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International artists weave together avant-garde and traditional tapestry

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Pump down the volume

SABINE CLAPPAERT

The Flemish Region's noise limit proposal wants to save young people from hearing loss, but the concert industry is having none of it

There are few politicians as unpopular in Flanders right now as culture minister Joke Schauvliege, who recently proposed to regulate – and lower – the maximum noise levels at all “musical activities” to a maximum of 100dB(A).

Within hours of Schauvliege's statement that “we want to help prevent hearing impairment by implementing a number of measures to protect the public,” media personalities and sound experts were issuing statements and devising tests to illustrate, measure and debate the relevance of 100dB(A).

The most vocal opponent of the proposed law is, not surprisingly, Herman Schueremans, organiser of Belgium's biggest music festival: Rock Werchter. An strong believer in a self-regulating industry, Schueremans stated on VRT's talk show *Reyers Laat* that the industry had already committed itself to a self-imposed charter recommending a maximum of 103dB(A) and that the Flemish government should not transfer its “regulitis illness” to the music sector.

Quick off the mark as always, Studio Brussels immediately put noise levels to the test. A school hallway filled with children shouting at full lung capacity? 113dB(A).

One in four people attending a festival leave with hearing damage

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Marathon man sets new world record

“Mission accomplished,” reads the proud announcement on the website of Flanders' own “Marathon Man” – 49-year-old Stefaan Engels, who last week completed his 365th marathon in as many days. Engels now holds the world record for the most marathon races run consecutively.

A considerable achievement, especially for an athlete who suffered asthma as a boy and was advised by doctors to steer clear of sport. The Ghent runner set his first world record in 2008 by completing 20 Ironman events within one year – each of which consists of swimming 3.8 km, cycling 180 km and running 42.2 km.

“After running 20 triathlons in one year, I was not ready to go back to normal life,” he told the Associated Press after his final run in Barcelona. “I also wanted to inspire people by showing that if I could run a marathon a day for an entire year, that anyone could run or bike a little each day.”

One 20 km run would finish off most of us, but Engels did twice that every day for a year. “I recover quickly. I don't run fast, and my heartbeat is slow. But it is more a mental



story,” he said. “The problem was thinking about running a marathon every day. I just told myself to run that day and did not think about the next day or the next week.” Engels' average time for a marathon (officially 42 km) was about four hours, with a best time of 2h56.

→ www.marathonman365.be

Memorial to victims of train crash

Safety report confirms “no significant improvement”

ALAN HOPE

A memorial was unveiled last weekend in the central square in Buizingen, Flemish Brabant, to commemorate the 19 people who died in a train accident one year ago this week (15 February). Another 50 people were seriously hurt in the head-on collision between two trains in the town, a municipality of Halle.

The unveiling of the memorial was attended by interior minister Annemie Turtelboom and government enterprises minister Inge Vervotte, whose responsibilities include the rail authority NMBS. Also in attendance were senior executives of the NMBS, and the

governors of Flemish Brabant and Hainaut province in Wallonia, where many of the victims were travelling from.

On Sunday, about 1,500 people took part in a silent march in Mons in remembrance of the victims. The NMBS network marked the anniversary on Tuesday by a minute's silence. A previous plan by the members of one rail union to bring trains to a halt at 8.39 – when the accident took place – and observe a standstill of 19 minutes in memory of the 19 victims, was cancelled because of the disruption it would cause.

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FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

Jan Decler



© J. Vermeirckx/VRT

On 7 April, Jan Decler will accept an honorary doctorate from the University of Antwerp(UA). The university's description of him as "an actor and living legend" is no overstatement. In Flanders, he enjoys the same stature as a Depardieu or a De Niro: None of them is blessed with matinee idol looks; all have made some dubious film choices; but all of them possess that screen presence that is what we mean when we talk about movie stardom.

Jan Amanda Gustaaf Decler was born in 1946 in Niel, not far from Antwerp. He studied fine arts at the Antwerp academy before crossing over to theatre. Years later, he would return to school to head Antwerp's Herman Teirlinck Institute and is credited with breathing new life into the school by his ability to attract a new generation of teachers. He made a name for himself as a young actor, playing in productions of the Internationale Nieuwe Scène as well as touring a one-man show of Dario Fo's *Obscene Fables*. His film debut came in 1971, and since then he has appeared in most of the best-known Flemish films,

starring as Adolf Daens in the adaptation of Louis Paul Boon's book about an activist priest, as a contract killer suffering the onset of dementia in *De zaak Alzheimer*, as Dutch premier Ruud Lubbers in the TV series *Retour Den Haag*, as a gay lover in Jan Bucquoy's scabrous *Camping Cosmos*, or, at 66, as the love-interest of a young woman in the new film *Marieke, Marieke*.

He's even famous in the eyes of kids: he was the king in the 1990s TV fantasy series *Kulderzipken* and played Sinterklaas in both the Flemish *Dag Sinterklaas* (which is regularly repeated on TV in December) and the Dutch *Het paard van Sinterklaas* (*Sinterklaas' Horse*). His children Sofie, Flor and Jenne are all actors, as is his sister Reinhilde, who played the matriarch in the hit TV series *Van vlees en bloed* (*Of Flesh and Blood*).

The actor, says UA, "has sparkled on the stage and on the screen for years". Decler himself, with an eye to his many career awards, reacted: "I've never entered a competition in my life, though I've won a great many."

News in brief

Jet Studio in Brussels has found a buyer, after the former owner of the historic recording studio was forced to sell (*Flanders Today*, 23 June 2010). The building and equipment have been bought by Rudy Coclet of Rising Sun Studio and Pascal Flamme of Studio Caraibes and Sonicville. Jet Studio was set up by the record label Decca in 1942 and was the home to many Flemish bands such as Hooverphonic and used by international artists such as Edith Piaf and the Rolling Stones.

Flanders' first crop of **genetically modified potatoes** has been given the go-ahead by the government's advisory committee on bio safety. The potatoes are engineered to be resistant to potato blight, or *Phytophthora infestans*. Were they to become widespread, the use of anti-fungal products in potato growing could be cut by up to 80%, according to the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology. The final decision by environment minister Joke Schauvliege is expected by 7 March.

This year's fundraising campaign for the cancer research charity **Kom Op Tegen Kanker** (KOTK) will concentrate on leukaemia. The telethon will be broadcast on 26 February on channel één. The money will be used to improve the collection of stem-cell samples used for transplants, as well as to increase the number of umbilical cord blood samples, where blood from the cord is stored and used for bone marrow

transplants. At present, Flemish blood banks have 12,000 samples stored at a cost of €1,000 each. The aim is to grow the stock to 20,000 samples. Last year's KOTK appeal raised €13.7 million.

A plan for the **export of fresh water** from Zeebrugge to Qatar, reported in January, has been postponed while authorities in the Gulf state decide whether the scheme can be made profitable. Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters was in Qatar last week, but the planned signature of the agreement did not take place. The water would have been shipped to Qatar in the tankers used by them to send oil to Europe.

Unions representing workers at the Brussels public transport authority MIVB are drawing up an **anti-harassment charter** following the sacking of two union delegates last week for an alleged campaign of bullying against at least one fellow employee. The man claimed to have been pushed into a rubbish container and thrown to the ground and sprayed with a fire extinguisher. The MIVB, announcing a policy of zero tolerance of bullying, has asked possible other victims to come forward.

This year's Novarock festival in Kortrijk will become the first Flemish festival to be awarded the **Safe Party Zone label**. All those attending will have their identity

cards scanned and will be excluded if their names appear on a black list of troublemakers. The area's police explained that they have had problems with a group of young people who go to parties to cause trouble. The system is currently being tested in West Flanders, but already other municipalities have expressed an interest. Novarock takes place on 26 March.

The parents of a child who **lost a finger in an accident** on the rolling pavement at Brussels Airport are suing the airport company for €125,000 damages. The accident took place in June last year, when the child, aged 18 months, fell on the pavement and had his finger crushed in the mechanism. It was later amputated. Brussels Airport company promised compensation, the parents say, but so far have failed to pay anything.

More than 5,000 people took part in the **bird census** organised by Natuurpunt on 5 and 6 February (*Flanders Today*, 2 February). The average number of birds counted per garden was 44, with an average of more than 11 species per garden. Spotters in Antwerp were the largest group, totalling nearly one-third of all participants. The most common species in Flemish gardens is the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), followed by the great tit (*Parus major*) and the blackbird (*Turdus merula*).

→ www.natuurpunt.be

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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OFFSIDE

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

Cross your legs and hope for a government

Marleen Temmerman tells me she never expected her newspaper column calling for all spouses of federal politicians to go on a sex strike until a government is formed to have quite such an impact. Or even be taken seriously.

In the 5 February edition of Flemish daily *De Standaard*, Temmerman said that since neither street protests nor men refusing to shave their beards had shaken party leaders out of their impasse, refusing them the ultimate pleasure could be, well, the ultimate weapon. Before long, her call for abstinence had been picked up by news organisations around the world.

Her tongue-in-cheek proposal, which has prompted outrage from feminists (although Temmerman emphasises the ban is for all partners, not just females), has worked elsewhere. In Kenya, where Temmerman works as a gynaecologist, women went on strike after a year of no government. One month later, they had one. (Not that the two are necessarily connected.)

Colombian women gave up sex until their husbands gave up their weapons in a 2006 amnesty in what became known as the Strike of the Crossed Legs, and, going back in history, there's Aristophanes' tale of *Lysistrata* in which the women shunned their lovers until they negotiated an end to the Peloponnesian War. Temmerman notes it might actually work the other way around: "Someone told me there



should be a study to see whether, if we forced the politicians to have more sex, they would be in a better mood to form a government."

One thing's for sure. Bart de Wever, leader of the nationalist N-VA did not have romantic plans for Valentine's Day. He announced in his blog that he would, in fact, be visiting the dentist to have a cavity filled. Marriage, he says, remains important for economic reasons. "A little realism is better than the sticky stuff that surrounds Valentine's Day."

Temmerman's conclusion about the furore she has created? "Sex is more important than beards."

Belgium sees a rise in trains running red lights

continued from page 1

The anniversary of the crash coincides with the release to parliament last week of the final report by a committee of rail experts charged with looking into the safety policy operated by the NMBS since 1982. The report contains many observations and recommendations, but its general conclusion is that there has been no significant improvement in safety on the railways in a period of almost 20 years, illustrated by the number of trains going through red signals, which has increased from year to year. In 2010, there were 130 incidents of a train going through a signal at red, compared to 117 in 2009. Except for Buizingen, none involved fatalities, but several

people were injured. They included a goods train derailed near Deinze that involved a chemical spill and a near-miss head-on collision in the Ukkel commune of Brussels. The most common location for trains passing a signal at red is around Brussels, on the main North-South link and on the branch of the Brussels-Leuven line leading to the airport. The forensic investigation into the accident is ongoing. One of the main questions to be answered is whether the Leuven train ran through a red signal, as was stated immediately after the accident. The driver, a union representative said, denies missing the signal. He is now back at work but confined to administrative tasks until the

investigation is completed. The driver of the other train, heading for Liège, was killed in the accident. Also last week, the NMBS announced it has so far paid out €2 million in compensation to victims of the accident, including those who had suffered only material damage. The families of the dead have received the legally mandated €21,000 advance on compensation. The authority stressed that the payment of damages was not an admission of culpability; final awards will be decided when the judicial investigation is finished. *Flanders Today will take a closer look at the safety report of the Buizingen committee in next week's issue.*



Mourners at the unveiling of a memorial in Buizingen last weekend

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Something new

L'enfer c'est la répétition Ionesco wrote. Going through the same moves again and again was his idea of hell. The French writer was not alone. Hell is always more of the same thing, is also what one negotiator wrote in his diary during the 2007 formation talks.

