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# "Always with us"

Teammates and friends salute fallen Flemish rider Wouter Weylandt

ALAN HOPE

Members of the Leopard Trek cycling team cross the finish line of the fourth stage of this year's Giro d'Italia (Tour of Italy) together, in honour of their colleague, Flemish cyclist Wouter Weylandt, who died in a severe fall on the descent of the Passo del Bocco last Monday, 9 May, during the third stage of the race.

"Wouter was one of the friendliest, funniest and most admirable people I ever knew," said American cyclist Tyler Farrar, teammate, training partner and close friend of Weylandt. "His death is a tragedy for his family, his friends

and for the sport as a whole....Wouter was and is the very soul of this sport we all love so much." Weylandt's partner, An-Sophie De Graeve, is expecting the couple's first child in September.

Based on reports from eye witnesses, the fall happened when Weylandt, travelling at about 80km/h, turned to look behind him during the descent, and his pedal became entangled with the road's concrete border. Race officials rushed to the spot and summoned medical assistance. Doctors worked for more than 40 minutes to revive him, without success.

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"Wouter was and is the very soul of this sport we all love so much"

## France says "Non" to Dutroux accomplice

Michelle Martin's release from jail in jeopardy

ALAN HOPE

It appears as if Michelle Martin, the ex-wife of Marc Dutroux, will be staying in jail after all. Martin was convicted in 2004 as an accomplice in the kidnapping of six girls, four of whom died at the hands of Dutroux. Two girls died of thirst in a cellar, ignored by Martin when Dutroux was in jail. A special tribunal in Mons last week approved Martin's early release halfway through a 30-year sentence, on a number of conditions.

But as *Flanders Today* went to press, the most important condition – that she would go and live in a convent under the supervision of the French justice system – has been curtailed by France.

At the weekend, justice minister Stefaan De Clerck sent a formal request to his French

counterpart to approve the move. Belgium and France have both signed a European convention that allows released prisoners from Belgium to be supervised by the French justice system just as they would be here – and vice versa. However the convention is not binding, and before De Clerck had even made the request, French justice minister Michel Mercier made it clear he had "no intention of saying yes".

As De Clerck sent off his request, he commented: "I know a position has been taken, and I'm under no illusions."

If that refusal is officially confirmed, Martin (pictured) will be left with nowhere to go, and the release will be cancelled – at least for a

time. Now that the intention of the release has been admitted, a future application will most likely be approved as long as the practical difficulties are overcome.

Much credit for swaying French opinion goes to Paul Marchal, father of 17-year-old An Marchal, who was kidnapped with her friend Eefje Lambrechts in 1995 in Ostend. Both teenagers were later found dead on one of Dutroux's properties. Marchal, a former schoolteacher from Hasselt, was a prominent figure among the parents of Dutroux's victims. An and Eefje were the only Flemish victims of Dutroux, who lived in Charleroi; the parents of Eefje have preferred to steer clear of the public eye recently.

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## FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE



© Dirk Waern / Bèga

## Vera Dua

Last week one of the leading figures in the growth of green politics in Flanders announced she would be stepping down from her last political post – a seat in the Ghent city council. Vera Dua brings to an end a career of more than two decades, though the ecological work goes on.

Dua was born in Ghent in 1952 and had her first close contact with nature as a bird watcher and member of the Youth Association for Nature and Environment, still a relatively niche interest in the early 1970s. She studied agriculture at Ghent University, going on to earn a doctorate in agricultural sciences. Following a period as a university researcher, she went to work for what is now the Flemish nature and forestries agency.

In 1984 she joined Agalev, the Flemish ecology party set up in 1979, which changed its name to Groen! in 2003. Dua first won a seat on the Ghent city council in 1989, then was elected to the federal parliament two years later, switching to the Flemish parliament in 1995 after the first direct elections to that body.

There she made a name for herself as a thorn in the side

of environment minister Theo Kelchtermans, whose job she was to take over after the election of 1999. She also sat on the Rwanda commission and took an active part in protests against French nuclear testing on the Pacific coral island of Mururoa.

Agalev suffered a severe defeat in the 2003 elections, leading to the change of name. Dua took over as the first woman president of the party. Under her leadership, Groen! made it back into the federal parliament in 2007. The party won five seats in last year's election and has seven seats in the Flemish parliament. Current Groen! president, Wouter Van Besien, now has a place at the negotiating table in talks to form a new government.

"At a certain point you have to turn the page, especially if you've held important posts in the party," Dua said last week. "The torch has been passed. I have every faith in the future." She has recently been named as an unpaid consultant for the Centre for Sustainable Development (CDO) at Ghent University.

