly sticking to the dialogue with the French speakers was the reason the cartel between CD&V and N-VA broke up. Ultimately, N-VA was shown to be right.

With all this in mind, it is hard to see why exactly the cartel – the joining of forces between two parties – had to split. This has led to a lot of "cartel nostalgia" within CD&V. Especially with elections coming up.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

450

Jobs lost at Case New Holland, which produces agricultural machinery in Zedelgem, West Flanders. The plant employs 2,700.



€110 million

Savings required from the Belgian activities of Dutch-based ING Bank. The bank plans to cut 530 jobs, 315 more than previously announced.

896

People sent in haikus to a competition organised by *De Standaard* and judged by prime minister Herman Van Rompuy, whose own work features on his website. Of those taking part, 150 failed to respect the standard format: three lines of 5, 7 and 5 syllables, respectively. The winner was entitled "Smog", by Mia Janssen:

*Winter's white landscape
wrapped around in veils of mist
holding in its breath*

€31/month

Average pocket money received by children in Flanders aged between 9 and 17, according to a survey by the consumer research organisation Oivo. Children in Brussels got more (€40 on average) with children in Wallonia getting less (€26). Some 74% of children get some sort of regular allowance, compared to 58% in 2003.

€1,850

Paid by every Belgian for the current economic crisis, according to former governor of the National Bank, Fons Verplaetse. Living standards will fall by 6%, he said, as a result of negative economic growth, population growth and the need to return to a balanced budget.

€102,270

The average mortgage borrowed for a home, according to KBC bank, down from €105,310 in 2007. The average period stabilised at 22 years, with 85% of customers opting for a fixed-rate loan.

11,000 m²

of painting work and 44,000m² of window washing, as the main hall of Antwerp railway station gets a six-month clean-up, which started last week. Train services are not expected to be affected. ♦



Designs for a new generation of smileys, or emoticons, the ubiquitous symbols of LOL-ing and ROFL-ing beloved of chatters and emailers the world over. The designs are the work of third-year graphic design students at the Provincial University College of Limburg in Hasselt. Ann Hermans' blue smileys have two rudimentary Wii-like hands which, she says, add to their expressive capabilities. Nicky Vreys found digital emoticons too sterile and so reverted to traditional media, like paint, in order to let them show more emotion. And Tim Verhoeven opts to abandon the traditional round shape altogether in favour of a more fluid smiley-morphology. The New Smiley project was a commission from Smakers, the yearbook of the Flemish Youth Cultural Passport.

Kids' snacks "unhealthy"

As many as seven out of 10 food products specially marketed for children contain too much sugar or fat, according to research by paediatric nutritionist Kristel Vande Kerckhove of Leuven University. The researchers tested products ranging from fish sticks to Petit Gervais and found that 14 out of 20 were unsuitable for a child's nutrition. Among the offenders were traditional stand-bys such as Roosvicee fruit cordial, Appelsientje fruit drink and Fruitpocket smoothies, all apparently healthy products, but all containing too much sugar – in the case of Fruitpocket, proportionally as much as Coca Cola. Petit Gervais, despite claiming high calcium, contained too much fat, as did Lu Prince Start biscuits and Bumba madeleines. However, the products concerned shouldn't be banned from the home, Vande Kerckhove said. "Kids sometimes need to have some fun, too. The little ones shouldn't live like monks."



Shall we dance

→ Continued from page 1

How the Flemish became Los Flamencos

In the 16th century, Flemish artists were in a class of their own. Their talent was demanded in royal courts across Europe, notably in Spain because they had developed a popular form of polychrome painting. "It looked like the light was shining out of their paintings," says Hermans.

One of the most famous artists was Juan de Flandes (Jan of Flanders), who was a court painter during the reign of Isabella I of Castille. His sitters also included her daughters Joanna of Castile (also known as Joanna the Mad) and Catherine of Aragon, who became the Queen

who had been born in Belgium. Their son Charles became not only King of Spain but emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, dubbed the land where the sun never sets because at any given moment somewhere over this vast realm, there was daylight.

Charles was born in Ghent and brought many Flemings with him into the Spanish court, giving them influential positions. He also brought a whole army of archers from his hometown. These men became known as *Los Flamencos* and developed a reputation for being wild and rough, womanising and drinking too much.

"The Flemish had white skin, and these gypsies had dark skin. But they both liked women, they liked fighting, and they made a lot of noise"

of England through her marriage to Henry VIII. (The first of his six wives.)

Joanna the Mad married Philip the Handsome, Duke of Burgundy,

At the same time, Hindus of Indian descent arrived in Spain, having been driven out of Rajasthan by the Muslims. After spending some time in North Africa, they named



Ivo Hermans in De Koerier van Navarra

themselves Egyptians, the origins of the English word "gypsy".

"The Flemish had white skin, and these gypsies had dark skin. But the one thing they had in common was that they liked women, they liked fighting and they made a lot of noise," says Hermans. People likened the two races, and, given the royal connections of the Flemings, the gypsies took this as a badge of honour.

Despite the connections, the following three centuries saw horrific persecution of the gypsies, culminating in Black Wednesday in July 1749 when King Ferdinand VI launched a police action to capture all the men and women and separate them into concentration camps – a form of "soft" genocide, says Hermans.

It was only during the reign of Charles III that the gypsies were to see an end to such levels of persecution. He promised their release on the grounds that they became Catholic, spoke Spanish, lived in houses, paid taxes and did military service. Ninety percent of them acquiesced to these demands.

Eventually, the term "gypsy" had only negative connotations. According to Hermans, they asked to change it to the name they had shared with the Flemings during the time of Charles I: *Los Flamencos*. And from that point on, their music and dance became known as Flamenco.

While this all sounds very convincing, it's just one of the many theories to be found about the origins of the word "flamenco" and just one theory about how the Flemish connection came into play.

So I ask Hermans just why the flamingo theory doesn't fly.

on the many internet pages devoted to the topic, postulates that the Flemish were themselves named after flamingos, owing to their ruddy complexions compared to the gypsies.

Hermans' response is close to a guffaw, and he mutters something about how you can find anything on the internet these days. The name of Spain's ubiquitous dish paella, he notes, is said to be a contraction of the Spanish phrase *para ella*, meaning for her. He winks that many Valentine lovers have been fooled by this one.

Apparently, and here Hermans demonstrates his broader knowledge of etymology, the word comes from patella, the Latin word for a knee-cap. Paella was cooked in enormous flat dishes, known back then as *patellas*.

He does go on *Naturalis Historia* to offer up a more substantial theory of the flamingo connection. The Roman philosopher Pliny, author, is said to have observed Andalusian youth courtships and found them similar to that of flamingos. A female flamingo permitting four approaches from a male must mate, says Hermans.

"This is similar to what the kids were doing," says Hermans. "The girls had bells on their ankles that made noise when they hit the floor with their feet. This was said to be a symbol to wake up new life or to procreate."

While it's a nice theory, Hermans says it comes too late and that what is more likely is that the youthful dance was incorporated at a later stage into what we now know as flamenco.

Arabs and knives

Another theory, which has been widely discredited, but to which Hermans adds his few cents, is

that the word "flamenco" derived from the Arab term *falah-menk-oum*, meaning the suffering of the peasant. Another similar theory is that it comes from the word for "peasant", *falah*, and *mengu*, meaning "banished".

Hermans explains: "If it was the case, then we would have seen historical evidence of the contraction of the Arab words."

He also dismisses a theory, which at one point was very popular, that flamenco was named after a 17th-century knife. Soldiers from the Spanish special forces were said to have come back from Flanders with knives made in workshops in 's-Hertogenbosch on the Dutch border.

These soldiers, so the story goes, included gypsies who were possibly in the military to secure citizens' rights for themselves. They brought back the flamenco knives to prove that they had been in Flanders. After that, the gypsies of Andalusia were said to carry these knives.

Hermans says the main problem with this story is that the blade of this knife was oriental in its style. He talked to experts from the Royal Palace of Madrid, who said the knives were of Moorish origin.

I can't resist a couple of last niggling questions about his theory before tottering out of his flamenco-style bar: How can we really believe there was ever such a link between the hot, unbridled flamenco dancers and the Flemish, known more for suppressing their passions?

"This only explains the Flamenco name, not the Flamenco mentality," he firmly states.

"The temperament is so different. The mentality of Flamenco is in Andalusia," he tells me, before gazing off wistfully into the distance. ♦

Tears of liberation

Amid a row of nondescript town houses on the edges of Leuven's city centre lies De Koerier van Navarra, whose doors are a portal into a world of Spanish food, sensual music and dramatic dancing.

Run by Ivo Hermans, who has devoted his life to bringing flamenco to the Flemish, the bar is something of a calling card for those who want a taste of the fiery culture.

Hermans love affair began as a child when he was captivated by the landscape, rich colours and music of Spain. He hosts evenings in which guests can savour a giant paella, sink a glass of his fine selection of Rioja and be pulled in to a world of flamenco.

The bar, tagged as "a place for passion and hunger", is lit by candles, giving it a romantic, mysterious air. On the walls are pictures of Flamenco singers, dancers and musicians. Hermans, who says that the word "flamenco" is linked to soldiers from Flanders known as *Los Flamencos*, has aptly named the bar after a postal service that existed between the Spanish city of Burgos and Brussels (crossing through Navarra) during the time of Carlos I who reigned over both regions.