At the time, those talks seemed endless. We know better now, of course, as Belgium is about to break the world record of going without a government. For more than eight months, the same seven parties have tried to find an agreement on state reform. Eight months they have been going through the same moves again and again. Hell, and not just to them.

So when the king appointed Didier Reynders (MR) as the latest mediator, there was almost a sigh of relief. Not that things will go any easier with the French-speaking liberal, whom no-one really trusts. But at least something new is happening.

To N-VA, Flanders' largest party, the change was most welcome. Economically speaking, Bart De Wever feels more at ease with the liberal free marketeers than with the French-speaking socialists. In the seven party talks, he felt isolated on the right, which made him even more hesitant to compromise. With MR and its Flemish counterpart Open VLD on board, at least this tension is gone.

What comes next, no-one knows. Reynders seems to want to hang on to the Leterme II coalition (Christian democrats, liberals and French-speaking socialists), with N-VA added on. Some predict that the caretaker government might continue as before, with N-VA supporting it from the parliament. In Dutch this is called *gedogen*, which translates as "tolerating". To most Flemish parties, this is a horror scenario: it would mean that N-VA would not take up full government responsibility, which allows it to act as an opposition party whenever it feels like it, paving the way for yet another election victory. N-VA has a bit of a tradition in this, as it opted out of Leterme II in a similar way.

And then there are the greens and the Flemish socialists, three of the former "seven parties". Will they be included in Reynders' scenario? Improbable, as having a government with nine parties sounds even worse than having none of all. Shaking them off will not be easy, though. The attention-loving Reynders seems to enjoy his royal mission so far, but he may soon learn the truth in yet another French quote. *L'enfer, c'est les autres* (Hell is other people).

Thousands gather for funeral of Marie-Rose Morel

More than 2,500 people turned out on Saturday, 12 February, at the cathedral in Antwerp for the funeral of Marie-Rose Morel (pictured), a former politician of the far right Vlaams Belang party. Morel, 38, died after a long battle with cancer.

As a teenager, Morel was already in the public eye from participating in beauty contests; and she narrowly missed becoming Miss Belgium. At university, she formed a friendship with fellow history student Bart De Wever. The two had been members of the Volksunie together, the forerunner to De Wever's N-VA party. Morel later crossed over to what was then Vlaams Blok, where she remained until last July.

When she was diagnosed with cervical cancer, she decided to share her experiences publicly, in a blog and a regular column for *Het Laatste Nieuws*, achieving an entry to the media that her party colleagues have for years been denied. For a time, it seemed she might have gone into remission, but the news finally came that the disease had spread.

The rift with the party was never healed. Last week, when her death was announced, Filip De Winter issued a statement of condolence, but Morel had already stated that neither he, current party president Bruno Valkeniers and parliamentarian Gerolf Annemans were not welcome at her funeral. Instead, an emotional eulogy



was given by old friend De Wever, who remembered their student days and apologised for the split and for the "ugly things" he had said as a result. "The lost years we had are now lost for good, and that is my punishment," he said. "I have always carried

you in my heart, and I will go on carrying you in my heart for the rest of my life." Morel leaves two boys aged seven and four, as well as Frank Vanhecke, the former president of Vlaams Belang, whom she married in a private ceremony last month. ♦

Officials honoured

Axel Buyse (pictured), the representative of Flanders at the Belgian Mission to the EU, has been named one of two Government Managers of the Year by the independent Flemish Union for Government and Policy (VUVB). Buyse was honoured along with colleague Didier Seeuws, the deputy federal representative at the mission. The men were praised for their efforts to make the Belgian presidency of the EU in the second half of last year a success, despite a caretaker government at federal level.

Buyse, 55, is a former foreign editor for *De Standaard* and worked at the Belgian embassy in the Hague. Since 2008, he has been in charge of representing Flemish interests at the Belgian permanent representation to the EU. "It's good to realise that the people who give out this award realise that the regions also had a part to play in the success," Buyse commented. "Their role was crucial to the adoption



of several sensitive dossiers and to the facilitation of contacts between the member states before and during the Belgian presidency," the VUVB said. The representation has a staff of 190 officials from all levels of government, including diplomats and civil servants. ♦

Clijsters ranked number one

Kim Clijsters last week moved up the rankings of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) to become the first mother ever to stand at number one. Clijsters' promotion came as a result of her victory against Germany's Kristina Barrois last week in the Open GDF Suez in Paris. She lost the final of the competition to Petra Kvitová of the Czech Republic.

Clijsters has spent 20 weeks in total ranked WTA number one during 2003 and 2006, after which she retired from the game. After getting married and having a baby, she picked up her racket again and made a comeback nothing short of remarkable by tennis standards.

Clijsters' all-time idol is former German player Steffi Graf, who holds the world record for weeks at WTA number one at 377 weeks between 1987 and 1997. ♦

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



16 minutes

average time spent per month on calls from one of the 500 public telephone boxes spread across the Brussels region. The upkeep of the boxes costs €3 million a year

6,400,000

bags of potato chips (or the equivalent in family-size packs) consumed in a year in Belgium, more than in any other EU country – an average of 2.3 kilograms for every person

70%

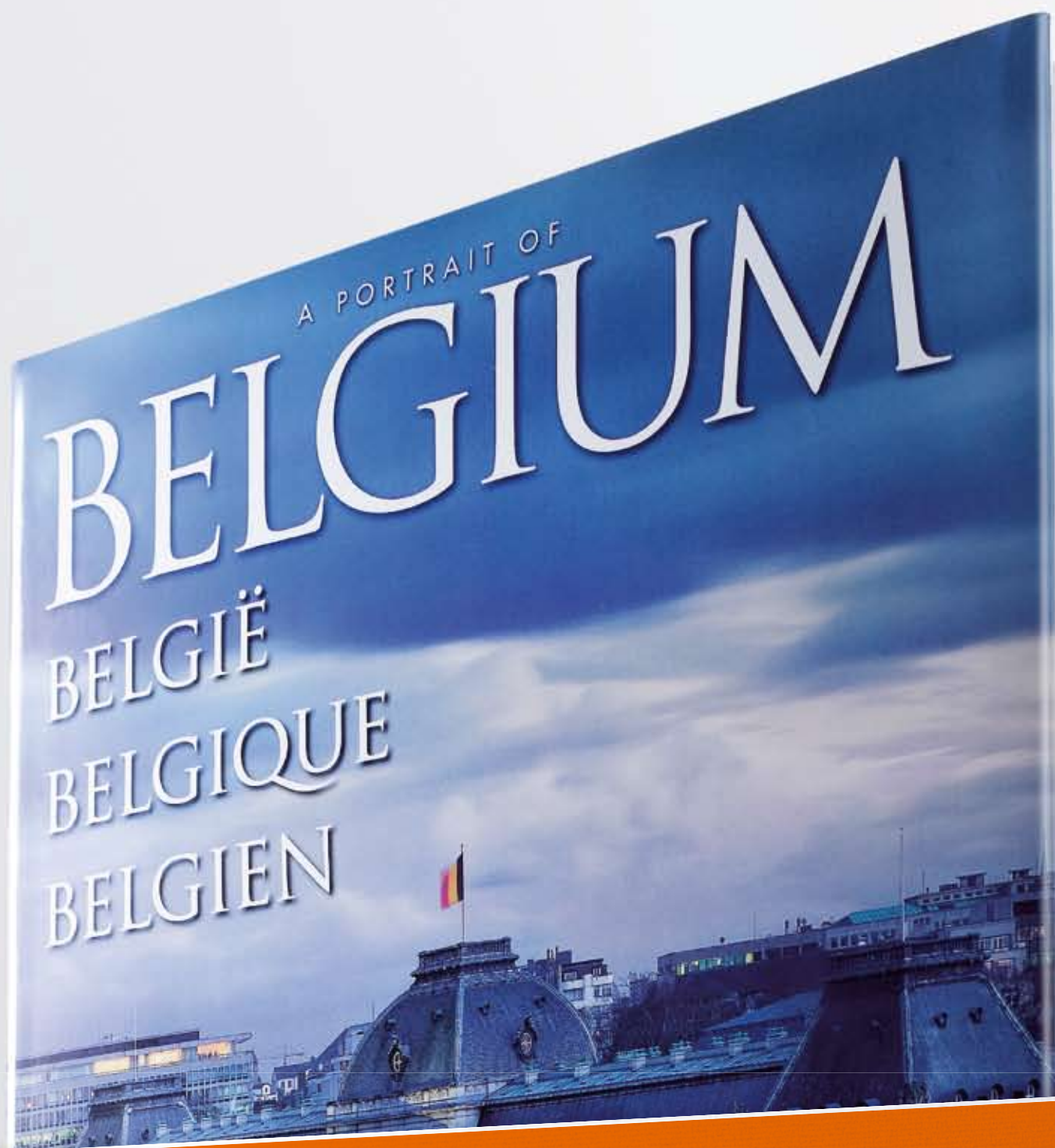
of speed bumps could cause damage to your car, according to a study carried out by Touring. The biggest problem is when bumps become too high, as a result of waterlogged sand under the bricks most municipalities use

832

cases of human trafficking registered in Belgium between 2006 and 2009, according to figures from the federal interior minister. A total of 882 suspects were involved in a single case, while 44 others had multiple offences

9,639

cases of motorists driving without a valid licence in Flanders in 2009, slightly fewer than in 2008



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Pump down the volume

Music industry releases official response to sound limit proposal

→ continued from page 1

A concert in Antwerp's Sportpaleis? 113dB(A). The movie *Inception* in booming surround sound? 118dB(A). A retirement home dining hall at full volume? 103dB(A). Schauvliege, though, is adamant that the suggested maximum of 100dB(A), when compared to noise regulations of surrounding countries, puts Flanders squarely in the middle of the pack. Switzerland, Austria and Sweden also cap maximum noise levels at 100dB(A). France puts its cap at 104dB(A). Germany comes in lowest at 99dB(A).

"One also has to remember," says Schauvliege, "that the measurement takes place over 15 minutes, which means we still allow peaks above 100dB(A), but that the average noise level over those 15 minutes should not exceed 100dB(A). And we're not even capping the peaks to certain levels, which some countries are doing."

Why are noise levels suddenly so high on the agenda? We only need look back to the summer of 2009 to find the answers. During that fateful period, two things happened: a Flemish man of 29 committed suicide, leaving behind a letter stating that he could no longer live with the effects of the hearing damage he had sustained as a student. Also that summer, a Pukkelpop performance by the heavy metal band My Bloody Valentine reached such high volumes that it evoked a public outcry.

Audiologists were quick to confirm the worst: one in four people attending a festival leave with hearing damage and will eventually seek the help of a specialist.

No policy in Belgium

To date, no region in Belgium has regulations stipulating noise levels at music events. Historically, only the noise levels on the peripheries of such events, focusing mainly on the disruption caused to surrounding residents and businesses, were measured and regulated. After the first round-table discussions of 2009 with all key players, Schauvliege issued a statement, saying: "there is an urgent need for a co-ordinated and uniform policy. A few points remain topics of discussion: what is an acceptable norm for festivals and concerts, how long should measurement last, should earplugs be made compulsory or not, etc."

Schauvliege is not alone. The World Health Organization (WHO) leads the call for a noise regulated music industry, stating a world-wide concern surrounding the effects of loud music on young people, who regularly visit concerts, clubs and other loud events. According to the WHO, as the exposure of employees to high noise levels has been regulated to protect them from hearing damage, so music events should be subject to regulations that protect visitors against possible hearing damage.

