



Communication breakdown

Our interview with Alex Stockman, director of *Pulsar*

p10

Belgium's debt under scrutiny

Market confidence in economy faces biggest test yet

ALAN HOPE

Belgium is in 16th place on a list of countries considered most likely to go bankrupt within five years, according to Credit Market Analysis (CMA). That's slightly better than Lebanon and Romania, but a lot worse than it was last year, when the country was in a more respectable 53rd place. Among the reasons for the rating, according to CMA, are its high debt burden, the general economic crisis in the eurozone and the country's failure to form a new government.

The list is headed by Greece, Venezuela and Ireland, while the stable economies of Norway, Finland and Sweden come at the end. The ratings are derived from the price of a credit-default swap for each country – a sort of insurance policy taken out by investors against the chance of a government defaulting on its debts. The more likelihood of default, the higher the CDS price. Using the CDS price,

together with other indicators, CMA has calculated an index of the probability of default. Greece, at the top of the list, is ranked at 58.8; Norway, at the bottom, is at 2.1, while Belgium stands at 17.9. The problem is more important than rankings on a table. As negotiations to form a new government stagger on, the federal administration of Yves Leterme has had to face the prospect of cutting €4 billion of public spending, as well as the possibility of disaster when the time comes to raise money on the capital markets.

Last week, Portugal, one of the countries under attack by speculators, staged a bond auction; the result was considered a success simply because the interest rate at which the financial markets were prepared to take on government paper was slightly lower – at 6.71% – than the 7% rate which had been expected, as well as lower than the 6.8% obtained at its last auction last

year. The issue was a success only relative to the potential disaster it might have been: by comparison, US Treasury bonds offer interest of only 3.35%. Nevertheless, stock markets breathed a sigh of relief. It's amid the current climate of hair-trigger anxiety that Belgium is preparing its own venture onto the capital markets. On 31 January, the government's Debt Agency plans to offer an issue of €4.5-€5.5 billion in state bonds on the financial markets. To do so, it needs to convince institutional investors that a Belgian bond is an attractive prospect. As usual, the agency works with a number of major banks as intermediaries, such as BNP Paribas and Deutsche Bank. The sale takes the form of an auction, with buyers bidding on the interest rate they would be willing to accept for a given amount of the debt.

» *continued on page 3*

New fathers want more time off

One in three fathers wants more time off work to spend with his new baby and partner, according to a study by the Institute for Equality between Women and Men (IGVM). More than nine out of 10 fathers already take some form of parental leave and, though the legal limit is 10 days, the average period taken is 12 days, with fathers dipping into their annual leave to make up the difference, or even taking unpaid leave.

According to the study, a majority of fathers would like the legal minimum more than doubled, to 22 days, as well as being allowed to split the time off between pre-natal and post-natal periods. But one in eight takes less than the legal 10 days, due in part to the state only guaranteeing full salary for the first three days of leave, with subsequent days being partially reimbursed by health insurance. The self-employed are not eligible for any payment and so are less likely to take time off. "Men don't know their rights well enough," commented Geraldine Reymenants of the IGVM.

» <http://igvm-iefh.belgium.be>

Designed, sealed and delivered

Design Flanders announces its 2010 Henry Van de Velde Awards

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

It's every Flemish designer's dream to win one of the yearly Henry Van de Velde Awards. It's a boost to a beginning designer's credibility, and the ultimate validation of one's work for the more accomplished individuals. It is, without competition, the designer event of the year.

Textile designer Diane Steverlynck couldn't be happier to be handed the Young Talent Award at the awards ceremony last night (18 January) in Brussels. "It's a recognition that inspires me to keep designing, to keep developing ideas and objects," she says. "It gives me that extra bit of ardour, of appetite."

Steverlynck runs her own studio, which she founded in 2001 after graduating from Brussels' La Cambre. She doesn't feel like a born designer, first concentrating on liberal arts and anthropology before a teacher "finally pointed me in the direction of textiles," she says. "It's the perfect combination of design and anthropology, as textile is so close to the human body, and it is present in every culture."

That explains why Steverlynck is not your usual brand of textile designer. She never creates a fabric for another designer to play with; she always designs with a final product – and its use – in mind. The jury compares her work to poetry, attributing it with "rhythm, playfulness, logic and freshness".

The Van de Velde Awards are in fact his year quite taken with textiles. The winner of the prestigious Career Award is Marc Van Hoe, also a textile designer, who earned his reputation through his use of innovative materials and extensive research.

Neither Van Hoe nor Steverlynck are well known outside of the design and textile industry, but their awards could change that. Textile designers are "not as well-known because we don't always offer ready-made products," explains Van Hoe. "I hand my inventions over to fashion designers, who make it into a coat, or to interior designers, who uses it to cover a sofa."

But textile designers do more than fondle fabrics all day: "You have to be interested in the arts and in fashion, you travel a lot, and you learn how to pay attention," says Van Hoe. "You're in touch with furniture designers and with architects... it's an undertaking very rich in content."

Flanders in fact has a long and illustrious history in textiles, particularly in wool and tapestries, but also in factory textile production in the first half of the 20th century. But the world has changed over the past few decades. "Anything was possible 40 years ago; people worked hard and made a lot of money," says Van Hoe. "Now we're not the centre of the textile industry anymore and have had to give up on mass production."

Still, all is not lost, according to Van Hoe. "Textiles can still play an important role in Flanders because we're clever and have the necessary experience. We just have to make sure to provide adequate education and not focus on production alone." These two 2010 Henry Van de Velde Awards are surely a step in the right direction.



» *continued on page 5*

FACE OF FLANDERS

Michel Moortgat



It's very likely glasses were raised in Puurs, Antwerp province, last week, when it was announced that this year's Manager of the Year, voted by the readers of business magazine *Trends*, was Michel Moortgat.

Moortgat, 43, is one of three brothers at the top of Duvel Moortgat, one of the country's most successful breweries. Times have been tough for brewers, with café sales in decline, hardly made up for by a trend towards entertaining at home. Despite that, Duvel Moortgat, whose brands include Duvel, Maredsous, Vedett and Liefmans, has performed well. During the period 2007-2009, turnover was up 30% and profit up 37%. Even though beer is considered somewhat recession-proof, those are impressive figures.

According to the award jury, Duvel Moortgat succeeded by concentrating on strong brands: "Quality took precedence over volume," the citation said. In 2004 the company re-launched Vedett, which has become a fixture in trendier Flemish cafés. La Chouffe came in for the same treatment in 2006, and Liefmans in 2008-2009.

Last year, Duvel Moortgat took over De Koninck, virtually the house beer of Antwerp, obtaining not only a major brand, but also some valuable real estate in a string of cafés and other properties in the city.

The Moortgat brothers, Michel, Bernard and Philippe, own 60% of the shares. The company dates back to 1871, when it was established in nearby Breendonk. They've managed growth in a shrinking home market, as well as increased exports. Belgian beer is a premium item in the UK, the US, the Netherlands and even France, and Duvel Moortgat's speciality brands are just the sort of thing foreign connoisseurs relish.

Moortgat himself is known as charming but also strictly no-nonsense, with a talent for surrounding himself with good people. "A good manager has to have an open mind. He listens and shows emotional intelligence. A good manager has to be flexible, but that's not the same as constantly leaving every decision open to discussion and changing course at the least set-back," he told *Trends*.

→ www.duvel.be

ALAN HOPE

Don't forget

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FLANDERS TODAY
JANUARY 19, 2011

News in brief

All new **gambling machines in cafés** will be required to be fitted with ID card readers from 1 July to allow automatic age checks, the government announced last week. Existing machines will have to be adapted by July 2015. The law restricts the use of gambling machines to over-18s. Café owners will be allowed to use a "house card" to lend to patrons who have forgotten their own ID card, but if used by minors, owners risk losing their licences.

Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, will receive **honorary doctorates** on 2 February from the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL). Recipients also include the Italian writer Claudio Magris and Polish economist and specialist in micro-credit Maria Nowak.

The allowance dates back to the time before mobile phones, when senior officers were compensated for use of their home phones for official business.

Production of the Belgica mussel will be reduced this year because of damage to mussel beds caused by storms, producers Reynaert-Versluys warned. The beds in the North Sea off the Flemish coast have to be brought in for maintenance and will not be put back in time for enough growth to meet this year's targets. The company, the first to grow mussels in Belgian waters, also suffered an upset in 2008 when the federal food safety agency withdrew the mussels from sale after traces of toxic materials were found.

The publisher of the popular comic strip *Suske en Wiske* has started **legal action against the far-right party Vlaams Belang** after it published a calendar in Ghent that featured a parody of the cover of the album "De Wilde Weldoener" ("The Wild Benefactor"). The cover was adapted to show Ghent mayor Daniel Termont distributing coins to a crowd of dark-skinned and burqa-wearing citizens. The strip's creator, the late Willy Vandersteen, left orders in his will that his characters were not to be used for political purposes.

Herman Van Rompuy, Kim Clijsters and Bart De Wever have been voted among the top 10 **Belgians of the Year** by a poll of readers conducted by several French-language media. Van Rompuy came fourth, Clijsters – last year's winner – came fifth, and De Wever took eighth place, just ahead of socialist party leader Elio Di Rupo. First place went to King Albert II.

Historian and author Timothy Garton Ash and the Archbishop of

The most **popular names for babies** in Flanders in 2010 were Marie for girls and Louis for boys, family organisation Kind & Gezin reported. Emma and Louise took second and third place for girls, with Lucas and Daan making up the top three for boys.

Belgium lies in **32nd place in a world ranking of economic freedom**, compiled by the conservative American think tank the Heritage Foundation. The list, which measures government intervention in the free market, was headed by Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland. Belgium received negative points for the tax burden on companies and for government debt, but also for its alleged price controls on bread, waste treatment, cars and water. Government administrative affairs minister Vincent Van Quickenborne declared himself puzzled. "There are no price controls on those things," a spokesman said. "Nobody here knows what the think tank is getting at."

A number of top police officers have been ordered to **repay a €20 monthly allowance** they have been receiving – in some cases for years – for telephone use, separate from their official mobile phones.

Belgian fishermen are **leaving behind up to half of the fish** they are entitled to catch because there is no market for them, according to the industry. In 2009, fishermen took only half of their EU quota of monkfish, sprat, rockfish and pollock and about 25% less than the quota for cod and sole, according to figures from the Flemish government.

Correction:

In our article "The Year Ahead" (12 January), we stated that Lies Vangeel was speaking on behalf of the Flanders Fashion Institute. Vangeel is in fact not associated with the FFI and was speaking as an independent stylist.

On page 16 of the same issue, the roller derby photograph should have been attributed to Véronique Lheureux.

ALAN HOPE

OFFSIDE

Hit or Miss

It seemed like one of the last things – together with chocolate, the Red Devils and the king – that could bring the factions in Belgium together, but this year's Miss Belgium contest did anything but. The contest was won by Justine De Jonckheere (*pictured*), 18, from Wevelgem, West Flanders. Despite being no-one's favourite before the competition, she was a worthy winner, if you go for that sort of thing.