"I don't know any stronger expression in popular repertoire than I find in flamenco." Explains Hermans. Those who love it cry, he says, "not tears of sorrow but tears of liberation." ♦

→ www.kovana.com

Pink birds

One alternative doing the rounds



Basquing in the glow

For over 400 years, Spain has had a huge impact on life in Flanders

DENZIL WALTON

Maybe they were fishermen looking for fresh fishing grounds or explorers broadening their horizons. But the first Spaniards to arrive in Flanders were, in any case, probably the Basques. Noted for their expert seamanship, they could easily have made a voyage through the Bay of Biscay, up the coast of France and into Bruges.

But stepping onto the quay in early mediaeval Bruges, their eyes would have alighted on a precious commodity: high quality Flemish cloth. Quickly calculating the profits, they suddenly decided to become cloth merchants. The export of Flemish cloth into Spain soon became big business.

By the end of the 14th century, Spain had the opportunity to play an even more significant role in Flanders. To protect its own cloth industry, England had slapped a hefty tax on the export of English wool. Flemish merchants looked for a cheaper alternative, and found it in Spain. Spanish wool – from the country's Merino sheep – began to be massively exported by carrack and later caravel from Basque harbours.

Spanish wool may have been cheaper than English wool, but, contrary to common belief, it was not inferior. Quite the opposite, asserted Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776), for "fine cloth is made altogether of Spanish wool".

It was therefore no surprise to find that Spanish merchants were treated like royalty in Bruges, and later Antwerp. "Their money was extremely important to the economic prosperity and development of Flemish cities like Bruges, Ghent and Ypres," says Professor René Vermeir from the University of Ghent. "There was an important Spanish Nation in Bruges, consisting of official Castilian and Aragonese merchants working in Bruges and other Flemish cities."

Charles in Spain (and vice versa)

The influence of Spain in Flanders grew further during the reign of the Habsburg dynasty in the 16th and 17th centuries. Interestingly, Charles V, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire (also known as Charles I of Spain), was born in Ghent. When he first went to Spain from Flanders he couldn't speak a word of Spanish.

During his reign, Spain attained

huge global influence and, for well over a century, was the world's greatest power. On the eve of Charles' death in 1558, his realm spanned almost four million square kilometres.

Because Spain had conquered the Inca and Aztec empires, its treasure chests were being enriched by silver and gold, as well as new foods like turkey, potato, coffee and chocolate, brought back across the Atlantic. This allowed the Spanish to have a huge influence with Charles.

Charles, meanwhile, was levying heavy taxes on the towns and cloth industry of the Low Countries. Much of this money went towards the construction of forts to protect the southern border against France. "Still, during the reign of Charles V the Low Countries took full advantage of belonging to a world empire," says Vermeir. "For example, Flemish merchants were able to trade not only directly with Spain but indirectly with Spanish America. The spectacular growth

"The Spaniards' eyes fell on Flanders' precious commodity, and they suddenly became cloth merchants"

of Antwerp in the first half of the 16th century was one of the positive consequences."

Philip's upset

Charles was succeeded by his son, Philip II. By this time, many Protestants were living in the Low Countries, but Philip believed it was his duty to fight for the Catholic Church. Backed by the zeal of the Jesuits and the Spanish Inquisition, his savage repression of Protestants soon led to a rebellion that disrupted the Spanish empire in the region.

By 1577, Dutch Protestants, led by William of Orange, governed virtually all the Netherlands and demanded freedom of worship. This was too much for Philip, who raised money to send his nephew, the Duke of Parma, with a powerful army to regain control.

The Duke's "Army of Flanders" started to capture the rebel towns



one-by-one. Parma captured the key Port of Antwerp, driving the Dutch rebels back to their northern strongholds. The end result was the formation of the Spanish Netherlands in 1581, which included modern-day Belgium, Luxembourg and part of Northern France. The northern provinces separated from Spanish rule and became the United Provinces.

They annexed Artois and Cambrai in 1659, while Dunkirk was ceded to the English. Through the Treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nijmegen further territory along the border was ceded, including Lille and Valenciennes.

"During this period, the Spanish Netherlands were repeatedly invaded by France," says Vermeir. "These devastating wars made further economic development impossible."

The situation became so threatening that the Dutch Republic, which had always been an ally of France and an enemy of Spain, came to Spain's aid. In 1688, France faced an alliance of the Netherlands, England and Spain, in a war that lasted until 1697. For the Spanish Netherlands it was disastrous, with Brussels largely destroyed by French artillery in 1695.

In 1700, Charles II, the last Span-

ish King of the Habsburg Dynasty, died childless and the War of Spanish Succession broke out. The Spanish crown was taken by Philip V, a Bourbon and the great grandson of Louis XIV (who was still ruling France). Both England and the Dutch Republic were unwilling to see the Spanish Netherlands in the hands of a French satellite. Many of the battles of the war were fought in Belgium, with the British general Lord Marlborough coming out on top.

Eventually, in the Peace of Utrecht of 1713, Spain ceded what was left of the Spanish Netherlands to Austria. It marked the end of the long period of Spain's direct and significant influence on Flanders.

But the Spanish have kept coming to set up restaurants and work in institutions. The love affair with Spain is far from over. ♦

Talking Spanish

The Spanish influence is everywhere in Flanders, if you just know where to look

Amigo. *The stylish hotel near Grote Markt in Brussels takes its name from a Spanish jail, the Amigo, where lawless citizens were held in the 16th century.*

Spaanse Loskaai. *The quay in Bruges where Spanish ships unloaded their cargo is still called Spaanse Loskaai, the Spanish Unloading Quay*

De Koning van Spanje. *This grand café on Grote Markt in Brussels is named after King Charles II of Spain.*

Spanjeplein. *The small Spanish Square near Central Station in Brussels has a statue of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza presented to the city by the Spanish government (photo)*

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Windmill park could produce more energy than Persian Gulf

Ministers support €200 billion plan – more or less

Europe needs to begin investing seriously in renewable energy sources like wind power, two Flemish ministers said last week. They were responding to a daring new plan proposed by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and his Rotterdam-based Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA).

Named for the Zeekracht (Sea-Power) Foundation which, together with the Nature and Environment Foundation, commissioned the study, the plan envisions a giant ring of wind turbine installations reaching across the North Sea from Norway to the Netherlands.

Last week two members of the Flemish government and a top Flemish architect gave their support to the idea, calling on European governments to put aside the “total lethargy” which characterises policy on renewable energy at the moment.

“If Europe is serious about sustainable energy, the OMA plan needs to be examined immediately so it can serve as a guideline for the future development

of wind turbine parks in the North Sea,” wrote Kathleen Van Brempt in an opinion piece in *De Morgen*, co-authored by architect bOb Van Reeth. Van Brempt is Flanders’ minister for mobility and will also be heading the Socialist party list for the European Parliament in June.

The Koolhaas plan would take about 40 years to realise and cost an estimated €200 billion, but it would create 700,000 jobs and make the continent energy self-sufficient by 2050. In comparison with the Persian Gulf region, which produces about 11,300 terawatt-hours (TWh), the North Sea ring would produce 13,400 TWh.

In addition, the installation would provide new openings for energy management, such as storing wind-produced energy in depleted under-sea reservoirs and tapping new gas fields for hybrid energy production in “marine remediation areas”, recreational parks and sea routes.



The wind-turbine ring would stretch from Norway to the Netherlands

The investment required would be about equal to the investment by oil companies in the Gulf, wrote Van Brempt and Van Reeth. However, once the ring was complete, there would be no cost to the transport of energy produced. “Plans like OMA’s deserve political support. They have mine already,” Van Brempt added.

Later in the week, Patricia Ceysens, Flemish minister for economy, science and foreign trade added her voice to the debate. “I can only underline the objective of my colleague,” she wrote in *De Morgen*. “Europe – and all other political levels – needs to demonstrate more daring and more ambition to bring about a breakthrough in alterna-

tive energy development.” She described the Zeekracht plan as “a Manhattan project for sustainable energy,” but warned against relying on “one silver bullet” solutions.

Dependence on the ring, Ceysens argued, could lead to “catastrophic consequences” if the installation should ever fail. In addition, it would create essentially “an electricity OPEC” with concentrations of power and economic interest as yet unforeseeable. “Instead of spending €200 billion on a ring of wind turbines,” Ceysens said, “government would be better to mobilise 200 million Europeans to create a green, innovative and competitive future. ♦

March 31 deadline for future of Opel plant

➔ Continued from page 1

General Motors, the parent company of Opel, last week announced the loss of 47,000 workers worldwide, with 27,000 of them employed outside the US. The company has a workforce of 244,000 and is the second-largest automobile manufacturer in the world, after Toyota.

The restructuring plan was delivered to the US government for consideration as part of Washington’s rescue plan for the car industry. Five plants in the US would close, and GM would hive off or close down four of its eight existing marques. In return, Washing-

ton is being asked for an additional credit line of \$9.1 billion (€7bn), on top of the loan of \$13.4 billion (€10.4bn) received at the end of 2008.

It remains unclear how the GM plans would affect Antwerp, as the company has given itself a deadline of 31 March to formulate plans for its European plants. GM has factories in Germany, Poland, Sweden, France, Spain, Hungary, Austria and Portugal, as well as Antwerp. Germany, with five plants, is likely to bear the brunt of the restructuring, and the German government has already expressed a willingness to take a €2 billion stake in a stand-alone European GM, along with the four Länder where GM plants are situated.

Belgium’s federal finance minister, Didier Reynders, said that the government would be interested in looking at rescue plans, but declined to give a more specific commitment. At the federal level, aid to GM might have to be coupled with a similar package for industry in Wallonia.

