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INDEPENDENT NEWSWEEKLY

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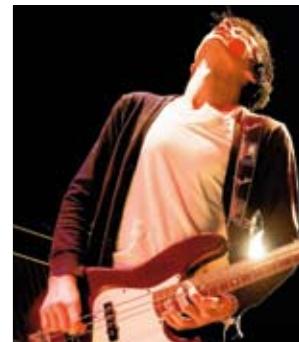
Fragile 7

The Female Entrepreneur of the Year is Natalie Vleeschouwer, who 20 years ago closed the wardrobe door on the "tent dresses and dungarees" of pregnancy clothes, carving a fashion niche that continues to grow



Rally around 8

Humo's Rock Rally has been ushering in the best Flemish rock and pop talent for three decades. Don't miss this year, when 10 eclectic bands vie for the title at the Ancienne Belgique



Far from game over 11

The Cellars of Cureghem are buzzing with the sound of 200 video games – all playable for the price of admission to the *Game On* exhibition, which does its part to educate players, as well as entertain them



#122

The thousand-year storm



storm

A super-storm could one day flood large areas of Flanders – unless something is done to hold back the sea

ALAN HOPE

At the Belgian coast on 1 February 1953, the combination of a rising spring tide and a storm depression causing south-westerly winds that later turned north-westerly led to sea levels two metres higher than normal for the time of the year.

Nearly five kilometres of sea dyke collapsed, and seawater flooded 500 hectares of polder land. According to conflicting reports, between 14 and 22 people died, the loss of livestock was huge and the economic toll considerable.

However, Flanders got off relatively lightly. The February storm was not meteorologically the worst of the year, although the duration and the amount of water involved made it the most damaging. Just up the coast in the Netherlands, 1,800 people lost their lives, and 100,000 lost their homes and possessions. A storm such as that is expected to happen about every 250 years.

► *continued on page 5*

Tunnel under Brussels?

Alternatives to ring road urgently sought

ALAN HOPE

A 15 kilometre-long tunnel under Brussels, stretching from the E40 Groot-Bijgaarden interchange to Sint-Stevens-Woluwe, is just one of the options being considered as an alternative to the enlargement of the Brussels Ring.

As anyone who uses it knows, the Brussels Ring road has reached, and sometimes exceeded, the limits of its capacity. The Flemish government has commissioned the Flemish Traffic Centre (VVC) to carry out a study, which has not been reticent in giving its imagination full rein. Some of the ideas being considered:

- widening the Ring between the E19 interchange at Machelen and the Sint-Stevens-Woluwe A3 interchange, up to a maximum width in some places of 17 lanes

- extending the road's capacity across the entire northern sector, from Groot-Bijgaarden to Sint-Stevens-Woluwe

- constructing a second, outer ring road from Aalst to Mechelen to Leuven for through traffic

- building a tunnel from the E40 at Sterrebeek and then completing the southern part of the Ring with a tunnel under the Zoniënwoud at the very edge of the Flemish Region

The options, together with the cross-Brussels tunnel, represent the full range of possibilities, from cautious to outlandish. But they are only – as everyone concerned likes to stress – food for discussion. All parties last weekend seemed to be united in considering the idea of a tunnel under Brussels as "nonsense".

• widening the Ring between the E19 interchange at Machelen and the Sint-Stevens-Woluwe A3 interchange, up to a maximum width in some places of 17 lanes

► *continued on page 3*

Say it with seeds

ALAN HOPE

This year's edition of the five-yearly *Floralien* botanical festival in Ghent will, as usual, coincide with a special issue of two postage stamps. For the first time, however, the stamps will be useful for something other than posting letters – each one will contain a single seed for planting.

The stamps will feature images of *Sieratabak* (*Nicotiana alata*, known in English as Jasmine tobacco) and *Prikneus* (*Silene coronaria*). The seeds given away are the latter, a member of the carnation family also known in English as Dusty Miller or Bloody William.

"The idea to spread seeds with stamps came from the Post Office," said *Floralien* director Paul Vandenbosch. "It goes without saying we went for it right away."

The stamps come in sheets of 10 – five of each plant – with the seeds encased at the bottom left-hand corner. The choice of seed depended on one main factor: the ability of the seed to go through the whole printing process, followed by a trip through the mail attached to an envelope or package.

Floralien took advice from seed experts, and *Prikneus* (*pictured*) came out the winner. Four million seeds were delivered, to be attached to 400,000 sheets of stamps. Each seed is held in place by a specially-developed gel which will not react with the seed.

Floralien runs from 17 to 25 April at Flanders Expo in Ghent.

► www.floralien.be





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FLANDERS TODAY

Independent Newsweekly



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Derek Blyth

News in brief

Professionals across Flanders have welcomed the decision by an Antwerp court to award €720 damages against a man who failed to show up for a dental appointment without cancelling. The patient had made appointments for four lengthy treatments but failed to show up for any of them. A spokesman for the Flemish Dentists' Union welcomed the ruling, joined by representatives of doctors, psychiatrists, veterinarians and the catering trade, all of whom suffer from clients who book and then fail to turn up – known in the trade as no-shows. "Previously we asked clients to call on the day to confirm their reservation. Now we do it ourselves – on Thursday we start calling the weekend clients to check," said Geert Van Hecke of De Karmeliet in Bruges, which, despite being one of the country's top restaurants, is plagued by no-shows.

Travel show charges tourist offices



The city of Gordes in Provence was one of the areas featured recently on the programme

Foreign tourist authorities in areas featured on the VRT travel show *Vlaanderen Vakantieland* (*Flanders Vacation Land*) were asked to pay €5,000 to €6,000 to be included in the programme, an investigation by *De Morgen* has revealed. Closer to home, the five provinces of Flanders, together with the umbrella organisation Tourisme Vlaanderen, paid around €450,000 between them every year to have their travel and holiday destinations featured on the programme, which reaches about one million viewers a week.

The office of tourism for Brussels and Wallonia, meanwhile, has a fund of €100,000 a year to meet the show's demands. The kind of "sponsorship" solicited by *Vlaanderen Vakantieland*, which sees its 20th anniversary this year, is the only financially responsible way to make a travel show, a VRT spokesperson said.

The news comes as Flemish broadcaster VRT announced plans to cut 279 jobs and shave 10% off programme budgets (5% for news and culture). Managing director Piet Van Roe last week assured unions the job losses would not be compulsory. About 90 people have already expressed a wish to leave, he said, and he was confident the numbers could be made up voluntarily.

Hardest hit will be entertainment shows, drama, children's programmes and sport. The day after the presentation of the savings plan to the board, the broadcaster announced it would not be bidding for the forthcoming new football rights contract – the VRT and its French-speaking equivalent RTBF together pay €8 million a year for the broadcast rights for first-class football.

Elsewhere last week, radio station MNM, also owned by the VRT, apologised for its handling of a special programme broadcast from the new Starbuck's coffee outlet in Antwerp central station. The radio station retained its editorial independence on such occasions, but the sponsor's name was mentioned too many times, the VRT admitted.

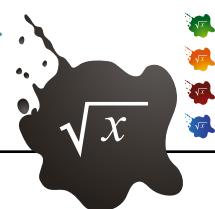
Two Flemish pianists are among three Belgians selected for the finals of this year's **Queen Elisabeth Music Competition**, which takes place in May. Stephanie Proot, 22, from Ghent and John Gevaert, 26, from Kampenhout will join fellow Belgian Nicolas Franco, 27, from Ciney in the month-long competition, which this year features a record number of contestants (21) from South Korea. In all, 83 international candidates will take part in the first round, which begins at the Brussels Conservatory on 3 May.

Organisations that administer performance royalties in Belgium are holding on to **€480 million** intended for musicians, according to Flemish member of parliament Bart Tommelein. The principal organisation, Sabam, has taken in €200 million from media and entertainment providers who pay to use recorded music, but still has to pay the money to the artists, Tommelein

said. Some royalty payments are not made until three years after money is taken in, but Sabam denied it was holding back the money in order to earn interest. There are another 27 organisations in Belgium performing a similar role.

The town of Knokke intends to be the first in the country to **welcome a six-star hotel**, mayor Leopold Lippens announced last week at a real-estate conference in Cannes. Knokke also plans to build 1,500-2,000 new hotel rooms in the next five years to make up for the loss of lodging houses that are closing and being replaced by apartment buildings. Knokke currently has eight four-star hotels, while the five-star La Réserve will reopen later this year. Lippens plans to add a six-star hotel with 350 rooms, as well as a second golf course, long considered impossible for environmental reasons. Several hotels claim to be six-star establishments, and three even claim seven stars, but the designations are self-awarded.

Four elderly **bicyclists** were killed last week when a tractor driver who claimed to have been blinded by the sun drove his vehicle into the group. The accident took place at Bocholt in Limburg. The group of 10 were cycling single file when the tractor approached from the rear. A woman and two men were killed instantly, and another woman died later from her injuries. Three others were injured.



Government weighs options of second Ring or congestion fees

continued from page 1

The original plan, announced at the end of 2008, was for a 17-lane Ring, intended to separate local traffic and through traffic. The other alternatives have now been added to the list for study.

One negative reaction came from Brussels Region. Although the Ring lies in Flemish territory, the impact on Brussels is huge, from traffic, noise and pollution. Brussels insisted on being consulted; according to the capital's transport and public works minister, Brigitte Grouwels, initial talks have already taken place, and further meetings are planned. One of the principal issues will be the integration of public transport and the increased capacity of the Ring.

Flemish mobility minister Hilde Crevits has made it clear she will be able to take the political decision "in good faith and conscience".

Traffic congestion is reckoned by the EU to cost business in Flanders about €1.9 billion a year in lost productivity. Along with infrastructure work involved in the eventual plan, the government will also be looking at other ways of reducing congestion, such as some sort of toll, car-pool parking facilities, the integration of public transport and improved signalling technology. The results of the study are expected to be complete by the summer. ♦



FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

No big bang

One thing the outside world finds hard to believe about Belgium is that it will not disappear soon. In 2007 and 2008, when tensions between the Flemish and the French speakers ran high, the foreign press descended upon Belgium, as it has done in the past, almost hoping for its end. It did not happen, again.

There is something funny about all of this. Even the most fervent of Flemish nationalists, like Bart De Wever, do not believe in the big-bang scenario. The ultimate goal of De Wever and his small but influential party N-VA may be the end of Belgium, but De Wever himself sees this happening in an "effervescent tablet scenario" – a slow diluting of the nation rather than a big explosion.

The false image of Belgium promulgated by the foreign press probably stems from the French speakers' fear that Flanders has a hidden agenda directed at dismantling Belgium. The truth is that, no matter how much French speakers' attitudes may get on their nerves, the majority of the Flemish do not want Belgium to disappear. Unlike the French speakers, however, they do not get all that passionate about it.

This image of a nation forever on the verge of imploding, flawed though it may be, is not what you need when you are in charge of the European presidency. How can you hope to find agreement between 27 member states if you cannot even hold together one country? This is one of the reasons why prime minister Yves Leterme organised a "ministerial super council" to which every minister from each of this country's six governments was invited.