"Frequent visitors should not be exposed to noise levels higher than 100dB(A) for a period of more than four hours, and no more than four times per year," states the organisation. "To prevent acute hearing loss, noise levels must stay below 110dB(A)".

Three sound levels proposed

Schauvliege's office proposes a staggered system for Flanders, which is "based on lengthy collaboration with industry experts" (audiologists, audio technicians, event



Rock Werchter: where not only the music is making a lot of noise

organizers and representatives of the youth sector) and suggests different maximum noise levels for different types of events. Each category carries its own set of rules and regulations. "Research in our workgroups has shown that not all activities need to reach the same high noise levels," explains Schauvliege.

Her proposal recommends a three-tiered system. The first tier is for activities with a maximum noise level of 90dB, including events at which music is played at background levels that make "a normal conversation possible". All events aimed at children under the age of 16 would fall into this category.

"The music sector in the debate surrounding hearing damage is being made Public Enemy Nr 1"

The second category is for events and activities with noise levels between 90dB and 95dB. Parties and dance clubs are listed as venues at which 95dB(A) is high enough "to ensure a pleasant and qualitative evening for the public". Organisers of events that fall within this category will be required to develop a floor and noise plan, post a publically visible notice informing the audience of the impact of hearing impairment and make earplugs available by, for example, installing a vending machine.

The third category in Schauvliege's proposal would pertain to "large public events" that reach levels of between 95dB(A) and 100dB(A). Here, organisers would be required to develop a floor- and noise plan prior to the happening, post texts warning of the impact of hearing damage and make earplugs available to all attendees free of charge.

"Over the past few years, society has become increasingly aware of the problems surrounding noise levels at music events and the increase in cases of hearing damage," the minister states. "All parties concerned – also organisers of festivals – demanded a clear and explicit policy. This proposal is attainable and allows people a full experience of music in a safe, responsible manner. Moreover, the same standards are applicable in many other European countries."

What is a dB anyway?

From Schueremans' self-imposed 103dB(A) to Schauvliege's suggested 100dB(A) seems like an insignificant tap to the

dial, but it's not. And it is exactly in this misunderstanding of the difference between 103dB(A) and 100dB(A) that the media finds its current debating playground.

In *Reyers Laat*, Schueremans, also a member of the Flemish parliament, was taken to task over his minimisation of the difference between 103dB(A) and 100dB(A) with an arresting sound bite: 100dB(A) equals the sound of one angle grinder at full power. 103dB(A)? Two angle grinders simultaneously. Schueremans commented that angle grinders are a poor representation of noise levels at a music performance.

Last week, the industry, under the auspices of Brussels' Ancienne Belgique, issued an official statement in reply to minister Schauvliege's proposal, stating that it views "the self-imposed Charter of June 2010 as a carefully considered first step of all players in the music industry" – from the major festivals and the local music clubs to professional sound mixers – toward a realistic, workable policy.

The industry says that it is a Charter that "already avoids harmful noise levels, which artists, their entourage and their technicians fully support" and one that it had hoped the Flemish authorities would help "elaborate and support".

Schauvliege's proposal is "anything but supportive," they conclude, stating that "by isolating and spotlighting the music sector in the debate surrounding hearing damage, the sector is in effect being made Public Enemy Nr 1," while many other types of activities (sporting events, carnival processions, a visit to the cinema) may easily reach similar dB(A) levels.

The industry does admit, though, that, while a society without noise is impossible, people do need to protect themselves against excessive loud noise. Their reaction states that the live music sector is prepared to act as "a pilot project in helping the Flemish administration define and develop a workable, realistic proposal". The industry calls it "an outstretched hand: one that could be used over the coming months to measure, research and experiment – without the threat of sanctions or fines" – and in which the Charter would act as a starting point and as a maximum cap.

By combining efforts, the industry concludes, "the music industry and government can shape a framework that addresses a wider societal problem efficiently – one in which the efforts, creativity and experience of events across the entire sector are not curtailed."♦



Face off: Joke Schauvliege wants to protect the public health; Herman Schueremans wants to preserve the independence of music festivals

© Rob Walbers

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Privacy invaders

A University of Antwerp study highlights the ignorance of our youngsters about the dangers of social networking sites

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

Crudely animated space invader games were about as exciting as it got computer-wise when I was a teenager. These days, social networking sites, where you can build a profile, post photos, connect with other users, tell them your political views, whether you're single, gay or even just what you ate for dinner, are *de rigueur*.

According to a study by the University of Antwerp (UA), nine out of 10 Belgian *tiensers* (youngsters) between 10 and 19 are members of one or other such site. This may bring many benefits. Without the ubiquitous Facebook, for example, where users can also post events and invite others, how much of a success would Belgium's "Shame: no government, great country" march in Brussels have been?

That such sites are so popular is not news. What is novel about this latest study is the level of understanding that these *tiensers* have about the care they should take when accepting requests to be "friends", how the information they disclose is used and how quickly information they would rather keep private can make its way around the superhighway.

While six out of 10 youngsters have used privacy controls on such websites to restrict access to their personal data, still a quarter have never adapted them. According to UA's Michel Walrave, author of the study, it's the younger children who are less likely to do this. They are also more likely to accept friend requests from someone they never met in an offline (real life) context.

"The tendency is that younger children are using privacy controls less and giving broader access to their data, while older ones give more information such as their cell phone number and relationship status but try to restrict this information to a smaller group," he explains. "We can ask ourselves if social networking sites are an ideal context for very young teenagers."



Michel Walrave, co-author of the social sites study

Opportunities and risks

According to Professor Walrave, social networking sites provide three principal benefits for youngsters: They create a communication channel below the radar screen of their parents; they allow them to manage their image; and they remove inhibitions, allowing them to communicate more freely than in a face-to-face context.

The flip-side to these opportunities is that many parents (those who didn't really progress from the space invaders) are left in the dark about a large chunk of their child's life; many teenagers do not think before they post (or in some cases drink before they post – witness some of the salacious snaps online); and being able to communicate more freely can expose them to abuse.

Aside from providing a hunting ground for paedophiles, children can unwittingly give ammunition to so-called friends or friends of friends (an option on some networking sites). "The negative side of the inhibition effect is cyber bullying. People can become more direct and aggressive, post a picture or a comment on a person's profile," says Walrave.

The study found that more than four out of 10 Belgian teenagers had already had someone post a negative comment on their profile and almost three out of 10 had made such a posting. Then there are the photos. You may choose what you post on your own profile, but other people can post pictures of you, too. Close to a third of respondents said in their case these had not always been flattering.

Finally, as if we needed convincing any more of their innocence and vulnerability, a similar split between older and younger children could be seen in their understanding of why such sites exist and how their personal information is used. For younger ones, these sites are there to make life fun. "Older teenagers are aware that their information, even if restricted to friends, is analysed and used to send them targeted advertising," says Walrave.

Where does the responsibility lie?

According to Walrave, it is partly up to the social networking sites themselves to step up to the plate. "The message in the study is that there is a responsibility for them to adapt their privacy settings and integrate awareness information into their site so that users understand the opportunities and the risks."

Teachers and parents also have a role to



What are they up to when you're not looking?

play and should no longer ignore this phenomenon given that, for so many children, social networking sites have a prominent place in their lives. Walrave recommends that they get their own profile to understand the opportunities and the downsides – but respect your kids' privacy. "Show you are interested but not monitoring them."

Last but not least, he says policymakers should ensure minors are protected from the darker side of the internet. The European Commission is already engaged in a review of its Data Protection Directive, which is applied in all 27 EU member states.

A key goal in the review of the law, which is 15 years old and predates social networking sites, is to bolster citizens' rights. Viviane Reding, European Justice Commissioner, says: "This is especially true for social networking sites, where teens post photos while having fun and then forget about them. These images may come back to haunt them when they have a job interview years later. Certain photos may not just be embarrassing, they could also lead to traumatic situations."

She wants to introduce a "right to be forgotten" into the law, allowing people to withdraw information that they posted on the internet in their less discerning

days. "It's important to empower children and teens to be in control of their online identity...I want this concept to become part of the EU's data protection rules so that citizens' rights are further strengthened." Walrave adds: "We should also encourage our youngsters to carry on with their offline lives. It's very important that these tools are new opportunities and that they don't replace other activities. The offline world gives more opportunity for children to develop relationships and build their identities." It also can be a lot safer. ♦

SOCIAL NETWORK STUDY IN FIGURES



54%

of youngsters admit they pay less attention to homework because of the time they spend networking

1 in 10

prefer communicating via their profile page than face-to-face

17%

use these sites to find a boyfriend or girlfriend

1 in 10

accept all friendship requests, even from strangers

43%

of 10-13 year olds said they had problems understanding privacy settings

Useful Addresses

The following websites provide children and adults with information about safer surfing

→ www.saferinternet.org

→ www.clicksafe.be

→ www.veiligonline.be

→ www.ikbeslis.be

Retail payments go mobile

Customers will be able to pay up to €25 with their mobile phones

ALAN HOPE

The financial sector and the three main mobile phone operators – Belgacom, Base and Mobistar – have reached an agreement on a system that allows customers to pay for transactions up to €25 using a mobile phone.

Payments by SMS have already taken off in Flanders in many parking areas and on the buses and trams of De Lijn, the Flemish public transport authority, which recently extended its SMS ticket to all three mobile networks.

The new system, to be introduced later this year, would make it possible to pay for goods and services at any retailer equipped with the necessary terminal. The system uses what is called Near Field Communication (NFC), which forms a wireless link between the customer's phone and the retailer's terminal. In the beginning, most phones would need to have an NFC sticker attached, but as time goes on more and more phones would come with the NFC chip built-in. NFC also allows the chip to be recharged via the phone. The system would essentially

replace Proton, the cash card system, which is already being phased out. The banking/mobile phone group working on the new system aims to make payments not only easier but more secure: many people decline to use Proton because if the card becomes lost, the money is, too. The NFC system would allow a lost or stolen chip to be blocked.

"The mobile electronic wallet should be safe and easy to use for the consumer and the retailer," said Dominique Michel, director of Comeos, the federation for small retailers. "But clearly there are a number of questions that remain to be clarified: what charges will be made on the retailer, what equipment will be required and how much will it cost. A payment system like this has to also be advantageous for the trade."

- Meanwhile, the city of Brussels is to introduce Quick Response (QR) codes at buildings and other places of interest to allow visitors equipped with a smartphone to get immediate information by scanning a code.



A QR code (example right) is similar to a barcode, but contains more information. When scanned with a smartphone (a suitable application may need to be installed) the code gives access to a webpage with information – in the case of Brussels, in Dutch, French and English. In the first phase, 30 locations will be coded, including museums, libraries and administrative offices. ♦



Minister takes Apple to task

Flemish media minister Ingrid Lieten has written to the Apple corporation to express her concern over plans by the computer company to force European newspaper and magazine publishers, including some prominent names in Flanders, to use Apple to distribute subscriptions to readers, and to pay hefty commissions for the privilege.

At present, those media who have developed applications for the iPad, such as *De Standaard* and *Knack*, make their papers available to subscribers directly via the iPad. But Apple has informed publishers that they must distribute iPad versions through iTunes and pay Apple a 30% commission.

"Now that the first tentative steps have been taken on the Flemish market and several success stories have emerged, Apple wants to change the rules," Lieten commented. The company's approach was a threat to the development of digital businesses in Flanders, she said, since subscribers to newspapers and magazines would be unwilling to pay extra simply to read the media on an iPad.

Lieten's letter was also copied to the EU commissioners for digital media and for competition policy. She calls on Apple to enter into talks with the Flemish publishers to find a solution acceptable to all.