But Ceysens warned that the region’s intervention would not be a blank cheque. “A capital injection by the Flemish government can only take place if Opel comes



© Belga

forward with a realistic business plan,” she said, before leaving for Detroit.

Unions welcomed the willingness of government to intervene. “It’s a positive sign that the government is ready to commit to a European perspective, but it’s only right that they should be wary about jumping in with taxpayers’ money,” said ABVV union representative Rudi Kennes. Unions were due to begin talks with GM management this week.

• Meanwhile, unions at the DAF trucks plant in Westerlo said they were “hopeful” following discussions between management and representatives of the Flemish government regarding job losses.

DAF has announced restructuring measures that will lead to the loss of 874 of the 2,700 jobs at the plant.

Both Kris Peeters and Frank Vandenbroucke met with DAF management following the announcement and appear to have been given some reassurances about reductions in working hours and increased training opportunities, in an effort to soften the blow of the planned redundancies. Peeters has also had talks with Dutch prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende. DAF has a plant in Eindhoven, and it was important, Peeters said, for the two governments not to compete with each other in the measures they take. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Air freight • Brussels Airport

Brussels Airport processed 33,100 tonnes of air freight in January, half the amount dealt with in the same month in 2008. The airport blamed the economic crisis for the fall, which also came about after courier service DHL left last spring. The number of passengers using the airport fell by 15% to just over one million.

Banking • KBC

Shares in Leuven-based bank insurer KBC fell by more than 12% on the Euronext last week to €9.67, apparently as a result of the bank’s heavy activity in Eastern Europe. KBC is active in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, as well as Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria. “We get the impression that all shares in banks that are active in Central and Eastern Europe are being indiscriminately dumped,” a KBC spokesperson said.

Brewing • InBev

InBev Belgium will push sales of Jupiler as the beer of choice at music festivals this year, in an effort to rebrand Stella Artois as a luxury beer. Stella is sold as a premium beer in other countries but not here. Jupiler, meanwhile, is the country’s top seller, though it has few sales abroad.

Gas supply • Eandis

Natural gas supplier Eandis plans to install budget meters in as many as 10,000 homes to try to tackle the problem of unpaid gas bills. The meters will cost the company €163 each and are activated by a rechargeable card. Eandis delivers so-called social energy in 80% of Flemish municipalities to families whose past payment problems make it impossible for them to get gas from the main suppliers.

Media • Persgroep

Kobbelegem-based De Persgroep, owners of media from *De Morgen* to *VTM*, have encountered new competition in their €100 million bid to take over the Dutch group PCM, which publishes *NRC Handelsblad* and *De Volkskrant*. One counter bidder has yet to be identified, but last week saw the emergence of another, the *Telegraaf Media Groep*, which publishes the Netherlands’ top-selling newspaper.

Spirits • Filliers

Jenever producer Filliers Graanstokerij of Deinze is to take over competitor Wortegemsen, based in Waregem. Filliers was established in 1880 and last year turned over €11 million. The acquisition will make Filliers market leader for Belgium.

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exhibition

LISA BRADSHAW



© Courtesy Flandria Gallery (Paris)

FotoMuseum, Waalsekaai 47, Antwerp

Until 7 June

→ www.fotomuseum.be

Erwin Olaf

At first glance, it's easy to write off photographer Erwin Olaf as a commercial prima donna, airbrushing oiled models and strategically cropping "June" for the next gay men's calendar. A low-rent photographer at high-rent prices.

And much of the famous Dutch photographer's work deserves little more attention than that. Even if his employers are media sophisticates, like Italian coffee brand Lavazza, they are also companies whose billboard-size exploitations of women are questionable.

Olaf, indeed, is a fan of the naked body but has the exasperating habit of destroying his own edgy intentions. Even when he is creating a series for art's sake, rather than the consumer's, he veers strangely off course. His 1999 series *Mature*, for instance, is a group of photos of older women posing as pin-ups. With sagging stomachs and deep wrinkles, their naked bodies sit atop soap suds or exercise machines. The images are a brilliant reminder of the fleetingness of youth and the inner sexiness that cannot be suppressed by advancing years.

But Olaf photo-shopped the women to make their asses look better. It was his first use of computer manipulations, and he simply couldn't stand not to use it to do what he does best – make people look unerringly pretty. In a socially acceptable way, that is. What use is an artist who must do that?

But then there are the times when Olaf gets it right. When he lets his precisely staged material speak for itself, it speaks such complex volumes that it is difficult to tear your eye – or your mind – away. Some of this you will find at the FotoMuseum in Antwerp during *EyeCandy*, a show of more than 100 of Olaf's photographs.

Perhaps the most infamous series – and one of the most striking – is *Royal Blood*, in which he photographs young, beautiful models playing various royal figures from Julius Caesar to Marie-Antoinette to Jackie O. Offering a literal interpretation of the catch-phrase title, all are bleeding. Marie-Antoinette holds onto her own severed head; Sissi, the nickname of Elisabeth of Bavaria, who was stabbed to death in 1898, pulls back her slinky dress to reveal her death wound. Princess Diana, meanwhile, sports a Mercedes emblem half embedded under her arm, like a tattoo.

Royal Blood is a highly stylised tribute to leaders, murdered or otherwise victimised based on status and power. The subjects are at once both alive and dead, staring at the viewer either blankly or seductively, all the while questioning: Why did you not stop this?

This kind of emotional impact comes through in other Olaf series as well: the fairly recent *Rain* portrays people in a variety of situations in which they should be happy as sad, numb or indifferent. Elton John bought one of them for €25,000. Sadly, you won't see any of *Rain* in Antwerp, but you will see a few works from the series *Blacks*, in which Olaf takes on America's continuing discomfort with its racial history, and *Rouge*, a fantastic series of gender-bending footballers.

As for the rest, pay it no mind. There is enough in this show to impress even the most critical (re)viewer. ♦

Running concurrently with *EyeCandy* are two more exhibitions at the FotoMuseum

The First World War ushered in the modern era of media photography once newspaper editors realised just how much of an impact the right photo could make. But the inter-war period also saw radical changes in the use of personal cameras, as photo technology became ever more accessible, and in the arts, when painters and writers starting aiming and shooting. Artistic differences arose immediately, as they so often do, among "traditionalists" and "modernists" both personally and professionally. Antwerp's FotoMuseum presents *Photography in Belgium Between the Wars*, which examines all of these aspects of photography between the First and Second World Wars.

Also on show at the museum are a collection of photos, drawings and texts by Vincent Beeckman. *Made in Strombeek* is a disarming series of portraits of average people in Beeckman's hometown. ♦





Brendan and the Secret of Kells is playing in Dutch and French dubbed versions across the country

The secret of Vanfleteren

Producer puts Belgium on the world map of film animation

LISA BRADSHAW

If you think getting your whole family together to go to a new animated movie is a lot of effort and expense, you should try making one.

Brendan and the Secret of Kells, currently playing all over Belgium, took five countries and hundreds of collaborators six years to finish. And mostly that's because of money. Viviane Vanfleteren, owner of Vivi Film in Schepdaal, just east of Brussels, is a genius at getting that money.

Vanfleteren's reputation for being able to pull in funding from both sides of the country and supervise both financial and artistic collaborators all over the world is responsible for putting the name "Belgium" on many film co-productions. Tomm Moore, the Irish director who made *Brendan*, did not hesitate to approach the Flemish businesswoman when he needed more money to complete his film.

It's been a steady rise to the top for Vivi Film. Vanfleteren opened the production house in 1990 with some friends so they could produce short films. Before that, she was an interior architect. It seems like an unlikely leap, but, in the late 1980s, she got the chance to work on interior designs for the phenomenally popular Flemish film *Koko Flanel*. "And I was sold!" she exclaims.

Vivi Films produced short films and documentaries, gaining notoriety with the 1994 Belgian short *Madame Foucault's Pendulum*, which was accepted at 60 festivals the world over, and with the documentary *Howling for God*, which won the coveted film critics' prize at the international Documentary Film Festival in Am-

sterdam in 1998.

And then Vivi hit gold. French director and animator Sylvain Chomet approached Vanfleteren about co-producing his film *The Triplets of Belleville*. She came on board, garnered animation work for Belgian studios and money from not only Wallonia, but Flanders. It was one of the first times Flanders invested in a French film, let alone an animation, and the very first time that Flanders imported animation work into the region rather than sending its animators abroad to work in a foreign country.

Triplets became a world-wide sensation, particularly for an animated film. Winning a slew of awards, it was nominated for an Oscar in 2004. "It only took me a year to get the money together in Belgium," she says of *Brendan*. "And that was thanks to the previous success of my films."

As a producer or, in the case of *Brendan*, one of a few co-producers, Vanfleteren coordinates a film's financial planning, budgets, contracts and timeline. "My job is really trying to get the film done the way the director wants it to be. It's not always easy, and often you have to compromise," she explains. "You have to be very conscious of every decision you are making — what kind of impact it's going to have on the film and on the audience."

Co-producing means getting your country to pony up the money, but it also means negotiating work for Belgian artists. Animators in five countries worked on *Brendan*, including Belgium, which also provided all the inking of the hand-drawn images. France was also a huge contributor. "I had the feeling sometimes that



Viviane Vanfleteren

"I was a go-between with France and Ireland," says Vanfleteren, "because the Flemish are quite close to both the Anglo-Saxon and the French culture."