→ [www.veradua.be](http://www.veradua.be)

## News in brief

A serious **fire that broke out in the warehouses** of Katoen Natie in the port of Ghent last week was caused by a discarded cigarette, the prosecutor's office has revealed. Fire services battled through the night to bring the fire, which started among wooden pallets, under control.

A 27-year-old woman who gave birth in secret and left the newborn to suffocate to death in a bucket in an Ostend housing complex in 2008 was found **guilty of premeditated infanticide** last week by a court in Bruges. Lawyers for Lieslot De Clercq pleaded that she was suffering from psychological denial of her pregnancy. The court rejected the argument and ruled that the killing had not been a panic reaction. De Clercq was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Flemish public broadcaster VRT is **failing to meet its targets for diversity** in employment, media minister Ingrid Lieten told the Flemish parliament last week. Only 0.6% of its staff has a disability, while the target stands at 1%. Only 1.07% are of immigrant origin, compared to a target of 2.5%. The organisation employs nearly 3,000 staff.

The federal parliament last week agreed unanimously to tighten the rules on **advertising scams**. The scams take the form of a letter inviting businesses to check their listing in "business directories", and when they do, they find they have signed up for expensive advertising fees. The new rules make it obligatory to state the purpose of the request and to include ad prices and other information in large print.

Federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom has opposed an idea by her colleague, justice minister Stefaan De Clerck, to make some **works projects immune from interference by the Council of State**. The proposal, made after the Council of State refused planning permission for a new tramline that is two-thirds complete (*Flanders Today*, last week), would be "a return to the 19th century", Turtelboom said, and would deprive ordinary people of a voice in decisions.

**Each time a baby is born** in a Ghent maternity unit next year, streetlights will go on in the city's Sint-Veerleplein, thanks to an installation unveiled last week by Italian artist Alberto Garutti.

"A switch is fitted in the delivery room, and the street lights up whenever a child is born," said culture alderman Lieven Decaluwe. Saint Veerle, also known as Pharaïdis, is the patron saint of Ghent.

Researchers at the universities of Antwerp and Ghent are on the point of developing a plaster to **vaccinate against bird flu** (H5N1). The virus affects poultry flocks and has led to the destruction of tens of millions of birds in recent years. It has also crossed over to humans, with fears of a pandemic. The new vaccine, which can also be administered by injection, will be tested on volunteers in the coming weeks.

A total of 45,000 people turned up for **Belgium Pride** last Saturday, 14 May, in the centre of Brussels. The celebratory event for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people includes a parade and village of retail and information stands. The numbers were up by 10,000, breaking last year's record attendance. The warm weather had something to do with it, but also the recent worldwide assault on queer citizens, including a recent call to approve the death penalty for gays in Uganda.

## Letter to the editor

I felt so shocked and disappointed by the letter of J Aerts (*Flanders Today*, 20 April). He must have met the two stupidest people in Antwerp: one who doesn't want to sell him frieten because he speaks French and one who doesn't like to sell French newspapers while he has them in his shop! I just wanted to say that Mr Aerts was probably very unlucky. I have had many international French-speaking friends visit over the years, and not one of them has ever had someone be rude to them because they spoke French. I think, at least in my part of the country, you are still assisted perfectly well when you speak French. In some Flemish cities, like Knokke, they even like it when you speak French :-).

So I really wouldn't want people to think that what has happened to this gentleman is representative of what's happening in Flanders right now. To my knowledge, it isn't.

K De Muynck  
Zomergem (East Flanders)

## OFFSIDE

ALAN HOPE

## Eek! A mouse!

He looks like a bandit, but he breeds like a rabbit. His name is the garden dormouse (*Eliomys quercinus*), but his preferred habitat is the forest – or the Walckiers park in Brussels, a tiny corner of green right beside the railway tracks leading to Schaarbeek train station, close to the nature reserve Moeraske (the little marsh).

That's the conclusion of MOB, the environmental commission for Brussels and surroundings, which has been running Operation Chlorophylle since 2006. (The name has nothing to do with photosynthesis, as you might expect, but with the main character in a comic strip by the late Raymond Macherot.) In 2008, MOB tallied three sightings of the dormouse in the park, which is something remarkable. *Eliomys* is commonly found in southern Europe as far as the Alps and Bavaria; but the forests of northern Germany are home to some, while in the Netherlands, where it could once be found all over Limburg, it's practically extinct.

Schaarbeek must have something that agrees with it: in its latest tally, MOB counted no fewer than 15 dormice, thanks in large part to the nest boxes the Chlorophylle project set out, most of which, but not all, were colonised by birds.



© Shutterstock

The population growth, MOB says, is a vindication of the project, which now makes the garden dormouse a creature of regional interest for Brussels, given its threatened status elsewhere.