Later, the European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA), which represents some 5,000 print media, called on technology companies "to ensure that newspaper subscribers can continue to enjoy access to news content on tablets and other online services, without any restrictive conditions". The newspaper business, the ENPA statement says, has the right to determine prices and payment systems for themselves.

"The print edition of a newspaper remains the engine room, creating an incredible range of news and informative content," said ENPA vice-president Valdo Lehari. "In the current environment, new online and mobile business models often operate in combination with the print edition." ♦

Wage accord faces new opposition

The federal government's new version of the InterProfessional Accord (IPA) has been met with a new salvo of rejection from trades unions. The proposed IPA drawn up by the Group of Ten, the committee of union leaders and employers' representatives, was left in the hands of the government last week after union members had broadly voted to reject its terms.

The IPA is an agreement revised every two years that lays out the terms of such matters as worker status, wage increases, pensions and redundancy.

The government made some changes, including allowing the first two weeks of a redundancy payment tax-free, giving an extra €120 a year to those on minimum wage. Also altered was the differences in notice required between "labourers" and "employees" – employment statuses that are a major

issue in current industrial relations.

However the new version handed to the unions this week by Group of Ten chairman Thomas Leysen met with as little enthusiasm as the initial proposal. The socialist ABVV and the liberal ACLVB maintain that a cap on wage increases at 0.3% is not acceptable. The Christian union ACV, on the other hand, said it hoped the government might make a rapid decision on implementing the new accord, to allow it to enter into negotiations within the various sectors in which members are employed. The ACV, the largest union in the country, was the only union to approve the original proposed IPA with a majority of 68%.

The various parties have a month in which to make their position known. The ABVV is promising a day of action on 4 March. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banks • KBC

KBC group, Flanders largest financial institution, has received takeover proposals from the French Credit Mutuel Arkea and from Credit Agricole for its mortgage and insurance brokerage affiliate Centea.

Construction • Nato

The new Nato headquarter under construction in Brussels is expected to cost up to one billion euro if all equipments are included compared with initial cost of some 500 million euro.

Dredging • Deme

Antwerp-based dredging company Deme has signed a €200 million contract to build two artificial islands off the coast of Abu Dhabi. The islands will be used as transit stations for the gas and crude oil extracted from a nearby off-shore field.

Economy • Savings

The total amount deposited in the country's savings accounts rose for the 26th consecutive month in December to reach a record €215 billion. Many analysts expect that January will see a further increase as end of year bonuses and interests work their way into the system.

Hotels • L&H

The former headquarters of the bankrupt Ypres-based Lernout & Hauspie voice recognition technology company may be turned into a hotel pending approval from city authorities. The infamous L&H developed a worldwide business in the late 1990s that was dismantled after massive fraud and accounting irregularities came to light.

Military • Airbus

The Belgian Army has signed a contract to buy seven Airbus A400 transport aircraft for some €891 million. The planes, which will replace 11 ageing Hercules C 130, will be delivered from 2020.

Mortgages • Boom year

Some 276,000 new mortgages for a total value of €26 billion were signed last year in the country, 24% more than in 2009 and the best result since 2005, thanks to low interest rates and attractive VAT cuts.

Ports • Antwerp

The Antwerp Port Authority is suing General Motors over its refusal to accept a €30 million offer for the site of the closed Opel plant in Antwerp. The Port claims it has pre-emptive rights on the property, based on a 1965 agreement between the Port and GM. The US firm estimates that the land is worth some €90 million.

Shipping • CMB

Antwerp-based shipping group CMB is selling its storage and logistics affiliate Hessenatie to Flanders leading transport group Essers.

The post postmodern world

Hungary's tumultuous history is taken up by its contemporary artists

ZSÓFIA GYÖRI

If you know nothing about Hungarian culture, here is your golden opportunity. Until the end of April, Bozar hosts a unique festival dedicated to the best of the Hungarian arts, in celebration of Hungary's presidency of the European Union. Internationally renowned Hungarian media artist and filmmaker Péter Forgács has curated this multi-disciplinary programme, while presenting many of his video and intallations projects.

Following two extraordinary concerts of the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra at the end of January, it's time we turned our attention to the next major course on the menu: *The New Arrivals: Eight Contemporary Artists from Hungary*.

Forgács, himself one of the eight artists in the exhibition, has selected the other seven installation artists and photographers to take over four spaces at Bozar. Emese Benczúr's installations in Horta Hall is the place to start. Benczúr, whose work is often compared to that of Japanese conceptual artist On Kawara, works mostly with textiles, particularly embroidery. Her large-scale "Lost/Found" contemplates the relationship between chaos and order: Seemingly randomly suspended blue squares suddenly form legible words if observed from the right angle. The horseshoe-shaped galleries around the Henry Le Boeuf hall houses the work of Gábor Gerhes and Lenke Szilágyi. While Szilágyi's photographs depict the sometimes bleak (though sometimes fabulous) reality in which she lives, Gerhes' Dadaist conceptual photos are full of black humour and absurdity, reminding me a bit of Magritte. Watch out for "LUVUMUM", a photo portraying a masked face that has both Pinocchio and Hannibal Lecter-esque touches, and the video installation "Dog in Winter".

The captain of the exodus

Descend to the Terarken Halls to become acquainted with the most breath-taking part of the exhibition – a post-modern video installation by Péter Forgács. "The Danube Exodus", which springs from Forgács' 1997 film of the same title, presents three sets of non-linear stories set on the Danube River in 1939 and 1940. One recounts the story of Central European Jews fleeing Nazi persecution, another tells about Bessarabian Germans leaving their land because of the Soviet invasion, and the third centres around the captain of the cruise ship that carried both groups. The captain, passionate amateur filmmaker Nándor Andrásovits, documented these two journeys.

The footage is projected onto five consecutive screens, and visitors are invited to choose whichever set of stories they wish to see. "As opposed to the 60-minute film, this interactive media piece comprises more than six hours of material," says Forgács, in town recently for the exhibition opening. "Elements that had to be left out of the film, such as the captain's story or the personal interviews with the survivors, are now integral parts of the composition and cast more light on the background."

"Each of us has our individual messages and questions, which have nothing to do with Hungarian folklore, politics or society"

–Péter Forgács

Indeed, in a smaller adjoining room one can dive into social, cultural and personal memories by watching interviews and visiting www.danube-exodus.hu to access more information through a research database.

Forgács, who often works with found footage, says "The Danube Exodus" is all about memories and (re)interpretations of memories, as well as the relation between different narratives and the documents that function as proof. "We have this almost neutral player who was filming the escaping Jews and Germans because he thought it was important," says Forgács. "He chose his theme, and he chose why, how and to what extent he would film them. Then I took his films and re-composed them into a new context, presenting them one after the other. This combination of the Jewish and German migration sagas, and the tension between the narrative and the post-narrative provoke a painful row of questions that cannot be answered immediately. *How do we remember? Why are the Jews dancing happily? Why are the Germans depressed?* The mission of this piece is not to answer questions but to provoke ideas."

We approach Bozar's rotunda with its three antechambers. Balázs Kicsiny's installation "The New Arrivals" invites visitors

to investigate a vivid crime scene that, according to Kicsiny, is "a conceptual 'misinterpretation' of a Robert Capa photo." Gyula Várnay, meanwhile, refutes time by means of a complicated light installation, while Orshi Drozdik's mysterious "Medical Venus" addresses eroticism and art. Finally, Imre Bukta contrasts rural and urban experiences and social classes through armchairs with eyes that watch the onlooker, and bleeding potatoes. While one would be tempted to categorise these artists and their styles as "typically Hungarian", or following certain artistic movements, Forgács cautions: "The Hungarian EU Presidency is a good occasion for us to present our works, but each of us has our individual messages and profound questions, which have nothing to do with Hungarian folklore, politics or society. In our post-postmodern world, contemporary art really is beyond styles – just look at the Venice Biennale or the Shanghai Expo, where so many diverse artistic tools are presented. We simply have our own visions, for which we always find the right artistic channels." ♦

→ www.bozar.be

DON'T MISS

1 March to 6 April: Hungarian Ebb and Flow

a selection of films by Péter Forgács

Bozar's neighbour, Cinematek, has given curator Péter Forgács *carte blanche* to select must-see Hungarian films. Forgács himself introduces the series, followed by the classic *The Round-up* (1965), Miklós Jancsó's historical drama about political prisoners of the 1848 Kossuth revolution. Another classic to see in the series is the visually ingenious *Time Stands Still* (1982) by Péter Gothár, a tale of teenagers coming of age in the politically turbulent, though still rock 'n' roll, 1960s. More contemporary films are also on the bill: don't miss prolific director Béla Tarr's slow-moving, mesmerising *Werckmeister Harmonies* (2000, pictured) or György Pálfi's multiple-award-winning *Hiccup* (2002), a near-wordless film that follows every life and death – and maybe murder – in a rural Hungarian town. The director (*Taxidermia*, *I am Not Your Friend*) will be at Cinematek to introduce the film.

27 March: Gábor Csalog

Hungarian pianist Gábor Csalog has prepared an contemporary programme of three composers who pushed the limits of piano, both musically and physically: Liszt, Ligeti and Kurtág

© Lenke Szilágyi, Zazi



Lenke Szilágyi captures the colour in black and white

Sunday in the park

Martha Tentatief tells real-life stories of randomly interviewed *Antwerpenaars*

MONIQUE PHILIPS

It all started with a simple jog. Author and playwright Bart van Nuffelen was out for a run in Antwerp's City Park and was confronted by three young Polish men staring him down. The author and playwright, who enjoys exploring drinking holes around his hometown's Central Station while blogging on his laptop, once again wondered why so often men of foreign origin always seemed to look at him in contempt.

Together with his theatre group Martha Tentatief, he spent 2010 exploring the relationships between a variety of *Antwerpenaars* in the five-part *Revue van het Ontembare Leven*, or *Revue of the Indomitable Life*. Playing now in the Antwerp area is "Polen op Zondag" ("Poland on a Sunday"), the fifth in the planned nine-part series.

Often in site-specific locations, the project aims to capture the topsy-turvy world of cultural collisions. By studying their home turf and facing their own fears, they are convincing themselves – and us – that these cultural changes are not for the worst.

"Polen op Zondag", though staged in cultural centres, is set in the very park where the idea had its spark. Members of Martha Tentatief went back to the park to conduct research. Passersby were interviewed, joggers chased down and background stories explored. Onstage, five actors portray these random park encounters. One of the more fascinating characters is Stefaan De Munter, played by Brazilian actor Alyson Pedrão. In an entertaining rehearsal that you can see on YouTube (search for "Polen op Zondag"), the real De Munter explains in English how exactly his spasms force him to move. "But if you really want to walk like me, you only need to go outside and get hit by a car."

Which seems to be the point Van Nuffelen and Martha Tentatief want to make. Cities and their parks are colourful mosaics made of shreds,



edgy slices of lives, that each deserve a closer look. What moves these people? Countless stories are to be harvested here.

And that is what we are being presented: a documentary revue of city lives. As each of the three acts replays the exact same events, we get more and more in-depth information – on the old Jewish woman in the wheelchair, the tree-hugger, the amorous couple. Forty-four characters and 23 nationalities (and some rabbits) stroll by in an hour's time.

The centre of rotation is the on-stage narrator, TV and stage actor Ludo Hoogmartens, playing Van Nuffelen. While the various characters slide silently across the stage, heads hidden by two-dimensional placards of faces, only his voice is heard. We share his view of "small breasted joggers" and his intrusive need to know what goes on in people's minds. This monologue, although occasionally interrupted by taped bits of interviews, felt rather constrictive and gave very little occasion for laughter or deeper emotions.