Brendan is the story of a 12-year-old boy who lives in a monastery in ninth century Ireland. Surrounding regions are being ravaged by Vikings, and Brendan's uncle, the Abbot, is busy sealing off their community with a giant wall. Brendan is desperate to see the outside world, and when a visiting brother needs special berries to make ink for his secret book, the boy sneaks outside the monastery walls to the forest to find them.

"The style of the film is totally different from anything I've ever seen before," says Vanfleteren. "I agree with people who tell me that every image is like a piece of art."

She not exaggerating: Iconic Celtic imagery is incorporated into the animation as a whole style, and the attention paid to background detail is simply incredible. The animators actually drew wide shots like a director using film would employ to emphasise wide landscapes or huge interiors that dwarf the characters.

"Sometimes I'm amazed when people ask me questions about animation. I think, God, how do I know so much?" Vanfleteren muses. "But in Belgium, there are not that many animation producers that have done two feature films. So here, I'm special." ♦

www.theseecretokells.com

CULTURE NEWS

The Flemish blockbuster *Loft* by director Erik Van Looy has broken the record of ticket sales in Belgium set in 1990 by Stijn Coninx's *Koko Flanel*. Last week *Loft* bypassed the long-standing total of 1,082,000 tickets sold. *Koko* moves into second place, and Coninx also holds on to third and fourth place with *Hector* and *Daens*. Van Looy resurfaces in fifth place with 2003's *De Zaak Alzheimer*.

Belgian harmonica player Toots Thielemans, 86, will take part in this year's jubilee edition of Night of the Proms at the Antwerp Sportpaleis. The veteran jazzman, who was already 11 years old when the venue was built in 1933, took part in the last jubilee 25 years ago. "I'll be there again in another 25 years," he promised.

The French-speaking broadcaster RTBF will begin subtitling Dutch speakers in news programmes instead of dubbing them into French, as at present. "French speakers are not accustomed to subtitles," said a spokesperson. "But we are a public broadcaster in a multilingual country that's open to the whole world."



Bart De Pauw

Bart De Pauw, TV maker and screenwriter of smash hit film *Loft*, is plans for a new adventure game series for families, under the working title *De Puzzel*. De Pauw is looking for families with children between 10 and 15 for a three-week audition in the Ardennes in August. Contact puzzel@koekentroof.be.

Jazz music in Flanders could be facing a crisis because of the lack of attention paid by subsidy panels to the rapid evolution of the sector, according to Antwerp's alderman for culture, Philip Heylen. Current policy supports established institutions like the Brussels Jazz Orchestra and Octurn, while ignoring individual musicians and innovative venues such as Rataplan in Borgerhout and De Werf in Bruges.

A major cultural festival is being organised in Antwerp from March to June to draw attention to its plans to give the docks area a massive facelift over the next 10 years. "Kaailand" will feature concerts, exhibitions, architectural installations and theatre.

Anima Eterna's management offices will be installed in the Ezelpoort in Bruges from 2010. Anima Eterna is the house orchestra of the recently rebuilt Concertgebouw, but its offices are still housed in Brussels. The Ezelpoort is one of the four remaining city gates in Bruges.

Dimitri Verhulst is the favourite author of young people aged 15 to 25, according to the annual survey of youth in Flanders, carried out by the Young People's Cultural Passport (CJP). *Humo* is the favourite magazine, Facebook.com the top website and *Loft* the top film.

© VRT/Bart Muisson

Built on black gold

Flanders' only authentically intact mine, and the town they built around it

DENZIL WALTON

The 20th century got off to a fine start in eastern Flanders. On 2 August, 1901, "Flemish black gold" was discovered in the Kempen region of Limburg. Coal transformed this virtually uninhabited region of arid heathland and boggy morasses into a thriving industrial heartland.

Over the next three decades, seven huge coal mines were built within cycling distance of each other. At its peak, the Flemish mining industry employed 46,000 mineworkers and yielded 10 million tonnes of coal per year.

One of the seven collieries was in Beringen. The town is the oldest in the Kempen, with records dating back to 1239. Before the discovery of its underground treasure, Beringen was noted as the birthplace of August Coppens. This Flemish pastor-poet was one of the leading lights of the Flemish literary scene. In 1885, he established the weekly cultural magazine *'t Daghet in den Oosten*, which ran for 30 years.

The seven-kilometre August Coppens Walk takes you around the town, passing the recently restored Church of St Peter in Chains. Dating back to the early 15th century, its baroque altar and 17th-century pulpit are worth stopping to see.

→ Treated like heroes

To discover Beringen's coal mining history, however, you have to leave the town centre and travel a few kilometres north. You travel back in time, for nowhere else in Limburg is the province's mining heritage so extensively preserved.

Although the first coal seams were discovered in 1901, it was not until 1917 that the first Flemish mine – Winterslag, near Genk – started extracting coal. Beringen mine was the next to open, in 1922. The golden age of the industry was in the 1950s, but it was short-lived, with most mines closing during the 1980s. The very last one – Zolder – closed in 1992.

It was decided that one mine should be preserved intact, and Beringen's was chosen. It was converted into the Flemish Mining Museum, which gives visitors fascinating insights into the lives of coal miners and the development of mining in Beringen and elsewhere in Flanders.

A visit to the museum starts with a documentary showing aspects of everyday life of miners in the early days. With the help of original black-and-white footage, an old miner reminisces. We learn how he started on his apprenticeship at the age of 14, sorting coal. His father was already down the pit, working 48 hours a week, six days out of seven, in what he describes as heavy, unhealthy and dangerous work.

Our friendly miner recalls how, during the Second World War, Russian prisoners were employed at Beringen, which was controlled by the German army. The coal was exported directly to Germany to support the war effort. Ironically, after the war, the Russians' places at the coal face were taken by German POWs.

The old miner's tale becomes more upbeat as he remembers the heyday of the 1950s. By then, conditions underground had been much improved, and the collieries were making big profits, which were ploughed back into the local area. Schools, hospitals, social clubs and new roads were developed. Prince Boudewijn visited Beringen colliery. "At Expo '58 we were treated like heroes," he recalls, and "Beringen Football Club was playing in the First Division."

But then, the old miner's eyes mist over as he tries to make sense of what happened next. "Coal became too expensive; at least that's what they said," he comments.

The development of the Kempen coal basin was no longer a priority for policymakers. Zwartberg mine was closed in 1966. Newsreels take over the story. Protests and demonstrations were held outside the colliery. Vehicles were overturned. The police tried to restore order, and two miners were killed. "Nothing was the same from this day onwards," says the old man.

He was right. Restructuring merely delayed the inevitable. Production stopped at Beringen in 1989.



→ Going underground

The next part of the tour is a scale-model of the colliery, with a rather old fashioned but effective audio-visual presentation describing the role of the coal production process and each of the buildings.

Then it's time to visit the mine itself. The shaft was sealed off and filled in for safety reasons when the mine closed. Everything else remains much as it was when the last miner clocked off.

The endless lines of tiled shower cubicles are remarkable. Each miner also had his own numbered locker (top half for clean clothes, bottom half for dirty), with a heating pipe underneath. You can follow in the men's footsteps as they head towards the shaft. You see where they would have collected their lamps; open flames at first, not just for light but to detect dangerous underground gases. (If your lamp went out, it was time to get out.) Later, battery-powered lamps attached to helmets were introduced.

Every miner also had a numbered badge, which he would leave behind when he took a lamp – a vital security check at the end of each shift. You see carbon monoxide filters, which were introduced after the 1956

disaster at the Marcinelle colliery in Wallonia, which claimed the lives of 262 miners.

Equally fascinating is the room where the foremen divided the miners into teams and allocated tasks. "The metal cages and gates might look like a cattle market, but with 2,000 men passing through at the start of each of eight-hour shift, such a strict system was necessary," says Filip Delarbre, the museum's curator.

Each team would then pass down a further corridor to collect their tools and water bottles before entering the elevator which would send them almost a kilometre below the surface. They would then spread out horizontally along 100 kilometres of tunnels to the coal face.

In the simulated underground tunnels and galleries are drills, picks, shovels, lamps, conveyor belts and rail wagons. You find out not just how the miners worked, but how they ate, drank and breathed 850 metres below the surface – all historically accurate.

If you are feeling in need of fresh air, then a walk on the slag heap will do you good. When the coal was brought to the surface, it was "dressed" by removing the stones (slag). The resulting heap has been grassed over. Footpaths lead to the top for impressive



Fatih Turkish Mosque is testament to the immigrants living in Beringen



Blueberry fields forever

Stroll through one of the largest blueberry farms in the country. In the summer, pick your own and eat blueberry ice cream

FLANDERS TODAY
FEBRUARY 25, 2009

views over the colliery complex and the surrounding countryside. Nearby is the Mine Manager's villa and five hectare garden, which is also open to the public. The gardens have been renovated, although the villa was unfortunately destroyed in a fire.

→ Shipped in by the thousands

A question that might arise while looking down at the vast colliery is: "Where did all the miners come from?" It's a reasonable question, considering the region was virtually inhabited, while at its peak, nearly 6,800 worked at the Beringen colliery.

When the mine opened in 1922, miners from collieries in Wallonia were drafted in, followed in the 1930s by workers from Poland. After the Second World War, the collieries in Limburg were in desperate need of manpower, and the Belgian government made a deal with the Italian government that if they sent workers, Italy would get cheaper coal.

Between 1946 and 1956, 28,000 Italians arrived in Limburg to work down the mines. When the Italian government terminated the agreement in 1957, following the mining accident in Marcinelle in which nearly half the 262 victims were Italians, the collieries imported workers from other countries such as Greece, Spain, Tur-

key and Morocco.