If you want to see one, you'll need to go at night, as it's nocturnal. You can recognise a dormouse by its black eye-patches, large ears and the white tassel on the end of its tail. But be careful: Dormice have been known to eat baby birds, as well as other mice. They are also fiercely territorial and will defend their patch against intruders. Each territory has a radius of 75 metres. The Walckiers park is only 300m at its widest point; there may be no place to hide.

## FLANDERS TODAY

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Editor: Lisa Bradshaw

News editor: Alan Hope

Agenda: Robyn Boyle

Art director: Michel Didier

Prepress: Corelio P&amp;P

Contributors: Rebecca Benoot, Robyn Boyle, Leo Cendrowicz, Sabine Clappaert, Claire Davenport, Courtney Davis, Katrien Devulder, Stéphanie Duval, Philip Ebels, Jacqueline Fletcher, Anna Jenkinson, Katrien Lindemans, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Monique Philips, Christophe Verbiest, Denzil Walton

General manager: Joske Plas

Publisher: Corelio Publishing NV

Editorial address:

Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

[editorial@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:editorial@flanderstoday.eu)

Subscriptions:

[subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu)or sign up online at [www.flanderstoday.eu](http://www.flanderstoday.eu)

Advertising: Evelynne Fregonese

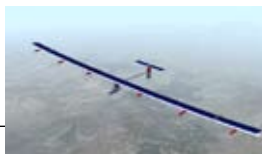
02.373.83.57

[advertising@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:advertising@flanderstoday.eu)

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Lisa Bradshaw





## Leopard Trek pulls out of Giro after Weylandt's death

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Weylandt, 26, never regained consciousness; the Italian medical examiner confirmed that he had died instantly. An autopsy revealed fractures to the face, leg, neck and skull, as well as internal injuries. "He did not suffer," Dr Armando Mannucci announced. Weylandt (pictured right) was described by those who knew him as colourful, good-natured and extraverted. Former cyclist Roger De Vlaeminck called him "a playful young man, someone with a lust for life and a future in cycling." Training partner Kurt Hovelijnck told how Weylandt had reacted speedily when he had fallen during training by calling in emergency services. "I owe my life to Wouter," he said. "And now Wouter himself is no longer here." The day following Weylandt's death was the race's fourth stage – described by the Italian daily *Gazzetta dello Sport* as "la tappa del dolore" ("the stage of pain") – and began with a rendition of The Last Post. The various teams rode

the stage in silence, alternating in the lead every 10km, until the last four km when Leopard-Trek moved in front, crossing the finish together, each rider with an arm on another's shoulder. Weylandt's team then pulled out of the Giro, although teammate Brice Feillu later said he would have preferred to continue racing. "I'm devastated by this drama, but I would rather have been able to give my best to pay tribute to Wouter," he said. At the start of the fifth stage of the race, Italian team coach Paolo Bettini, a former teammate of Weylandt in the Belgian Quick Step team, put his signature next to Weylandt's name on the race register, with the note "Sempre con noi" ("Always with us").

### Tributes continue

Last week Pieter Weening of the Dutch Rabobank team, who led the race on the day of Weylandt's death, handed over the leader's jersey to Weylandt's family in tribute. The organisers of the Giro decided to withdraw his number 108 permanently from the race, and Team Leopard Trek will no longer issue the number

to its racers. VRT commentator Karl Vannieuwkerke, who was commenting as the fatal accident took place and watched the efforts to revive Weylandt, pulled out of the race coverage and returned to Belgium.

The International Cycling Union (UCI) said it would carry out an investigation into bicycle safety. "We will make sure we are not making bicycles that cause problems," said UCI president Pat McQuaid. "But they [the cyclists] understand there is a limit to what you can do to a bike....One tends to forget that they go out every day and risk their lives, going down the mountains at [high] speeds. We see a lot of crashes in cycling and a lot of injuries, but very rarely do we see a fatality."

At the same time, the organisers of the Giro are reviewing the safety of some of its course following concern from riders. A priority will be the Col de Crostis, part of the 14th stage due to take place on 21 May, which has never been used before, is partly unpaved and has no crash barriers. "Our priority is that riders can take part in total safety," Giro director Angelo Zomegnan said.



Weylandt's funeral is scheduled for Wednesday, 18 May, at 11.00 in Sint-Pieter's church in Ghent, chosen for its size and the large square in front, allowing a maximum of supporters to attend.