The super council took place in the Egmont palace, normally reserved for large diplomatic meetings. There may be a metaphor in this somewhere, but the reason was also practical: the Egmont palace is large enough, and it forms the perfect setting for inviting the foreign press to see just how united we can be.

But there are dark clouds on the horizon. Behind the scenes, former prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene is working to find a solution to the divisive issue of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde. So far, nothing is known about this, but Dehaene has extended the original deadline of Easter (which led to *De Standaard* concluding that "Easter has been postponed this year"). Also, even outside the Egmont gates, ministers of the Flemish and federal governments quarreled.

Conclusion? Not all is well in this country. It never was, and it never will be. But don't expect a big bang any time soon.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



34

ambulances have been stolen since 2000, seven of them in 2006 but only two in 2008 and one in 2009. Over the same period, two fire engines and two police vehicles were also stolen

1 in 3

people over the age of 35 has trouble sleeping, according to the Belgian Association for Sleep Research and Medicine. Some 6% of 35 to 44-year-olds use sleeping pills, and 10% of the over-45s

50%

of all lamb sold in Belgian supermarkets is halal, according to a study by the university hospitals of Leuven and Brussels. Most of the meat comes from New Zealand, where almost all slaughtering is done according to halal rules since the country's main market is the Middle East

€10.5 million

cost of an "ecoduct" across the E19 motorway in Wuustwezel, which allows animals to cross the road safely. The ecoduct, named De Munt, is the third such project in Flanders, following crossings on the N25 at Bierbeek and the E314 at Maasmechelen

81.5%

of people in Flanders no longer trust politicians. Minister-president Kris Peeters is the most popular politician among those who do trust them, with 29% of the vote

Troops invade streets of Ostend

Soldiers of the First Regiment of Mounted Hunters and Scouts were last week deployed in the streets of Ostend in preparation to confront the threat of the Taliban. The regiment, from Leopoldsburg in Limburg and Lombardsijde on the Flemish coast, will travel to Afghanistan at the end of June to take over duties guarding Kabul airport until October.

Last week the people of Ostend, who have seen their share of hostilities over the centuries, were treated to the sight of the regiment exercising in the streets of the port town. "It is of crucial importance that we exercise beforehand in an urban environment, where daily life goes on around us," explained Lt Col Bart Huybrechts, the regiment's commanding officer (who was born in Ostend). "My troops need to be able to react to unforeseen obstacles with an absolute minimum of force. We are not Americans. We have to act with the necessary respect for the local people and culture, rather than just shooting willy-nilly at the people around us." ♦



Belgian troops on a previous tour in Afghanistan

Tough week in sport: out of running for Europa and boxing title

LEO CENDROWICZ

Anderlecht put four goals past German Bundesliga club Hamburg SV last week, but still failed to reach the quarter-finals of the Europa League after an epic football match in Astridpark. Their 4-3 victory at the Constant Vanden Stockstadion was not enough to overturn the 3-1 first leg defeat to the Germans, and Anderlecht crashed out 6-5 on aggregate.

But the game itself was an up-and-down affair: despite trailing 1-0 just before the break, Anderlecht replied twice within three minutes and at one point were 4-2 up – just a goal away from an overall lead. Hamburg will now play the only surviving

Belgian team in the competition, Standard Liège.

Meanwhile, closer to home, Flemish boxing hope Osei Bonsu "Sugar" Jackson was knocked out in the first round of his IBF welterweight title eliminator at Antwerp's Lotto Arena last Friday by former WBO light-welterweight champion Randall Bailey. It only took a minute for the American Bailey to display his much-feared punch, knocking Jackson to the floor with a left hook. Jackson clambered back into the fray but was soon down again after a huge left hand to the head. The referee quickly halted the action, ending Jackson's dreams of getting his shot at the world title. ♦

Victims of Limburg gunman buried

Almost 1,000 people, including many police officers, attended the funeral last weekend of Eddy Strijckers, the 55-year-old officer shot dead by a gunman in Bilzen two weeks ago. Houben was himself killed in police return fire. The funeral in Tongeren was also attended by interior minister Annemie Turtelboom, Flemish government minister Ingrid Lieten (representing an injured Kris Peeters), and health minister Jo Vandeurzen, a native of Limburg. "This is a dark day for the police, not only in Eddy's division, but across the country," said local police chief Tony Verlackt.

The investigation has revealed that Houben's 15-year-old son Cederic, whose body was found at home in Riemst after the fatal shootout, had in fact been murdered by his father the previous evening. Cederic was also buried at the weekend, in Kotem near Maasmechelen. The ceremony was attended by a large number of fellow members of the Standard Liège supporters' club, the Red Bull-Dogs. ♦

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FLANDERS TODAY

We want to hear from you!

Since its launch in October 2007, Flanders Today has seen a spectacular increase in the number of readers and subscribers and now has a **weekly circulation of 24,000 copies**.

We regularly receive feedback and comments from our readers, but we would like to know more about you and gather information on your needs and expectations regarding *Flanders Today*. We would also like to know your level of satisfaction with the newspaper, along with its e-newsletter and website.

Your opinion really matters and helps us to shape the content. So please go to www.flanderstoday.eu/survey to fill out the readership survey. This should take no more than 10 minutes and will help us to make Flanders Today an even better newspaper.

If you complete the survey, you can also participate in a competition for the chance to **win one of three vouchers of Vlaanderen Vakantieland** (worth €100 each), **one of five yearly subscriptions to Brussels Unlimited and The Bulletin** (worth €85 each) or **one of 10 Bongo gift boxes** (worth €25 each).

Thank you and good luck!

Lisa Bradshaw
Deputy Editor

Derek Blyth
Editor-in-chief

www.flanderstoday.eu/survey



The thousand-year storm

One-third of the Flemish coastline is not adequately protected against heavy storms

→ *continued from page 1*

Right now, the Agency for Maritime and Coastal Services is preparing for a 1,000-year-storm. "It will come one day," says Tina Mertens, an engineer employed by the agency. "It could be next winter. And our coastline has to be able to withstand it."

The 1,000-year storm – the so-called super-storm – would feature five-metre-high waves and the raising of the sea level by seven metres. The agency calculates that the hinterland would flood as far as Bruges and Diksmuide.

In parts of the Flemish coast, the polders – where the land is lower than sea level – extend as far as 20 kilometres inland. The area also represents various interests – agricultural, recreational and environmental – which all have to be balanced when decisions are made on the use of the land. If the current circumstances were to continue, the super-storm would cause an estimated €3 billion in damage, with as many as 4,000 casualties.

What can we do?

The Integrated Coastal Safety Plan is a series of measures guarding against the danger of a super-storm to be taken between now and 2050. The plan has been compared to the Deltaworks constructed along the Dutch coast after 1953, including the Oosterschelde barrier closing off the eastern arm of the Scheldt between Noord Beveland and Schouwen-Duiveland.

The Flemish plan will not include anything as spectacular, however, and will cost upwards of €300 million. The Oosterschelde barrier cost €2.5 billion, but then Flanders only has 67 km of coastline to protect.

The plan is based on a study that split the coastline into 255 strips, each about 300 metres wide. For each strip, a comprehensive risk analysis was made: how would this stretch of coast stand up to a super-storm?

"A good third of our coast is inadequately protected against a really heavy storm," Mertens says. At some points, where the dyke is built-up, there is a risk of massive waves sweeping away sand and reaching the dyke itself, bringing down apartment buildings in the worst case scenario. In other parts, by the harbours of Zeebrugge, Blankenberge, Nieuwpoort and Ostend, sea-walls are relatively low and higher water could easily rush over them. It's already a regular occurrence in winter for the sea to reach the level of the wall and even to slip over.

The Zeedijk in Wenduine is reckoned to be the single weakest spot on the entire coastline because it juts out into the sea like the prow of a ship. Locals call it the Rotonde, and every year it's reinforced with new sand, which washes away almost as fast as it can be deposited.

The Plan evaluates the problems in each of the 255 strips and offers possible remedies. Then it's up to the Flemish government, in cooperation with the municipalities along



Tonnes of sand are pumped onto the beach at De Haan to shore up defences

the coast, to decide what can and must be done. Sometimes only one option is open; other times a number of options have to be weighed according to the different interests.

Sea-wall

The ideal solution would be to build a wall the length of the coast to keep the sea out. That's not likely to happen, however, because it wouldn't be cost-effective. The agency stresses that one-third of the coast is inadequately protected.

There are parts of the coast where raised sea walls offer a solution, but the coast municipalities are opposed, since even a one-metre wall can be enough to ruin the outlook from a house or apartment whose main selling point is its sea view.

Closing harbours

Ostend will soon see the effects of new harbour developments, with the construction of two sea dams in the approach to the harbour – the East Dam and West Dam. Essentially two long sea walls, the dams will reduce the impact of waves

in the harbour and provide an easier and faster passage for ships entering and leaving Ostend.

They will also slightly re-orient the harbour in a northerly direction, almost perpendicular to the coastline. In the event of a storm, the dams would absorb much of the impact of the sea at some distance offshore.

The centre of town, however, to the east of the harbour, remains a weak spot. The first measure to tackle that problem will be a reinforcement of the dyke at the Zeeheldenplein, a monumental square facing out to sea where the town meets the docks. That work will go ahead as soon as possible, without waiting for reactions to the integrated plan.

"The question of coastal safety is extremely important, but people still have to be able to live, work and enjoy themselves," said mobility

and public works minister Hilde Crevits when she visited Ostend in October last year. "I'm pleased to note that things are working well here: besides the work on safety, there is also attention being paid to the maintenance of the heritage value of the Zeeheldenplein, and the tourist-recreation possibilities of the site are being increased."

Harbours are a particular weak point in coastal protection, with heightening of quay walls required in Nieuwpoort, Blankenberge, Zeebrugge and the rest of Ostend.

Shoring up the beach

One way to make the dykes and dunes less vulnerable to damage from the sea is to make the beach broader. That would be accomplished, Mertens explains, by bringing in sand and raising the level of the beach. The high-water mark is then pushed further from the dykes or dunes, and the beach itself takes more of the impact of normal waves and storms.

Every year the coast receives about 500,000 cubic metres of imported sand – about 200 Olympic-sized swimming pools of the stuff – for shoring up, tackling erosion and other emergency measures. To extend beaches would require at least three times as much again. The problem with such huge amounts of sand is the source: the kind of sand needed comes from protected areas, and supplies are not infinite. The option of extending the beach is also not popular with the coastal communes because it would attract more tourists to the beach itself, and tourists largely don't eat and drink at the restaurants and bars lining the seafront.

Extending the sea dyke

Bringing the dyke closer to the sea is an option the tourist industry is more likely to support, since a larger sea dyke allows more room for café terraces. But the question of sea view can also arise: some dykes, such as the one at Wenduine, are currently so low they virtually serve no purpose, and if they were to be reinforced they would also need to be raised.