However, several of her fellow contestants didn't go for it at all, and one even alleges fraud. At the announcement of the result, four of the candidates from Wallonia refused to take the podium in protest. One, Lara Binet, alleged that the result had been decided in advance, regardless of the SMS votes that viewers were invited to send in. She has now started an action to have the money from the votes cast for her – some 14,000 – donated to a charity.

Protesters claim the contest was rigged by organiser Darline Devos, herself from West Flanders. Critics point out that Devos would regularly drive to rehearsals with Justine as her passenger. They also point out that three of the last five Miss Belgians were also natives of the province.

This year, four of the five finalists were Flemish, a circumstance some attribute to bias, but which others put down to the French-speaking contestants' inability to speak Dutch, with one girl coming up



© Daniel De Gave

speechless when she had to speak the language. "Bart De Wever is right," one of the protesting girls was reported as saying. "Flanders and Wallonia have nothing more to do with each other."

FLANDERS TODAY

Flanders Today, a free weekly English-language newspaper, is an initiative of the Flemish Region and is financially supported by the Flemish authorities.



The logo and the name Flanders Today belong to the Flemish Region (Benelux Beeldmerk nr 815.088). The editorial team of Flanders Today has full editorial autonomy regarding the content of the newspaper and is responsible for all content, as stipulated in the agreement between Corelio Publishing and the Flemish authorities.

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Belgium's debt: lack of interest in Belgian bonds

continued from page 1

Last week the interest on Belgian 10-year bonds went up to 4.27%, far less than the Portuguese figure, but still high enough to induce vertigo in government circles. At the same time, the difference between the rate on Belgian and on German bonds – the so-called spread – opened up to an unprecedented 139 points. As a rule of thumb, with Germany being the most trusted European economy, the wider the spread, the fewer investors are attracted by the bonds.

The problem is not yet, as was the case with Greece and Ireland, that investors are offloading Belgian paper. However, they are not showing much interest in what

little there is on sale, a reflection of market jitters regarding the eurozone as a whole. Not an encouraging sign for an issue that will be at least three times as big as that of Portugal.

But the government needs to borrow the money, and it will have to accept whatever rates it can get. If those turn out to be higher than expected, the Debt Agency enters into a vicious circle, as higher interest leads to more debt, which leads to the need to issue more paper to service the debt. In the end, the burden falls on the taxpayer. "All of our effort to save a couple of billion extra would then have been for nothing," commented federal budget minister Guy Vanhengel.

The figures are dizzying: for the whole year 2011, according to projections made in December, the government needs to borrow a total of €82.23 billion, including



© Shutterstock

almost €15 billion to plug the hole in the budget, €24 billion to pay out on bonds reaching their term and nearly €40 billion to refinance running debts. That's 26.6% of GDP for the coming year. Before the Belgian sale, the governments of Spain, Italy and Portugal will have gone to the

markets again. The four countries are seen as the weakest in the eurozone, other than Ireland and Greece. The outcomes of their auctions – for a total of more than €26 billion – will give a strong indication of the likely success of the Belgian offer – if there is any interest left at all. ♦

→ www.cmavision.com

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



220,000

people in Belgium have or have recently had flu, according to the government's flu expert. With that, the epidemic this year has reached its peak and is already starting to decline in Brussels and Antwerp

4.89 million

passengers carried by Brussels Airlines in 2010, an increase of 4.4% on the previous year. The company said the figure would have topped five million were it not for the Iceland volcano and the bitter winter weather. Freight activity was up 22%

700

invitations to the New Year reception given by the municipal authorities of Knokke-Heist have gone missing in the post, the city council announced. The invitations for the event on 15 January were posted on 20 December but failed to arrive before the party, thanks to heavy snow and industrial action at the sorting office in Ghent

0

speeding tickets handed out by police in central Brussels since the introduction of a 30 km/h speed limit four months ago

10

escapes by prisoners in Belgium in 2010, compared to 34 in 2009. Only three of the prisoners actually escaped from prison; the other escapes took place during transfers from one prison to another

Inquiry into jailing of prison director

Federal justice minister Stefaan De Clerck has called for an investigation into the actions of a magistrate after he ordered a prison director to be locked up by police, along with the chief prison guard and the guard on duty at the gate.

The incident occurred when Wim De Troy, who hit the headlines last year as the Brussels magistrate in charge of the investigation into an alleged cover-up of sexual abuse by clergy, drove to Sint-Gillis to sign the detention order of a suspected drug dealer. He arrived in his private car, and the guard at the gate would not let him drive his car into the prison. De Troy called for the chief prison officer, who upheld the other guard's decision. The two officers were then supported by the prison director on duty that evening.

De Troy's response was to call the special unit of police that covers Zaventem airport, where the case against the alleged drug dealer is being handled, and have the three arrested for obstruction of an official investigation. They were detained and questioned at the airport, while De Troy signed the detention order.

"At first glance it appears the prison personnel behaved correctly," De Clerck said at the weekend. "If what is emerging now turns out to be true, I find it an extremely strange reaction from a magistrate. It is out of all proportion....We make a lot of effort to help the prison system work properly. The historically low prison escape figures for 2010 show that we're on the right track. A magistrate cannot be allowed to ignore the rules." ♦

Channels attack plans for VRT3

Several commercial TV channels, including VT4 (owned by SBSBelgium) and VTM (Vlaamse Media Maatschappij), have issued a joint call for clarity from the government over the role of the public broadcaster VRT. Information emerged last week that VRT is considering launching a third free-to-air channel in the near future, with the support of both new CEO Sandra De Pretere and Flemish media minister Ingrid Lieten.

Plans for the third channel are not official, but the commercial channels, meeting as the Private Broadcasters Federation (POF), fear they could include an expansion of Ketnet, the children's TV strand that shares the second channel with Canvas in the evening, and with Sporza if there are sports events of major Belgian interest. Ketnet is by far the ratings leader in children's TV, ahead of vtmkazoom and VT4's cartoon output. The POF considers an expansion of Ketnet as unfair competition and has counselled the VRT to consider other interest groups instead.

Other critics ask how it is possible for the VRT to consider starting up a new channel when it is already

under orders to cut €65 million in spending. It has already implemented large-scale redundancies, with 293 people leaving in the next few months.

• Meanwhile, VRT CEO Sandra De Pretere last week told viewers of the programme *Reyers Laat* that the broadcaster would not be taking part in the bidding this year for rights to broadcast football matches. Her decision was later explained by the channel's sports manager, Luc Van Langenhove. "Apparently some people thought a few million would come falling out of the air, but the money just isn't there," he told *De Morgen*. ♦



Klumpies, one of the latest big Ketnet hits

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Love story

Marie-Rose Morel leaves few people indifferent. The former beauty queen and far-right politician is dying of a rapidly spreading cancer. She is preparing to leave behind two sons, aged six and four, and a husband, whom she recently married, fully aware that death is only weeks away. It is hard not to be moved by this.

Morel's story is unusual in many respects. For one thing, she is very open about her imminent death. One can read about it almost daily in the popular press and all over the internet. "Dying on stage" *De Morgen* called this. It has inflated her popularity far beyond where it was as a politician.

That Morel should be given such a forum stands at odds with the way other politicians belonging to her party are treated. Members of the extreme right Vlaams Belang are rarely given the opportunity to talk about their private lives. Morel is different though. Her story is just too good not to be published.

Still, Morel doesn't only have admirers. The Muslim organisation Sharia4Belgium recently got itself noticed when it claimed Allah was punishing her for her political views. Less laughable was Bart De Bie, an intimate of Vlaams Belang strong man Filip Dewinter, who wrote: "Put the champagne in the fridge!" on Facebook after news broke of Morel's imminent death. The remark was so callous, even for the party Morel fell out with, that De Bie was promptly fired.

Morel was introduced to politics by a former college friend, N-VA's Bart De Wever. After she failed to get elected, Morel left De Wever's party for the then much larger Vlaams Belang. Within Vlaams Belang, Morel soon formed a special alliance with party president Frank Vanhecke, giving her disproportionate power.

The duo (who vehemently denied they were a couple) fell out of grace with the rest of the party leadership. This led to a power struggle, which ended with Morel and Vanhecke leaving Vlaams Belang. Morel was not done with the party, though. Even now, she still sneers at anyone who has stood in her way before. In these circumstances, Vlaams Belang finds it hard to battle with Morel, who has been transformed from an eternal troublemaker into a saint in the public's eye.

Morel's recent marriage to Vanhecke, the man with whom she always denied having a relationship, is just another odd twist in this story. One can only wish them happiness and strength in the days to come.



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Designed and delivered

Textiles designers finally get their due

→ *continued from page 1*

From art to industry

The Henry Van de Velde Awards and Labels were founded in 1994 by the Flemish Institute for Entrepreneurship, the predecessor of Design Vlaanderen. "At that time, no national award existed for good design," explains Bie Luyssaert of Design Vlaanderen. "There were plenty of awards for art, literature, music and film, but none for the applied arts." The Van de Velde Awards changed this by presenting four designers each year with an award in different categories: career, young talent, best product and public choice. In 1995, an extra award was added, presented to a company.

A few years ago, the award for best product was abandoned, replaced by the Henry Van de Velde Labels in 2006. "The award for best product led to too many discussions. It was

"It's a recognition that inspires me to keep developing ideas. It gives me that extra bit of ardour, of appetite"

incredibly hard to compare a silver platter to a mud guard for bikes, for example," says Luyssaert. "With the HVDV quality labels, we're able to designate all of those products that clearly deserve the recognition."

A few years ago, in conjunction with the Public Waste Agency of Flanders (OVAM), the awards also added the OVAM Ecodesign Award Pro.

Nominees for the awards are selected by Design Vlaanderen, and their work is presented to a jury. "Much like how the VIZO branch of Arts and Crafts evolved into Design Vlaanderen, there has been an evolution from artistic projects to designers who work for the industry," explains Luyssaert. "This follows from the way in which designers are working these days. Many do still create products that are unique or produced on a small scale, but they also create on an industrial scale." Van de Velde Award winners are presented a money prize and trophy. The trophy in itself is an object created by a different designer every five years – currently Helena Schepens, whose creation will do the honours until 2014. The awards ceremony takes place in the Flemish Parliament building in Brussels' Leuvenseweg, where an exhibition of work by winning designers is open to the public until 26 February. ♦

→ www.designvlaanderen.be

The Van de Velde manifesto

"You shall understand this form and construction of all objects only in the sense of their most stringent logic and justification for being. You shall accommodate and subordinate these forms and constructions to the essential use of the material which you employ. And, should the desire animate you to embellish these forms and constructions, only yield to this desire in so far as you can respect the rights and the essential appearance of these forms and constructions and retain them."

And the 2010 winners are...