Van Nuffelen is, rather admirably, a young, middle-class man who dares to talk to anybody, be it in dingy bars or parks on Sunday. But, as the small-breasted joggers were dismissed off stage with a single comment – "Their lives were easy, too easy" – I realised that it's only fair to return the remark.

While I'm curious to see where this fashionable trend of making theatre about immigrants is going, I had hoped to see more than the writer's own take on life, so elaborately staged by extras here. The audience, many already fans of the *Revue* series, applauded the sold-out performance loudly. ♦

Polen op Zondag

18 February, 20.15, Wilrijk
25 February, 20.00, Ekeren
26 February, 20.30, Deurne
In Dutch, no surtitles

→ www.marthatentatief.be

Gossaert in London ♦ The National Gallery hosts a major show of the Flemish primitive

ANNA JENKINSON

If asked to name an artist active in Flanders in the 15th or 16th centuries, you might think of Jan Van Eyck, Hans Memling or Rogier van der Weyden. I'd place a fairly safe bet, in any case, that Jan Gossaert wouldn't be the one. Fortunately, Gossaert is about to become a far more familiar name, thanks to a new exhibition opening on 23 February at London's National Gallery.

Little is known about the life of Gossaert, who was also referred to by other names, including Jenni Antwerpen, Mabuse and Johannes Malbodius. He was born around 1478, possibly in Maubeuge in present-day France (indicated by the names Mabuse and Malbodius), and died in 1532, probably in Antwerp.

His significance for the development of art cannot be underestimated. As the National Gallery puts it: "Gossaert changed the course of Flemish art, going beyond the tradition of Jan van Eyck and charting new territory that eventually led to the great age of Rubens."

Gossaert was one of the first northern artists to travel to Rome and make copies of Greek and Roman sculptures and monuments, later incorporating them into his own work. He is most often credited with "successfully assimilating Italian Renaissance style into northern European art of the early 16th

century", according to New York's Metropolitan Museum, where the Gossaert exhibition was on display before moving to London.

Jan Gossaert's Renaissance include more than 80 works, juxtaposing paintings, drawings and prints with those of his contemporaries to show the artistic milieu in which he was working.

The first clear sign of Gossaert's artistic presence dates from 1503, the year in which he is recorded as having become a master in the painters' guild of Saint Luke in Antwerp. How exactly Gossaert came to accompany Philip of Burgundy on an important diplomatic mission to Pope Julius II is not clear, but that he did so in 1508-1509 is not in doubt. It was during this trip that the artist experienced firsthand the ancient and Renaissance works of Italy.

Works on display at the National Gallery include "The Adoration of the Kings" (1510-1515), pictured, whose perspective and grandeur reflect this Italian influence, mythological paintings commissioned by Philip of Burgundy such as "Venus" (about 1521) and a room full of portraits for which Gossaert was particularly renowned.

If you can't make it to London, there are possibilities to see the artist's work closer to home, including several paintings at the Royal



Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels and "Lady Portrayed as Mary Magdalene" at the Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp. ♦

Jan Gossaert's Renaissance

23 February to 30 May
The National Gallery
Trafalgar Square, London

→ www.nationalgallery.org.uk

CULTURE NEWS

Rundskop (*Bullhead*), playing now in Belgium, screened this week at the **Berlin International Film Festival**, one of the top three film festivals in Europe. It's the first Flemish film in more than 10 years to be accepted into the prestigious Panorama programme of art house films that, according to the festival, "might go unnoticed in a purely commercial or less open-minded environment. An intended effect of this is to embolden film buyers to be open to films with controversial subjects or unconventional aesthetic styles."

Twenty-one-year-old Charlotte Van Brabander has become **Belgium's first poker player** sponsored by the world-leading poker website Pokerstars. There are four members on the Belgium Pokerstars Team, but Van Brabander is the only one who doesn't have to pay her own way into several important tournaments, both on line and off. "The poker community is made up mostly of men, but there is also a circuit of women who excel," she says. "This year I want to play in as many tournaments as possible – online and live – to gain more experience. Just like in any sport, training is the only way to get better."

→ www.pokerstars.be

Thirteen Belgian and international artists launched their careers last year through **SonicAngel**, an investment company where members of the public can buy so-called FanShares in an artist of their choice. Founded by Flemish new media entrepreneur Bart Becks and Flemish musician Maurice Engelen, better known as Praga Khan, SonicAngel is launching an American platform next month.

→ www.sonicangel.com

Lebanese author Elias Khoury has won the **Groene Waterman Prize** for his novel *Poort van de zon* (*Gate of the Sun*). The prize is given annually by the Antwerp bookshop to a new work or a work newly translated into Dutch. Khoury, who originally published the book in 1998, was at the ceremony earlier this month in Antwerp to receive the prize. The Groene Waterman public prize went to *Antwerpen, biografie van een stad* (*Antwerp: Biography of a City*).

→ www.groenewaterman.be

Last week saw the opening of the exhibition **Venetian and Flemish Masters** at Bozar in Brussels. The exhibition brings together masterpieces from the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo and the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, showing the interdependency of the Flemish and Venetian schools. Bruges' show comparing the work of the Flemish Primitives to masters from Central Europe, which ended last month, brought more than 123,000 visitors through the doors.

→ www.bozar.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

Travels with Charlie

Adopt the perfect dog from one of Flanders' many animal shelters

COURTNEY DAVIS

Charlie is so cute. I have the biggest crush on him. And my husband doesn't even mind. Why should he? Charlie is sweet, kind and adorable. And he is a golden retriever.

Abandoned in Spain, Charlie was brought to Flanders via Galgo Aid Europe, an Antwerp non-profit that specialises in bringing abandoned galgo dogs, a breed of sighthound, from Spain to Belgium for adoption. Charlie was a bit of an exception. Sometimes one of the volunteers finds another breed of dog on the streets and just can't resist.

Charlie is Spanish and has a passport to prove it. In fact, if any pet is to travel into the country, it will require a passport. In it, all vaccinations and shots are recorded. Rabies is also a compulsory shot in Belgium, however most veterinarians will recommend a host of other shots against hepatitis, viruses and more.

Adoption of Charlie was relatively easy. There are numerous groups online that allow you to peruse pet profiles. Featuring photos, as well as history, it feels a bit like a dating site. You can find out their genetic make-up (pure breed or mutt), as well as birthday, day of arrival in the foster dog care system and, interestingly enough, a personality description.

Alternatively, you can meet dogs in person at a local shelter. Shelters are not centralised – some towns have them, others don't. Some are huge, hosting over 150 dogs, and others can house just a handful.

In Belgium, the rule of thumb for all shelters is to do everything in their power to reunite lost dogs with their owners or to find them new owners if they're abandoned. From the end of this year, every dog and cat is required to be fitted with a microchip, which has the dog's owner's name and vital records encoded on it. It's the size of a grain of rice and embedded in the dog's neck.

Dogs in Belgium are all required to be identifiable and registered with the Belgian Association for the Identification and Registration of Dogs (BVIRH). The agency that imported the dog or your local shelter can help you with registration. So can your veterinarian, who can also get your dog fitted with the microchip.

Finding furry friends

On our quest for a canine addition to our family, we first visited the kennels of Ghent's Royal Society for Animal Protection, located in Citadel Park, where there were about 20 dogs. Each animal is noted with breed, gender, if they are good

with other dogs, children, cats and any other comments. The society not only welcomes visitors, they allow the dogs to go on walks with interested people, providing the dog has been checked and cleared for that activity.

The online versions of dog shelters or kennels are a little easier on the heartstrings. Pets.be is the recommended site as it features only registered organisations. Looking at a photo of a dog and deciding you don't want to adopt it because it doesn't like cats is far easier to do if it isn't looking up at you with those world-renowned puppy dog eyes.

From Jack Russell terriers to boisterous labradors to bug eyed pugs, there are a huge variety of dogs up for adoption. It soon becomes clear that two breeds are the most common: German shepherds and staffordshires.

German shepherds are common in shelters because, as the name indicates, they're from the region. Used as guard dogs, many area farmers utilise their protective natures. Staffordshire are also sadly common in shelters due to their high energy levels as well as aggression if not properly treated. Both require space and room to exercise, needs many dog owners don't consider until it is too late.

All breeds have different personalities, and finding the best match for you and your home is what's important. Collies of any kind, for instance, need multiple daily walks and a lot of mental stimulation. Surprisingly, the skinny and super fast galgos, a Spanish hunting greyhound, are total couch potatoes. One walk a day will suffice.

Going Galgo

Galgo Aid founder Anita Wuyts does home visits to people interested in adopting a dog. "We ask them questions to see what their motivations are in having a dog," she explains. "We require that the dog has space to be outside and won't be confined to a chain all day. We also check to see if the garden is properly enclosed so the dog won't escape."

The people have to be right, too: "We want to be sure that if a couple is getting a dog, both of them want it. We don't do many dog adoptions – maybe 100 a year – but the ones we do, we do well."

Although there are plenty of local dogs to adopt, the situation in Spain for this particular breed is dire. Used during the hunting season, galgos are often then abandoned or killed outright. "The culture in Spain is generally more macho, which contributes to a rougher, less



Charlie, happier and healthier after just two weeks in a permanent home

kind interaction with dogs," says Wuyts. "Galgos and podengos are used in Spain for hunting rabbits, much like hounds in the UK hunt foxes. There is a belief that the more the dog suffers, the better their next season will be. Once they are no longer useful for hunting, they are simply abandoned, left on the side of the road or in strangers' cars. Sometimes the microchip is dug out of the dog's skin – without painkillers – so the owner can't be traced."

Most organisations don't have the time or the resources to take the steps Wuyts goes through. They are all required, however, to make sure that any imported dog has had all the necessary vaccinations, blood tests for diseases and is sterilised. Dogs that are already in Belgium and find their way to a shelter will also be checked for their

shots, but are left with their reproductive parts intact.

Most shelters don't see many galgos, since they are not a dog naturally found in Belgium. But a few organisations bring in breeds from other countries, particularly Turkey and Spain, where abandoned dogs are numerous. There can occasionally be hard feelings in the animal care sector over this, as these organisations are in direct competition with local shelters, and all dogs are competing for the same limited number of homes.

While you can get your dog or cat from a pet shop, the many organisations and shelters in Flanders and Brussels make finding the dog of your choice much easier, and you can be happy in the knowledge that you are giving a homeless pet the home it deserves. ♦



Anita Wuyts of Galgo Aid Society, which specialises in bringing abandoned galgo hunting dogs to Flanders

WHERE TO START

Find local shelters and check out some dog profiles

→ www.pets.be

Adopt a galgo breed, rescued from the streets of Spain

→ www.galgoaid.eu

Everything you need to know about registering and licensing your new dog

→ www.abiec-bvirh.be

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Art of the Loom

ANNA JENKINSON

If "Flemish tapestries" makes you think of faded, 17th-century wall hangings depicting battle scenes or idyllic gardens, think again. *Art of the Loom* puts a whole new spin on the craft by combining contemporary art and design with the traditional skill of tapestry making, historically a huge business in Flanders.

The project is the brainchild of West Flemish carpet manufacturer cum gallery owner Mark Deweer, who wanted to combine his two passions. He invited well-known local and international artists, including Flanders' Koen Vanmechelen, Germany's Günther Förg and the Russian-born Ilya Kabakov, to come up with designs that would be woven on his factory looms.

Deweer is "someone who can push back frontiers, who can turn a conservative way of looking at things into a radical new world view," according to Flemish artist and curator Jan Hoet. To realise some of the 32 new designs, Deweer had to invent brand new weaving techniques.