Protecting the dunes

The nature protection agency Natuurpunt has called for the Coastal Plan to take more account of the needs of nature in coastal areas. One important factor here is sand dunes, which not only provide natural protection against the sea but also represent an important habitat for animals, birds and plants. At some points on the Belgian coast – Oostduinkerke, Knokke and Blankenberge, for example – grass barriers have been planted to help retain dune sand. ♦



The planting of "beach hedges" of tough grasses on the dunes helps retain sand and protect against erosion

→ www.afdelingkust.be

Precious little

Nanotechnologies are a buzzword, but they're not about wacky inventions in a distant future

TANIA RABESANDRATANA

Nanosciences explore the realm of the very, very small. In Greek, *nano* means dwarf: a nanometre is 80,000 times thinner than a human hair – the scale of a molecule. Nanotechnology is an umbrella term: it comprises a large number of areas and potential applications for food, health, energy supply and more. However diverse nanotechnologies are, they share one vision: elucidating and using the finer properties of matter at the nano-scale. Before the late 1990s, scientists weren't always able to fully comprehend, modify or build structures at the nano-level. Now, our understanding of the intimate structure of matter has grown wider and deeper; nanotechnological development wants to make the most of this whole new world of knowledge.

Nanotech around your neck

Chris Van Hoof is head of the "Human++ Programme" at the IMEC research centre in Leuven; his team develops nano-solutions for human health. "Our population is ageing, and the costs of health care are rising," he explains.

So nano-enthusiasts hope that miniaturising electronic circuits would allow for much smaller devices able to perform precise, cheap, fast, personalised diagnosis and monitoring – essentially, a "lab on a chip". Instead of going in person to the medical lab and then wait for the analysis results, doctors could test patients for many parameters in one go with a single, small device.

For instance, Van Hoof is proud of IMEC's Electro-CardioGramm (ECG) necklace, a palm-sized, pebble-shaped device that you can wear around your neck while you work, shop, do the dishes or play chess (or tennis, pictured). Typically, if you need to monitor your heartbeat, you go to the hospital. There, the cardiologist uses a bulky machine linked to electrodes taped to your chest. The machine measures your heartbeat, and you go home with a snapshot on a sheet of paper.

Instead, the ECG necklace measures your heartbeat data over a longer period of time and then stores the data or sends them to your doctor via your cell phone. It is obviously more comfortable, and hopefully more complete and reliable than a classical ECG recording.

"We even tested the necklace successfully on patients while they were jogging," Van Hoof recalls. The rechargeable mini battery requires little energy, and since there are no signals going into the body, the device should be safe. Van Hoof expects that the ECG necklace will be on the market in about three years – with a €50 price tag. IMEC is also developing a disposable version, which the researcher hopes would be recyclable or bio-degradable.

Nanoethics

Nanotechnologies bring about many questions and challenges. How can we define and combine sensible caution and safe development?

Some researchers argue that nanotechnologies have already been with us for some time. Van Hoof says that

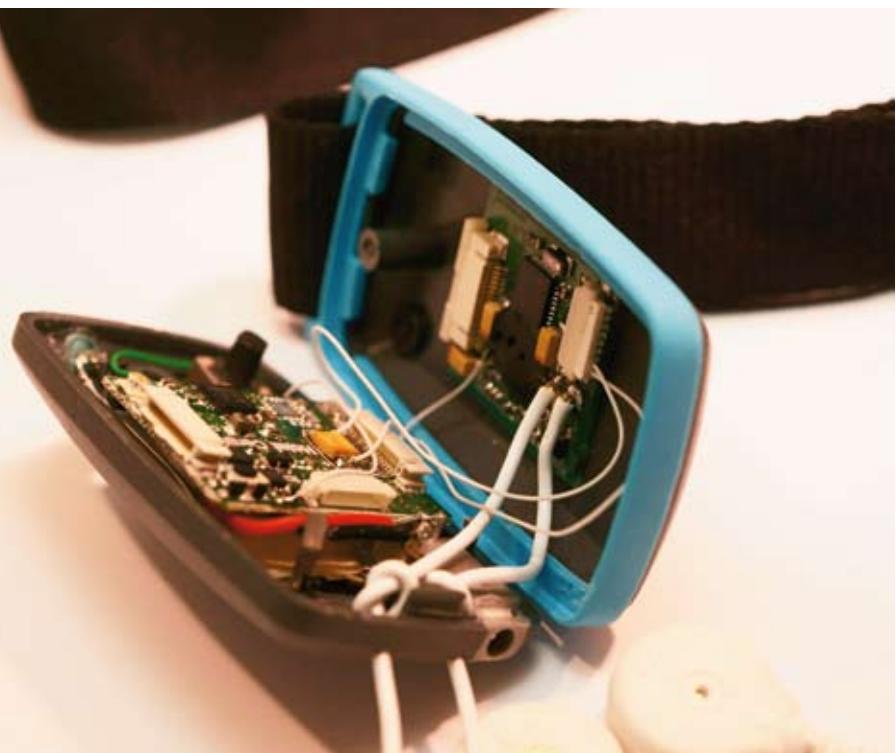
some drugs already use nano-particles, while more mundane processes, such as our bathroom soap, also work at the nano-level. "Size itself is not an issue," the researcher explains. On the other hand, nanoscientists and industrialists mostly rely on a discourse of novelty and progress – one that comes with legitimate excitement and anxiety. "There is nothing worrisome in using benign materials that interact with the human body," says Van Hoof. However, he agrees that "we have to be careful in selecting those materials."

The researcher thinks that public bodies such as the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provide adequate, strict approval procedures. "Regulation is a very good thing, and medical companies are well aware that they have to be careful."

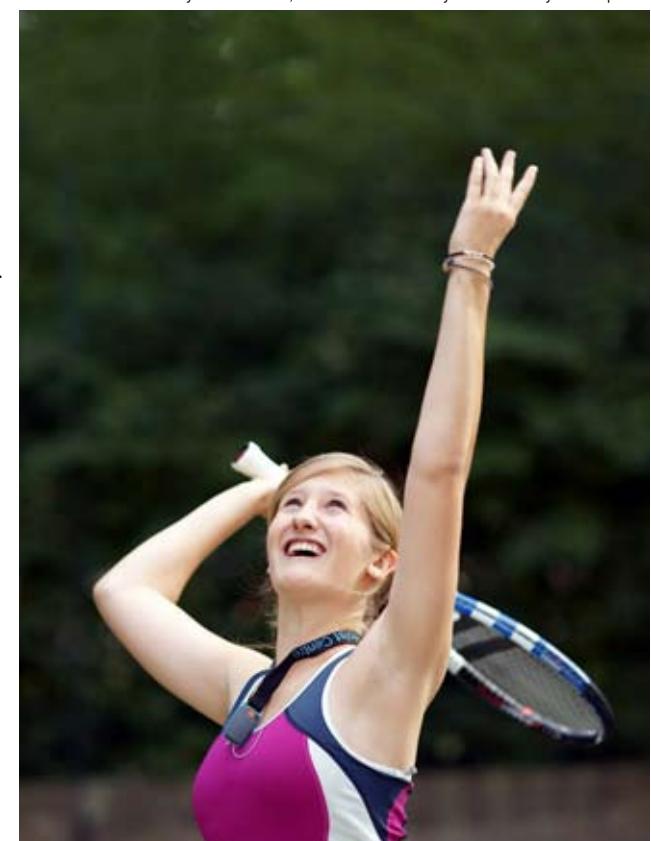
Phil Macnaghten, Professor at the University of Durham, led the three-year, EU-funded DEEPEN project (Deepening Ethical Engagement and Participation with Emerging Nanotechnologies). He believes that, more than formal, top-down regulation, a wider governance framework should integrate ethical thinking right into scientific practice. This could help create a positive foundation for responsible development that truly benefits most – if not all. "If and when we get advances, they are likely to be at the top-end of the market," Macnaghten says.

Nanotechnologies are supposed to help make the world a cheaper, faster, more comfortable place. But Macnaghten calls for caution: "We can't accept the promises at face value," he says, referring also to the earlier debate around Genetically Modified (GM) food development. "GM crops manufacturers often argued that their products would benefit third-world countries, but did GM organisms really benefit consumers or poor farmers?"

There are many important questions, and no simple answers. Nanotechnologies are already with us and will certainly remain with us for many decades to come, so we might as well embrace that complexity now. *



IMEC's ECG necklace measures and stores information on your heart beat, which can be sent to your doctor on your cell phone



To find out more about DEEPEN and to download the project's final report (Reconfiguring Responsibility), visit: www.geography.dur.ac.uk/Projects/deepen



Neutral in Leuven

Leuven is home to the headquarters of IMEC (Interuniversity MicroElectronics Center), one of the largest research institutes in nanoelectronics worldwide. It was founded in 1984, when nanotechnology wasn't even a word yet, with a grant from the Flemish Region.

Around 1991, the institute took a big strategic turn that boosted its growth. Instead of working with one industrial partner, it invited several competitors faced with similar challenges to work together. IMEC acts as neutral ground, while private companies share the risk and costs – and hopefully also the fruits of research and development. As researcher Chris Van Hoof explains, it is a fine balance of open innovation and technological exclusivity: private companies find common answers and solutions but then "develop their own products and find their specificity further down the development line."

IMEC has offices in the Netherlands, Taiwan, the United States, China and Japan and currently employs over 1,650 people. It also teams up with university researchers, including some from the Catholic University of Leuven. Its 2008 revenue amounted to €270 million.

→ www.imec.be

Fragile is Entrepreneur of the Year

Natalie Vleeschouwer reinvented the landscape of fashion for pregnant women

ALAN HOPE

Natalie Vleeschouwer, founder of Fragile, the fashion label for pregnant women, has been named Female Entrepreneur of the Year by mabizz, a joint venture between markant, the women's business network and Unizo, the organisation for the self-employed.

Vleeschouwer (*pictured*) started studying at the famed fashion department of the Antwerp arts academy, but soon discovered that she was, she says, a little too straight-laced to make the best of the experience. From there, she went to night classes in pattern making, where she was given some freelance work making patterns for maternity clothing. "I had a look around to see what was on the market, and I was in shock. Pregnancy fashion was usually stuck away in the basement of the shop. I never handed those patterns in. I used them to start my own business."

Fragile started 20 years ago in a single shop in Antwerp selling hand-made clothing for pregnant women. Vleeschouwer was only 22, and the financing came from New Year money given to her by her grandmother and saved up over the years. According to her website, her aim was to provide "practical fashion which would make the pregnant woman beautiful and sensual. The round belly and the full bosom, the acme of femininity, had to be emphasised. With this, Fragile dissociated itself from the tent dresses and dungarees that dominated the limited pregnancy clothing supply".

Since those modest beginnings, Fragile has gone on to open 25 sales points in Belgium, including two name stores (in Antwerp and Lier), a shop in the Hague and a shop-in-shop in Tokyo, as well as outlets in Korea, Jordan, the US, France and eight other European countries.