Career Textile designer Marc Van Hoe, known for his innovative use of materials



Public Jaga Ontwerpstudio of Diepenbeek for their child-friendly radiator "Play"



Company Family-owned Curana in Roeselare, specialised in fantastically cool-looking bicycle parts (their famous made-to-order mud flaps grace our cover)



OVAM Ecodesign Award PRO
The Beltag lost-and-found service, designed by Ghent's Pars Pro Toto

Young Talent Diane Steverlynck, known for producing finished products rather than providing textiles to other designers. Buyers of her "Self Couture" line can turn their bedspreads into jackets and skirts



Who was Henry Van de Velde?

Henry Clemens Van de Velde was born in Antwerp in 1863. He was a painter, artist, designer and architect. Together with Victor Horta, he is considered the founder of the Art Nouveau style in Belgium.

Van de Velde was known for his preference to link the aesthetic with the utilitarian. His breakthrough in Germany led him to move to Berlin and found the crafts seminar in Weimar: precursor of the School of Arts and Crafts, which in turn was the predecessor of the Bauhaus.

Here, Van de Velde proved to be an excellent teacher as well as designer. Many years later, he would move to Switzerland and then return to Belgium, where he continued to influence and inspire many students as director of the Institut Supérieur des Arts Décoratifs, now known as La Cambre. His best-known architecture in Belgium is his own 1895 home in Brussels' Ukkel district and Ghent's famous Book Tower of 1939.

Van de Velde eventually retired to Zürich, where he died in 1957.

The decision to dedicate awards for outstanding design to Henry Van de Velde was an easy one. "He was chosen because of his versatility as a designer," says Bie Luyssaert of Design Flanders. "He designed buildings and furniture, but he also created book covers, objects, clothing and paintings... It remains an inspiring feat to this day."

→ www.henry-van-de-velde.com

Young Talents on their HVDV awards

"Winning the award has brought me a lot of attention in the Flemish media, leading to more interviews. I suppose I did sell a few more handbags because of it, but it wasn't the big break for me. Mouth-to-mouth is even more important."

Accessory designer Michaël Verheyden – Young Talent 2008

"For me, there are two important aspects to the prize. First, it helps you being taken more seriously. People and organisations have more confidence in designers who have won a prestigious award and are more likely to work with you. Second, but equally importantly, it helps you believe in yourself."

Furniture and accessory designer Linde Hermans – Young Talent 2007



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putting people first

Albert Heijn launches in Flanders

Dutch supermarket chain could spark price war

ALAN HOPE

The biggest supermarket chain in the Netherlands, Albert Heijn, will open its first Belgian supermarket in March in Brasschaat, Antwerp province, near the Dutch border. The chain has had its eye on Flanders for some time and has chosen to launch in a city with a large population of Dutch expats. But parent company Ahold said the new store would not be an export version of the Dutch model, but a Belgian store in its own right.

The arrival of Albert Heijn is expected to upset the local supermarket industry, which is currently dominated by Delhaize, Colruyt and Carrefour. Ahold is not yet releasing any details of its strategy for expanding into Belgium, but some industry experts estimate a total of 200 stores might be achievable. According to Gino Van Ossel, retail specialist at Vlerick Management School, the arrival of Albert Heijn could have a greater impact than the arrival of German deep-discounter Lidl in the 1970s.

Albert Heijn dominates the Dutch market, with a market share of nearly 33%, compared to 26% for Delhaize, the market leader in Belgium. The company is known for selling products at low prices as loss-leaders. In the past, it has sold large bottles of Coca-Cola for a few cents as a means of attracting families to do all their shopping in the store, although this policy has been investigated by competition regulators. As a result, Dutch supermarkets are extremely price sensitive, with brand names suffering the most as supermarket chains force them to offer advantageous price deals as the cost of a presence in their stores.

Ahold will, however, find Belgium a quite different market, Van Ossel warned. Belgian supermarkets take on a major burden of real estate because shoppers demand parking on a larger scale than the Dutch.



The new store will take the place of a local supermarket on the Hoogboomsteenweg in Brasschaat and be operated as a franchise, along the lines of many Delhaize City and Carrefour Express supermarkets in Belgium. It will be supplied from Albert Heijn's distribution centre in Tilburg, with the product range adapted to local requirements. The store, occupying 1,200 square metres and employing 40 staff, will open in March following a complete renovation.

• The death was announced last week of Albert Heijn, grandson of the founder of the supermarket chain and former chairman of the board. He was 83 and suffering from post-polio syndrome, a disorder of the

central nervous system. He is credited with the introduction of the modern supermarket concept to the Netherlands, as well as playing a role in the introduction of bar codes to speed up checkout.

• Lidl, meanwhile, has been fined €27,500 by a Ghent court for misleading advertising. The chain advertised several products, including ink cartridges and men's underwear that were not stocked in many stores. Lidl was also ordered by a court in Brussels to pay €35,000 to consumer organisation Test-Aankoop for the misuse of test results in advertising. Lidl had used the organisation's Best Buy seal, awarded for individual products, to advertise unrelated products. ♦

New lock for Terneuzen as Ghent harbour grows

The Flemish and Dutch governments last week signed an agreement over the construction of a large lock at Terneuzen in Zeeland, the Netherlands, at the mouth of the canal that links the Port of Ghent to the Scheldt estuary and the North sea.

The agreement reached by mobility minister Hilde Crevits and her Dutch counterpart Melanie Schultz van Haegen brings to an end several years of doubt over the future of the Port of Ghent. Three options were being considered: a lock for smaller craft, a combi-lock for seagoing vessels intended for inland waterways or a large sea lock. In the end, the two governments opted for the latter, most expensive, option, which was favoured by the Flemish government.

The Port of Ghent (*pictured*) last year saw record traffic of 48 million tonnes, an increase of

29% over 2009. Port authorities said the increase was largely due to the access available to larger ships.

The increase covered both sea traffic and inland waterway traffic. "This is beyond our wildest dreams," commented Ghent's alderman for port affairs, Christophe Peeters.

Brazil is Ghent's main trading partner, largely for the import of ores and fruit juices. Russia comes second, for coal and metal products. Direct and indirect employment at the port, which is seen as an important junction between sea freight and traffic on inland waterways, is estimated at about 70,000 workers, expected to grow in the next couple of years as the port heads towards its target of 50 million tonnes of traffic. The new sea lock at Terneuzen will have a major effect on that progression.

At Zeebrugge, meanwhile, port traffic was up 11% in 2010 to 49.8 million tonnes, also an all-time record. All types of freight saw an increase, in particular new cars and ride-on, ride-off (ro-ro) freight. The port saw 1.6 million cars pass through, an increase of almost 25% on 2009. For ro-ro



© Tom d'Haenens

freight, the increase was 31% to 12.5 million tonnes. The number of cruise passengers also rose, by 19.6% to 201,250. This year, Zeebrugge will open a new container terminal at the Albert II dock. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Aviation • Sabena Technics

Zaventem-based Sabena Technics has won a 12-year contract from the French navy for the maintenance of six Falcon 10 transport aircraft.

Biotech • Galapagos

Mechelen-based bio-technology firm Galapagos has received an additional €7.4 million from pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline to meet additional development criteria for an anti-arthritis drug. The company has already received payments of some €55 million from GSK.

Biotech • Innogenetics

Ghent-based Innogenetics, taken over last year by the Japanese Fujirebio, is to cut 80 jobs, one-third of the current workforce. The parent company said it intended to move away from research and development toward sales and distribution.

Hotels • Hilton

The landmark Brussels Hilton hotel on Waterloolaan is to be rebranded as "The Hotel" from 1 February. The move follows the acquisition of the landmark building by the Swedish Pandox group for €25 million and the termination of its management contract with the Hilton group. The 40-year-hotel will go through a €25 million renovation. Other hotels already operated by Pandox in Brussels include the Bloom and the Crown Plaza Palace.

Pharmaceuticals • Omega Pharma

Omega Pharma, based in Nazareth, East Flanders, has acquired a number of strategic brands in the UK and France, for a total price of €14 million. In France, the company acquired Duo LP Pro, an over-the-counter treatment for head lice and nits. In the UK, Omega acquired three brands from the Shapemart slimming products range from Goldshield.

Post • TNT

Dutch transport and express delivery group TNT is selling its Zaventem-based distribution services to its management. The deal is backed by the Amsterdam-based NPM Capital investment fund. The move is not expected to have any impact on the company's 450 employees.

Retail • Antwerp

Rents on Antwerp's Meir, the city's main shopping street, have caught up with those on Brussels' Nieuwstraat, according to the recently released Cushman & Wakefield retail survey. At some €1,800 per square metres yearly, the rents are the country's highest.

Security • Brink's

The ailing local affiliate of US-based security services firm Brink's will file for bankruptcy. The move precedes its relaunch in a joint venture between the Swedish Loomis security group and local businessman Ramy Baron. The future owners have guaranteed that some 300 jobs out of the existing 398 would be secure and that the four operational bases would remain open.

Living

Southern comfort

Flanders might seem cold and northern, but it is filled with influences from the warm Mediterranean

CLEVELAND MOFFETT

The spirit of the Renaissance, or the first thin wedge of it, arrived in Belgium when Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, then an aging scholar, unpacked his bags at his lodgings in Anderlecht one day in May 1521. He brought with him his European-wide fame as a sage, a saint and a dabbler in perilous opinions.

More than that, Erasmus brought along the classical learning he had perfected in Italy. The combination of his scholarly knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, together with a scorn for the corruption of the clergy as he witnessed it in Italy, turned Erasmus into what his enemies called a heretic and his admirers a humanist.

To maintain this delicate balance between erudition and indignation took all of Erasmus' tact and ironic ambiguity, nowhere more apparent than in his audacious satire *In Praise of Folly*. But when, speaking as the allegorical figure of Folly, his contained fury breaks through the mockery, the meaning could not be less subtle.

Folly's opinion of monks is that they are "gloriously self-satisfied", that they "believe it's the highest form of piety to be so uneducated that they can't even read" and that they "make a good living out of their squalor and beggary, bellowing for bread from door to door..."

If it had been left up to Erasmus, there might have been some hope of a relatively peaceful reform of at least the worst abuses of the church, such as the practise of buying and selling salvation.

But what he did do for Flanders was leave an invaluable mark on the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL). He spent the years 1517 to 1521 at the university – one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in Europe – where he helped establish the college that taught the three so-called sacred languages, Greek, Latin and Hebrew.

The cultural pilgrimage to Italy was a defining experience of any aspiring Flemish artist in the 16th century. Among the first to make that fateful voyage and to experience for himself the wonders of the Italian Renaissance was Jan Gossaert (1478-1532), sometimes called Jan Mabuse, the subject

of a major exhibition soon to move from New York to London.

Certainly no Fleming went to Italy to learn how to paint; such supreme artists as Jan and Hubert van Eyck, Hans Memling, Rogier van der Weyden and so many others achieved the ultimate in life-likeness and emotional expressiveness. But what Gossaert discovered when he accompanied his patron, Philip of Burgundy, to Italy in 1508 was not only a different way of painting, but new and different subject matter.