Of course, these workers needed a place to live, and the result was the creation of a totally new mining village: Beringen-Mijn. The company didn't just build houses — they had to provide schools, shops, sports facilities, cultural centres, churches and a hospital. A walk through Beringen-Mijn is a fascinating experience, especially if you hire the digital Story Traveller from the museum or tourist office, which provides an entertaining guide through the most interesting spots.

The multicultural character of the village is immediately evident from the different places of worship. Worthy of a visit is the Fatih Turkish Mosque, with its Ottoman architecture, twin minarets and beautiful hand-painted tiles. Equally impressive is the Greek Orthodox Church. St Theodardus Mining Cathedral was actually built during the Second World War — when many other churches were being destroyed. Its Gothic arches hark back to the black mineshafts.

→ More than mining

There are plenty of places to visit in and around Beringen that are not related to its mining heritage. From May to September, a walk with a difference is around Blueberry Fields, where you will be brought up to date on the cul-

tivation of blueberries and cranberries, their health benefits and their uses. In July and August, you can pick your own. Any visit should be rounded off with blueberry ice cream or a glass of cranberry juice.

Learn more than you ever thought possible about goats at 't Kasteeltje Goat Farm in the Vennestraat. This also includes how goat's cheese, ice-cream and cheesecake are made, all of which can be sampled afterwards.

If you prefer sheep to goats, head to De Stalse Schans in Guido Gezellestraat. The owners breed Flemish milk sheep, an endangered breed. Again, after finding out everything about milking, shearing and breeding, you get to taste the milk, cheese and ice cream.

A very unusual museum, meanwhile, is located in Genebroekstraat. 't Pad van Pien Barometer Museum tells the story of all kinds of meteorological discoveries. Various information panels cover topics such as weather, climate, air pressure and humidity. You can measure the strength of the wind, weigh air and create air pressure. At certain times you might catch a glass-blower at work.

→ www.beringen.be



Touring the mines

Visitors are only allowed into the Flemish Mining Museum in Beringen as part of a guided tour. Daily tours are in Dutch, but other languages are possible if booked in advance. The tours are led by ex-miners. Their extensive first-hand information makes every tour unique. "Children in particular enjoy the opportunity to meet an actual mineworker and ask him questions," says the museum's curator. (And everyone gets to dress up in miners' overalls.)

→ www.steenkool.be

restaurant

DUSTIN BENNER

Amadeus Spare Rib Restaurant

A veritable gem in the landscape of Flemish folk cuisine, spare ribs restaurant Amadeus has become an institution, and deservedly so. Their successful formula has led to the establishment of four such restaurants across Flanders, and the din present most nights in every one bodes well for the eatery's future.

As with most restaurants worth a visit, Amadeus' elements work well together. In this case, the diner is taken back to the 1930s and 40s, and the trip is a pleasant one. Woodwork abounds, from the chairs to the ceiling — including coloured glass arrangements and the wall-to-wall mirrors, which also serve as writing surfaces for the day's suggestions. Melancholy Edith Piaf and fellows serenade softly in the background.

Cheap red-and-white chequered tablecloths keep things from turning posh, but that is the point. This small chain is folksy. The clientele ranges from troupes of

teens to gaggles of grey-hairs and every combination in between. No pretentious place settings, and the result is better for it.

Amadeus' claim to fame is the spare rib *à volonté* (all you can eat), widely considered the best in Belgium. Ribs are presented with a side salad and a jacket potato, and additional portions can be requested until one's buttons burst. The ribs can be eaten as served or doused in a delicious dark syrup, and the potato is flavoured with a home-made, orange-flavoured herb butter.

Though the waiter's attention is sometimes hard to catch, the diner really can order slab after slab. The additional portions are half-size, though, and occasionally a little on the dry side. Best to request a juicy one.

While the spare ribs and accoutrements are stellar, it is fathomable that one might want to try something else. For those eccentrics, the menu also features other grilled meats, lamb cutlets, grilled salmon and Ostend fish pan. Done with dinner? Then deposit those bones in the tin bowl, wipe your fingers clean and prepare for dessert: chocolate mousse or rice pudding accompany the rib dinner, but ice cream, apple cake and *crème brûlée* are also on the menu.

In Ghent, home to two of the four branches, one finds an Amadeus in the city's culinary heart, the historical Patershol district. The sister restaurant is also located in the downtown area, this time in a famed *rederijkerskamer* (Chamber of Rhetoric) on Goudenleeuwplein.

Antwerp's is just a few steps from the Scheldt waterfront in Sint-Paulusplaats. The Brussels establishment, meanwhile, changed its name to Amadeo in order to avoid confusion with another eatery in the area called Amadeus. This last stop is also located centrally, between the Beurs and the Vismarkt. ♦

🕒 Open: daily, 18.30 to 23.00

🍴 Spare rib menu: €19,75

→ www.amadeusspareribrestaurant.be



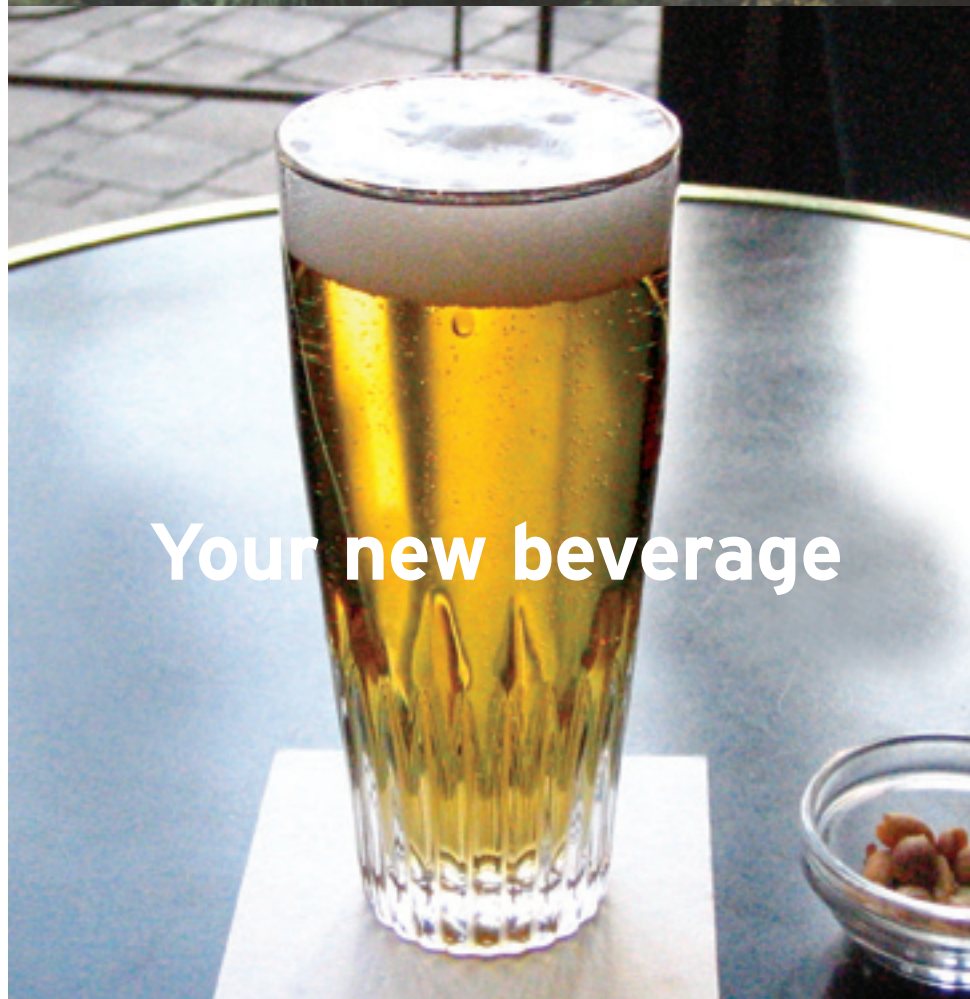
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Frank Vander linden

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Frank Vander linden is taking a break from his power trio De Mens to embark on a solo adventure. On his recently released, eponymously titled solo début, the songs are often emblazoned with piano, organ or drums, but during his current tour, he's all by himself on stage. That's never an impediment for Vander linden.

Two musical souls co-exist in the singer: the extrovert likes to rock out, where the more intimate seeks shelter in wistful songs. Both musical sides are expressed in De Mens, although the emphasis lies, especially live, on the former.

As a solo performer, Vander linden now gives now free rein to the latter. The influences that come across are in the tones of Lou Reed and Bob Dylan – and even Jacques Brel, whose “Voor un ami pleurer” he covers in the classic translation of Flemish crooner Johan Verminnen (“Een vriend zien huilen”).

Vander linden, who was a highly influential rock critic for both *Humo* and *Knack* for 20 years, also tackles Jan De Wilde, one of Flanders' unsung musical heroes, who loosely mixes Dylan and George Brassens, and De Kreuners, who were, more than two decades ago, the trailblazers of Flemish rock.

Vander linden is held accountable for some of the best song lyrics ever written in Dutch: a

bit enigmatic, generally catchy and always witty, but fortunately never too clever for their own good. They clearly bear the influence of Leonard Cohen's un pitying dissection of love and human relationships. No wonder that Flemish singer and TV presenter Yasmine asked him to translate some of Cohen's songs for a cover album. Vander linden has also penned songs for De Kreuners and, together with Jan Leyers from Soulsister, for Clouseau.