• Women entrepreneurs want to be able to keep track of their businesses as closely as possible after their pregnancy, according to a survey of 791 business women carried out by mabizz. About 5,000 business owners give birth every year in Belgium, and 93% of them would be in favour of part-time maternity leave. At present, self-employed women are allowed eight weeks of maternity leave divided into three weeks for the birth, and the other five weeks at a time of their choosing within the first six months. The women themselves would like to organise the eight weeks to suit their businesses – for example taking two days off a week. ♦ ➤ www.fragile.be



Thousands of trains to be cancelled

Rail travellers were last week warned to steel themselves: in order to carry out the necessary improvements to safety, the rail authority NMBS will have to withdraw as many as 16,000 trains from service over the next three years. "Exceptional measures require exceptional means," the NMBS said.

The works involve the installation of the automatic braking system TBL1+, the absence of which was one of the factors in the Buizingen rail crash in February that killed 18 people. The crash was caused when a train passed a red signal and collided head-on with an oncoming train, something that will be technically impossible after the braking system is fitted. During the inquest that followed the Buizingen crash, it was admitted that, despite pledges to install the safety system following the last major accident (at Pecrot in 2001, when eight people died), only 25% of tracks and 1% of trains have been brought up to date.

"Safety is our priority, even if rail users have to put up with some inconvenience," said Inge Vervotte, the federal minister for government enterprises last week, announcing the plans together with Marc Descheemaeker, the head of the NMBS,

and Luc Lallemand, head of infrastructure agency Infrabel.

Over the three-year period 2010-2012, a total of 16,000 trains will be cancelled, or 14 trains a day out of an average of 4,000 a day. By the end of 2012, the TBL1+ system will have been fitted to 87% of the tracks on the network, including all of the most dangerous points. Trains, meanwhile, will be fitted with the system by the end of 2013.

The new work schedule will need additional staff, and the NMBS has 230 vacancies for technical and engineering jobs. For the TBL1+ installations, 47 staff will need to be hired by 1 May. Former workers who took early retirement are to be invited to return to work for a period. The works will also require paid overtime working by existing staff, Infrabel said.

The cost over the three-year period is €104 million, part of a safety budget of €175m, also announced last week. Rolling stock renovation and the fitting of an interim safety system called Memor will cost €59.4m, while the NMBS' own mobile phone technology, GSM-R, used for digital communications, will be extended to the entire network, at a cost of €11.5m. ♦

Limburg chef turns in his stars

One of Flanders' top chefs will close his restaurant for 18 months before reopening as a hotel. Christian Denis of the Clos St Denis in Vliermaal, Limburg province, won his second Michelin star 16 years ago and runs the busy restaurant with his wife and family – one daughter is in the front of the house, a second daughter is a pastry chef, and a son-in-law is a sommelier.

"I wrote a letter to the Michelin Guide to thank them for the trust they showed in me and to let them know they could drop my restaurant from the new guide. It wasn't easy. You don't just turn your back on something you fought for your whole life – first to win the stars, then to hold on to them."

The fine-dining restaurant will be integrated into an entertainment complex, featuring a hotel, rest home, swimming pool, brasserie and a park. Denis, 63, will hand over the whole complex to his daughter, Veronique. "I'll miss it, but I promised my wife," he explained. ♦ ➤ www.closstdenis.com



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • KBC

KBL, the private banking affiliate of Flanders' largest bank KBC, has attracted bids from several leading financial institutions. The short list of candidates include the US-based KKR venture capital fund, the Swiss Julius Baer group, the Italian Agnelli holding company, the Brazilian Safra bank and the Indian Hinduja investment fund. Meanwhile, KBC is regrouping its Ghent banking and insurance activities in the planned 27-storey MG Tower, which will be Flanders' tallest building.

Construction • Besix

Besix, the Brussels-based construction group, will build a €940 million hospital in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. The 375-room facility, expected to open in 2013, will be the area's most prestigious health-care facility and will include royal suites. Besix and its affiliate Six Construct have previous experience in the region as a leading participant in the building of the recently inaugurated, 800-metre high Dubai tower.

Energy • Elia

Elia, the country's electricity grid operator, will pay €500 million to Sweden's Vattenfall for a 60% share in 50Hertz Transmission, Germany's fourth-largest electricity supplier. The move pushes Elia to fifth position among Europe's electricity distributors and provides the Brussels-based firm with extensive expertise in renewable energy supplies.

Metals • Nyrstar

Nyrstar, the Flemish zinc and non-ferrous metals company, has again seen its efforts to acquire Australia's CBH Resources mining company rejected, despite increasing its earlier offer by 44% to €190 million. The Japanese Toho Zinc group, already CBH's largest shareholder, has thwarted the move with a higher bid of its own.

Retail • Factory Outlet

Ghent has agreed to plans to open the Factory Outlet Centre – the country's fourth discount shopping centre – in 2014. Located near Flanders Expo, the new retail outlet is expected to provide up to 500 jobs.

Supermarkets • Delhaize

Delhaize, the country's largest supermarket chain, has plans to open up to 30 additional outlets locally and 120 worldwide this year. Some of the new stores are to be developed under the Red Market discount brand. The company is also seeking to gain total ownership of the 216-store Greek affiliate Alfa Beta, of which it already owns more than 90% of shares.

Hail the Rock Rally

This Sunday, 10 bands compete to win *Humo*'s annual rock contest, a glory that will lead to eternal fame



And the winner is...

More than 1,000 bands and solo artists wanted to participate in this year's Rock Rally. After a preliminary demo selection, 10 first-round shows and two semi-finals played out in concerts across Flanders over the last few months, the winner will finally be chosen from these 10 finalists. We've placed our bets, although there's only one certainty: when the president of the jury announces the winner, someone in the audience will slosh the president with beer. Ah, tradition.

Amatorski

Fragile Ghent foursome whose songs sometimes contain sudden noisy eruptions. Nicely intertwined male and female vocals, and, for a Rock Rally finalist at least, some unusual instruments, like a vibraphone. Singer Inne Eysermans sometimes sounds like a Björk-clone. But with a name like that, we doubt she hails from Iceland.

Think: mún, Pram, lilies in the field

Will win: because they attain a beauty too rarely heard in this country

Won't win: too arty for the jury's taste



Gloria

Ghent girl with Ghanaian roots. She raps and sings, striving for a warm blend of R&B and hip-hop, and is always radiating a positive vibe. Hopefully she'll evolve to lyrics a bit more original than "The stage is my place, put your hands up". Two hands are too much, but a thumb she can get.

Think: Alicia Keys, Michael Franti, morning calisthenics.

Will win: the jury wants to make a statement: R&B lives!

Won't win: it's already a small miracle she's in the final of the Rock Rally.



Maya's Moving Castle

Ghent reigns in this Rock Rally, but the third band from Flanders' new rock capital is the lightest. This foursome has some nice, intimate songs with a mourning cello, but mostly they prefer to play some pumped up '80s wave, enforced by tacky synths.

Think: The Cure, The Cranberries, efficient lullabies

Will win: are you kidding?

Won't win: the new wave revival is really, really over



The Crackups

"The Bitch Is Back" and "A Girl Is Only Good to Fuck". You think The Crackups are a bling-bling hip-hop posse from LA? Think again. They are an exploding punk outfit from the deepest inlands of the Kempen hamlets with names like Pule and Oevel. With three songs of barely two minutes, this will be the shortest gig of the final.

Think: Iggy Pop, The Bronx, a war plane taking off

Will win: because they are the underdog

Won't win: after The Van Jets, The Hickey Underworld and Steak Number Eight, another LOUD rocking winner would be too much.



The Mojo Filters

Straightforward rock outfit from Beerse with a nice sense of melody, catchy guitar hooks and fronted by a charismatic singer. Good songs too. There's only one problem: you've heard it all before, and much better.

Think: Arctic Monkeys, Kings of Leon, a joyride on an empty highway

Will win: complicated times ask for uncomplicated music

Won't win: lacks even the slightest drop of originality



It seems like every Flemish province – or, even worse, every city – has a contest for rock artists these days. But you can't beat the real thing: this weekend 10 bands will try to win the Rock Rally, the biannual competition organised since 1978 by the popular independent weekly *Humo*. It's still by far the most influential rock and pop contest in Belgium.

Mintzkov, The Van Jets and The Hickey Underworld have won the Rock Rally in recent years, but the contest also engendered bands like Admiral Freebee, Zornik and The Black Box Revelation. Famous winners from the past include Elisa Waut and Novastar. And, yes, dEUS played the final in '92, but singer Tom Barman (see article, facing page) will be the first to admit they didn't play their best that day, so they didn't even make it to the top three.

Clearly, you don't have to participate in the Rock Rally to have a successful career; Hooverphonic and Soulwax are living proof. But it does help. Particularly in the last decade, the Rock Rally has either launched careers or at least recognised the careers that were going to take off. Probably closer to the former: *Humo* is always very supportive of their finalists, and there is a huge amount of attention in the media and the clubs generated by the Rock Rally. Still, even a Rock Rally jury can be wrong. The Peter Pan Band, anyone?

Of course, the jury can't be blamed if there aren't enough good candidates. From the 2002 final, only Soon and the winning band, Goose, have made a lasting impression. But half of the bands from the 2000 and 2004 finals went on to successful careers. In Belgium, that is, because a good result in the Rock Rally is no free ticket for an international career. It gives a confidence boost, for sure, but they still have to start from scratch if they want to make it in France or Germany.

And what to think of Gaëtan Vandewoude, whose band Isbells is set to become Flanders' new success story? Four times in a row, from 1996 to 2002, he played in a band selected for the Rock Rally. One of them, Soon, reached the final. But he never liked participating. So with Isbells, which is really *his* band, he decided against it. Still, their future looks bright.

So in the end, *Humo*'s Rock Rally may not make or break a career in the long run. But it's still the grand old dame of Belgian rock contests.♦

28 March, from 15.00

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110
Brussels

→ www.abconcerts.be

Nele Van den Broeck

Nele Van den Broeck is the odd one out in this final. This folky singer-songwriter with a ukulele has an album in the making, which might actually be a disadvantage: does she need a victory? Four years ago, Absynthe Minded was in a similar situation and didn't win, either.

Think: Kimya Dawson, Noah and the Whale, spring is in the air

Will win: she's fantastic

Won't win: the jury doesn't want to be mistaken for sissies – a ukulele for goodness' sake!



Psycho 44

More loud noise from the Kempen: Psycho 44 lives up to its name with dangerously overstrung, dirty-ass rock 'n' roll. Nice touch: they combine it with catchy melodies. (But they should get rid of that irritating synthesizer.)

Think: The Brandos with a synth, The Sonics with a synth, a trench during the First World War

Will win: carrying on a tradition of past Rock Rallies

Won't win: the jury is afraid of them



School Is Cool

The times are really a-changin' if you can call your band, in all earnestness, School Is Cool. But the name suits their looks, indeed: this bunch is playing happy-go-lucky pop songs with a very slight melancholic twist. All together now: "Monday back to school / Life is boring without rules".

Think: The Arcade Fire, The Byrds, that carefree summer holiday when you were 10

Will win: they cover The Beatles without sounding derivative. *Chapeau*, as they say in Flanders.

Won't win: blame it on the name



The Sore Losers

Hasselt foursome that play a sort of southern rock, with heavy riffs and vocal harmonies. Yes, they sound like competent players and originality clearly isn't their main concern, but still: could it sparkle a bit more, please?