A good example is his "St Luke painting the Virgin" where the mother and child on one side of the picture and the artist on the other are both done with familiar Flemish precision. But between them a long and spacious nave opens up, demonstrating a mastery of the laws of perspective that Gossaert could only have learned from the Italians. He also uses the picture to show off his knowledge of classical architecture and a more subtle placing of light and shade, or chiaroscuro.

By far the most radical departure from the traditional approach and purpose of art – the glorification of the Holy Family and assorted saints – was the introduction of pagan figures from mythology such as Venus, Neptune, Apollo, Hercules. Ever more explicit nudity was another borrowing from a promiscuous Italy. Gossaert's drawings of Adam and Eve are nothing short of lascivious; they're obviously going to enjoy sin before they get chased out of Paradise. The title of the exhibition of his work at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City: *Man, Myth and Sensual Pleasures: Jan Gossaert's Renaissance*.

For those unable to make the long and arduous trip to Italy, the ingenious 15th-century invention of the woodcut and engraving (soon followed by the printing of books) allowed them to see images of original art in the comfort of their studios. The engravings became works of art in their own right in the hands of such craftsmen as Gossaert. As one art historian puts it: "the printing of images ensured the triumph of the art of the Italian Renaissance in the rest of Europe". Nowhere more so than in the country that is today Belgium.

The food of love

And then there was music. The rich history of Flemish composers of the 15th and 16th centuries is widely appreciated in Flanders even today, with popular concerts by such internationally recognised ensembles as La Petite Bande of Sigiswald Kuijken, the Capilla Flamenca of Dirk Snellings and the Collegium Vocale Gent of Philippe Herreweghe.

The history of this resurgence of interest in early music would not be complete without reference to the extraordinary Italian career of the choirboy Roland de Lassus (1532-1594). The story goes that young Roland was kidnapped three times for his beautiful singing voice. With suitable guarantees for his safety, his parents allowed him, at the age of 12, to go to the court of Ferrante Gonzaga, the Viceroy of Sicily. Young Roland, who became so thoroughly Italianised that he wanted to be known as Orlando di Lasso, moved up the peninsula, invited into the palatial homes of the Italian nobility from Naples to Venice.

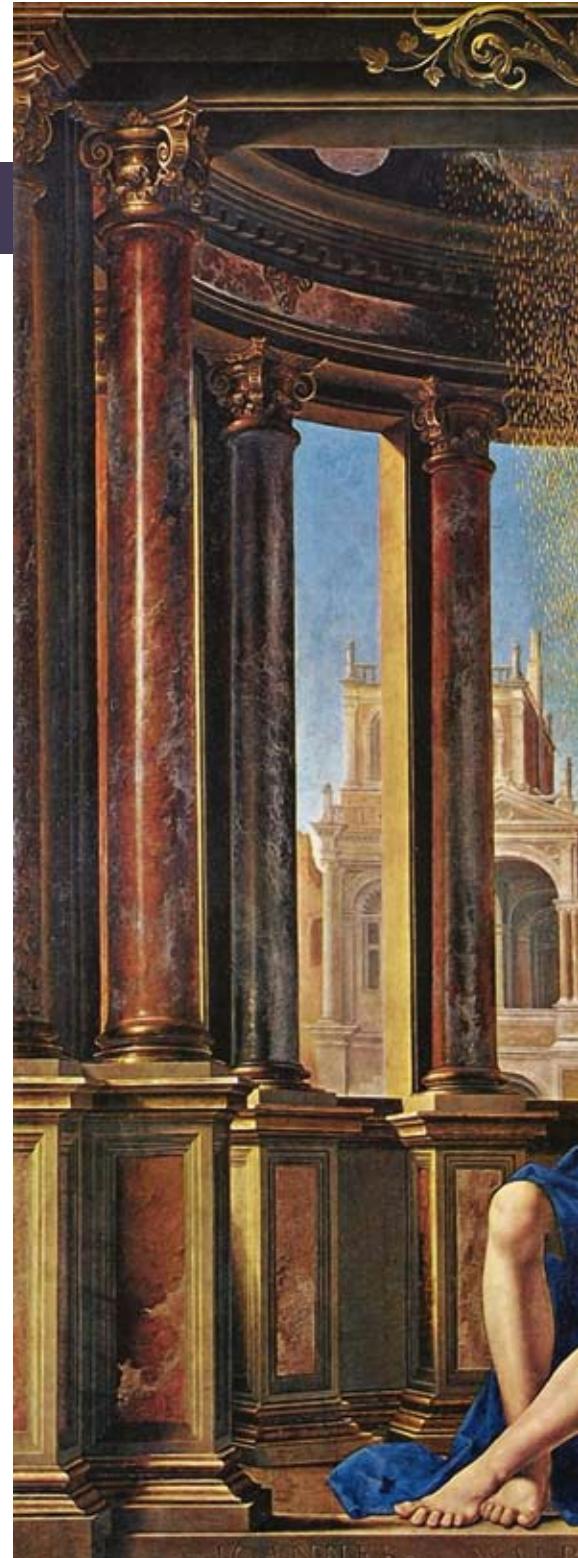
With adolescence, the boy's voice changed, and he became a composer of music in every known form, including motets, madrigals and masses. The music of the Venetians tended to be solemn and restrained, Lasso's to be "pictorial and dramatic".

Lasso left Italy in 1555 and brought his acquired musical skills with him to Antwerp. Before his death in 1594, he had written more than 2,000 works and been acclaimed as one of the supreme masters of 16th century polyphony. One specialist in the field has reliably calculated that three fifths of all music published between 1555 and 1600 can be attributed to the phenomenally prolific Lasso.

Nor was he alone, as the concerts by Renaissance music groups today can attest. The names of Jakob Obrecht, Heinrich Isaak and Josquin des Prés are among several other early Netherlandish composers who are regularly programmed.

The sinjoren

The winds of the Mediterranean that blew up from Spain, meanwhile, were more like the scorching sirocco that drives men



mad. Under that arch heresy-hunter Philip II, the low countries were invaded by his infamous Spanish troops led by the Duke of Alva, and all opposition crushed.

Anyone who might be suspected of sympathy with Lutheran or Calvinist doctrines either fled to the north or risked persecution and death. The result was a drastic loss of free-thinking scholars and many of the more skilled artisans, a kind of 16th-century brain drain.

Sincere and contented Catholics, on the other hand, had nothing to fear. Indeed, to some extent, they prospered. One of the very few wise and generous acts of the tyrannical Philip II was his decision to turn over the 17 provinces of the Netherlands to the Archduke Albert of Austria and marry him to his favourite daughter, Isabella.

After nearly half a century of foreign rule, the new arrangement seemed to promise something like national independence. The port city of Antwerp was the first to benefit from an increase in trade and the immigration of Spanish merchants and bankers. In the eyes of the populace, these new residents became known as *sinjoren* in a mangled version of *señor*.

When word of the flourishing state of Antwerp got back to Spain, the common expression was coined, *No hay mas Flandes*, meaning that nothing could be better. This was the era of the new generation of artists – Rubens, Van Dyck, Jordaens and their followers. Rubens, another Italy-lover, signed the letters he wrote in Italian with the name of Pietro Paolo Rubens.

© Miriam Devrient



The extremely popular Collegium Vocale performs historical Baroque music – a mirror of the Italian Renaissance in modern Flanders



Flemish Primitive Jan Gossaert returned from Italy with new subject matter; London's National Gallery hosts a major Gossaert show starting next month, the first devoted to the artist in more than four decades

The illusion of prosperity did not last. Albert and Isabella were stubbornly determined to keep the 17 provinces together, but did nothing to make the policy more attractive to the disaffected northerners who persisted in their

allegiance to Reformation or protestant values. And so the warfare broke out anew, and this time the 10 provinces of the north, now the Netherlands, declared themselves independent.

The cruel oppression that Spain exercised

in the southern provinces will not be forgotten nor easily explained away. But the new learning and the arts that represent the good that humanity can do sum up the truest meaning of the word "Renaissance". ♦



Erasmus brought his classical education from Italy to Leuven where he helped found the university departments of Greek, Latin and Hebrew



Genk is known for its Greek and Italian neighbourhoods – the closest you can get to a Little Italy in Flanders, with its Vespa club and strange fascination with cappuccino and Italian football. Even when cheering on their home team, FC Genk fans give a nod to Italy with their famous chant "Forza Racing!"

© Portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger 1523; National Gallery, London

Royal imports

They couldn't be more different, but Belgium's two living queens both brought a bit of Latin style to the throne of Belgium. Fabiola de Mora y Aragón, born in Madrid in 1928, is the widow of Boudewijn, the fourth king of the Belgians. A devout Catholic, she generously devotes time to social causes, especially mental health, the welfare of children and women's issues in developing countries. It is her greatest sorrow that she was unable to have children; five of her pregnancies ended in miscarriage.

Belgium's current queen is Paola Ruffo di Calabria (*pictured*), born in Forte dei Marmi, Northern Tuscany, in 1937 and consort of Albert II. A famous beauty in her youth, she has led a subdued life as Queen of the Belgians. The couple have three children – Philippe, Astrid and Laurent, along with several grandchildren. Paola takes a special interest in contemporary art; it was she who commissioned Flemish artist Jan Fabre to create his now-famous work consisting entirely of bright green beetles meticulously applied to the ceiling and chandelier in the Royal Palace in Brussels.



© Wikimedia Commons

STREEKPRODUCT SERIES

ALAN HOPE

Filet d'Anvers

Filet d'Anvers (as it's known throughout Flanders) is a cut of beef silverside, also known as the eye of round. It's an extremely lean cut and rather tough, as it comes from the animal's hind leg – hence the intensive and lengthy preparation.

While in the past *filet d'Anvers* could be made with horseflesh, the three recognised producers in Flanders – two in Antwerp and one in Limburg – use beef, with the fillet labelled "ossevlees" – literally "ox meat", though it can come from any bovine animal: steer, cow or bull.

First the meat is lightly pickled, then allowed to dry. It's then salted and allowed to rest before being smoked with beech wood. The whole process can take several weeks and depends on the size of the fillet, according to Louis-Philippe Michielsen of Vleeswaren Michielsen Producten in Schoten, just outside Antwerp. Michielsen has been producing *filet d'Anvers* since 1969.

The result is a fillet of about 15 cm in diameter and a deep Bordeaux in colour. It's eaten sliced paper-thin as sandwich meat or as part of a *charcuterie* plate. Our sample came from Keurslager Michielsen, another of the recognised producers (unrelated to the Schoten company).