Meanwhile the Leopard Trek team has set up a support fund for Weylandt's family. "Cycling is a team sport; Wouter is part of the team and always will be," said spokesman Tim Vanderjeugd. "This fund is intended to be an extra support for his family. You can define support in many ways, and this is one of them." ♦

→ [www.wouterweylandt.be](http://www.wouterweylandt.be)

## Father of victim makes appeal to French authorities

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Marchal called the convent in Besançon to which Martin was preparing to go, though he declined to reveal how he came by the information. "I called to introduce myself," he said. "I asked the nuns for some understanding of the situation of the victims. They were very understanding, but a bit surprised that I knew what was going on."

Marchal also made an emotional appeal to the French media to bring pressure on the government to reject Martin's request. "I'm begging you on my knees, don't let that monster in," he said on radio station Europe 1. The interview led to interest from other French media.

"Wherever Michelle Martin tries to hide, I'll be there to make a fuss," he said.

"Fifteen years is much too early to be released. This woman was convicted in 1989 for similar crimes and got a second chance already in 1991. Not even four years later, four more girls had been kidnapped and murdered. One of them was my daughter." ♦

## Shots fired in airport taxi wars

The long-running battle between taxi companies servicing passengers at Brussels Airport in Zaventem took a sinister new turn last week when a taxi ran over a policeman, who then fired several shots at the driver.

The incident happened when police arrived to carry out a routine check of the taxis lined up outside the arrivals hall of the airport. By law, only taxis registered in Flanders are allowed to ply for trade, although the majority of passengers are going to Brussels. Brussels taxis that bring passengers to departures, in the meantime, have to either drive back to the city empty or wait to pick up a fare who has called in.

A policeman saw what appeared to be a Brussels cab drive up and signalled to it to stop. The driver kept going and hit the officer, who was thrown onto the bonnet of the cab. He hung on for about two kilometres, firing two shots from his weapon through the taxi's windscreen. Eventually he was thrown off, the taxi stopped some distance away, and the officer fired again. The driver was hit in the shoulder, and the policeman slightly injured. The taxi driver was arrested.

The driver worked for the Brussels-based Taxis Bleus, which denied



Police arrive to break up a protest of taxi drivers outside Brussels Airport last week

their driver had run down the officer deliberately and claimed he had only been carried a few metres. "The policeman jumped onto the hood of the car," the company said.

Since taxis registered in Flanders can also not pick up fares in Brussels, they, too, have to return to the airport with an empty cab after dropping off a fare. It is prohibitively expensive to pay the fees involved to register a taxi in both regions, and both sides recognise that the airport situation is bad economics and bad for the environment. All attempts to come to an agreement, however, have proved unsuccessful.

Following the incident, taxi drivers gathered at the airport, blocking all traffic for a time. Brussels region transport minister Brigitte Grouwels said the incident was "a black mark on the image of the taxi sector" and said she would take the necessary disciplinary steps against the man, regardless of legal action. That would involve withdrawing his taxi licence. Grouwels has invited the mayor of Zaventem, as well as Flemish mobility minister Hilde Crevits, to join her in talks to resolve the taxi problem once and for all. ♦

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES



**18%**  
of café owners have no intention of respecting the total ban on smoking that comes into force on 1 July, according to a survey by NSZ, an organisation that represents the self employed

**622**  
requests for a royal grace accepted over the last four years. The procedure allows the king to reduce a prison sentence in individual cases. Last year there were 75 granted

**270,000**  
Belgians last year requested to keep their telephone numbers out of directories, one in six of all households. The main reason given is to avoid telemarketers

**8.4 billion**  
pills swallowed by Belgians last year, an increase of 3.2% on the previous year. The most popular are anti-depressants, cholesterol reducers and medication to treat osteoporosis

**€91 million**  
available for religious organisations, including free-thinkers' organisations, to be divided by the federal parliament. The Catholic church alone receives €71 million of it

## FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

### To see what is right

Royal mediator Wouter Beke (CD&V) has handed in his final report. "All the building blocks are there for an agreement," he said. Flemish daily *De Morgen* summed up his efforts slightly differently: 8 centimetres of paperwork, 9 proposals to split BHV, 144 pages of text, 600 pages of technical notes, 71 days as mediator, 6 visits to the king, 3 large chapters, 2 privileged negotiating partners, 1.1 pages a day, 0 progress.

Again, Belgium has not moved any closer to forming a federal government.

On the Flemish side, N-VA, the big winners of the federal elections, wants to bring in the Open VLD liberals, who share its right-wing economic views. This, it thinks, would help form a counterweight to the large left-wing PS, dominant in French-speaking Belgium. But this means chucking the socialist SP.A.

The Christian-democrat CD&V is somewhat reluctant to follow this scenario, as SP.A is also part of the Flemish government, lead by the Christian-democrat Kris Peeters, who would rather not see it destabilised.