Think: Lynyrd Skynyrd, Crosby, Stills & Nash (but no Young), lumberjack shirts

Will win: jury thinks lumberjack shirts are hip again

Won't win: the guitar solos prevail over the songs



Willow

More neo-new wave, but less imitative than Maya's Moving Castle: six guys from Grimbergen who bring jumpy pop songs, with a singer who's listened to a bit too much Joy Division. And who is, let's stay polite, quite creative in his pronunciation of English.

Think: New Order, Interpol, kitchen sink drama

Will win: maybe the new wave revival isn't over after all

Won't win: no, but seriously, it is



FILM REVIEW

Soul searching • Tom Barman goes under the microscope for this intimate biopic

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Tom Barman is back in the cinema! No, not with the long-awaited follow-up to his excellent movie debut *Any Way the Wind Blows* (2003), but as the subject of the documentary *Tempo of a Restless Soul*.

Barman, 38, is the front man for dEUS, one of Belgium's most popular rock bands and certainly the most highly praised of the past decade and a half.

Tempo of a Restless Soul – the title is a quote from the dEUS song "Slow" – is a documentary by Manu Riche and Renaat Lambeets. The latter is a famous Flemish director of photography and cameraman, the former has a solid reputation as a documentary director.

Riche and Lambeets followed Barman between 2005 and 2009, amassing more than 100 hours of material out of which they distilled this 75-minute film. They shot during dEUS' concert at the legendary L'Olympia in Paris and at the 0110 fundraise-

ing event in 2006, but also in more private places: backstage, when Barman is analysing, in a dead cold atmosphere, a gig that didn't go well; when the singer is just out of bed in his flat or together with his mother, who's always shied away from the press.

But the most remarkable moment in the film actually focuses on bass player Alan Gevaert. When he shows up at a rehearsal completely spaced out, we see Barman and dEUS' manager Christian Pierre – the two have worked together hand in glove for almost two decades – searching for a place for Gevaert in a drug rehabilitation centre. The scene sparked some controversy when the movie screened at the Ghent Film Festival last year, and one does indeed wonder what it adds to a portrait of Barman and if it was only added to spice up the film.

Tempo is filmed according to the fly on the wall-principle that Riche uses in most of his work: no direct interviews, no off-screen

narration – just a camera registering the action and the conversations. In the past, that has resulted in revealing portraits of former top politician Steve Stevaert and of Paul Dujardin, general director of the Brussels art temple Bozar.

Lambeets worked with Barman on *Any Way the Wind Blows*, and the two are friends. His collaboration here probably made it possible for Riche to film scenes he wouldn't otherwise have been allowed to, getting snug into Barman's world.

But *Tempo* also shows the limitations of the approach. Fly-on-the-wall can be interesting if you're portraying someone who's not very open or expressive in interviews, but Barman is. Extremely so even, so a 30-minute interview with Barman would teach you much more about what makes the man tick than this documentary.

For fans of Barman, though, this might be an interesting addendum to what they've

"I know Luc as a great guy who wears his heart on his sleeve," says Van Mechelen. "He's unusually capable, overactive, open to whatever's good for music, full of talent, language, science, committed, funny and honest. If Luc's in the company, the company is alive."

The Eighth Symphony by Luc Brewaeys will be performed at Bozar on 30 March by the Belgian National Orchestra, conducted by Pascal Ropé. Also on the programme: *L'arbre des songes* (concerto for violin and orchestra) by Henri Dutilleux, with Akiko Suwanai on violin; and *The Rite of Spring* by Igor Stravinsky. ♦



30 March, 20.00

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23
Brussels

→ www.bozar.be



heard, read and seen in the past. But if you've never heard of him before, you'll get a fragmented, far-from-complete image, and you might exit the cinema with more questions than answers. So, a three-star film for the fans, a two-star film for everybody else.

© Paul De Smet

Rebuilding Horta

An Art Nouveau masterpiece is open to the public thanks to a writer and an artist who cared enough to save it

ANNA JENKINSON

When François Schuiten and Benoît Peeters embarked on a project to buy the Autrique House, they had little idea what was awaiting them.

The two friends had thought the project – to restore the Brussels townhouse designed by Belgian architect Victor Horta – would take two, maybe three years at most. In fact, it took eight. One of the most time-consuming factors was dealing with the public authorities who were financing the plan.

"They wanted certainty about the materials, the craftsmen, the experts," recalls Schuiten, a graphic artist. "At times it was disheartening because we weren't making any progress. But it was great fun, too, discovering the quality of the building."

In the end, their perseverance paid off. In December of 2004, they opened the house as a museum. As well as showing off Horta's townhouse itself, the museum is also home to many temporary exhibitions, with photographs, prints, paintings or objects displayed throughout.

Built in 1893, the building, situated at 266 Haachtsesteenweg in the Brussels commune of Schaerbeek, marks a transition from Horta's early Classicism to the Art Nouveau style. Not as luxurious or extravagant as the better-known Horta House or Hôtel Solvay, the building nonetheless has many of the flourishes and characteristics associated with his later style.

The entry hall is the highlight, with its mosaic flooring in an off-white colour and Horta's characteristic swirls of the *coup de fouet* (whiplash) design in orange-brown. The wooden staircase seems to grow out of the flooring, its curved lower steps and sculpted banister evoking a plant or other motif from nature.

To top this off, as you look up the stairs to the next floor you see a beautiful stained-glass feature on part of the wall and ceiling that recalls the larger, more extravagant winter gardens found in the middle rooms of other Horta houses. The hallway also boasts an original mirror and mantelpiece, forming a unit together with the simple white radiator underneath.

The restoration of the house inevitably entailed many difficult decisions, such as which colours and materials should

be used. Over the decades, the building has acquired different styles and elements, so decisions had to be taken as to which of these should be preserved. Some of the choices, which were always made after a lot of research and much reflection, may be surprising, Schuiten and Peeters say in their book *Maison Autrique: Metamorphosis of an Art Nouveau House*. They cast a new light on some "received ideas" about the architecture of Victor Horta.

The two men were keen for the house to come to life and turned each room into a stage set, with an event linked to its use. For example, in the large bedroom on the first floor a black dress is laid out on the bed, as if ready to be worn that evening. Down in the basement, the kitchen table is covered with cooking utensils and weighing scales, and the stove has a couple of pans on it as if the evening meal were being prepared. The laundry in the room next door is filled with white sheets and clothes, and the wine cellar is stocked with (empty!) bottles.

As Schuiten and Peeters say, it was "a wonderful opportunity to realise one of our dreams: stage-manage a Brussels House from cellar to loft."

For the museum's opening, Louis Vuitton also contributed to this sense of theatricality by providing trunks with the well-known LV design for the rooms. This detail is captured in a drawing of the Autrique House done by Schuiten, which is hanging up behind the museum's entrance desk.

As well as drawings of the house, Schuiten has also done illustrations of its architectural features that have been used in the Robert French-language dictionary to illustrate the words *bel étage* ("piano nobile") and *rejointayage* ("pointing").

The restoration of the house and its transformation into a museum took over the lives of Schuiten and Peeters for many years, and to this day the two of them remain very involved. "It's like a child...you have to follow it, watch it grow up," says Schuiten, who still lives in the area.

When I ask him if he would take on such a project again, the artist emphasises that it was something special and unique, rediscovering a piece of local heritage. "It involved a considerable investment and was, above all, a civic project. You can't always do that kind of work." ♦

→ www.autrique.be



The façade of the Autrique House in Schaerbeek



Trademark Art Nouveau swirls and visual continuations evoke garden paths more than tile floors and wooden staircases

Comic Connection

François Schuiten and Benoît Peeters' passion for Victor Horta's architecture can be traced back at least to their well-known comic book series *Cities of the Fantastic*, which they started in 1983. The architecture in the first book of the series evokes an Art Nouveau style and some of the original boards were in fact exhibited at the Horta House in Brussels.

The duo's associations with the world of comics helps explain the subject of the temporary exhibition showing at the Autrique House until 25 April: *Births of the Comic Strip*. The exhibition, accompanied by a book of the same title, traces the comic strip from what professor Thierry Smolderen argues are its origins in the 18th century through to the early 20th century.

As of early June, the Autrique House plans to have a show for the summer months that focuses on the house itself, putting on display drawings, paintings and photographs of the house, including some works by Schuiten.



DIY

It seems that citizens who want to see the great treasures of Art Nouveau restored in Brussels give up on the city's involvement and do it themselves. Besides the restoration of the Autrique House, another family has spent six years restoring the Albert Ciamberlani mansion on Defacqzstraat in Elsene. Ciamberlani commissioned architect Paul Hankar, a colleague of Victor Horta, to build it in 1897, and it has now been restored to its former glory by its new owners after decades of decay.

Game on

From Atari to Wii, *Play Belgium* dives into the history of computer games and peeks ahead to the future

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

The Kelders van Cureghem in Brussels is currently alive with beeps, buzzes and voices raised in victory (or defeat). The interactive exhibition *Play Belgium* features more than 200 games demonstrating the evolution of computer technology. And you get to play with all of them.

The event is part exhibition and part arcade; information panels offer answers to all your questions about gaming and enlighten you on the versatile uses of computer games.

There could not be a bigger contrast between the dark and quiet setting of the Kelders and the bright and noisy objects filling them. As soon as I entered, I was welcomed by the eclectic sound of 200 switched-on electronic games. I received a little booklet to guide me through the exhibition and a quiz (that enters me into a prize drawing if I got all the answers right).

All the games in *Play Belgium* come with an information panel. The old arcade games look huge and charmingly dated, but a go on the first arcade game ever, Atari's Pong (1972), is still surprisingly entertaining. It's also hard to ignore the absolute classics like Space Invaders (1978) and the ground-breaking Pac-Man (1980), the game credited with opening up video gaming to both genders. By the time I finished a round on all of these, I realised I was in for probably my longest museum visit ever. (Growing up, I was never really allowed to play with computer games because it was 'bad for my eyes', so I had a lot of catching up to do.)

Two can play at that game

There is a multi-player zone for friendly competition and a wide range of educational games – from very simple games for littler kids to Monkey Labs (a mathematics game used in some schools) to socio-political games where you have to help street youth, or medical games used for training and continuing education.

The exhibition tries to shake off a few of the prejudices against video games: they do not necessarily make you anti-social, and they don't turn you into a violent sociopath. But they don't ignore these concerns: the 18+ section features more violent games such as *Assassin's Creed*, where it's all about power and revenge. A big display narrates the history of violence from art to computer games, backed up by a few studies at Flemish universities.

Informative as the exhibition is, it's clearly impossible for the young people here to concentrate on most of that over the games. The impressive games collection is curated by the Barbican arts centre in London, and in case one of the consoles breaks down, a technician is present to fix it within the day.