But expect no *Clouseauesque* fiesta during Vander linden's shows. Just close your eyes, and you'll swear you're sitting round a campfire on a slightly chilly, late August evening, already the first tinges of autumn in the air.

Frank Vander linden is on tour until 17 April across Flanders. Visit website for dates and places
→ www.demens.be



MORE ROCK THIS WEEK

Jeronimo → *Ancienne Belgique, Brussels*
Protest the Hero → *Muziekodroom, Hasselt*
Zender → *Trix, Borgerhout*



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28
MAR 1 15.00 Graindelavoix

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be
MAR 4 20.00 Collegium Vocale Gent Orchestra and Choir conducted by Philippe Herreweghe: Bach
MAR 4-5 20.00 LOD in Judaspassie, world première by Pieter De Buysser, staged by Inne Goris, music by Dominique Pauwels performed by B'Rock, conducted by Frank Agsteribbe

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02, www.concertgebouw.be
FEB 28 20.00 The English Concert conducted by Alfredo Bernardini, with Nuria Rial, soprano; Fulvio Bettini, baritone: Handel
MAR 5 20.00 Flanders Syphony Orchestra conducted by Etienne Siebens, with Patricia Kopatchinskaja, violin: Debussy, Szymanowski, Mussorgsky

Brussels

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
MAR 1 20.00 Flanders Symphony Orchestra conducted by Etienne Siebens, with Patricia Kopatchinskaja, violin: Debussy, Szymanowski, Mussorgsky
MAR 5 20.00 Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen, with Solveig Kringelborn, soprano; Juha Uusitalo, bass baritone: Schönberg, von Zemlinsky

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
FEB 27 12.30 Concertino with Raymond Dils, clarinet; Jean-Pierre Dassonville, horn; Eric Robberecht, violin; Levente Kende, fortepiano: Bartók, Brahms

Flagey
Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be
MAR 1 20.15 Focus on 1913: Brussels Philharmonic conducted by Michel Tabachnik, with Christiane Iven, soprano; Otto Derolez, violin: Webern, Berg, Debussy, Stravinsky

Royal Conservatory of Brussels
Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
Concerts at 20.00:
FEB 27 Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden, piano and José Van Dam, baritone: Mozart, Ibert, Schubert, Brahms (charity concert, tickets from 0476.33.45.23) MAR 2 Hagen Quartet: Haydn, Bartók, Beethoven MAR 3 Alexis Kossenko, flute; Bjarte Eike, violin; Andreas Arend, lute; Violaine Cochard, harpsichord: anonymous Irish, English and Scottish music MAR 4 Baroque de Limoges Ensemble conducted by Christophe Coin, with Maria Cristina Kiehr, soprano: Rebel, Stravinsky, Couperin, more

Royal Library
Kunstberg; 02.519.57.51, www.kbr.be
FEB 27 12.30 Tribute to Guillaume Guidé



Leuven

30CC Schouwburg

Bondgenotenlaan 21; 016.23.84.27, www.30CC.be
FEB 27 20.00 Lied von der Erde

Bruges

Stadsschouwburg
Vlamingstraat 29; 050.44.30.60, www.cultuurcentrumbrugge.be
MAR 1 15.00 Operastudio Vlaanderen, concert by Belgian and international opera singers with Collegium Instrumentale Brugense

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02, www.vlaamseopera.be
FEB 26-MAR 8 15.00/19.30 Mazeppa by Tchaikovsky with the Flemish Opera Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dmitri Jurowski, with baritone Nikolai Putilin and soprano Tatiana Pavlovskaya

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
Until MAR 1 15.00/19.00 Le Calisto by Francesco Cavalli, with De Munt Symphony Orchestra and Choirs

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Milow

17-20 May Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels

There are three opportunities in May to witness this night of guitar rock with Leuven-born warbler Milow – in Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels. He just won a slew of prizes at the Flemish Music Industry Awards, and his latest single “Ayo-Technology” is still in the charts after hitting number one earlier this year. Inspired by American folk and sounding a little like the young Bruce Springsteen, his tales are of desire and broken promises.

→ www.milow.be



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Borgerhout

Rataplan
Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
FEB 28 20.30 Jeroen van Herzele Quartet

Bruges

De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29
FEB 26 20.30 Jeroen Van Herzele Quartet
MAR 2 20.30 Sonny Fortune & Het Rein de Graaff Trio

Stadsschouwburg
Vlamingstraat 29; 050.44.30.60,

www.cultuurcentrumbrugge.be
FEB 28 20.00 Balanescu Quartet

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
MAR 1 20.00 Balanescu Quartet

Archiduc
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52,
www.archiduc.net
FEB 28 17.00 Lander Van den
Noortgate, Bert Cools, Frederik
Meulyzer, Nathan Wouters

Jazz Station
Leuvensesteenweg 193-195;
02.733.13.78
FEB 25 20.30 Massot/Florizoone/
Horbaczewski
MAR 4 20.30 Barbara Wiernik sextet
MAR 5 20.30 Jazz Station Big Band

Sass'n Jazz
Koningstraat 241; www.sazznjazz.be
FEB 28 20.30 Sibel
MAR 4 20.30 Bronco
MAR 5 20.30 Jam Session

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,
www.soundsjazzclub.be
FEB 25 22.00 Caribe Con K FEB 26
21.00 The Singers Night FEB 27-28
22.00 Pascal Mohy Trio MAR 2 22.00
Master Session MAR 3 22.00 Big Band
MAR 4 22.00 Chamaquiando (salsa)

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
Concerts at 20.30:
FEB 25 Merijn Bruneel Group FEB
26 The KMG's FEB 27 Erik Bogaerts
Quartet: Tribute to John Coltrane FEB
28 Ja Muës & the New Look Trio MAR
5 Stéphanie Blanchoud (chanson)

Genk

Casino Modern
André Dumontlaan 2; 089.65.38.70
FEB 27 20.00 Balanescu Quartet

Strombeek-Bever (Grimbergen)

Cultural Centre
Gemeenteplein; 03.263.03.43,
www.ccstrombeek.be
FEB 26 20.15 Hamster axis of the One-
click Panther



Ardoioie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82,
www.deschaduww.net
FEB 28 20.30 Belgium Asociality & The
Vault

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
FEB 25 20.00 Rachael Yamagata FEB 26
20.00 First Aid Kit + Venus in Flames
FEB 27 19.00 BOTA@AB: Jeronimo +
Selah Sue + Papa Dada + Vismets MAR
3 20.00 Devon Sproule + Rupa & The
April Fishes MAR 4 20.00 Luka Bloom
& band. Petersonic + School of Seven
Bells MAR 5 20.00 De Staat + A Brand

Espace Senghor
Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40,
www.senghor.be
FEB 26 20.30 Electrobelle concert

Fuse
Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
FEB 28 23.00 Ivan Smagghe, Geoffroy
Aka, Mugwump

Koninklijk Circus
Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
MAR 4 20.30 Scala sing Pierre Rapsat

Le Botanique
Koningstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
Concerts at 20.00:
FEB 25 Horse Feathers FEB 27 Polar
Bear Club + The Frank Turner +
Gaslight Anthem. NLF3/Patton FEB 28
AB@BOTA: Joshua + Barbie Bangkok
+ The Sedan Vault + Maximus MAR 1
Wintersleep MAR 2 The War on Drugs
MAR 4 Crystal Antlers

Recyclart
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34,
www.recyclart.be
FEB 28 22.00 Nightshop with Buraka
Som Sistema + Radioclit + RQM +
Tupolev Sound Crash

Steklerlapatte
Priestersstraat 4; 02.512.86.81,
www.steklerlapatte.be
FEB 26 21.30 Tom Back
FEB 28 21.30 Carole Masseport/

Stéphanie Rombi
MAR 5 21.30 Wrapped In

VK Club
Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07,
www.vkconcerts.be
FEB 26 21.30 The Gin + The Rasmus

Ghent

Culture Club
Afrikalaan 174; 09.233.09.46,
www.cultureclub.be
FEB 25 22.00 Stitch, presented by The
Ghent Fashion Academy

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01,
www.handelsbeurs.be
MAR 4 20.00 Arid

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
FEB 27 20.00 Alva Noto +
Eavesdropper + Machinefabriek
FEB 28 22.00 Peter Van Hoesen +
Andy Stott & Claro Intelecto + Efdemin
+ Move D & Benjamin Brunn + DJ
Special K

Hamme

CC Jan Tervaeert
Kaaiplein 34; 052.48.09.48,
www.jantervaert.be
FEB 26 14.00 Liedjes van toen en nu

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; www.muziekodroom.be
FEB 25 20.00 Paramount Styles

Leopoldsburg

CC Leopoldsburg
Kastanjedreef 1; 011.34.65.48,
www.ccleopoldsburg.be
FEB 28 20.15 Yasmine houdt woord:
music and poetry with the Flemish pop
singer Yasmine

Roeselare

Cultureel Centrum De Spil
Spilleboudreef 1; 051.26.57.00,
www.despil.be
FEB 25 20.00 Arid

Tessenderlo

CC Het Loo
Vismarkt; 013.67.50.88,
www.cchetloo.be
FEB 28 20.00 Gorki

Tienen

Cultuurcentrum De Kruisboog

Minderbroederstraat 15; 016.81.28.20,
www.tienen.be
FEB 25 15.00 DoReMi Band



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
Concerts at 20.30:
FEB 27 3MA (Mali/Madagascar/
Morocco) FEB 28 Rat Records Night
MAR 1 Djunushov Brothers & Salamat
Sadikova (Kyrgyzstan) MAR 5 TM
Krishna (India)

Ardoioie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82,
www.deschaduww.net
FEB 27 20.30 CenTbious

DON'T MISS Zap Mama

8 March, 20.30
KVS, Brussels

Marie Daulne, founder of
Zap Mama, reunites with
several members of her
original a cappella group
for this benefit concert
on International Women's
Day. These women haven't
sung together in 15 years
and may not for another
15. Proceeds go to women
victims of violence in
eastern Congo and Gaza.