The socialist PS wants to keep SP.A on board – for obvious ideological reasons, but also because without SP.A, the liberal MR comes back into the picture to provide a majority for a possible state reform. PS dreads a setting in which its rival MR plays any role in this. Then there is also the small matter of state reform, which has stood in the way of forming a government for almost a year now and on which an agreement has yet to be found.

In Dutch the word for hibernating is *overwinteren*: to "overwinter". This has led to the neologism *overzomer*: to "oversummer". This is not something some or other small mammal is considering, it has become a realistic option for our elected leaders: putting off a new federal government until after the summer.

Though this sounds like horror to most people involved – let alone the voters who have to undergo all of this – it has some obvious advantages for the two major parties, N-VA and PS. PS hopes that by waiting long enough, it can shake off N-VA after all. N-VA knows that dragging out the endless conflict will benefit it at the local elections of October 2012.

"To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage," Beke said, cited Confucius, last week, hinting that N-VA and PS should finally compromise. It is up to the king now to decide on the next move. Can he see what is right?



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# “Working our way back to heaven”

## Flemish wireless tech company Option climbs out of its Chinese-induced slump

LAWRENCE DE GEEST

Before my interview with Jan Callewaert, CEO of wireless tech company Option, his press man gave me a bit of a briefing. I chose not to tell him that I was calling from an office in New York City housing a jumble of other wireless start-ups as he summed up the last two years in the company: “We went through hell.” Their 750-strong worldwide staff was chopped to 250, due to, according to the press man, unfair Chinese competition that called the government into action. But now, he says, “We are working our way back to heaven.”

And with that, the gung-ho Mr Callewaert (*pictured*) picks up the phone, ready to talk. So, what about this China fracas?

A few years ago, Leuven-based Option began making USB sticks and encountered rapid response from Chinese companies determined to become top brass in Europe. “These mastodons of companies were obsessed with volume and started dumping high and low technology into European markets,” says Callewaert. “Two years ago we had 70% market share. Now we have 5%.”

*“Everything mankind is making and finding comes from nature”*

All he will say about their practices is that they were “not normal”. An anti-dumping case and an anti-subsidy case were put together. The European Commission considered both for four months before Option decided to strike a deal with Huawei – one of the Chinese heavies – effectively turning over one of Option’s divisions and licensing their products to them. Callewaert: “If you can’t beat them, join them.”

Still, the experience has given the 54-year-old Callewaert his first view on globalisation. Namely, that it is ironically limited.

“The flat world is all about information sharing, and anyone can build a USB stick,” he says. “But even in the flat world, the trend is local content delivery, which means you have to be close to your customers. And the Chinese don’t understand that. They care about volume and not content or applications. They don’t speak Dutch. Right now, they compete by pressuring prices or buying companies.”

### Local vs global

Callewaert’s second view, conversely, is that we’re all fast becoming neighbours. “Everything is wireless, and the future is in image and video sharing,” he says. A Fleming vacationing in New York, for instance, could lie in Central Park watching a national football game live on his phone, switching back and forth to local news from home.

This, however, requires more bandwidth than voice and text sharing, and the necessary capacity isn’t here just yet. But he suspects it will be soon. “Within the next 10 years, roaming charges will disappear,” he says confidently. “We are approaching technological invention we cannot yet

possibly imagine. The world will become ubiquitous.”

Powerful stuff indeed. Whether it is plausible is a question globalisation studies are tackling. “World 3.0” by Pankaj Ghemawat of Spain’s IESE Business School details surprisingly low levels of global economic integration, foreign investment (including China in Belgium) and immigration. And because governments tend to impose their own restrictions on internet use, it, too, is becoming regionalised.

China is notoriously strict in its censorship of the internet. The US blocked images of coffins containing dead American soldiers from news service Al Jazeera during the Iraq War. Most famously, perhaps, is the shutting down of micro-blogging website Twitter during the 2009 Iranian presidential elections that resulted in mass protests.

In fact, Option appears to be a paradigm case model of what globalisation may become: the local expression of ubiquity. Callewaert calls it a “paradox”. Products and services exported to other countries seem to last when tailored to their new market, while the dumping of cheap stuff slumps whenever consumers feel less frivolous. Like the memory of an Option chip, markets can only be so big, and too much stuff eventually becomes clutter.

There could indeed come the day when wireless borders are globally abolished. But users are most likely to share mostly within their country’s borders. Globalisation may produce sexy business models, but the beauty is skin deep.