"For a long time, I didn't want to link these two worlds," says Deweer in his introduction to the exhibition catalogue. The factory was developed in the late 1960s with his brother Dirk from their father's textile company into the rug factory Deweer-Assur Carpets. Deweer opened the gallery, which was one of the first in Belgium to present artists such as David Hockney, Tom Wesselmann and Allen Jones, just

over a decade later with his wife Marleen. The factory and gallery, both based in Deweer's home town of Otegem, a municipality of Zwevegem (about 15 kilometres east of Kortrijk), were to him separate spheres.

But when the family factory hit difficulties due to the economic pressures of globalisation, Deweer decided to close it down, and he realised that it was "now or never" if he was ever going to unite his two worlds. "I wanted to finish the era of the carpet factory with a flourish. A project with the artists from the gallery could sweeten the pill somewhat and make me forget for a while about the closure," he writes.

The project was realised, and the last carpet came off the loom in 2006. The company then closed its doors, and the machines were disassembled. As to why it has taken more than four years to launch *Art of the Loom*, exhibition book editor Max Borka simply puts it down to "Mark Deweer's now legendary modesty".

In the intervening years, some of the artists have exhibited their carpets elsewhere – French artist Matthieu Laurette turned "Applause (The Today Show)", pictured above, into a room-size installation at Art Brussels in 2005.

The exhibition is an intriguing look into contemporary art and choices: some artists created completely new works and some adapted previous works. For their ability to transfer

well to textile? For their effect on a large scale? To look good on your floor?

Each piece is also often a perfect reflection of the artist: Koen Vanmechelen offers a simple black background topped by a giant head of a chicken; Panamarenko's is a reproduction of the poster from his seminal show in Ghent's SMAK; Jan Fabre's "Privy" has been adapted from his *The Fountain of the World* series, in which bodily fluids and genitalia get rather out of control. The entire collection, which was on show at the Interieur 2010 Design Biennale last autumn in Kortrijk, can now be seen at the Deweer gallery. Many artists lent more than one design, and every carpet is for sale and comes with a certificate of authenticity that has been numbered, dated and signed by the artist, as well as a copy of the exhibition catalogue. ♦

Until 10 April

Deweere Gallery
Tiegemstraat 6A
Otegem (Zwevegem)

→ www.artoftheloom.com



Antwerp

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
FEB 18 19.45 Radio Modern Deluxe party with The Baboons, The Aces of Swing, Mike Sanchez, The Boppin' Benvis Brothers and more

Lotto Arena

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
FEB 19 20.00 Reverze: Call of the Visionary, hard-rock event (also at Sportpaleis)
FEB 23 20.00 Skunk Anansie

Petrol

Herbouvillekaai 21; 03.226.49.63
www.petrolclub.be
FEB 19 22.00 Mumbai Science + Gtronic + Dr Lektroluv

Queen Elisabeth Hall

Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060
www.elisabethzaal.be
FEB 18 20.00 Ray Lamontagne & The Pariah Dogs

Rataplan

Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvzw.be
FEB 16 20.30 Sam Wauters

Sportpaleis

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
FEB 19 20.00 Reverze: Call of the Visionary, hard-rock event (see also Lotto Arena)

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
FEB 16 19.30 Knights of the Abyss + Martyr Defiled
FEB 17 20.00 JFJ + Mozes and the Firstborn
FEB 19 20.00 White Noise Sound + San Diablo
FEB 23 19.30 Junip + Woodpigeon

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
Concerts at 20.00:
FEB 16 Tift Merritt + Iron and Wine.
Twin Shadow FEB 18 Kupid Kids + Elvis Black Stars FEB 19 Lady Angelina
FEB 22 The Future Dead + The Galacticos

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
www.fuse.be
FEB 19 23.00 Fuse Never Sleeps party, with DJs Steve Bug, Magda, Mathias Kaden, Art Departement, Deniz Kurtel, Pierre, Issa Maiga

K-NAL

Havenlaan 1; 0474.04.00.00
www.k-nal.be
FEB 19 23.00 Club Cheval & Social Disco Club (DJ party)

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
Concerts at 20.00:
FEB 17 Boutiq Rock: Volt Voice, Romano Nervoso, Do or Die, Hoquets, Bd Banx, Henri Prosper, Volt Selector
FEB 18 Boutiq Rock: Waldorf, Alpha 2.1, Waxdolls, Isola, Mukfase, Playboy's Bend, Skiv Trio
FEB 19 Boutiq Rock: Stereo Grand, Big Hat Band, Surprise, Coffee or Not, Teme Tan, Sinus Georges, Vegas
FEB 22 Men
FEB 23 Jonny Vinnie Who + Lucy Love
FEB 24 Suuns

Magasin 4

Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74
www.magasin4.be
FEB 18 18.30 Body Farm Festival: Thirty Years of Parade Ground: Parade Ground + + Red Sniper + M3D + Solar Skeletons + Le Syndicat MMX + Codes + Maria + Tzii

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recyclart.be
FEB 18 22.00 Rebel Up! Soundclash DJ party

DON'T MISS

Flat Earth Society

24 February, 20.00

deSingel, Antwerp

One of the most intriguingly experimental outfits in the country, Flat Earth Society, led by Flemish composer, clarinetist, saxophonist and keyboardist Peter Vermeersch, presents the film concert *Hearsee*. Vermeersch chose fragments from a number of film archives to piece together this original soundtrack to diverse and surreal images.



→ www.desingel.be

Ghent

Charlatan

Vlaammarkt 6; 09.224.24.57
www.charlatan.be
FEB 22 20.00 Bloodshot Bill + The Chimiks
FEB 24 20.00 Lucy Love + Styrofoam

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65 www.handelsbeurs.be
FEB 17 20.15 Joan As Police Woman + The Two
FEB 19 20.15 An Pierlé & White Velvet

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
FEB 19 22.00 New Wave Classix, new age party. Radio Modern Deluxe party featuring The Baboons, Mike Sanchez and The Aces of Swing
FEB 20 19.30 Lee Fields & the Expressions + Menahan Street Band featuring Charles Bradley

Gistel

CC Zomerloos

Sportstraat 1; 059.27.98.71
www.gistel.be
FEB 19 20.00 Luc De Vos solo

Hasselt

Muziekodroom

Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
FEB 24 20.00 The Subs

Kortrijk

De Kreun

Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
Concerts at 20.00:
FEB 16 Gold Panda + Eleven Tigers
FEB 17 Steve Singeneyer (Soulwax)
FEB 18 Djivilé + Definitivos + Gesman + Very Very Pop + Riot In A Box + Stab
FEB 22 Junip

Schouwburg

Schouwburgplein 14; 056.23.98.50
www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be
FEB 17 20.15 Absynthe Minded unplugged

Leuven

Het Depot

Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
FEB 17 20.00 A Brand + Jamaica + The Tellers
FEB 18 21.30 Hindu Nights with Willow, Jeff Wootton, and Hindu Radio
DJs. 23.00 Birdy Nam Nam
FEB 19 20.00 The Undertones + TV Smith & The Valentines. 23.00 Sub Focus & MC ID + Murdock + AKS
FEB 24 20.00 CPEx

MORE SHOWS IN WEST FLANDERS THIS WEEK

The Responsive Subject → *Mu.Zee, Ostend* →

Myriam Dekeyser → *MEC Staf Versluys, Bredene*

Cheese and Advertising → *De Oude Kaasmakerij, Passendale*



Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00
www.kursaalooostende.be
FEB 18 20.00 The Best of Musicals
with Rosemary Ashe, Jan Schepens and
Deborah de Ridder



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
FEB 24 20.00 The Writer's Bench
presents But Is It Jazz? with Soweto
Kinch Quartet and Phynt featuring
Erwin Vann

Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
FEB 17 21.30 Buster BabL Jam **FEB 18**
22.00 Bertus Borgers **FEB 19** 22.00
Lost Romeo **FEB 23** 21.30 Playtime
Session: JNCC

De Hopper
Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
FEB 20 16.00 Harry Happel & guests
FEB 21 21.00 Sander De Winne
Quartet
FEB 22 21.00 Jam session

Rataplan
Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvzw.be
FEB 18 20.30 Pierre Vaiana: Itinerari
Siciliani, jazz

Brussels

Jazz Station
Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
FEB 16 20.30 Amina Figarova sextet
FEB 17 20.00 The Bundle **FEB 23** 20.30
Caçamba with Osvaldo Hernandez
FEB 24 20.00 Youth Jazz Orchestra
conducted by Pierre Bertrand

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
FEB 16 Caribe Con K **FEB 17** Tutu
Puokane: 'It Began in Africa' **FEB 18**
Alexandra Grimal Quartet **FEB 19**
Wery-Telzhanov Quartet **FEB 21**
Master Session **FEB 22** Tassin-Di Maio
Quartet **FEB 23** Chamaquiando, salsa
FEB 24 Mess Trio

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:
FEB 16 Sara So Far Quartet **FEB 17**
Circacino, Astor Piazzolla music **FEB 18**
Andy Middleton Quartet **FEB 19**
Mardi Gras Jazzband **FEB 23** Gorgona
FEB 24 Suzanne Folk & Sophie
Tassignon 4tet

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
FEB 20 15.00 Glenn Miller Orchestra,
swing/big band

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
FEB 24 20.15 Oli Brown Band, blues

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
FEB 17 20.00 Erik Friedlander + Evan
Roy + Das Kapital
FEB 18 20.00 Paolo Angeli + Hauschka
+ Zach Miskin

Kortrijk

Schouwburg
Schouwburgplein 14; 056.23.98.50
www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be
FEB 23 20.15 Flat Earth Society

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
FEB 22 20.00 Tony Joe White, blues



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Walse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
FEB 16 20.30 11 songs (West Africa)
FEB 24 20.30 Farhòd Qôri Halimov +
Mavrigi Bukhara Ensemble (Uzbek)

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
FEB 20 14.00 Tango Nuevo. 15.00
Orquesta Tanguedia



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80
www.amuz.be
FEB 20 15.00 L'Yriade with Cyril
Auvity, tenor: Marc-Antoine
Charpentier, Michel Lambert

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
FEB 16 20.00 La Petite Bande
conducted by Sigiswald Kuijken, with
Luc Devos, piano: Mozart
FEB 17 20.00 Adrian Brendel, cello;
Tim Horton, piano: Bach, Zemlinsky,
York Höller, more

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02
www.concertgebouw.be
Until FEB 20 Come On! Beat It!: music
and dance festival of beat, straddling
classical, jazz, contemporary and
world repertoires and featuring Jordi
Savall, the Brussels Philharmonic,
Trevor Watts, Thomas Hauert and
Muziektheater Transparant

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
FEB 16 & 19 20.00 De Munt Symphony
Orchestra and Choir conducted by
Hartmut Haenchen and Winfried
Maczewski: Mahler **FEB 18** 20.00
Belgian National Orchestra conducted
by Zdenek Macal with Nemanja
Radulovic, violin: Tchaikovsky, Dvorák,
Jean-Paul Dessy **FEB 19** 11.00/14.00
Liège Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Nathalie Muspratt:
Saint-Saëns' and Arnold's Carnival of
the Animals (classical for kids) **FEB 20**
11.00 Benjamin Grosvenor, piano:
Gershwin, Chopin, Ravel **FEB 23** 12.40
Philippe Koch, violin; Luc Dewez,
cello; Luc Devos, piano; Ilan Schneider,
viola: Fauré, Léopold Samuel **FEB 24**
20.00 Liège Philharmonic Orchestra
conducted by Patrick Davin: Mahler

Espace Senghor
Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40
www.senghor.be
FEB 20 11.30 Wibert Aerts, violin;
Geert Callaert, piano: Frédéric Dhaene
FEB 23 20.00 Annette Vande Gorne
et al: acousmatic music by Hans
Tutschku, Philippe Leroux, more