The finished product is silky smooth, with the buttery feel of a fine Parma or San Daniele ham. There's more depth to

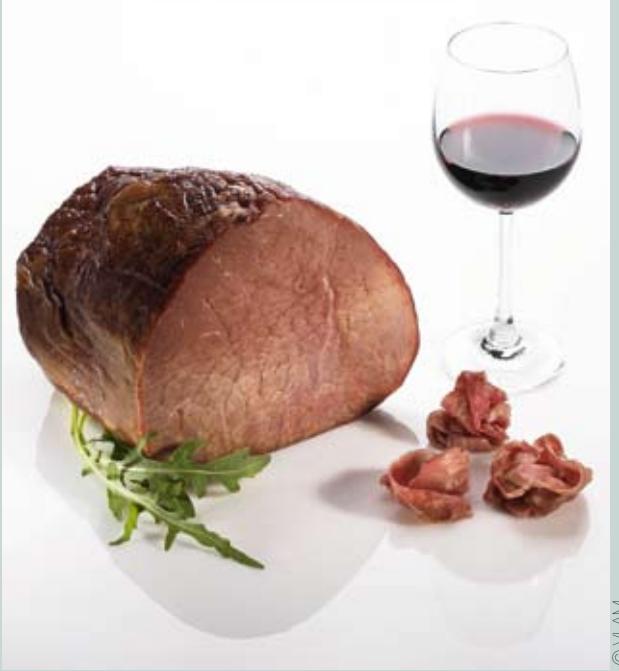
the flavour of beef, however, and it doesn't give it all up at once: the taste grows as you chew it. Personally, I find the flavour is smothered by bread, so I'd recommend eating it by itself. An indulgence, perhaps, but it deserves to be savoured.

Vleeswaren Michielsen also produces another recognised *streekproduct*, or regional product: Antwerp veal roll, or *kalfsrol*. Also a thin sandwich meat, it was originally a means of using up the less valued parts of the calf. The product fell out of favour for some time before Michielsen started making it again about 40 years ago.

The roll is made up of cuts of lightly pickled flank meat, or *bavette*, encasing a mixture of veal and seasoning, decorated in the centre with jewel-like studs of gherkin and *filet d'Anvers*. The *kalfsrol* went down better with our child tasters than the more developed and flavourful *filet d'Anvers*. Superficially similar products are available elsewhere, but Michielsen makes everything in-house, and the craftsmanship shows.

The "streekproduct" label means you're buying a locally made product produced according to traditional methods

→ www.streekproduct.be



© VLAM

Filet d'Anvers: the king of charcuterie

Lost connection

Slow-burning thriller *Pulsar* questions the technological ties that bind

IAN MUNDELL

Flemish director Alex Stockman describes *Pulsar* as a film he didn't see coming. "I was doing some research on the internet for another script, and I came across an advert for wi-fi blocking paint. I thought that was hilarious. Now that we've done everything to be reachable all the time, we are starting to protect ourselves from being reachable all the time."

This inspired him to think about a character fighting an invisible enemy, and soon he began to notice other aspects of communication technology that might go into the story. A crucial element came from talking to someone whose girlfriend was living in Montreal.

"He told me about the weary feeling you get from trying to have a long-distance relationship on Skype and the delay you have on the image and sound, which in the end makes you feel the distance and the incompleteness 10 times over," explains Stockman (*pictured*).

And this is what happens in *Pulsar*. Samuel has stayed behind in Brussels while his girlfriend Mireille has gone to New York to advance her career in architecture. The separation plays on Samuel's insecurities: he feels creative and tinkers with making music and taking photographs, but his day job is menial and tedious. He starts to wonder if he can live up to Mireille's expectations.

He uses all the means of communication at his disposal in an effort to keep the relationship alive. They chat, use web cams and send each other photographs and little movies. But this is when the internet seems to turn against him. "It's like science fiction, where the machines have a life of their own," Stockman says, "but I chose to put this in a very small story, on a more psychological level. You can call it a romantic thriller."

It was important to have an actor with presence for the role of Samuel, so Stockman chose Matthias Schoenaerts. "He is very strong at conveying a sense of brooding, and as a spectator you can really connect to that. He's like these old Hitchcock actors whose presence exists beyond the frame."

"Now that we've done everything to be reachable all the time, we try to protect ourselves from being reachable all the time"



© Luk Vanseert

In contrast to Schoenaerts' roles in *Loft* and *My Queen Karo*, Samuel starts out in *Pulsar* as a regular guy whose computer is playing up. "I chose a very ordinary hero, played by an actor who has something insouciant about him, and then showed his gradual loss of security and mental balance," Stockman says. "It's a way of saying that these darker, more dangerous aspects of communication devices and habits begin on a small scale in our daily lives."

This isn't to suggest that Stockman is a technophobe. "I'm young enough to use all this technology but old enough to be constantly surprised by it – and also pretty worried about where it will lead us. I don't think we will be able to cope with it, mentally and morally."

While a good deal of *Pulsar* takes place inside Samuel's apartment, you can still sense the city that he's in. "It's a typical Brussels apartment, which is almost like a character in the movie," Stockman says. "It has an inner courtyard, which provides this strange, unwanted visual and acoustic contact with neighbours, and a very long corridor. That's very Brussels."

But this is just one of the film's many layers. "There's

the layer of his cosy apartment, which becomes less cosy and more frightening. You have the layer of the city, and outside that the forest. Then you have the ocean that separates him from Mireille, and then the atmosphere where all these coded messages float around, all the way up to the stars."

Without giving away the ending, Samuel does find a solution to his dilemma, combining the different technologies that seem to be conspiring against him. "I like the fact that he puts together technologies of different eras," Stockman says, since Super 8 movies are also added to the mix, along with the conversion of digital media into hand-written documents. "I think copying is very interesting," he says. "You have these young girls who copy down their SMS messages; that's beautiful."

And in the end, Samuel manages to get his message to Mireille. "It all comes together: how to say it, what to say, how to deliver it," Stockman says. "Then there's the art of waiting for a reply, which we have kind of lost, and an homage to the old-fashioned rendezvous that you can't cancel, just like that, with an SMS." ♦

FILM REVIEW ★★★★

Pulsar

Samuel's girlfriend has gone to America to do an internship with an architect's office. At first they use the internet to stay in touch, but communication becomes increasingly difficult. At the same time, there are signs that someone is interfering with Samuel's computer, changing settings and blocking his connection.

As his relationship stumbles from one long-distance misunderstanding to the next, Samuel becomes increasingly detached. Keeping up with New York hours is ruining his sleep, and he starts to fall down on his job delivering packages of medicine to pharmacies around Brussels. Boosting his computer security doesn't help, so he starts to take more drastic measures.

Watching a man reading his email or updating his virus protection is not usually the stuff of movie

magic, even when the man concerned is Flemish heartthrob Matthias Schoenaerts. There are moments in *Pulsar* when you wonder if the film has fallen off the network altogether, but stick with it, and your patience will be rewarded. Schoenaerts is one attraction, demonstrating that he can play low-key characters as well as the larger-than-life roles of recent films *Loft* and *My Queen Karo*. He uses his height and bulk to convey vulnerability rather than menace, adding to the feeling of claustrophobia as Samuel is increasingly confined to his apartment.

The other reward is in the ending, which draws the threads of the story together into a brilliant act of creative resistance. Old-fashioned romance may yet stand a chance in the era of the gigabyte and megapixel. IM



Playing the Wild Cards

Flanders Audio-visual Fund turns students into directors

IAN MUNDELL

The film *Little Baby Jesus of Flandr* made a remarkable journey in 2010. It was selected for the Cannes Film Festival in May, had its national premiere at the Ghent Film Festival in October and was screened at 60 different venues across Flanders in December. But the journey began with one award, a Wild Card from the Flanders Audio-visual Fund (VAF) at the end of 2009.

The Wild Cards are VAF's way of helping the most promising student filmmakers make the transition to a career as professional directors. Film schools from across the region submit their students' work. Most are short films, but, even so, there may be as many as 60 for the juries to watch before making their choices. In 2010, two fiction films, two documentaries and, for the first time, one animation film were chosen.

The winners get funding for their next film project, the only stipulation being that it has to be over a certain length. This bypasses the usual process of bidding for VAF funds, which involves submitting a detailed dossier on the planned project for approval. "The money is given by us, not on the basis of a project but on the basis of what they have achieved in the school," says Pierre Drouot, head of VAF.

The winners can also choose a coach to help them write or direct their next project. This may sound like a continuation of film school by other means, but that's not the idea. "It's the transition from school to professional life," Drouot explains. "Tutors are not imposed, as they are in schools. We try to create pairs that are efficient and inspiring collaborations with the Wild Card winners."

The model example of how the Wild Card system should work is Hans Van Nuffel. He collected one of the first Wild Cards in 2005 and used the money to make a short film, *FAL*, with writer-director Erik De Kuyper as a coach. This short won a prize at the Montreal Film Festival and smoothed the way for Van Nuffel to win a VAF script workshop award, again with a coach.

This was Jean-Claude Van Rijckeghem, who liked the script so much that he agreed to produce it. The resulting feature film, *Adem*, came out last year and has been touring the world's film festivals. "He won a Wild Card in 2005, and at the beginning of 2010 he has finished a feature film," says Drouot. "In just four years, he is on the map." The amount of money offered (€60,000 for fiction and animation, €40,000 for documentary) is usually enough only to produce a short film, but there are exceptions. Joost Wynant, who also won in 2005, used the money to turn his winning short into a feature film, *De laatste zomer*, which came out in cinemas in 2007.

Little Baby Jesus of Flandr is a special case, since it is rare for a student film to be feature-length. Producer Tomas Leyers was on the jury that gave the film a Wild Card and was so impressed that he offered to help prepare it for a commercial release. After a little polishing, it was submitted for the Cannes film festival, and the rest is history.

According to Drouot, this is also part of the Wild Card process. "It makes professionals aware of the talent coming out of the schools." ♦

→ www.vaf.be



Wild Card Class of 2010

Now/Here

When he returns from abroad to sell his mother's apartment, Wim has to confront the friends he left behind and his feelings of mortality. Director **David Williamson** (Sint-Lukas film school, Brussels) uses intimate, hand-held camerawork to relate Wim's ambiguous feelings on returning, but pushes into more experimental territory for the psychologically charged conclusion.

Misschien later (Maybe Later)

A naked man and woman in a large shower have a banal conversation. A busy mother tries to convince her daughter, dressed for a party, that it isn't her birthday. An old man is lost in traffic. Twin schoolgirls storm out of class. Scene follows scene, linked by a feeling of tension rather than narrative. A daring approach from director **Moon Blaise** (RITS film school, Brussels), working with an unusually large cast of actors.

Mouse For Sale

In the first Wild Card for animation, a lonely mouse with big ears and only a sarcastic woodlouse for company tries his best to attract the attention of

customers in a pet shop. **Wouter Bongaerts** (Media & Design Academy, Genk) changed from drawn to computer animation for his graduation project, but retained the simplicity of classic animal cartoons.

Because We Are Visual

Gerard-Jan Claes and **Olivia Rochette** (KASK Film Academy, Ghent) built their documentary from footage found on the internet. They build up themes, ranging from natural phenomena to confessions and moments of private theatre, weaving together images and sounds into a moving and poetic collage.

Children of the Sea

Annabel Verbeke (RITS film school, Brussels) filmed at the Ibis school in Ostend, where young boys from difficult family circumstances are prepared for careers connected with the sea. Her images of everyday life are mixed with portraits of the boys and inter-cut with archive footage that shows how little things have changed since the school was established in 1906.