### Ideas are not enough

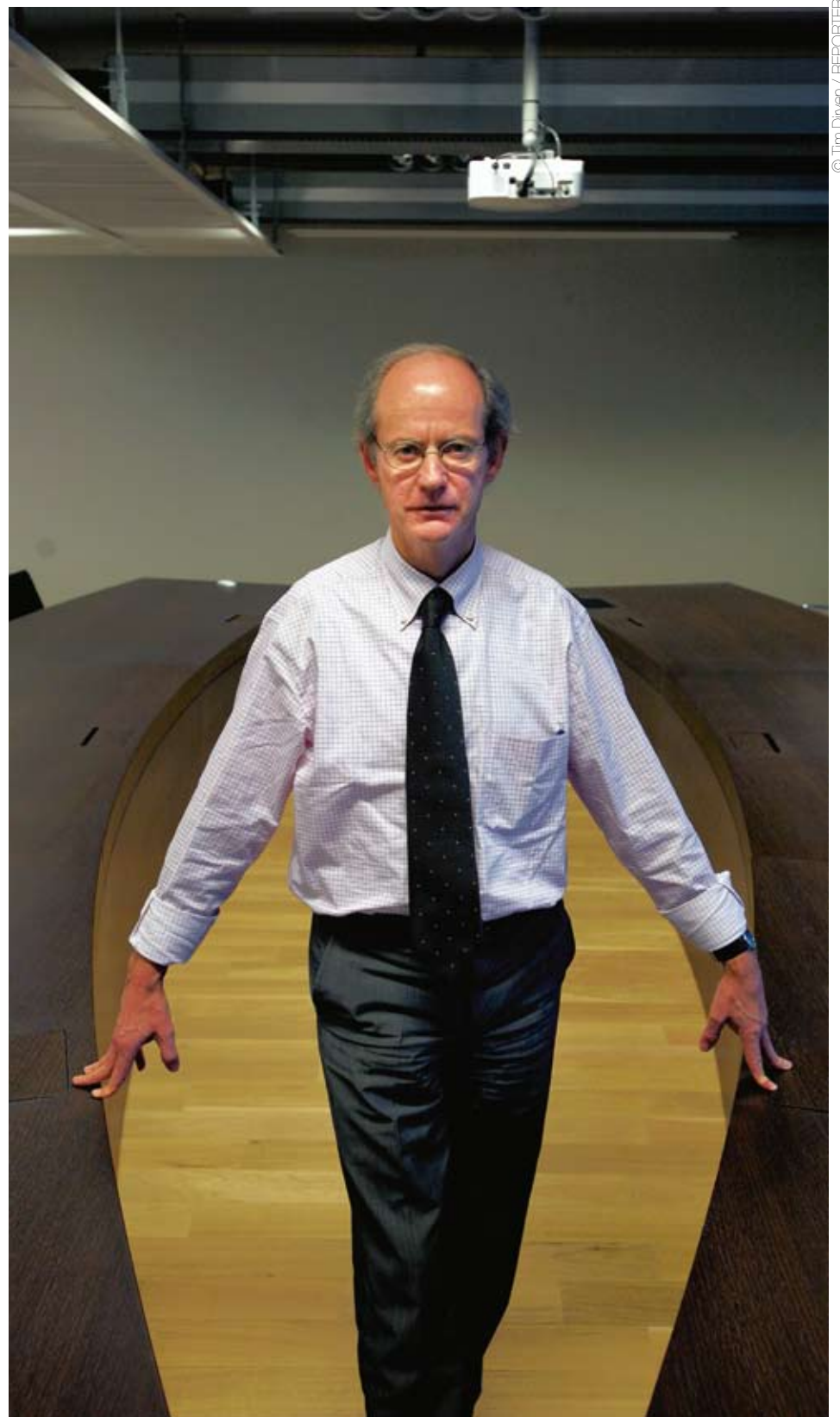
Option has, nevertheless, enjoyed considerable success abroad as well as at home. Started in 1986, when today’s internet could have been an outlandish feature in a *Back to the Future* movie, it beat two American companies and one German to become the world’s number one wireless technology provider in 2006, selling 13 million products in a 10-year span. Its main sales were in data cards to mobile carriers like AT&T, Orange and T-Mobile. Callewaert was proclaimed Manager of the Year in 2005.

Now it is working on a security product, due this summer, that lets people monitor from their phones the security cameras they have set up, say, in their house. There is also a security product for mobile banking in the works.

As for his vanquished competitors, Callewaert suspects the US companies tried going global too fast. He also credits, in his soaring oration, the necessity of vision.

“Companies get started when the founder has a bright idea. But I would say that it is not enough,” he says. “Many people have ideas, even bright ideas, but not many people can make their ideas successful. I call it a vision. Companies 25 years ago were people working at their desks with desktops. I predicted that they would one day be moving with a need to stay connected.”