→ www.kvs.be

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Antwerp

Stadsschouwburg
Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,
www.sherpa.be
Until FEB 25 15.00/20.00 Divine
Performing Arts, Chinese dance and
music show

Brussels

Kaaithheater
Sainctelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59,
www.kaaithheater.be
MAR 4 20.30 Black!... White?
choreographed by South African
Nelisiwe Xaba

Vaudeville Theatre
Koninginnegalerij; 02.507.82.00,
www.ticketclik.be
FEB 27-MAR 1 International tap
dancing and jazz music by the Fred
Academy with guest dancer Sarah
Petronio, music by David Miller

Leuven

Stuk
Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20,
www.stuk.be
FEB 25-26 20.30 Second Life,
choreographed by Andros Zins-
Browne, with performers between 60
and 80 years old

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein; 0900.69.900,
www.musicall.be
FEB 27-28 20.00 The Royal Ballet of
Flanders in The Return of Ulysses,
choreographed by Christian Spuck,
with live music by Purcell performed
by Brussels Philharmonic, conducted
by Benjamin Pope



Antwerp

Toneelhuis/Bourla
Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44,
www.toneelhuis.be
FEB 27 20.00 De koning sterft (The

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king is dying) (in Dutch)

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,
www.sherpa.be
MAR 2 20.00 Piaf: de musical, based on
the life of Edith Piaf (in Dutch)

Zuiderpershuis

Walse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
FEB 25 20.30 De Varkensfabriek in
Jan Janszoon, de blondie Arabier (in
Dutch)
FEB 26 20.30 Cocoo Jumbo Sister,
musical theatre

Berchem (Antwerp)

CC Berchem
Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20,
www.ccberchem.be
FEB 27 20.30 Eelt (in Dutch)
MAR 3 14.30 Bakelietjes, songs from
the '30s, '40s and '50s
MAR 5 20.30 Datumloze dagen
(Dateless Days) (in Dutch)

Brussels

KVS Bol
Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00,
www.kvs.be
MAR 5-14 20.00 KVS & Ro Theater
in Het Laatste vuur (The Last Fire) by
Dea Loher, staged by Alize Zandwijk
(in Dutch with French and English
surtitles)

The Warehouse Studio

Waelhemstraat 69a;
www.ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
MAR 3-14 20.00 English Comedy Club
in Absurd Person Singular by Alan
Ayckbourn, (in English)

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00, www.capitolegent.be
MAR 3 20.00 Piaf, de musical, based on
the life of Edith Piaf (in Dutch)

Theater Tinnenpot

Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60,
www.tinnenpot.be
Until FEB 28 16.00 Mijnheer Papier
(Mister Paper) (in Dutch, ages 5 and
up)

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
FEB 25-28 20.00 Compagnie Cecilia,
Union Suspecte and Hetpaleis in
Broeders van Liefde (Brothers of
Charity) (in Dutch)

Heusden-Zolder

CC Muze
Dekenstraat 40; 011.80.80.89,
www.muze.be
FEB 26 20.15 Zoals de Dingen Gaan
(As Things Go) (in Dutch)

Leuven

30CC Minnepoort
Dirk Boutslaan 62; 016.23.84.27,
www.30cc.be
FEB 26 20.00 Op en top by Kamagurka
(comedy, in Dutch)

30CC Wagehuys

Brusselsestraat 63; 016.20.30.20
www.30CC.be
FEB 28 20.00 Datumloze dagen
(Dateless Days) (in Dutch)



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum
(MuHKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60,
www.muhka.be
Until MAR 27 Le[s] moi[s] de Lizène,
works by Liège artist Jacques Lizène
Until MAR 29 Lonely at the Top:
Klankeffecten # 5, works by Juan Pérez

Agirregoikoa

Until MAR 29 Insert the Passing of a
Perfect Day (Revisited), installations by
Katleen Vermeir

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 0484.42.10.70
Until MAR 8 Justine Frank: a
retrospective, work by the 20th-century
Jewish-Belgian Surrealist, who is the
alter ego of contemporary Israeli artist
Roe Rosen

Bruges

Arentshuis
Dijver 16; 050.44.87.11
Until SEP 27 The Museum of Museums
2009 by contemporary Flemish artist
Johan van Geluwe

Brussels

Algemeen Rijksarchief
Ruisbroekstraat 8; 02.513.76.80
Until FEB 28 1918: De kanonnen
zwijgen: opnieuw vrede? (The Canons
Are Still: Peace Again?), the aftermath
of the First World War in Belgium

Argos Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03,
www.argosarts.org
Until APR 11 Language Works: Video,
Audio and Poetry, works by Vito
Acconci
Until APR 11 I'm With You in
Rockland, video work by Karl
Holmqvist

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72,
www.atomium.be
Until MAY 24 Bi-Polar. From South to
North, scientific exhibition on current
research and expeditions in the Arctic
and the Antarctic

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80,
www.stripmuseum.be
Until MAR 8 The New Children's
Comic Strips, works by young comic
strip artists

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

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

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
Until MAR 15 Image/Construction 3
Cities, Brussels, Bruges and Liège seen
in monumental photographic montages
Until APR 19 Robbrecht & Daem:
Pacing through Architecture, works by
the Ghent-based architects
Until MAY 17 Monumental-size
installation by contemporary Italian
artist, Maurizio Cattelan (part of Turin
festival)
Until MAY 24 From Van Dyck to
Bellotto: Splendor at the Court of Savoy,
paintings from Turin's Galleria Sabauda,
with works by Flemish masters,
including Brueghel, Rubens and Van
Dyck (part of Turin festival)
Until JUNE 30 N.i.c.h.e. 360
architecten, scale models by Jan
Mannaers and Stéphane Beel

Czech Centre

Troonstraat 60; 02.213.94.30
Until MAR 6 The Life and Times
of Karel Capek, photographs and
documents on the Czech writer and
journalist (1890-1938)

De Elektriciteitscentrale European Centre for Contemporary Art

Sint Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.35
Until MAR 29 Moet elke wreedheid
wel gezegd? (Should Every Cruelty be
Said?), work by 102 artists on the theme
of Belgium today

Design Flanders

Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60
Until MAR 8 Austrian Design,
innovation and technology

Fondation pour l'Architecture

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80,
www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be
Until OCT 18 De tijd van de boetiek
(The Time of the Boutique), window
shopping from 1800 to today

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
Until APR 19 Robert Capa,
retrospective of the work of the Jewish-
Hungarian photo reporter (1913-1954)
and founder of the Magnum agency

Natural History Museum

Vautierstraat; 02.627.42.38
Until AUG 30 X-treme, surviving
in the most extreme climates and
environments

Royal Army Museum

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33
Until MAY 3 Tribute to Pierre de
Caters, first Belgian aviator, who flew
over Belgium 100 years ago

Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 1; 02.502.44.24
Until APR 5 Archeologie om de hoek
(Archeology around the corner), 20
years of archaeological finds in Brussels

Stadhuis

Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50
Until MAY 10 DeKadence: The
Bohemian Lands 1880-1914, paintings,
drawings, sculptures and photographs

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
Until MAR 31 That's Opera: 200 Years
of Italian Music, a look behind the
scenes at the making of an opera

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23
Until MAR 1 Large format paintings by
Dirk Skreber
Until MAR 1 Paintings by Albert
Saverys
Until MAR 1 Picture this!, drawings by
Benoît van Innis

Ghent

Dr Guislain Museum
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95,
www.museumdrguislain.be
Until APR 12 The Game of Madness:
On Lunacy in Film and Theatre,
representations of madness in films,
plays, paintings and contemporary art
Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij
Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30,
www.gent.be/spa
Until MAR 29 Flemish wall tapestries
from the 15th and 16th centuries

Witte Zaal

Posteernestraat 64; 09.267.96.77,
www.francekunstart.be
FEB 27-APR 4 Julian Lampens:
architectural projects pictured by Jan
Kempnaers
FEB 27-APR 4 Pieter Vanden Broecke:
graphic works

Leuven

Tweebronnen library
Rijschoolstraat 4; 016.22.65.22
Until APR 19 Ceci n'est pas la BD
flamande (This is Not the Flemish
Comic Strip), installation by 20
contemporary Flemish comic
illustrators and writers

Maaseik

Maaseik Museum
Lekkerstraat 5; 089.81.92.99
Until MAR 31 The Terracotta Army of
Xi'an: 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

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)
Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75,
www.speelgoedmuseum.be
Until MAR 31 Gils, Belgische saga van

de elektrische trein (Belgian Saga of the
Electric Train)
Until SEP 30 Cowboys and Indians

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11,
www.africamuseum.be
Until AUG 31 Omo: People &
Design, Hans Silvester's photographs
of southwestern Ethiopia's nomadic
tribes and objects from the museum's
collection

Waregem

Be Part
Westerlaan 17; 056.62.94.10
Until MAR 29 Steve Schepens: Horror
30, installations and videos



Carnival: Carnival celebrations around
the country, ranging from parades and
folkloric festivities to giant bonfires
02.504.03.90, www.toervl.be