CULTURE NEWS

It was 100 years ago this year that **Maurice Maeterlinck** won the Nobel Prize for Literature – the first and last Belgian to do so. The city of Ghent, where he was born in 1862, is planning several events towards the end of the year, closer to the time when the prize was awarded. The Flemish Opera though, is staging the new opera *L'intruse*, based on the work of Maeterlinck, at the Vooruit Arts Centre in May. As next year is the 150th anniversary of Maeterlinck's birth, related events will spill into 2012.

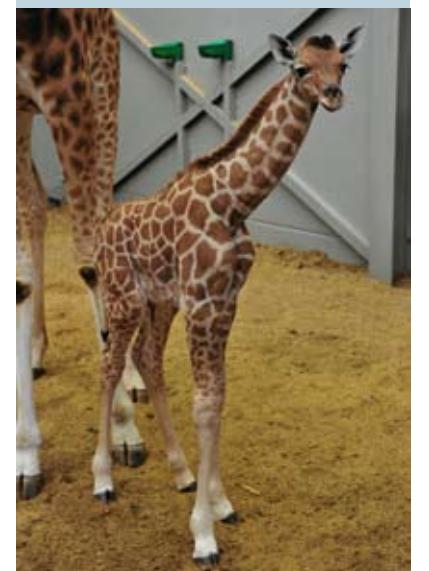
Not surprisingly, Gust Van den Berghe, the young director of *Little Baby Jesus of Flandr*, was voted Film Personality of the Year by visitors to Vlaamsefilm.be, which hands out film awards every year that have come to be known as the "**Flemish Oscars**". Hans Van Nuffel was voted Best Director, meanwhile, and his film *Adem* as Best Flemish Film. Most anticipated film went to *Rundskop* (*Bullhead*), which opens in cinemas on 2 February.

There are three days left for the public to vote for the Best Poem of the **Herman De Coninck Prize**, which also consists of a juried choice of Best Poetry Collection and Best Debut for Dutch-language work by Flemish poets. The public's choice is from poetry written by the five finalists for the Best Poetry Collection, and the winning poem will be reproduced as a poster and given away free in various book shops. All prizes are announced on Gedichtendag (Poetry Day), 27 January.

→ www.boek.be

A few weeks after mourning the passing of their matriarch giraffe, Planckendael animal park, near Mechelen, is celebrating the birth of the latest **addition to the giraffe family**. A 1.9-metre, 60 kilo male (pictured) was born to mother Barbie last week. You can vote for your favourite name for the new giraffe at

→ www.planckendael.be





Al het stadsnieuws in 3 talen
Toute l'info régionale en 3 langues
The local news in 3 languages

 www.tvbrussel.be



Cost-cutting panic or investments in human capital?

In times like these, where we have to do more with less, there are two types of managers. **Those who cut costs** across the board, and **those who even now choose to continue to invest** prudently. Which type are you? The financial crisis and the uncertain economic situation are confronting managers with new challenges, but all too often they are also driving them to take decisions that are infused with panic and doom-and-gloom. But the ones who are forward-thinking and keep to their own course don't slam on the brakes – instead, they invest in the future.

Knowledge determines your competitive power

An organisation that wants to maintain and strengthen its competitive position in the global economy must be powered by a well-oiled knowledge engine. Your workforce is your greatest capital and lifelong learning is an absolute necessity. The acquired knowledge flows back into your company and your knowledge capital grows larger and larger, increasing your competitiveness. This will keep you competitive in the rapidly changing economic context. We call this 'learning with impact'.

Investing in training: costs versus benefits

Too often, training is still regarded as a cost instead of an investment. However, companies that view their personnel policy from a strategic standpoint continue – even when the economy becomes a serious challenge – to invest in training programmes for their most strategic employees. Investing in talent and training now guarantees you a significant jump on the competition when the economy gets going again.

Vlerick, your partner in tailor-made training programmes

Those who have participated in a Vlerick training programme are undoubtedly better prepared than other employees to take on today's challenges. Via in-company programmes – focused on the development of individual employees as well as on organisational development – Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School offers you a collaborative project fully tailored to your needs. Thanks to in-depth knowledge of both local and international economic environments and years of

experience in training management talent, the School can develop a specially adapted management training programme for every organisation, in each phase of its development, targeting the most diverse aspects of its business.

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Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

Celine Chariot

The work of Belgian photographer Celine Chariot is on view at Bodson-Emelinckx gallery in Brussels until 26 February
 → www.bodson-emelinckx.com



FLANDERS TODAY
 JANUARY 19, 2011



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Deborah De Ridder

ESTHER KING

The hills were alive with the smiles of surprised commuters and one million YouTube fans last April, as a flash mob of close to 200 took over Antwerp Central Station with a choreographed dance to *The Sound of Music's* "Do-Re-Mi". Apart from 12 disgruntled travellers who returned home to hit YouTube's "dislike" button (and from Sony Music, who have blocked all online videos of the joyous song and dance), VTM's publicity stunt for their reality show *Op zoek naar Maria* (*In Search of Maria*) was a huge success.

Op zoek naar Maria spent painstaking weeks whittling down the contestants – all hoping to play Maria in the Antwerp production of the Dutch version of *The Sound of Music* – until finally only winner Deborah De Ridder was left.

Nearly two years later, the now 28-year-old De Ridder stars in her own series of theatre concerts. A pianist will accompany, and De Ridder brings in other local talent, staging *kleinkunst* duets with (depending on the evening) Anne Mie Gils and Dieter Troubleyn.

"She will perform musical theatre songs as well as songs by American singer-songwriters who are less well known here," says Thomas Van der Spiegel, the event's promoter.

Van der Spiegel specialises in producing and promoting cabaret-style theatre in Flanders, notably with his West End project, in which he brings over London's stars in one-man and one-woman shows.

The prolific Rosemary Ashe, for instance, who in more than three decades of performing has played Carlotta in *The Phantom of the Opera* and Felicia in *The Witches of Eastwick*, will bring her one-woman show *The Killer Soprano* to Ostend next month, courtesy of Thomas Van der Spiegel Events.

De Ridder and Jan Schepens join Ashe for the evening, promising an eclectic mix of West End energy and Flemish talent, and another opportunity to see *The Sound of Music* star in action.

Thomas Van der Spiegel Events has brought many West End actors to Flanders, including Maria Friedman and John Barrowman.

The performers he chooses are still top names in London – Ashe is currently starring in *When We Are Married* at the Garrick Theatre. Very unlike seeing them onstage in the West End, the appearances are on a smaller scale and more intimate – "in a cabaret style, with singers accompanied on the piano," says Van der Spiegel. ♦

Deborah De Ridder
 22 January, 20.15
 CC Jan Tervaert
 Kaaiplein 34, Hamme

Complete schedule of dates available on website → www.thomasvanderspiegelevents.com

MORE CABARET THIS WEEK

Kommil Foo Deluxe → *Capitole, Ghent*

An Nelissen in Zus → *Schouwburg Rex, Mol*

Gesloten Hart, ode to Wannes Van de Velde → *across Flanders*



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
 Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
JAN 20 20.30 Anne van Veen

Bourla
 Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44
www.toneelhuis.be
JAN 24 20.00 An Pierlé & White Velvet

De Roma
 Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
JAN 22 20.30 Hannelore Bedert
JAN 26 20.30 Mathieu & Guillaume

deSingel
 Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
JAN 21 20.30 Britt Truyts, soprano; Adriaan Jacobs, piano

Sportpaleis
 Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
Until JAN 28 20.30 Natalia meets Anastacia

Trix
 Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
JAN 22 17.00 Sheer Terror. 20.30
 Mauroworld featuring Mauro & The grooms + Nieuw Zwart Trio + Pawlowski, more
JAN 25 20.30 Walter Schrefels

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
 Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
JAN 21 20.30 Mind Mute

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
 Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
JAN 19 20.00 Indochine **JAN 20** 19.00
 Architects + The Devil Wears Prada + Bring Me the Horizon. Lasse Marhaug + Maja Ratkje **JAN 21** 20.00 Pony Pony Run Run **JAN 27** 20.00 BUURMAN

De Krikkelar
 Gallastraat 86; 0473.95.03.63
www.myspace.com/adamleeaz
JAN 23 14.00 Izzy and the Kesstronics, rockabilly

Fuse
 Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
www.fuse.be
JAN 22 23.00 Time to Express #3: Luke Slater, Peter Van Hoesen, Pierre, Deg

K-NAL
 Havenlaan 1; 0474.04.00.00,
www.k-nal.be
JAN 21 23.00 Anarchic: Laurenzinho, Lorenzo Ottati, Gilleson. Electrofied Jukebox, Jules X, Red Out **JAN 22** 23.00 Matias Aguayo Mashup

Le Botanique
 Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
 Concerts at 20.00:
JAN 19 Freaksville night: Leatitia Sadier + MiamMonster + Loved Drones + more **JAN 20** Lyrical session: Bilal Benjany, Code Rouge, Maky, McYeeb, Sismik, more **JAN 21** Hip-hop: Mo & Grazz, Gandhi, Frown I Brown, K2, Mochelan, Ypsos, Sensey **JAN 21** Rap session #3: Salif, A6000, B-Lel, Nina Miskina, Sanzio, S-Kdron **JAN 22** Hot Club de Paris

Magasin 4
 Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74,
www.magasin4.be
JAN 21 20.00 Louie Knuxx + Leg + Velvet Stick + Fleau **JAN 26** 19.00 Child Abuse + Gay Beast

Recyclart
 Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
JAN 20 21.30 BJ Nilsen

Vorst-Nationaal
 Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestrnational.be
JAN 23 20.00 Drake with special guest J Cole

DON'T MISS!

101% Exhibition

Until 3 February
 Designed in Brussels

After showing in Milan, Stockholm and London, the *101% Exhibition* is finally being staged at home in the Designed in Brussels headquarters. Five Brussels-based designers show work ranging from architecture to ceramics. Nathalie Dewez's Linea Light, a long, tube-shaped lamp crafted from aluminium and steel, won a Blueprint award for Best New Product at Design London.



→ www.designedinbrussels.be

Ghent

Handelsbeurs
 Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
JAN 22 20.15 Soulsister

Vooruit
 St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
JAN 19 20.00 Hautekiet & De Leeuw **JAN 21** 19.30 Cutting Edge Awards 2011 with An Pierlé, My Jerusalem, AKS, and DJ Kevin Major **JAN 26** 22.00 Marble Sounds

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
 Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
JAN 22 22.00 Modfest 2011: Fake Blood + Mason + Rustie + Doory + more

Leuven

Het Depot
 Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
JAN 21 20.00 New Cool Collective & Jules Deelder **JAN 27** 20.00 Mauro and The Grooms

Roosdaal

Cultureel Centrum Het Koetshuis
 Strijtempel 15; 054.89.49.02
www.koetshuisroosdaal.be
JAN 21 20.00 Jimmy Molire (former band leader of Fats Domino)



Antwerp

Buster
 Kaasruil 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
JAN 19 21.30 Playtime Session **JAN 20** 21.30 Buster BabL Jam **JAN 21** 22.00 WirDo **JAN 22** 22.00 Elixir **JAN 25** 20.30 JazzNight **JAN 26** 21.30 Playtime Session

De Hopper
 Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
JAN 23 16.00 Sam Stuyck Quintet **JAN 24** 21.00 Marjan Van Rompay Group **JAN 25** 21.00 Jam sessie

© Fien Muller

Agenda

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
JAN 27 20.30 De Bankroet Jazz Live!