Flagey
Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20
www.flagey.be
FEB 18 12.30 Quatuor Tercea: Debussy,
Schubert, Haydn, Schumann

Minimienkerk
Minimienstraat 62; 02.511.93.84
www.minimes.net
FEB 20 10.30 The Minimienkerk
Orchestra and Choir, conducted by
Julius Stenzel: Bach, Georg Böhm

Royal Music Conservatory
Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcb.be
FEB 21 20.00 Lautten Compagnie
conducted by Wolfgang Katschner,
with Simone Kermes, soprano: Handel

Stadhuis
Grote Markt; 02.772.34.26
FEB 18 20.30 The ULB choir
conducted by Thierry Vallier, with
Elise Gâbele, soprano; Miyaghi Osada,
mezzo; Marie-Claude Roy, piano:
Brahms, Fauré, Mahler

ULB Delvauxzaal
Paul Hégerlaan 20, Solbosch Campus
www.orchestre-ulb.be
FEB 24 12.30 Students from the
Brussels Conservatory, conducted by
Philippe Gérard: 20th-century masters
(www.conservatoire.be)

Ghent

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
FEB 16 20.15 Alain Planès & Matan
Porat, piano: Schumann, Debussy,
more

Hoeilaart

Maison de la Musique
Edgar Sohiestraat 41; 02.657.96.52
www.maisondelamusique.be
FEB 24 20.00 Soloists from the Queen
Elisabeth College of Music: Mozart,
Janacek

Leuven

STUK
Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20
www.stuk.be
FEB 20 16.00 Frederik Croene, piano:
Roll Over Czerny, featuring music by
Carl Czerny, Croene



Antwerp

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
FEB 23 20.00 Oresteia by Iannis
Xenakis, with new music by Annelies
Van Parys, staged by Caroline
Petrick, performed by VocaalLAB
Nederland and Asko/Schönberg
conducted by Alejo Perez. Produced by
Muziektheater Transparant (in Dutch)

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
www.demunt.be
Until 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
FEB 16 & 18 20.00 Massenet's
Hérodiade staged by Joachim
Schlömer, conducted by Dmitri
Jurowski & Yannis Pouspourikas (in the
original French with Dutch surtitles)



Antwerp

Stadsschouwburg
Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be
Until FEB 20 & APR 7-10 Oliver!, the
musical (in Dutch)

Brussels

Théâtre Marni
Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.80
www.theatremarni.com
Until FEB 19 20.00 Dentro por Fuera/
Fuera por Dentro, choreographed by
Bud Blumenthal and Manuela Nogales

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
FEB 18 20.00 Paco Peña, flamenco

DON'T MISS

Luc Tuymans: Retrospective

18 February to 8 May

Bozar, Brussels

Hailed as the best-known Belgian painter of his generation, Luc Tuymans enjoys his first-ever retrospective in the country. The show of 70 works from 1978-2008 toured the Unites States before opening at Bozar this Friday. Unique to the Brussels' exhibitions is film work by Tuymans, who experimented with super 8, super 16 and 35mm in the early 1980s in a break from painting. Check *Flanders Today* next week for a review of this much-anticipated show.

→ www.bozar.be



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
FEB 23 20.15 The Reduced
Shakespeare Company in The
Complete Works of William
Shakespeare (abridged) (grote zaal;
in English). 20.30 Rony Verbiest and
Antje de Boeck in Boon (kleine zaal;
in Dutch)

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
FEB 23-26 20.00 Troubleyn in the
Belgian premiere of Prometheus
Landschap II by Jan Fabre (in English,
with Dutch surtitles)

Fakkelteater Keldertheater
Hoogstraat 12; 070.246.036
www.fakkelteater.be
Until FEB 26 20.30 Sébastien De
Smet in Geboren worden is erfelijk
(Being Born is Hereditary) by Herman
Brusselmans, directed by Ivan Pecnik
(in Dutch)

Nova
Schijfstraat 105; 03.259.04.20
www.nova-kiel.be
FEB 19 20.15 Nigel Williams in Geloof
mij! (Believe me!), stand-up comedy
(in Dutch)

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
FEB 18 & 20 20.30 Ama Producties in
Eenzaam in gedachten (Alone With
Your Thoughts (in Dutch)

Brussels

Kaaistudio's
Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vaakstraat 81;
02.201.59.59
www.kaaitheater.be
FEB 16 20.30 Maatschappij Discordia
in Marionett (in Dutch)
FEB 18-19 20.30 Maatschappij
Discordia in Monolog, by and with
Annette Kouwenhoven, Jan Joris
Lamers, Jorn Heijdenrijk, Matthias de
Koning, Miranda Prein (in Dutch)

Kaaitheater
Sainctelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaitheater.be
FEB 22-23 20.30 Kinderen Van De Zon
(Children of the Sun) by Maxim Gorky,
directed by Ivo Van Hove (in Dutch)

Scarabaeus Theatre
Hollestraat 19-27; 02.241.44.02
www.shaksoc.com
Until FEB 19 20.00 Brussels
Shakespeare Society in Macbeth,
directed by Tracie Ryan (in English)

Theatre de Poche
Gymnasiumweg 1a; 02.649.17.27
www.poche.be
Until FEB 19 20.30 Historia Abierta,
multidisciplinary performance with
visual artists from Chile, directed
by Lorent Wanson (in Spanish with
French surtitles)

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
Until FEB 27 20.00 Kommil Foo De
Luxe, music/cabaret (in Dutch)

NTGent Schouwburg
Sint-Baafsplein 17; 09.225.01.01
www.ntgent.be
Until FEB 19 15.00/20.30 Toneelgroep
Amsterdam in Kinderen van de zon
(Children of the Sun) by Maxim Gorki,
directed by Ivo van Hove (in Dutch)

Kortrijk

Schouwburg
Schouwburgplein 14; 056.23.98.50
www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be
FEB 18 20.15 Gunter Lamoot: Rauwe
Kloten, stand-up comedy (in Dutch)

Sint-Lievens-Houtem

CC De Fabriek
Fabrieksstraat 19; 053.60.72.35
www.gunterlamoot.be
FEB 19 20.00 Gunter Lamoot: Rauwe
Kloten, stand-up comedy (in Dutch)



Antwerp

Central Station
Van Immerseelstraat-Kievtplein;
02.537.68.75
www.artinallofus.be
Until MAR 30 FC De Kampioenen,
exhibition on the comedy show, which
ends this year after 20 years on Flemish
television
Until MAY 8 Art in All Of Us,
photographs of children around the
world by Anthony Asaël and Stéphanie
Rabemifafara

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until MAY 22 Liam Gillick and
Lawrence Weiner: A Syntax of
Dependency, double portrait of the
New York-based artists and their work

Grauwzusters – Antwerp University
Lange Sint-Annastraat 7; 03.286.88.52
www.maroeurope.org
Until FEB 20 Morocco & Europe: Six
Centuries of Exchanges, a history of
intercultural relations seen through
the eyes of diplomats, travellers, artists,
writers, more

Maagdenhuismuseum
Lange Gasthuisstraat 33; 03.338.26.20
Until APR 3 Kanttekeningen, a history
of lace production in Antwerp

Photo Museum (FoMu)
Walse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be
Until JUN 5 Hungry Eyes, food
photography by Tony Le Duc, Valérie
Belin and Dimitri Tsykalov

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
www.kmska.be
Until APR 30 Museums in the 21st
Century: Concepts, Projects, Buildings,
the most significant trends in
contemporary museum architecture

Zeno X Gallery

Leopold De Waelplaats 16; 03.216.38.88
www.zeno-x.com

Until MAR 12 Luc Tuymans: The Twenty Seventh of January Two Thousand and Eleven, paintings by the world-famous Flemish artist

Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03
www.argosarts.org
Until APR 2 Hans Op de Beeck: Sea of Tranquility, installation by the multi-disciplinary Flemish artist
Until APR 2 Shelly Silver: Here, His, video
Until APR 2 Down Low Up High: Performing the Vernacular, video

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80
www.stripmuseum.be
Until MAR 6 European Comic Strip Treasures, original works from the past 100 years by 50 European comic-strip artists

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
FEB 17-APR 23 Norbert Ghisolan, photographs by the late Belgian photographer (1878-1939)
FEB 17-MAR 27 De bloeiperiode van de Albanese fotografie (The Heyday of Albanian Photography), photographs from early 20th-century Albania

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
Until FEB 13 Ensor: Composer and Writer, publications, documents and photographs by Flemish master painter James Ensor
Until MAY 8 Venetian and Flemish Masters, masterworks from the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, Italy, shown alongside Flemish masterpieces from Antwerp's Royal Museum of Fine Arts, spanning the 15th to the 18th centuries
FEB 18-MAY 8 Luc Tuymans Retrospective, works by the contemporary Belgian artist

Flemish Parliament - De Loketten

IJzerenkruisstraat 99; 02.227.60.60
www.designvlaanderen.be
Until FEB 26 Henry van de Velde Awards & Labels 2010, works by the design award winners

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

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
www.mjb-jmb.org
Until MAR 27 David Seymour (Chim): Een humanistisch fotograaf (A Humanist Photographer), works by the Warsaw-born Magnum agency photo journalist

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

Museum of the National Bank of Belgium

Wildewoudstraat 10; 02.221.22.06
Until JUN 15 Geld en je leven (Money and Your Life), interactive exhibition encouraging youngsters to reflect on their relationship with money (12-16 years)

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 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

Toy Museum

Verenigingstraat 24; 02.219.61.68
www.museedjouet.eu
Until MAR 31 Husa: genie van het houten speelgoed (The Genius of Wooden Toys)

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
www.tour-taxis.com
Until APR 3 Zes miljard mensen (Six Billion People), photo project by Yann Arthus-Bertrand
Until MAY 9 America: It's Also Our History!, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork

VUB - Building F1

Paul Hégerlaan 22-24; 02.650.37.65
www.ulb.ac.be/culture
Until MAR 12 VUB on display: sculpture, paintings, installations, drawings and photographs by the university's artists

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50
www.wiels.org
FEB 19-MAY 15 David Claerbout, photographs

Ghent

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99
www.designmuseumgent.be
Until FEB 27 .03 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 MAY 8 The Weighty Body: Of Fat and Thin, Perfect or Deranged, a history of fasting for personal, esthetic, religious or economic reasons

Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30
www.gekleurdverleden.be
Until APR 25 Gekleurd verleden: Familie in oorlog (Coloured Past: Family at War), stories of the Second World War by everyday people in 1944

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03
www.smak.be
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

Stadsmuseum Gent (STAM)

Bijloke - Godshuizenlaan 2; 09.269.87.90
www.stamgent.be
Until MAY 1 Enlightened City, a study of how light affects a city through diaries, models, paintings, photographs and installations

Hasselt

Fashion museum

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21
www.modemuseumhasselt.be
Until JUNE 5 Alter Nature: The Future That Never Was, a look at the year 2000 from the point of view of designers from the 1960s and a glance at new possibilities in fashion

Literary Museum

Bampslaan 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 Trou 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.mleuven.be
Until MAR 20 David Shrigley, drawings and sculptures by the British artist

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
Until JUNE 19 Tussenruimte: Het onzichtbare zichtbaar maken (Space In-between: Making the Invisible Visible), paintings by Flemish artist Roger Raveel on white frames

Ostend

Kunstmuseum Aan Zee (MuZee)

Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18
www.muze.be
Until MAR 27 The Responsive Subject, works by Flemish artist Guy Mees