Antwerp

Hobby Creatif Salon: Hobby fair
FEB 26-MAR 1 at Antwerp Expo, J Van
Rijswijklaan 191
03.260.81.22, www.hobbysalon.be

Tuinexpo: Garden fair

FEB 27-MAR 2 at Antwerp Expo, J Van
Rijswijklaan 191
03.260.81.22, www.tuinexpo.be

Borgerhout

Circo Roma: Modern-day circus week
MAR 6-14 at De Roma,
Turnhoutsebaan 286
03.292.97.40, www.deroma.be

Brussels

Anima 2009: International animation
festival featuring Japanese filmmaker
Hayao Miyazaki, a tribute to Fritz the
Cat creator Ralph Bakshi and festival
guest Bill Plympton
Until FEB 28 at Flagey, Heilig
Kruisplein
02.641.10.20, www.anima2009.eu

Ballon Day Parade: Procession to
mark the opening of Brussels 2009 BD
Comics Strip, with helium balloons
representing comic-strip characters and
other familiar faces
FEB 28 13.30 from South Station
through the city centre to North Station
www.brusselscomics.com

Bards in Brussels: Celebration of UK
poetry (in English, Gaelic and Welsh)
MAR 3 20.00 at Passa Porta, A
Dansaertstraat 46
02.226.04.54, www.passaporta.be

Batibouw: The city's renowned
international building, renovation and
decoration fair
FEB 28-MAR 8 at Brussels Expo,
Belgiëplein 1
02.474.89.81, www.batibouw.com

Disney on Ice: Princesses, ice-skating
show
MAR 4-8 at Vorst-Nationaal, Victor
Rousseaulaan 208
0900.00.991, www.vorstnationaal.be

Turin/Italian Spring: Multidisciplinary
festival showcasing the culture of the
Italian city Turin
FEB 20-MAY 24 at Bozar,
Ravensteinstraat 23
02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

Ghent

Flanders Horse Expo: Fair for riders,
breeders and horse lovers
FEB 27-MAR 1 at Flanders Expo,
Maaltekoeter 1
09.241.92.11,
www.flanders-horse-expo.be

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

SAFFINA RANA

Steph x

Dali's Bar, Brussels



The mood changes when
Steph x starts spinning the
decks. The air grows warm.
Bodies start to sway, ever so
slightly. People catch your
eye and smile. Sometimes
he begins with something
deep and funky, other times
quietly edgy and minimal.
He takes in house, elec-
tronica, rare groove and
nu-jazz, blending rippling
melodies with fat base lines.
If it doesn't give you a warm
uplifting feeling in the pit
of your stomach, consider
seeing your doctor.

I first found Steph x dj-ing
at Dali's on Korte Been-
houwersstraat in 1997. He
has opened clubs, produced
tracks and managed other
DJs but always returned to
the bar to kick back and let
rip. Dali's is tucked away at
the end of a narrow cobbled
alley near Grote Markt that
houses some of Brussels' more
touristy fish restaur-
ants. After midnight, the
only time to go, you may
have to dodge the restaura-
teurs throwing out their ice
mountains at the end of the
night.

There's not much to the bar,
except a quirky homage to
surrealist painter Salvador
Dali. The gathering of Belgi-
ans and expats is also unpre-
tentious. Nobody cares what
you wear or how you dance,
and conversations with
strangers come and go, espe-
cially if you are drinking the
speciality "shakers" – sweet
and luridly fluorescent cock-
tail shots.

Entrance to Dali's is free,
but remember to slip the
bouncers a euro or two for
their trouble when you leave.
Steph x will be spinning this
Saturday 28 February. ♦

➡ www.myspace.com/dalisbar

*Open: 22.00-05.00 Thurs-Sat
Best time to go... 01.00-03.00*

Kortrijk

Margarita Festival – Fresh #6:
Presentation of artists' works from
various disciplines, including film and
stage
FEB 27-MAR 1 at Buda
Kunstencentrum, Broelkaai 1b
056.22.10.01, www.budakortrijk.be



FACE OF FLANDERS

MARC MAES



Soulsister

1980s soul-pop duo makes a comeback

"It's interesting to see that, although the band name 'Soulsister' doesn't ring a bell today, once you start humming 'The Way to Your Heart', everybody knows the soul-influenced pop song, both in Belgium and abroad," says Jan Leyers, who launched Soulsister back in 1986 with Paul Michiels. "This makes me aware that we managed to get ourselves on the 'soundtrack of time' of the 1980s."

And the name Soulsister is indeed coming back, as the



duo has released a new album, *Closer*, and is playing Antwerp's Sportpaleis next month.

Soulsister, with a package of hit songs and albums, called it a day in 1995, when Leyers and Michiels decided to go their own ways. While Michiels pursued a solo career, Leyers (on the right in the photo) continued as a songwriter and composer. He co-wrote American country singer Aaron Tippin's number one Billboard hit "That's as Close as I'll Get to Loving You" and became a presenter on Flemish television. Today, together with

Nashville songsmith Michael Garvin, Leyers is preparing material for...the new Britney Spears album.

After a guest appearance during the 2007 Night of the Proms concerts in Antwerp and Germany (where Soulsister still enjoys great popularity), Leyers and Michiels decided to team up again for what was meant to be a one-off reunion concert. In March of last year, 34,000 fans showed up for three shows at the Sportpaleis.

"There were no plans, really, but what you get when you put two musicians in one room for six weeks [the Proms tour] is that they start playing and compos-

ing," explains Leyers. "The idea of putting out a new album grew organically." After the release of singles "Back in a minute" and "How many Waterfalls", Soulsister struck a deal with a national news group, which backed the release of the new album last October. "And

now we're looking at 80,000 copies that went over the counter," says Leyers. Tunes on *Closer* continues the duo's love-song format, with more country riffs than before.

The title of the album inspired the pair to stage the 6 March concert – to get "closer" to their audience. "The stage layout in the Lotto Arena enables us to look the audience straight in the eyes." Songs from *Closer*, like the new singles "All the Loving you Need" and "Forgiven", will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the string of hit singles such as "Through Before We Started", "Broken" and "Changes", songs that made Soulsister European pop stars of the 1980s and '90s.

It's the principle of WYSWYG, as Leyers puts it. "We offer the audience what

used to be obvious years ago and what has become a rarity now: good songs, a good band with some of the finest musicians around, good vocals without auto-tuning technology. The real thing." ♦

→ www.soulsister.be



TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



Vakantie →

Winter is beginning to drag a bit, so many minds are turning to the summer and holiday plans. What with the global bruising of recent months, the prospect of a holiday certainly lifts the spirits. I've just been glancing through the paper to see what's on offer. Let's start close to home. What about two weeks at the Belgian coast: *Knokke, zeer mooi appt* – very nice apartment, 2slpk – 2 bedrooms, sounds fine, *alle comf (wasmachine, droogkast)* – all comforts (washing machine, tumble dryer): sounds like home away from home, no thank you.

What about the Ardennes, perhaps a small hotel. Here's something near Saint Hubert: *sfeervol ingerichte herberg* – attractively furnished inn: that's more like it; *vlaamstalig* – Flemish speaking, which rather defeats the point of going to Wallonia.

Let's look north. Here's a holiday home in Vlissingen just over the border in the Netherlands: *achter de duinen gelegen* – situated behind the dunes; *U bent in vijftien minuten op het strand* – you are on the beach in 15 minutes; *ideaal als startpunt voor fietstochten* – ideal starting point for bike trips. Not bike trips, please.

Further afield, in Menton on the Med: *mooi luxe app*, which sounds fine, *zwembad* – swimming pool, now that's a must for my daughter; *niet vrij 1ste helft aug* – not free 1st half Aug, which is just when I'm on holiday; well, that knocks that idea on the head.

Here's an interesting one: *comfortabel vakantiehuis 2-6 pers, tussen wijngaarden en zonnebloemen* – comfortable holiday house, between vineyards and sunflowers. It makes me want to dig out our old easel, but first I need to check the location of Eauze.

And this? *Ardeche huis op boerderij met dieren* – house on a farm with animals, which sounds rustic enough; *12-14 pers* would mean getting some friends on board – that could be fun; *wijds uitzicht, zwembad, rust & wandelen* – broad views, "swimming pool ideal" rest and walking; does that mean there is a pool or not?

Here's one in Umbria: *landhuis met groot zwembad tot 16 pers* – country house with large swimming pool up to 16 people, *7 slaapk, 5 badk* – 7 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms, well that should reduce morning queues; *onvergetelijke ligging en uitzicht over lago* – unforgettable setting and view of the lake. Sounds good but a bit far off.

I seem to be getting nowhere, but, as I close the paper, I see on the back page: *Pakket "Cruise & Fly": steeds meer Belgen gaan op cruise* – ever more Belgians go on a cruise. Cruises suggest quoits and knee rugs. Am I ready for strolls on deck? Not quite. Perhaps I should leave holiday decisions for the spring. ♦

→ www.vlaanderen.be/rsv

The last word →→→

Celebrity culture

"I'm beginning gradually to understand why radical Muslims find us iniquitous: we are quite simply depraved."

Standaard columnist David Van Reybroek lamenting the press' obsession with celebrity trivia such as naked photos of Madonna



Judge criticised

"I could weep with anger. A verdict like this undermines public trust in our judges."

Mobility minister Kathleen Van Brempt, following the ruling by a judge in a fatal road accident that 160km/h was not speeding

State of the union

"Whether we like it or not, Flanders is on its way to becoming a state."

Olivier Maingain, chairman of the French-speaking party FDF