Rataplan
Wijngaemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvw.be
JAN 23 15.00 David Reinhardt Trio

Brussels
Flagey
Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20
www.flagey.be

JAN 21 12.30 Bram de Looze, piano, with Nic Thys. 20.15 Rêve d'Eléphant Orchestra
JAN 26 20.15 Anne Wolf with Théo de Jong, Jaco Van der Kaaden, Ben Ngabo, Christa Jérôme and Mizzy

Jazz Station
Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
JAN 19 20.30 Acous-Trees
JAN 22 18.00 Chrystel Wautier Trio
JAN 26 20.30 Jacques Pirotton Quartet

Marni Club
Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.82
www.theatremarni.com
Concerts at 20.15:
JAN 19 Robin McKelle **JAN 20** Mélanie de Biasio with Pascal Mohy, piano; Sam Gertmans, double bass **JAN 22** Tutu Puoane **JAN 27** Fabien Degryse and Co

Piola Libri
Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91
www.piolalibri.be
JAN 21 19.00 Noi Trio

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
JAN 19 Caribe con K **JAN 20** Golden 80s
JAN 21 Stephane Mercier Quartet **JAN 22** Paul Biss Duo **JAN 24** Master Session **JAN 25** Nicolas Thys & Dries Lahey Duo **JAN 26** Chamaquiendo, salsa **JAN 27-29** Aka Moon

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:
JAN 21 The Eric Ineke Jazzxpress **JAN 22** Alexandre Cavaliere Modern Gypsy Quintet
JAN 25 Skyline **JAN 27** Jazzystrings Quartet

Théâtre Molière
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00
www.muziekpubliek.be
JAN 21 20.00 Knopf Quartet



Antwerp

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
JAN 22 20.00 Ana Moura, with the Nederlands Blazers Ensemble

Kelly's Irish Pub
Keyserlei 27; www.kellys.be
JAN 20-22 21.00/22.00 Take the Biscuit (Noel Shannon + Lynn Harleman)

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
JAN 20 20.30 Ebo Taylor
JAN 21 20.30 Ensemble Shanbezadeh

Brussels

VK Club
Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07
www.vkconcerts.be
JAN 20 16.00 La Chiva Gantiva

Ghent
Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
JAN 27 20.00 Murder, folk



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80
www.amuz.be
JAN 22 21.00 Andreas Staier, harpsichord: Bach's Goldberg Variations

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28 www.desingel.be
JAN 19-20 20.00 Graham Johnson, piano; Geraldine McGreevy, soprano; Robin Tritschler, tenor: lecture recital on Schubert's Lieder

JAN 21 20.00 Ralph van Raat, piano; contemporary music by Eerki-Sven Tuür (Belgian première), John Adams, Steve Reich, Joep Franssens

JAN 27 20.00 Marc-André Hamelin, piano: Berg, Liszt, more

Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02

www.vlaamseopera.be

JAN 20 20.00 Flanders Opera Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Alberto Zedda & Yannis Pouspourikas: Rossini's Stabat Mater

Bruges

Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02

www.concertgebouw.be

JAN 20-23 Bach Academy Bruges: Bach festival featuring concerts, lectures, film, exhibitions and outings. Participants include Philippe Herreweghe and his Collegium Vocale, Le Concert Lorrain, Capilla Flamenca, Andreas Staier, more

Brussels

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

JAN 19 12.40 Trio Carlo Van Neste: Brahms, Haydn. 20.00 London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev: Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky **JAN 20** 20.00 Prague Symphony Orchestra, soloists and choirs conducted by Peter Chromczak: Beethoven, Carl Orff **JAN 21** 20.00 & **JAN 23** 15.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Julian Reynolds with Natalia Gutman, cello; Rodion Schedrin, Shostakovich, Mussorgsky

JAN 23 11.00 Harriet Langley, violin; Dana Protopopescu, Julien Libeer, piano; Sonja Volten, soprano: Bruch, Ravel **JAN 24** 20.00 Budapest Gypsy Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sandor Buffó Rigo & József Csócs Lendvai: classical and traditional music (www.100violons.com) **JAN 25-26** 20.00 Hungarian National Orchestra and Choir conducted by Zoltán Kocsis and Matyas Antal, with Dezső Ranki, piano; Liszt, Bartók **JAN 26** 12.40 Jean Dubé, piano: Liszt

Miniemen Church

Miniemenstraat 62; 02.511.93.84

www.minimes.net

JAN 22 20.00 Il Suonar Parlante: Bach's Art of Fugue

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30 www.mim.be

JAN 23 11.00 Diane Andersen, piano: Joseph Jongen, Bartók

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37

www.kcb.be

JAN 24 20.00 Frank Peter Zimmermann, violin; Antoine Tamestit, viola; Christian Poltéra, cello: Schubert, Schoenberg, Mozart

Ghent

Conservatorium

Hoogpoort 64; 09.269.92.92

www.debijloke.be

JAN 14 20.00 Aviv Quartet: Haydn, Shostakovich, Brahms

De Bijloke

Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2 09.233.68.78

www.debijloke.be

JAN 21 20.00 Theatrum Affectum: Handel, Corelli, Bellinzani, more

JAN 23 16.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Dirk Brossé: Korngold's Robin Hood

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65

www.handelsbeurs.be

JAN 26 20.15 Ictus Liquid Room #2: music by Benjamin de la Fuente, Philip Glass, Harry Partch, Helmut Lachenmann and other contemporary composers

Leuven

30CC Schouwburg

Bondgenotenlaan 21; 016.23.84.27

www.30CC.be

JAN 26 20.00 Almschi: musical play by Annelies Verbeke retracing the life of the composer Alma Mahler, featuring SKaGeN and the Octopus Solisten

Keizersberg

Mechelsestraat; 016.23.84.27 www.30cc.be

JAN 26 20.00 Flemish Radio Choir conducted by Luc Anthonis: Dvorák's Stabat Mater



Brussels

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39 www.demunt.be

JAN 27-FEB 20 15.00/18.00 Wagner's Parsifal conducted by Hartmut Haenchen, directed by Romeo Castellucci, choreographed by Cindy Van Acker (in the original German with Dutch and French surtitles)

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera

Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02

www.vlaamseopera.be

JAN 19 15.00/18.30 Rossini's Semiramide directed by Nigel Lowery, conducted by Alberto Zedda (in the original Italian with Dutch surtitles)



Antwerp

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28 www.desingel.be

JAN 21-22 20.00 Rosas in En Attendant, choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

Metropolis

Groenendaallaan 394; www.kinepolis.com/ballet

JAN 23 16.45 Ballet at the Cinema: Giselle, live via satellite from the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, choreographed by Asaf Messerer, adapted by Joeri Grigorovitsj

Monty

Montignystraat 3-5; 03.238.91.81

www.monty.be

JAN 21-22 20.30 Trilogy, choreographed by Albert Quesada and Vera Tussing

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900

www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be

Until FEB 13 Oliver!, the musical

JAN 26-30 So You Think You Can Dance, based on the popular TV show with choreographies by finalists, plus concerts by winners from the My Name Is TV show

Brussels

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

Until JAN 21 20.30 Compagnie MossouxBonté in The Last Hallucinations of Lucas Cranach the Elder, choreographed by Patrick Bonté and Nicole MossouxB

Espace Delvaux

Gratésstraat 3; 02.663.85.50

www.lavenerie.be

JAN 20-22 20.30 Sources, hip-hop dance and music, directed by Olivier Battesti

Kaaitheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59

www.kaaitheater.be

JAN 26-27 20.30/19.00 Sans-titre (Untitled), with Faustin Linyekula, choreographed by Raimund Hoghe

Rijke Klaren

Rijke Klarenstraat 24; 02.548.25.80

www.lesrichesclaires.be

JAN 26-FEB 5 20.30 Compagnie Nyanga Zam in Je me suis mariée toute seule (I Got Married All By Myself), choreographed by Ebéle Zam

Theâtre 140

Eugène Plaskylaan 140; 02.733.97.08

www.theatre140.be

JAN 25-27 20.30 La Reine s'ennuie (The Queen is Bored), choreographed, written and performed by Andrea Sitter

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72
www.atomium.be

Until APR 25 *Cosmos*: The Universe in 3 Dimensions, study of the solar system from the scientific and geopolitical to the philosophical and artistic

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80

www.stripmuseum.be

Until JAN 30 The Studio of Franquin, Jijé, Morris and Will, rare documents and drawings show mutual influences between the four comic-strip artists who revolutionised the art form in Europe
Until MAR 6 European Comic Strip Treasures, original works from the past 100 years by 50 European comic-strip artists

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

Until JAN 23 *Gilbert & George: Jack Freak*: Pictures, major exhibition of the Italian-British artist duo's stylised photographs with British flag iconography

Until JAN 23 *The World of Lucas Cranach*, work by the leading figure of the German Renaissance that places him in the artistic context of his time

Until JAN 23 *Knockin' on Heaven's Door*, Flemish artist Wim Delvoye's works inspired by gothic art, including drawings, sculpture and a 17-metre steel tower

Until FEB 13 *Ensor*: Composer and Writer, publications, documents and photographs by Flemish master painter James Ensor

CIVA

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71 www.civa.be

Until FEB 13 *Fabrizio.Musa.Bruxelles.TXT*, digital art in a tribute to Brussels architecture

De Loketten - Flemish Parliament

IJzerenkuilstraat 99; 02.227.60.60

www.designvlaanderen.be

WEEK IN FILM

LISA BRADSHAW



Rare Exports

Cinema ZED

Antwerp

Antwerp's Cinema ZED is the only place you'll find this Finnish holiday horror comedy (four words that rarely go together), subtitled in English, no less. It's a similar story to the Dutch horror film *Sint*, though it's comic irony is intentional and its chills chillier.

It centres around a lad named Pietari, who figures out what no one else can, naturally: the drilling project near his home in northern Finland is going to disturb a long-frozen evil Santa Claus. All hell breaks loose as soon as Santa does: freakish elves, slaughtered reindeer, children disappearing (replaced by creepy little dolls). Probably not a great film for kids under 15.

Regardless, it's a taut feature film debut by Jalmari Helander that delivers surprises, atmosphere and at least one scene of a room full of old, gnarly naked Santas. Those Finns.