Explore Playstation games you've only heard of or visit some classics you mastered in that bowling alley back in 1982 during *Play Belgium*

You are the console of the future

Those who do take the time to learn, as well as play, will find an intriguing story of the development of electronic games over the last two decades and the realisation that we haven't seen the best of it yet. Whereas some games, for instance, have been based on movies, now movies get their story ideas from computer games. When, in 1996, *Tomb Raider* was released, nobody expected its iconic main character, Lara Croft, to become such an adored virtual heroin. Her popularity grew by leaps and bounds when in 2001 Angelina Jolie took on the role for two Hollywood films.

The stories and images in games get more complicated and detailed, while the consoles become smaller – and sometimes even invisible. *Play Belgium* offers a sneak peek at the future: Sony's Eye Pet is a cute but extremely needy pet that likes to get washed and played with; Microsoft's Natal projects work not by holding a remote control, but by using your body as the controller itself, with the program following your every move and facial expression onscreen.

The final offer of the exhibition is how to learn more: schools teaching game programming across Belgium present their offers of study. ♦



Until 18 April

Kelders van Cureghem (Entrance 3)
Jules Ruhlstraat, Brussels

→ www.playbelgium.be

Holiday tip

There's no time limit to your stay at the *Play Belgium* exhibition, which makes it a great idea for a weekend or holiday activity. Kelders van Cureghem has a big car park and is next to the metro station Delacroix.

Where chefs go to eat • Bruges' Rock Fort is on par with its three-starred neighbour

COURTNEY DAVIS



It must be a tad daunting being located right next to one of Belgium's only two triple-Michelin-starred restaurants. But in this case you wouldn't know it. Standing brazenly next to De Karmeliet in Bruges' Langestraat is Rock Fort, a small eatery that easily holds its own in the culinary shadow cast next door. Don't let the silly sunflower signage or the fact that you have to walk through the front bar to get to the restaurant dissuade you. Upon entry, you will immediately be put at ease. The well-balanced combination of modern white tables and walls with rugged wooden floors and flannel-wearing staff makes it clear that this restaurant might be modern, but it is also comfortable.

Since its opening in 2001, Rock Fort has been packed. This is the place where chefs go on their night off, not only because it's open on Mondays (and closed over the weekend) but because the food is nothing short of perfect. It's a hotbed in the Bruges gastronomy scene; I saw no less than three local chefs having dinner there.

Besides the food, Rock Fort has something obvious going for it: it's a fine dining experience sans exorbitant price tag. The four-course tasting menu is €49 and features a tuna tartar with a smooth wasabi sorbet over minutely diced cucumbers. Seared scal-

lops followed that simply couldn't be improved. The main course of pigeon and foie gras was rich, filling and complimented by upscale *kroketten* that would please royalty and kids alike.

A dessert of mango coulis, coconut sorbet, fresh pineapple and vanilla yogurt was light, refreshing and the sweet finish the meal needed. My table ordered a bottle of house red from Spain that seemed worth more than its €17.50. If you don't opt for the tasting menu, the Rock Fort salad is a must-try. A scoop of Roquefort cheese ice cream melts over fresh greens and dried Spanish ham. The result is a rich blue cheese dressing that melts luxuriously over salty ham and spicy lettuce. Different and divine.

One element where many eateries fail is the customer service, but, again, Rock Fort was a stand out in its subtle yet genuine service – never intrusive but always friendly. A few other details complimented our experience: the tableside olive oil was of good quality, and the snacks of tuna tapenade and savoury popcorn made the short wait a small culinary adventure.

The bread was varied, fresh and quickly replenished but, even better, was smartly served in a brown paper bag that saved space on the small table. Be sure to book in advance.

→ www.rock-fort.be



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and cards can be ready for you the moment you arrive in Belgium. ING's Expat Services have 40 years of experience to help make your stay in Belgium as financially smooth as possible.



Triple play

Painting, drawings and photography on show in Hasselt's Culture Centre by three artists based in Flanders
→ www.bccha.be



FLANDERS TODAY
MARCH 24, 2010



TO BE OR NOT TO.be

LISA BRADSHAW

So, what do you think of first when someone says "Belgium"? If you live outside Brussels, you might have trouble conjuring anything outside of the tourist clichés of beer and chocolate. That's because half of us live in Flanders and half of us live in Wallonia, and we don't always know what "Belgium" means at all, let alone means to us.

Which is why TO BE OR NOT TO.be is a very good idea. Six documentaries – three by Dutch-speaking directors and three by French-speaking directors – explore what "Belgium" means and provide some fascinating perspectives on the country's past, present and future.

Although it's not unusual to see artists from both sides of the language border working together, it is highly unusual to see funding coming from both quarters. But in this case it did. Support came from French TV station ARTE and from Flemish broadcaster VRT, as well as the audio-visual fund of the French-speaking community. But TO BE OR NOT TO.be was spearheaded by the French-speaking public broadcaster RTBF and the Flemish Audio-Visual Fund (VAF).

"When the head of documentaries at RTBF asked his boss if he could contact us to help develop this project, his boss said 'sure, if you're ready to waste your time,'" remembers Pierre Drouot, director of VAF. "But within two weeks we had made the decision to go ahead with it with them." It was the first

time the Flemish organisation had collaborated with a French-speaking institution. "It was very agreeable and constructive. We did not reproduce the problems of Belgium in our collaboration," says Drouot with a smile.

After the call was put out for documentaries on the theme of "Belgium", the organisations received 114 entries. They had to whittle it down to six for the series. It of course wasn't easy, but they looked for "diversity, originality and themes of the past and of the future," explains Drouot.

The 50-minute films will air two at a time on RTBF over the next few weeks. Each film contains both Dutch and French and will be subtitled in French where appropriate. Although the French portions will not be subtitled in Dutch, the films will eventually be released on DVD with both Dutch and French subtitles.

Films will air at 22.00 on RTBF as follows:

29 March: Luckas Vander Taelen and Pascal Verbeken's *Het beloofde land* (*The Promised Land*) takes a look back at a somewhat forgotten history of mass Flemish immigration into Wallonia in the early part of the 20th century when work in industry and the mines was plentiful and the economic situation in Flanders was depressed – the exact opposite of the situation today (*photo above*). *La Royale Harmonie* by well-known documentar-

ian Manu Bonmariage seeks the opinions of both experts and regular folk from the south of the country on the possibility of a Belgium split.

5 April: Of all the films in the series, this one might just be the most fun: In Geertrui Coppens' *Een Belgisch verhaal* (*A Belgian Story*), two journalists – one Flemish, one Walloon – organise a footrace between colleagues from each of their language territories. As they run along the Flanders/Wallonia border they talk about what separates – and unites – Belgium. *Ça rime et ça rame comme tartine et boterham* (we're not going to try to translate that) finds a French-speaking Brussels woman learning Dutch while searching for her Flemish roots.

12 April: Filmmaker Jacques Duez, meanwhile, turns to the country's children in *België in al zijn staten* (*Belgium in All its Forms*), and they come up with wonderfully mixed-up versions of contemporary society that come uncomfortably close to mimicking politicians, while Maya Van Leemput's *Belgische toekomsten* (*Belgian Futures*) imagines four possible outcomes for the Belgium of tomorrow. ♦

→ www.vaf.be

MORE FILM THIS WEEK

Young Film Fans → *Cinéma & Flagey, Brussels*

Jean-Luc Godard's *Le mépris* → *De Roma, Antwerp*

8, anthology of short films, plus debate → *Flagey, Brussels*



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
MAR 31 20.15 Vaya Con Dios

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40 www.deroma.be
MAR 25 20.30 Pura Fé **MAR 27** 20.30: Orkest van de reizende maan & gasten: Passion! **MAR 28** 15.00 Glenn Miller Orchestra **MAR 31** 20.30 Luka Bloom

Kelly's Irish Pub
Keyserlei 27; www.kellys.be
MAR 26 21.30 The Durans
MAR 27 21.30 Clouds

Lotto Arena
Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
MAR 27 20.00 Sylver "10 Years"

Petrol
Herbouvillekaai 21; 03.226.49.63
www.petrolclub.be
MAR 26 22.00 Gaslamp Killer + FaltyDL + Emalkay + Sbtrkt
MAR 27 21.00 Junior Kelly + Warrior King + Firehouse

't Kwartier
Keistraat 11; 0475.28.66.10
www.tkwartier.be
MAR 28 20.00 Kwart van

Trix
Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
MAR 25 20.00 The Van Jets + Kapitan Korsakov. 22.00 Xicotada
MAR 26 19.00 Reverend Horton Heat + Deadbolt + The Grave Brothers + Angelic Upstarts
MAR 31 20.00 Nathen Maxwell (of Flogging Molly) & The Original Bunny Gang

Ardoorie
Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
MAR 25 20.30 Selah Sue & band

Brussels
Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
Concerts at 20.00:
MAR 25 Yodelice, Landfill + Wallace

Vanborn **MAR 26** Sinik **MAR 29** Dobet Gnahore + Manou Gallo **MAR 30** Hindi Zahra **MAR 31** Claudine Munu + Josh Rouse

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bemf.be
MAR 26-28 Brussels Electronic Music Festival: electro, Krautrock, minimal techno and experimental music with 45 artists, plus Mexican Electronica Showcase (part of the Mexico Festival) and Party Harders night (at Recyclart)

Koninklijk Circus
Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15 www.cirque-royal.org
MAR 24 20.00 Brian Wright + Tom McRae
MAR 25 20.00 I Muvrini

Le Bar du Matin
Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
<http://bardumatins.blogspot.com>
MAR 25 21.00 Laura Vane & The Vipertones

Le Botanique
Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
MAR 25 20.00 Taxi Taxi! The Heavy Hocus Pocus
MAR 26 20.00 The Waow + Mass Hysteria
MAR 30 20.00 Lonelady

GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Willie Nelson

24 June, 20.00
AB, Brussels

For those of you who thought he was all washed up – or at least in jail for tax evasion – ha! American country music icon Willie Nelson is back on stage in Belgium. The man releases an album almost every year, but you should still get a decent taste of his 2009 Grammy-nominated *American Classics*. His voice might be fading like a pressed Texas flower, but there's no shunning his stylings: from Americana to chanson to bluegrass, Willie knows how to take on a genre and make it all yours.