That they do. Just as Callewaert switched to discussing how his background destined him for wireless, the door to my room was thrust open by a gentleman in skinny jeans



© Tim Diven / REPORTERS

wielding an iPad, wearing a necklace of white power cords and screaming excitedly into his Blackberry. “My God! This video of the royal wedding alone is worth 10,000 blog post views!” he exclaimed, before asking me if he could “juice up.”

### Thinking and talking at the same time

“You need to be fascinated by something,” continues Callewaert, “and with me, it was technology – even though I wasn’t a technical guy.” A commercial engineer by study, he had stints at companies like Honeywell before striking out on his own. He occasionally helps engineers with designs and software programming, but it seems that most of his power comes from what he calls his “commercial flair and passion for everything wireless.”

He also credits his other university subject: philosophy. “It makes for an interesting package,” he says. “Board meetings – be they with Japanese or Americans – are all about thinking and talking at the same time.” Alongside logic, he also fancied philosophy related to nature: “Everything comes from nature – everything mankind is making and finding.”

Perhaps it speaks volumes to his vision that it is hard to find a model for wireless in nature – though echo location among dolphins springs to mind. Wireless technology is probably changing how people interact with nature forever. Imagine if 19th-century naturalist Henry David Thoreau used Twitter: “E-book idea: guy sub-lets cabin in the woods, live-blogs about life without broadband. Thoughts? #Walden” ♦







# Bekaert boss sparks fears of leaving Flanders

## The country has become too difficult for heavy industry, says Bert De Graeve

ALAN HOPE

Unions at one of Belgium's biggest companies, the Kortrijk-based Bekaert, have demanded a meeting with management after the company's CEO, Bert De Graeve, last week said leaving Belgium was "not possible to rule out". In an interview with *Knack* magazine, De Graeve, the winner of this year's prestigious Vlerick Award for management, complained of the climate in which heavy industry had to operate in Belgium. Bekaert makes steel wire and advanced materials and coatings. "Industrial production on a large scale is no longer viable in Belgium," De Graeve said. "It seems nobody here wants industry any more. There's always some problem; either we make too much noise or we're responsible for too much freight traffic. Apart all that, there's a shortage of good manpower, and the energy prices we pay are too high." China has already become the most important country in the world for Bekaert, De Graeve explained, because of the size of its market and because of the share of its economy still represented by the manufacturing industry. Bekaert's plants in China are staffed, he said, with as many Chinese as possible, including

management. Of a total workforce of 28,000, Bekaert employs 11,000 Chinese, a number set to grow in the short term to 15,000. "What do we actually do here?" continued De Graeve. "We still invest in research and development, even though there's a lot of that going on in China, too. And since we're busy with research, we still have factories in Aalter and Zwevegem, where we put the finishing touches to new products and bring production up to industrial scale. If those factories were to stop being viable, then it's doubtful we'd carry on doing R&D in Belgium. And if we can't do research any more, for example because of a shortage of good engineers, then those two factories would be in danger. Then we'd be left with only our head office in Kortrijk, but it would be no problem to move that to Geneva, Shanghai or New York." A union representative described statements as "offensive" and "criminally irresponsible". Speaking for the metal industry section of the ABVV union, vice-president Georges De Batselier said: "In the past, we've been through closures and restructuring, so there's a certain



Bekaert China's new Technology Engineering Centre in Jiangyin, Jiangsu province, opened in April

amount of unrest among the workforce. It's hardly good for motivation to have to hear that it's no longer worth the trouble to invest in our industry." Agoria, the federation for the technology industry, sympathised with De Graeve's position. "We don't create the conditions to keep companies like Bekaert here, unlike Germany, where they pay more attention to industry," a spokesman said. Bekaert, he said, was more likely sending a political signal than reflecting on any real plan to leave the country. "And if they're sending a signal, they mean for it to be heard."

• Meanwhile Belgium attracted fewer foreign investors last year, down from 177 in 2009 to 166 in 2010, according to figures from the Global Business Services report published by IBM. Most of those (108) chose Flanders to set up a new site or new business. Within Flanders, the lion's share of 46 new investors went to Antwerp, bringing an estimated 1,400 jobs. As well as the attraction of the port city for manufacturers, Antwerp is also beginning to profile itself on the office market, IBM said. ♦

## Belgium scores well on jobs and growth

The Belgian economy grew in the years since the start of the economic crisis in 2009 by 2.3%, more than France, the Netherlands and even Germany, according to figures released last week by the federal government's Planning Bureau. According to experts, the lack of a federal government has actually been a good thing for the economy. Because the federal government has now spent more than a year dealing only with current matters and was unable to pass measures involving new spending, the economy has grown. Spending has remained constant, while growth has brought in new income from taxes. Interest rates, meanwhile, have remained more or less steady.