Venetiaanse Gaanderijen

Zeedijk/Parijsstraat; 050.40.34.38
www.west-vlaanderen.be
Until MAR 13 Visual Arts Competition 2010, recent works by West Flemish artists

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
www.africamuseum.be
Until MAR 13 Perspectives on the Congo River Expedition, photographs by Kris Pannecoucke from the Congo 2010 scientific project exploring the river's biodiversity
Until MAR 25 Madagascar: Meet the People, large-scale panoramic photographs by Wim De Schampelaere of village scenes in the Indian Ocean island

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum

Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220
www.inflandersfields.be
Until NOV 13 Tribute to donors, a wide selection of donated works, including paintings, drawings and photographs



Ars Musica: Contemporary music festival

Until APR 3 across Brussels and Flanders
www.arsmusica.be

Saint Amour - Bella Italia: Mix of literature, music and film with a love/Italian theme

FEB 14-24 across Brussels and Flanders
www.begeerte.be

Antwerp

Crossroads Festival: First edition of the international visual theatre festival

FEB 17-20 across Antwerp
www.crossroadsfestival.eu

Bruges

Come on! Beat It!: Percussion and beats festival revealing the underlying connection between old and new music, Western and non-European music, and dance and music theatre
Until FEB 20 at Concertgebouw, 't Zand 34
www.concertgebouw.be

Brussels

Boekenbeurs 2011: Annual book fair, this year themed around women and their relationships with men and the world

FEB 17-21 at Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86C
www.flb.be

Hungary in Focus: Hungarian festival to coincide with the country's presidency of the European Union, with music, exhibitions, cinema, theatre and literature

Until APR 30 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

Norway Now: Festival of contemporary Norwegian culture

Until MAY 25 at Bozar and Ancienne Belgique
www.abconcerts.be

Offscreen Film Festival: festival of sci-fi, noir, kung fu and other offbeat and independent films

Until FEB 27 at Cinema Nova and other Brussels venues
www.offscreen.be

Performatik 2011: Annual contemporary performance and visual art festival, including seven world and five Belgian premieres and encompassing theatre, music, dance, exhibition, and talks

FEB 24-MAR 5 at Kaaaitheater, Sainctelettesquare 20
www.kaaithheater.be/performatik

The Finkler Question: Man Booker Prize winner 2010 Howard Jacobson talks about his book to mark the launch of its Dutch translation (in English)

FEB 23 20.00 at Passa Porta, A Dansaertstraat 46
02.226.04.54, www.passaporta.be

Ghent

Belgian Boat Show 2011, collection of open boats, luxury cabin yachts and information on pleasure boating

FEB 18-20 at Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1
www.belgianboatshow.be

Groot Volksfeest: Party in Gent to celebrate Belgium's achievement of the world record for the longest time without a government

FEB 17 midnight in Sint-Jacob's Square
www.belgiewereldkampioen.be

Kortrijk

Kunstbende 12: Young artists' festival featuring exhibitions, dance, theatre, literature and music by 13- to 19-year-olds

FEB 20 14.00 at Schouwburg, Schouwburgplein 14
056.23.98.50, www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be

Leuven

Kulturama: Music, theatre and dance festival linking culture, knowledge and technology

FEB 17-20 across Leuven
www.kulturama.be

Artefact: Art and media festival featuring exhibitions, concerts and performances

Until FEB 24 across Leuven
www.artefact-festival.be

CAFE SPOTLIGHT

JOHN REGA



Monk

Sint-Katelijnestraat 42 Brussels

On a street of step-gabled houses between Sint-Katelijneplein and the Beurs, Café Monk beckons not just with its modern graphical sign jutting out from a 16th-century facade. The real hook is the view inside through storefront windows. Original Art Deco panelling, inset with mirrors, glows under sconces. An artsy looking crowd of students and elders relax and converse, seven days a week. A marquee over the bar displays a handwritten menu of interesting beers, a dozen whiskies and a choice of jenever, alongside cocktails, wines and soft drinks. There's no food but patrons are welcome to bring their own in from the bounty of neighbourhood eateries, such as – this being the fish market quarter – De Noordzee's seafood counter across the street.

Deeper within, Monk widens into an interior square framing a piano. A central row of tables is notionally designated non-smoking. The woodwork continues into a one-time billiards room, where the cafe screens Belgian football matches.

“The previous tenant had put a wood panel in front of the original seats and mirrors and had painted it purple,” says Marco Versele, the bookkeeper-turned-owner. “When Café Monk started up, the fake panels were removed, and these beautiful Art Deco walls appeared.”

Formerly A la Couronne – the name still appears on the façade – the establishment was reborn as a jazz café in homage to the pianist Thelonious Monk. Though musical identity has faded, bartenders often put on jazz or something else atmospheric at a conversation-friendly volume.

The piano is no mere drink stand and newspaper repository. Aside from the occasional plinking customer or staffer, musicians playing it lately include Ozark Henry, for a December broadcast of VRT's Cobra.tv arts programme.

To cafe culture in the neighbourhood, Monk also has contributed a succession of spin-offs by former barmen. All this makes Monk an institution of Flemish social life in Brussels.

Yet on a recent weeknight, amid a swirl of jumbled languages, a bartender enthused to a francophone customer about a special beer on offer. That's the lasting appeal. All comers are welcome and, eventually, all come.

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



© Johan Martens

Mr Krock

When you've had your fill of steak and fries, there's nothing quite like Thai food to appease your need for culinary variety. Very unlike food from here, Thai cuisine is typically spicy, sweet and sour all at once.

And if you order it from Mr Krock, you can rest assured that your dish consists of incredibly fresh ingredients, prepared with a lot of time and care in the open kitchen. Much of the restaurant's success is due to its take-away menu, but if you choose to dine in-house, be prepared to spend a couple of hours there. Still, it's worth it.

We enter the building on the Kortrijksesteenweg, undeterred by its shabby look and steamy windows, and receive a warm welcome from two Thai women and Mr Krock himself. Or who we always thought of as "Mr Krock" – turns out his real name is Suthat. He explains that *krock* is the name of an indispensable tool found in every Thai kitchen: a mortar and pestle. It is used to grind spices into curry pastes and fresh herbs and nuts into flavourful sauces.

With a Singha beer in one hand and a *kroepoek* in the other, my companion and I study the menu. Even though we have dined here several times before, we always have a hard time deciding because it *all* sounds so enticing.

Knowing how generous the portions are, I still can't help but order a starter of spicy scampi soup (Tom Yaam Goong). Five large tiger scampi bob on top of the hot and sour broth, along with giant mushrooms, lime leaves, lemon grass, chilli peppers and fresh cilantro. Thai heaven in a bowl. The mains are arranged on the menu according to their primary ingredient: chicken, fish, beef, pork, duck or vegetarian (with tofu). The variations are numerous, from milder yellow curry to more fiery

reds and greens, combined with a plethora of Thai herbs (coriander, chilli powder, lemongrass, etc) and veggies.

After long deliberation, my companion opts for tofu in a thick, creamy peanut and coconut milk sauce, accentuated with bits of green chilli peppers, strips of red pepper, "exotic" spices (according to the menu) and just the right balance of sweet and salty.

My dish is not a dish, really, but a platter. On it are no less than 10 thick (and moist) slices of duck breast, mingled with stir-fried onions, scallions, red peppers, hot green chillies and salty oyster sauce. The entire plate is exploding with contrasting yet complementary flavours, my favourites being the sweet Thai basil and pungent chillies.

Two more Singhas and a large bowl of sticky rice provide the perfect antidote to all this heat. It's warm in the small space as well, and humid, which rather convinces you that you could actually be in Thailand.

As usual, we both end up taking home half of our meals – which is no problem for our server at all – to look forward to for lunch the next day. And all for under €40.

📍 Kortrijksesteenweg 590, Ghent;
0479.30.90.73

🕒 Tue-Sun 11.30-14.00 & 18.00-22.30;
Sat 18.00-22.30

€ Mains: €10-€17

★ Authentic, fresh and affordable Thai cuisine and a friendly, relaxed atmosphere

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

TALKING FESTIVALS

MARIE DUMONT



© Martin Sigmund

Neue Vokalisten Stuttgart perform Stockhausen's *Stimmung* in Bruges

Ars Musica

"Why do we hate modern classical music?" asked critic Alex Ross in an article published recently in *The Guardian*. How come we're so ready to applaud avant-garde choreographers, cherish modernist architecture and embrace the haphazard paint drips of Jackson Pollock, but storm out of the concert hall when confronted with more than a few bars of Schoenberg or Berg?

The ear, it seems, is the most conservative of our senses, although, if we are to believe scientists, appreciation comes with exposure: Hearing more contemporary music is the only way to start savouring the joy and excitement it can bring. The more reason to root for Ars Musica, a festival staged across Belgium in March and April that for years has been labouring to broaden our musical horizons.

Founded by Paul Dujardin, Bernard Foccroulle and a few other high-flying music administrators in the late 1980s, the festival cranked up a gear last year by taking madcap Flemish composer Patrick De Clerck on board as director. The idea was to try to reach a broader audience than the genre's niche following. De Clerck, with his taste for provocation and sixth sense for luring innocent people into concert halls (ticket sales to the Klara Festival rocketed during his three-year stint as artistic director), may be just the person to pull it off.

De Clerck has already left his lurid mark: the pink brochure, the foetus logo and the Elvis Pompilio hats worn by festival staff are all part of his desire to

shed the genre's ascetic image. Content-wise, the same spirit of novelty and irreverence permeates the programme. Electro-acoustic experiments, discreet lunchtime readings of Bartók and Debussy, new works by composer-in-residence Peter Eötvös, concerts that reach out to dance and literature, even jazz and rock (several commissions revisit top-of-the-chart singles by Pink Floyd and The Beatles...the only thing absent from this 22 edition, it seems, is stuffiness.

Concessions have even been made to more accessible modern composers like Arvo Pärt, whose plangent, mediaeval-inspired polyphonies are regarded by some as the epitome of kitsch. Ars Musica's mission is to help us realise that contemporary music can be beautiful, fun, diverse and approachable. Also that Belgians are good at it: as many as 40 home-grown composers will be featured, from established figures like Philippe Boesmans and Henri Pousseur to young talents barely out of the conservatory, not to forget marginal figures like Baudouin De Jaer, best known for his quirky pedagogical experiments, or Giya Kancheli, a Georgian disciple of Shostakovich who's been living as a semi-recluse in Antwerp since 1995.

It may be messy and on the brink of dissolution, but little Belgium is home to one of the world's most lively and inspiring community of composers. And they're out to make themselves heard.

➔ www.arsmusica.be

THE LAST WORD...

Tough at the top

"It's been a good week. We had some great food, and even drank a little."

Kim Clijsters reaches WTA number one during her week in Paris (see p3)

Phantom chopper

"I assume we're talking about someone who hates greenery and wants to destroy as many trees as possible."

Police and conservationists in West Flanders are mystified by a vandal who cuts down trees by night, apparently at random

Hope for the best

"Less than three years after a bitterly hard economic crisis, we have the chance to climb out of the hole. The last thing we need is social unrest."

Acting prime minister Yves Leterme on hopes for his inter-professional accord (see p7)

The pain in painting

"I have to go through hell for every painting."

Luc Tuymans, whose retrospective at Bozar opens this week

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #168

Feature

The train system NMBS is under fire from right and left. News editor Alan Hope looks at their safety problems and new proposals to improve timeliness of trains

Arts

Bozar is the place to be this month, with new exhibitions *Luc Tuymans: Retrospective and Venetian and Flemish Masters*. Our art critics take a peek

Living

Brewing your own beer is interesting and fun, but where do you learn? In Hasselt next month, at Brouwerij Jessenhofke