→ www.abconcerts.be

Magasin 4
Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74,
www.magasin4.be
MAR 26 20.00 The Upsessions + Mighty Patch Sound System
MAR 27 19.00 Deviate + Length Of Time + Hangman's Chair

Recyclart
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recyclart.be
MAR 25 20.30 Kaboom Karavan + Niobe + Jam Session Brussels Open
MAR 27 22.30 Party Harders + Riot Kid + Kill Frenzy + Highbloo (part of Brussels Electronic Music Festival)

VK Club
Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07
www.vkconcerts.be
MAR 31 20.00 Jack of Heart + Chain and the Gang + Spectrum

Vorst-Nationaal
Victor Rousseaalaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestnational.be
MAR 25 20.00 The Cranberries
MAR 31 20.00 Maximilian Hecker

Ghent
Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
MAR 26 20.15 The Wolf Banes
MAR 27 20.15 Jim Byrnes and The Sojourners
MAR 31 20.15 Luc De Vos

Kortrijk
De Kreun
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
MAR 24 20.00 Mintzkov + Wallace Vanborn
MAR 27 18.00 Triggerfinger + The Boston Tea Party

Leuven
Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
MAR 24 20.00 The Opposites
MAR 25 20.00 Mintzkov + Waldorf

© Danny Clinch

Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY
MARCH 24, 2010



Antwerp

Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
MAR 25 21.00 Buster Babl Jam **MAR 26** 22.00 Greenhouse Quartet **MAR 27** 22.00 Soie Sauvage **MAR 30** 20.30 JazzNight **MAR 31** 21.00 Playtime Session

De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
MAR 28 16.00 Yvonne Walter & guests (free)
MAR 29 21.00 Stijn Wauters Trio (free)
MAR 30 21.00 Thoine Thys Hammond Trio (free)

Trix

Noorderingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
MAR 30 20.00 Afro-jazz listening session with Jeroen Revakk

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
MAR 24 20.00 José James

Archiduc

Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52
www.archiduc.net
MAR 28 17.00 The Arthur Kell Quartet

Charliermuseum

Kunstlaan 16; 02.218.53.82
www.charliermuseum.be
MAR 30 12.30 Midi Jazz: Barbara Wiernik & Alain Pierre Duo

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
MAR 24 20.30 Timescape Project
MAR 27 18.00 Free Desmyter Quartet featuring John Ruocco

L'Alphabet

Waversesteenweg 1387; 02.662.23.00
www.lalphabet.be
MAR 25 20.30 The Flying Fish Jumps Live

Le Bar du Matin

Alsebergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
http://bardumatin.blogspot.com
MAR 29 20.00 Gorgona Projekt

Piola Libri

Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91
www.piolalibri.be
MAR 26 19.00 Delos Project
MAR 30 19.00 Esposito & Smith Duo

Rataplan

Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanzw.be
MAR 27 20.30 José

Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78
www.sazznjazz.be
MAR 27 21.00 Gursel & Sazz n Jazz Quartet

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
MAR 24 22.00 Los Soneros del Barrio
MAR 25 21.00 The Singers Night **MAR 26-27** 22.00 Da Romeo & The Crazy Moondog Band **MAR 29** 22.00 Master Session **MAR 30** 22.00 Laurent Doumont Soul Tuesdays **MAR 31** Chamaquiando, salsa

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:

MAR 24 Butterfly **MAR 25** Jean-Paul Estiévenart Quartet **MAR 26** Jean Warland/Fabrice Allemans Quartet **MAR 27** The Cotton City Jazz Band + The Harvard-Westlake School Jazz Band Tour **MAR 31** FS Band

Theatre La Roseraie

Alsebergsesteenweg 1299; 02.376.46.45, www.roseraie.org
MAR 28-29 20.30 Django 100 Years: concert/show with La MaNouche BaNdo and Mandino Reinhardt



Antwerp

't Kwartier

Keistraat 11; 0475.28.66.10
www.tkwartier.be
MAR 26 20.00 Hotel Imun + Mira Bertels, folk

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
MAR 25 20.30 Pancho Amat y su Cabildo del son (Cuba)

Brussels

Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
MAR 26 20.00 Rebetiko

Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78
www.sazznjazz.be
MAR 26 21.00 Group Cemre, Turkish traditional & folk
MAR 31 20.30 David and Christella

Sint-Pieters-Woluwe Cultural Centre

Charles Thielemanslaan 93; 02.773.05.88, www.art-culture.be
MAR 26 20.30 Tania Maria (Brazil)

Théâtre Molière

Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00
www.muziekpublique.be
MAR 27 20.00 Imaran (Tuareg/Algeria) + Masha 'el Falesteen (Palestine)
MAR 31 12.30 Broodje Brussel: Uxia Sennle & Sergio Tannus



Antwerp

Amuz

Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28
www.amuz.be
MAR 26 21.00 Thomas Baeté, viola da gamba: music by 17th-century English composer Anthony Poole

MAR 27 20.00 Aranis and Symfonisch Jeugdorkest Edegem (youth orchestra) conducted by Michiel Delanghe: Leonard Bernstein, Joris Vanvinckenroye, more

MAR 28 15.00 Sigiswald Kuijken & François Fernandez, violin; Marleen Thiers, viola; Wieland Kuijken, cello: Haydn's Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuz

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
MAR 24 20.00 Florilegium ensemble with Johanna Zomer, soprano: Bach
MAR 25 20.00 Fauré Quartett with Nabil Shehata, double bass; Warre Borgmans, narrator: Mendelssohn
MAR 26 20.00 Sylvia Schwartz, soprano; Wolfram Rieger, piano: songs by Schubert, Jesus Guridi, more

Sportpaleis

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
MAR 30 20.00 Star Wars in Concert, extracts from all six films The Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra and choir conducted by Dirk Brossé

Bruges

Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02
www.concertgebouw.be
MAR 25 20.00 Antje Weithaas, violin; Quirine Viersen, cello; Silke Avenhaus, piano: Brahms
MAR 28 15.00 Jos van Immerseel and Claire Chevallier, piano: four-hand piano pieces by Schubert

Kempinsky Hotel

Prinsenhof 8; 050.44.78.86
MAR 26 19.30 Véronique Bogaerts, violin; Vincent Hepp, violin and viola;

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65, www.handelsbeurs.be
MAR 24 20.15 Quatuor Danel: Beethoven, Gubaidlina, Mieczyslaw Weinberg

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Sarah Dupriez, cello: Handel, Schubert, more

Brussels

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

Concerts at 20.00:

MAR 24 Sergey Khachatryan, violin; Lusine Khachatryan, piano: Bach,

Brahms, Beethoven **MAR 25** 12.30 Aria Orchestra conducted by Etienne Rappe,

Ishango chamber choir conducted by Thierry Lequenne: Pärt, Tavener **MAR**

26 Liège Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by François-Xavier Roth: Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart **MAR 28**

Eisler Quartet: Haydn, Schubert **MAR 30**

Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Pascal Rophé, with Akiko Suwanai, violin: Breweays, Dutilleux, Stravinsky

DON'T MISS



Stabat Mater

26 March to 8 April
Across Flanders

Normally recited at the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows in September, the Stabat Mater is making an appearance a little earlier this year, courtesy of the Vlaams Radio Koor. Under chief conductor Bo Holten, the choir presents three versions from 1650 to 1750 of the famous text describing Mary's (and universal) suffering at the death of her son – those of Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti and Giovanni Pergolesi.

→ www.vlaamsradiokoer.be

vlaamseopera.be

Until APR 3 15.00/20.00 Eugene Onegin by Tchaikovsky conducted by Dmitri Jurowski, staged by Tatjana Gürbacia, with Tommi Hakala (Onegin) and Anna Leese (Tatiana) (in the original Russian with Dutch surtitles)

Mechelen

Utopolis

Spuibekstraat 5; 015.55.77.33, www.utopolis.be

MAR 25 19.30 Opera in the cinema: Il Viaggio a Reims by Rossini, recorded in Teatro Alla Scala (Milan)

Turnhout

Utopolis

Gratakker 99; 014.43.03.54, www.utopolis.be

MAR 25 19.30 Opera in the cinema: Il Viaggio a Reims by Rossini, recorded in Teatro Alla Scala (Milan)



Antwerp

CC Berchem

Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20, www.ccberchem.be

MAR 25 20.30 Cie Soit in We Was Them, choreographed by Hans Van den Broeck

Brussels

Kaaitheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59 www.kaaitheater.be

MAR 25-27 19.00/20.30 Zita Swoon and Rosas in Dancing with the Sound Hobbyist, choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

MAR 31-APR 1 20.30 Damaged Goods and Eira in Blessed, choreographed by Meg Stuart</

Théâtre Varia
Scepterstraat 78; 02.640.82.58
www.varia.be
Until APR 3 19.30/20.30 To the Ones I love, choreographed by Thierry Smits

Leuven
STUK
Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20
www.fabuleus.be
MAR 27-28 15.30/20.30 Everland, contemporary dance performance inspired by Michael Jackson, choreographed by Dirk De Lathauwer and Natascha Pire



Antwerp
Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
MAR 25 20.15 Els Dotterman in Was will das Weib?, music theatre (in Dutch)
MAR 26-27 20.15 Je zal alles worden (You'll Become Everything) by Wouter Deprez (in Dutch)
MAR 29 20.15 Krauwelenhof en Hoveberg, variety show by mentally handicapped youth (in Dutch)

Bourla
Komedielaan 18; 03.224.88.44
www.toneelhuis.be
Until MAR 27 20.00 De Filmfabriek in De Indringer (The Intruder), directed by Peter Missotten (in Dutch)

CC Berchem
Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20
www.ccberchem.be
MAR 26 20.30 Theater Malpertuis in Hondstuk, by and with Stefan and Peter Perceval, Sien Eggers (in Dutch)

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
MAR 26-APR 2 20.00 Troubleyn in De dienaar van de schoonheid (The Servant of Beauty), directed by Jan Fabre (in Dutch)

Klokhuis Theatre
Parochiaanstraat 4; 03.231.71.81
www.vlaamsfruit.be
MAR 26 20.30 Jeremiah Fleming in The Fever, directed by David Llewellyn Child (in English)

Stadsschouwburg
Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be
Until MAR 28 The Sound of Music (musical, in Dutch)

Bruges
English Theatre
Walplein 23; 050.68.79.45
www.tematema.com
MAR 25-28 20.00 Carine Slabbinck and Nicholas O'Connor in The Lover by Harold Pinter, directed by Clare Allen (in English)



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Brussels

KVS Bol
Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00
www.kvs.be
MAR 25-APR 3 20.00 Philoktetes, directed by Raven Ruell (in Dutch with French and English surtitles)

KVS Box
Arduinkaai 9; 02.210.11.12
www.kvs.be

Until MAR 27 20.30 Global Anatomy by Benjamin Verdonck and Wily Thomas (without dialogue)

Ghent

NTGent Schouwburg
Sint-Baafsplein 17; 09.225.01.01
www.ntgent.be
MAR 30-APR 2 20.30 Els Dottermans in Was will das Weib?, music theatre (in Dutch)

Theater Tinnenpot

Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60
www.tinnenpot.be
MAR 24 20.00 Ghent University English Department presents The Importance of being Earnest by Oscar Wilde (in English)



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be

Until MAY 2 Animism, Part 1, installations, photos and film exploring the collective practices of humans and non-humans and the ensuing relationships

Until SEP 19 Art kept me out of jail, performance installations by Jan Fabre 2001 – 2004 – 2008

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55
www.extraicity.org
Until MAY 2 Animism, Part Two (see above)

Fashion Museum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70
www.momu.be

MAR 25-AUG 8 BLACK: Masters of Black in Fashion & Costume

Zilvermuseum Sterckshof

Hooftvunderlei 160; 03.360.52.51
www.zilvermuseum.be

Until JUNE 13 Delheid 1828-1980: From Michel to Climax, works from the Delheid Frères company, one of the 19th and 20th centuries' most important silver producers

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be

Until APR 4 Congo Exists, photographs of daily life in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03
www.argoarts.org

Until MAR 27 Rinko Kawauchi:

Transient Wonders, Everyday Bliss, photography, video and slides

Until MAR 27 Ralo Mayer: Travelling Through Biosphere 2, or Anastylosis of Follies, multi-media installation