→ www.cinemazed.be

JAN 19-FEB 26 *Henry van de Velde Awards & Labels 2010*, works by the design award winners

Designed in Brussels

Lakensestraat 99;
www.designedinbrussels.be

Until FEB 3 101% Designed in Brussels, works by Brussels-based designers Chevalier Masson, Nathalie Dewez, Jean-François D'Or, Lhoas & Lhoas and Hugo Meert

Goethe Institute

Belliardstraat 54; 02.230.77.25

www.goethe.de

Until MAR 25 *Stefan Moses: Deutsche Vita*, 50 photographs by the celebrated post-war society photographer

ING Cultural Centre

Koningsplein 6; 02.507.82.00 www.bozar.be

Until FEB 13 *Ensor Revealed*, drawings and paintings illustrate the artistic evolution of the Ostend artist on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth

Marc Sleen Museum

Zandstraat 33; 02.219.19.80

www.marc-sleen.be

Until APR 4 *Marc Sleen and Brussels*, special exhibition on the Flemish comic strip artist's relationship with the capital

Natural Science Museum

Vautierstraat 29; 02.627.42.38

www.naturalsciences.be

Until MAR 20 *Destination Mars*, interactive exhibition in three sections: The Imaginary, The Planet and Exploration

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33

www.legermuseum.be

Until JAN 31 *Belgians Can Do Too!* Het Belgisch-Luxemburgs bataljon in Korea, Belgian military operations in the Korean War

Until FEB 6 *Reinhoud*, tribute to the Flemish sculptor and graphic artist, member of the CoBrA movement, who died in 2007

Royal Museums of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11

www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until APR 24 *Tussen hemel en hel* (Between Heaven and Hell), exhibition on death in the Middle Ages

Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 23; 02.502.44.24

www.sintgorikshallen.be

Until JAN 31 *Bruges & Venice*, photographs by Luc Teper comparing the history and art of the two cities
Until JAN 30 *euReka! 48 onderzoekers in de kijker* (48 Researchers Under the Microscope), photographs by Denia Zeroualia of some of the 13,000 scientific researchers in Brussels

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49

www.tour-taxis.com

Until MAY 9 *America: It's Also Our History*, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork
Until APR 3 *Zes miljard mensen* (Six Billion People), photographic project by Yann Arthus-Bertrand

Toy Museum

Verenigingstraat 24; 02.219.61.68

www.musee du jouet.eu

Until JAN 31 *Het dier in het speelgoed* (Animal Toys)
Until MAR 31 *Husa, genie van het houten speelgoed* (The Genius of Wooden Toys)

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50

www.wiels.org

Until JAN 30 *Francis Aly's: A Story of Deception*, installations, video, paintings, drawings, and documents by the Mexico-based, Antwerp-born artist

Ghent

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99

www.designmuseumgent.be

Until FEB 27 *Maarten Van Severen: The History of an Icon*, models, prototypes, drawings and photographs of the development of the '03 chair by the Flemish designer
Until FEB 27 *Art Nouveau and Art Deco* from the Netherlands, a selection of objects from the Drents Museum Assen collection

Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95

www.museumdrguislain.be

Until JAN 27 *Bobby Baker Diary Drawings: Mental Illness and Me*, more than 150 drawings by the British performance artist illustrate her 10-year journey through psychiatric institutions
Until MAY 8 *The Weighty Body: Off Fat and Thin, Perfect or Deranged*, a history of fasting for personal, esthetic, religious or economic reasons

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03 www.smak.be

Until JAN 30 *Paul Hendrikse: A Vague Uneasiness*, works by the Dutch artist

Until FEB 27 *Hareng Saur: Ensor and Contemporary Art*, spotlight on the continuing contemporary aspect of work by James Ensor, shown with work by international contemporary artists
Until MAR 27 *Inside Installations*, 10 installations from the museum's collection
Until MAR 27 *Adrian Ghenie*, paintings by the Romanian artist

Hasselt

Literary Museum

Bampsalaan 35; 011.26.17.87

www.literairmuseum.be

Until FEB 26 *Niet van de poes! De kat in het kinderboek*, a collection of children's books and stories about cats

z33

Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60 www.z33.be

Until MAR 13 *Alter Nature: We Can*, works by international artists about human manipulation of nature

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation

Westakker; 03.789.22.07

www.verbekefoundation.com

Until APR 10 *Certified Copy*, works by 20 international artists on reproduction and cloning

Until APR 10 *Mark Verstockt: A Portrait*, an overview of the Flemish artist's work in celebration of his 80th birthday

Until APR 10 *Trouw de Ville*, group show featuring press releases, e-mails, videos and photographs on guerilla art

Leuven

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29

www.mwm.be

Until JAN 23 *Mayombe: Meesters van de magie* (Master of Magic), sculptures and objects from the Congolese collection of the Catholic University of Leuven

Until FEB 13 *Katrien Vermeire*, nature photographs by the Flemish artist

Until FEB 13 *Koenraad Tinel: Flandria Catholica*, drawings by the Flemish artist

Until MAR 20 *David Shrigley*, drawings and sculptures by the British artist

Ostend

Kunstmuseum Aan Zee (MuZee)

Romestaat 11; 059.50.81.18 www.muzee.be

Until MAR 27 *The Responsive Subject*, works by Flemish artist Guy Mees

Venetiaanse Gaanderijen

Zeedijk/Parcjsstraat; 050.40.34.38

www.west-vlaanderen.be

Until MAR 13 *Visual Arts Competition 2010*, recent works by West Flemish artists



DjangoFolies: Annual festival celebrating the anniversary of the birth of Belgian gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt in 1910
JAN 20-23 across Belgium

www.brosella.be

Bruges

Brugge Centraal

Festival celebrating the art and culture of Central Europe, with dance, theatre, music, literature, film and major exhibitions

Until JAN 30 across Bruges
www.bruggecentraal.be

Brussels

Brussels Antiques & Fine Arts Fair (BRAFA)

Brussels most

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



Pietje Pek

If you've ever circled Drongen's major roundabout, you've no doubt noticed this restaurant with big blue lettering in all caps. PIETJE PEK is meant to grab your attention, its name referring to a folkloric figure that kidnaps naughty kids.

But no need to worry, it is in fact a very friendly and welcoming place. Owner Sofie Van Laere and her five children see to that. With ages ranging from late teens to early 20s, all were present and accounted for during my visit, smiling and working away in the family business. They've practically grown up there, as Van Laere opened the restaurant with her late husband more than 18 years ago.

In spite of our spur-of-the-moment decision to have lunch there on a notoriously hectic Sunday, they made place for our party of 10 at a long table by the window. We all had an enormous appetite and ordered a variety of dishes. Everything arrived at the same time – and within 15 minutes.

There were two orders of *paling* (eel) in cream sauce, which elicited many sounds of approval from one end of the table. Meanwhile, beer-braised Flemish stew in a cast iron skillet was leaving quite an impression on a few more. Closer to where I was seated, one friend hungrily tucked into his *reuzebrochette*, a spit on which 350 grams of beef had been spiced, skewered and roasted.

Across the table, mushroom cream sauce was being poured over a just-pink slab of Irish entrecôte. My companion and I shared an

enormous portion of Chateaubriand, medium-done, already sliced and with a side of salty, creamy Roquefort sauce.

All the dishes on the table came with a bowl of potato-cut fries and mayonnaise (with a hint of mustard). But the best part about ordering a steak, aside from the meat itself, which was well prepared and incredibly juicy, were all the vegetables that came with it: carrot strips browned in onion and bacon, butter-sautéed witloof, even half a tomato. The dish was accentuated with a springy heap of fresh and peppery watercress that perfectly offset the palate.

In addition to the above-mentioned classics, Pietje Pek also specialises in mussels, fish stew, fillet of sole, crown of lamb, homemade croquettes and more. And, although our party couldn't even *think* about dessert, they also offer pancakes, waffles, crème brûlée, chocolate mousse, etc. There will definitely be a next time.

→ <http://sites.resto.com/pietjeppek>

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NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #164

Feature

You hear a lot lately about the Roma in Flanders. Where are these groups of travellers coming from and why are they settling here in such large numbers?

Business

Would you like to do all your work in a bar? One coffee bar in Antwerp is doubling as a space for freelancers to plug in outside of the house and network with other independents

Arts

The annual Herman De Coninck poetry prizes are about to be decided: we talk to one of the nominees and look at new books published this month

TALKING SPORTS

LEO CENDROWICZ



Can Belgium make a football comeback?

This week, Belgian football returns after a mid-winter break, and, in principle, players should be refreshed and reanimated as they kick off the second half of the season. The break also gives us time to put the game into perspective and ask whether Belgium can revive itself after a decade of underperformance on the wider stage.

It was in 2001 that the Red Devils last qualified for a big tournament – the World Cup in Japan and Korea the following year – but since then Belgians have been spectators. That is unlikely to change soon: Belgium is languishing in fourth place in its Euro 2012 qualifying group and would need a miracle set of results to make it to the Poland and Ukraine event.

It is a grim decline in form for the country that reached six successive World Cup finals until 2002. Since then, Belgium has slipped from 16th place in the FIFA rankings to 57th.

Equally, Belgian clubs, once a force to be reckoned with in European competition – taking home UEFA and Cup Winners cups – are now barely noticeable. In 2000, Anderlecht beat Manchester United and PSV Eindhoven before being knocked out of the second group stage of the Champions League. This year, like too many before, there were no Belgian sides in the competition – although

Anderlecht, currently heading the Belgian League, did sneak through to the second round of the Europa League at the tail end of last year.

So, on the face of it, not much to celebrate right now. However, look behind the records of the national side and the clubs, and there are glimmers of hope. And they come from the players themselves. Belgian footballers have been slowly rebuilding their reputations as keen, solid, imaginative performers.

In England's Premier League, Belgians are among the most consistent players and include Arsenal's Thomas Vermaelen, Everton's Marouane Fellaini, Fulham's Moussa Dembélé (pictured) and Manchester City's Vincent Kompany. Lille's 19-year-old midfielder Eden Hazard has been hailed as the next Lionel Messi and has already attracted interest from some of Europe's biggest clubs.

And if the rumours are correct, by the end of this month, Anderlecht's 17-year-old prodigy Romelu Lukaku will break Belgian transfer records in a few days, going to Liverpool. Europe may be out of reach for Belgian clubs, and the Red Devils look like sitting out Euro 2012. But if the young Belgian talent already lighting up Europe continues to mature, then watch out for a comeback.

THE LAST WORD . . .

Godly vibes

"We pray for Lady Gaga, but you won't hear her music on our station."

Radio Maria, the Catholic radio station, is coming to Flanders

Writing on the wall

"As a concert organiser I always felt like Jekyll and Hyde. I was a passionate music lover and musician, but I also had to play the businessman. On the toilet in Vorst Nationaal, I came to the conclusion I could no longer express my artistic ego with my name. Then I saw, scribbled on the wall, 'Boogie Boy was here'."

Paul Ambach, aka Boogie Boy, explaining his stage name

Game over

"If Luca isn't recognised as a top sportsman, his career is over before it's even properly started."

Carlo Brecel, father of 15-year-old snooker player Luca, who cannot apply for sports grants because the Flemish government does not consider snooker a sport

Down under, but not out

"I'm not bothered. I know how to play to get that good feeling back."

Flemish tennis champion Kim Clijsters, recently defeated in Sydney but tipped to win the Australian Open