Until MAR 27 James Lee Byars: From Life to Art and Back Again, video and interviews with the American artist

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80
www.stripmuseum.be

Until AUG 29 Moomin: Tove Jansson's Dreamworld, works by the Finnish illustrator and author

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

Until APR 11 Mexican Modernisms, overview of post-war Mexican architecture, plus documentary films and

contemporary documents

Until APR 11 Mundos Mexicanos, 25 contemporary Mexican photographers

Until APR 18 Frida Kahlo y su mundo, works by the famous Mexican artist on loan from the Dolores Olmedo Museum

Until APR 25 Imágenes des Mexicano, portraiture and the history of Mexico

Until APR 25 El Horizonte del topo (The Mole's Horizon), video art

Until MAY 9 El Greco: Domenikos

Theotokopoulos 1900, more than 40 paintings by El Greco

Cellars of Cureghem

Ropsy Chaudronstraat 24; 02.528.19.00,
www.cureghemcellars.be

Until APR 18 Play Belgium, interactive and informational exhibition on the history, present and future of video games

Het Huis der Kunsten van Schaarbeek

Haachtsesteenweg 147; 02.240.34.99

www.culture1030ecoles.be

Until APR 11 Design: Een verhaal van context (A story of context), industrial design and objects by Loudordesign studio and D&A Lab

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50 www.wiels.org

Until APR 25 Felix Gonzales-Torres: Specific Objects without Specific Form, retrospective of the late Cuban-born American artist

Until APR 25 Melvin Moti: From Dust to Dust, the contemporary Dutch artist's first solo show in Belgium

Ghent

Contemporary Art Museum (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03

www.smak.be

Until APR 18 The Wandering Tuba Method, sculptures by Tamara Van San

Until MAY 16 Loek Grootjans: Leaving Traces, installations

Until MAY 16 Koen van den Broek: Curbs & Cracks, photographs and paintings by the Flemish artist

Until MAY 16 Collection FAKE?, interpretations of reality

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99

www.designmuseumgent.be

Until JUNE 6 Richard Hutten, furniture, interiors and objects by the Dutch designer

Until JUNE 6 The Scandinavian Touch in Belgian Furniture 1951-1966

Museum Dr Guislain

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95

www.museumdrguislain.be

Until MAY 2 From Memory: About Knowing and Forgetting, multi-disciplinary exhibition on memory and dementia in science and art

Hasselt

Cultuurcentrum

Kunstlaan 5; 011.22.99.31 www.ccha.be

Until APR 11 Yvan Theys: Verborgen schatten (Hidden Treasures), paintings by the late Flemish artist

Until APR 11 Marnik Neven: Moment, multi-media show of work by the Flemish artist

Until APR 11 Kumi Oguro, photographs by the Antwerp-based artist

Kortrijk

Museum Kortrijk 1302

Houtmarkt-BeginpArk; 056.27.78.50,

www.kortrijk1302.be

Until MAY 16 Miniaturen: Gras dat verder groeit (Thumbnails: Grass That Continues to Grow), group show with works based on poems and other texts by Flemish writer Jozef Deleu

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveel museum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00

www.rogerraveelmuseum.be

Until JUNE 20 Pictografie: Schilderijen zijn ook tekeningen en vice-versa (Paintings are Drawings and Vice-versa), group show

Turnhout

TRAM 41

Grote Markt 1; 014.44.33.98,

www.tram41.be

Until APR 30 China en het kaartspel

(China and the Card Game), Chinese

printing techniques and card games

Until MAY 2 De eerste onder zijn gelijken (The First Among Equals), cards, letters, books and prints from medieval Latin schools in the Kempen region



Brussels

Eurantica: The Continents Fine art and antiques fair with European, tribal and Oriental art

Until MAR 28 at Brussels Expo, Heysel 02.474.89.81, www.eurantica.com

Festival of Confusion Second edition of the festival of performance, film, music and visual arts, including Belgian and international premières

Until MAR 27 at Beursschouwburg, A Ortsstraat 20 02.550.03.62, www.beursschouwburg.be

International Circus Festival:

Performances from 30 Belgian and international companies

Until MAR 31 in and around Victoria Park, Koekelberg 070.660.601, www.pistesdelancement.be

LIFE²: Health and wellness fair, including gastronomy, sport and leisure, medical and pharmaceutical

MAR 26-28 10.00-18.00 at Brussels Expo, Heysel 02.474.89.81, www.life2.be

Mars en Mediterranée: Middle Eastern and Mediterranean festival featuring dance, circus and literature

SHARON LIGHT



Fondue

From the diner's perspective, fondue – or its cousins, raclette and gourmet – is a special dining experience. It's interactive and creative, which makes for a fun night out, but not something you'd do regularly. Which I guess is why you don't find fondue restaurants on every corner.

For my most recent fondue indulgence, I headed to Aalst to visit the Fonduehuisje Le Bourguignon. Open for 12 years, Le Bourguignon specialises in these Swiss-style, cook-it-yourself meals.

Each table features an electric stove in the centre and an exhaust fan overhead. It sounds industrial, but they've disguised it in a sleek design. The restaurant is comfortable and modern, featuring chocolatey brown tables and walls, perhaps to tempt you towards dessert.

The fans are thankfully quiet, but they also don't work as well as they should – you will smell the cooking oils from the moment you walk through the door.

On to the matter of what you will be cooking. Do you fancy grilling meats and vegetables? Go for "gourmet": each diner gets their own personal tiny pan to mix-and-match the meats, fish and vegetables in small servings.

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

The raclette at Le Bourguignon is just a variation on the gourmet option. At other restaurants, a large wheel of cheese may be heated and scraped onto your plate, but here they follow the more modern raclette system. You'll receive the same small pans as with gourmet, with slices of semi-soft cheese, and the traditional raclette accompaniments of potato, bread, tomato, gherkins and pickled onions.

Take those same ingredients, shuffle them around a bit and toss in a big pot and a long, thin fork, and you're all set for fondue. Choose meats or fish, dipped in your choice of oil or bouillon, or opt for melted cheese.

At Le Bourguignon, the ingredients were fresh but basic, and the meal was filling. However, I was careful to leave room for dessert. Three dessert fondues are available: milk chocolate, white chocolate and Toblerone. We tried the milk, which was sweet and creamy, accompanied by delicious fresh fruit.

A fondue evening will always make for a social night out, but it can also break the ice indoors. All kinds of fondue and raclette sets are available in cooking and appliance shops. A bit of shopping, a bit of chopping, invite a few friends over and get started!

→ www.lebourguignon.be

FLANDERS TODAY

We DID hear from you!

We sent our online survey to our newsletter subscribers via email, and many of them were encouraged to write back.

"This weekly journal contact is for me a way to reach my goal to learn the English language, a task not easy for me. But at my age, I am no longer ashamed to make some mistakes. I am 71 now and eager to learn something new." **Pierre**

"I congratulate you on the way you treat the political reality as well as the links that exist on historical matters between Flanders and England. Particularly appreciated are the articles where Flemish and English is mixed together "à la Brusseleers", a sympathetic local touch!" **FL**

My Dutch isn't really good enough to read the local papers yet. Your paper is the only one I can read to find out what's going on here, and I have gone to many of the events you write about. Flanders Today is my Bible! **Rita**

"This weekly newspaper is really interesting for me as well as for my (adult) students as an addition to their English lessons!" **Georgette**

"You made a common mistake: you "promised" that answering the questions would not take more than 10 minutes. Well, I stopped after 20 minutes. I am simply not willing to invest half an hour or more in something that offers a limited chance of winning rather poor prizes. Free advice by a former marketing consultant: NEVER lie about the time needed to complete a questionnaire! Just be honest, and you'll be rewarded." **Emile**

www.flanderstoday.eu/survey

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



kortingsbon →

Unless you have a "Geen reclame – No junk mail" sign on your letter box, you will probably receive all sorts of leaflets inviting you to grab a pair of scissors and join the world record holders at cutting out *bonnetjes* – coupons.

In Belgium, an amazing 155 million *kortingsbonnen* – reduction coupons – were handed in to shops last year, saving shoppers a total of €123 million!

Gemiddeld gebruikt een gezin 34 bonnetjes op een jaar tijd – on average, a family uses 34 coupons in a year. Not that you will be saving much: a coupon is usually worth 80 euro cents, but, as we say in Scotland, every mickle makes a muckle.

And I just happen to have a folder in front of me with dozens of these *bonnetjes*. The trouble is that to save you often have to invest: I see I can save 50 cents on cereal, but then I note *op 3 verpakkingen* – on 3 packs. I could feed the whole family just on the food with such reductions here. But just think of the organisation: you would have to cut up all 12 pages and match the 144 *bonnetjes* with a menu plan.

To help achieve this, on the back page is *uw boodschappenlijstje* – your shopping list, neatly divided up with headings such as *beenhouwerij* – butcher's, *lichaamsverzorging* – body care, and *ontbijt* – breakfast. It must be worth it, and it would

be silly to look a gift horse in the mouth, I suppose.

That's why in Kortrijk the new shopping centre (called K for short) handed out 25,000 shopping bags with three million *kortingsbonnen* when it opened earlier this month. The manager was taken by surprise: "De eerste 5.000 waren weg in een half uur – The first 5,000 were gone in half an hour". The scissors will be hard at work in Kortrijk.

And with people tightening their belts, *knippen wij meer bonnen dan ooit* – we are clipping more coupons than ever. You can even watch adverts on some TV channels and then download *bonnetjes* from the internet – oh, joy unbounded!

You might try to avoid them, but *bonnetjes* are everywhere – or they soon will be. If you take a stroll down Kammestraat in Antwerp and happen to have a Bluetooth-active mobile phone, you will pick up digital flyers *om de voorbijganger op de hoogte te brengen van aanbiedingen* – to inform passers-by of special offers. Apart from *filmmpjes* – short films and *lopende acties* – ongoing offers, you will receive *kortingsbonnen*, which I suppose will be detected when you buy something in one of the local shops. It's all part of what is called "innovative retailing".

And perhaps the day will come when you can cut out *bonnetjes* from Flanders Today.

→ www.bonissimo.be

THE LAST WORD . . .

Overstimulated

"We noticed that children are living busier lives than they used to. They're exposed to more external stimuli. That takes its toll in the end, and that's why we encourage this sort of activity to calm them down."

The Antwerp pre-school Dries is introducing meditation sessions for the under-sixes

Sympathy for the Devils

"The Red Devils are more of a symbol of unity to me." Caroline Gennez, head of the Flemish Socialist party, on plans to limit the role of the monarchy

Over and out

"Boxing fans don't just come for the main event, they come for the whole programme. And they know that a bout can be over in no time. You don't complain. But it was of course disappointing."

TV personality Ben Crabbé, commenting on the 90-second defeat of Sugar Jackson (see page 3)

Sound of Music

"It's never quiet at our place. If there's not music going on throughout the house, it means something terrible must have happened."

Marie Vandenbogaerde, 12, who belongs to Flanders' most musical family of seven children and two parents