One of the main benefits has been the growth in jobs: Last year, 27,000 new jobs were created, while job growth in the coming five years is expected to reach 46,000 jobs a year, with only 10,000 a year in the part-time and low-pay sectors associated with service-checks (where the government picks up a sizeable part of the tab). This year the number of people in work will account for 70% of the population of working age – the rest are accounted for by unemployment, invalidity, early retirement and those who have never worked and do not claim benefits. However, warns the Planning Bureau, 2012 is likely to see a turn-around in the situation. Any new government will once more open the tap

of new spending, which has been closed since mid-2010. The government will also take in less because of an increase in the amount of tax relief businesses are able to claim on investments from their own capital. In 2009 they could deduct 4.3% from their tax bill; this year it was 3.8%. For the coming years, the caretaker government has not had the mandate to set new rates, so the higher market rate is assumed to apply. That would bring in €700 million less in corporation tax and add 0.2% to the government's debt burden – rising from 3.4% to 3.6% as a proportion of GDP. ♦

## Products recalled

**De Graal brewery** in Brakel, East Flanders, has recalled 3,000 bottles of beer because of a defect in the glass at the neck of the bottle that could break on opening. The beers concerned are De Graal Tripel (lot 11072), Odlo (lot 11112), Mouten kop (lot 11101), Zwalms Veloke (lot 11092), Nen Uts (lot 11091), Rogier (lot 11082), Eerwaarde Pater (lot 11082) (pictured) and Toria blond (lot 11132). Lot numbers are given on the cap. The brewery has a telephone number for enquiries: 0495.64.25.25.



Flemish dairy cooperative **Belgomilk** has recalled a large number of cheeses suspected of containing the listeria bacteria, including Grimbergen, Affligem, Nazareth, Brugge Goud, Corsendonk, St Maarten and Kievit cheeses sold before 11 May. Contamination by listeria can lead to stomach complaints, fever, headaches, muscle pain and dizziness. A meat-borne outbreak in Canada in 2008 infected 57 people, killing 23 of them.

→ [www.belgomilk.be](http://www.belgomilk.be)

## THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

### Autos • Sales

New car sales dropped 7% in April compared to the same period last year but are still slightly up since the beginning of 2011. Market leader remains Renault followed by Volkswagen and Peugeot.

### Economy • Foreign investment

The number of foreign investment projects in Belgium dropped last year to 166, compared to 177 in 2009, representing some 5,000 jobs, according to IBM's Global Location Trends survey. Flanders attracted 108 of the projects, with the Antwerp area good for 46 of them. The best performing sectors are chemicals, pharmaceuticals and transport.

### Energy • Fluxys

Brussels-based Fluxys gas transport and pipeline operating company is part of a consortium bidding €1 billion to take over the TENP and Transitgas gas pipelines from Italian company Eni. The TENP pipeline runs from the Netherlands to Switzerland while the Transitgas line links Switzerland to Italy.

### Property • AG Real Estate

The property affiliate of the AG insurance group is investing some €500 million to develop a 180,000 square-metre business park near Paris, designed by Brussels' architect Art & Build. The company is also considering the acquisition of office buildings in the French capital.

### Railways • Hupac

The Swiss Hupac company is now operating a daily freight rail service linking the port of Antwerp with the Chinese cities of Beijing and Chongqing. The service cuts transport time between Antwerp and China to some 30 days compared to 40 days on the standard shipping route. The rail link runs through Germany, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Mongolia and China.

### Services • Weight Watchers

The US-based Weight Watchers has opened a store in Brussels, its fifth in Europe. The company will sell its diet products, books, equipment and sponsor its well-known support groups.

### Telecom • Mobistar

Mobistar, the country's second-largest telecommunications company and an affiliate of France Telecom, is once again at the heart of speculation over its future. Latest developments include a sale to the US' KKR and Blackstone investment funds or a joint venture agreement with the German Deutsche Telecom. Everything started last month when France Telecom's chairman said his company's stake in Mobistar was not seen as strategic.

### Transport • Van Hool

Lier-based Van Hool bus manufacturing company has signed a €23 million contract to supply 27 hybrid buses to the city of Metz in north-eastern France.



# Vikings and Romans and

## The history of Bruges in an artefact-filled exhibition

ALAN HOPE



Reconstruction of a dwelling from the early middle ages in Uitkerke, West Flanders

History, as the word suggests, is a narrative, and all historical museums have a narrative thread to their exhibitions. *Uit goede bron* (*Reliable Sources*), running at the Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse in Bruges, takes as its title a phrase used by journalists (usually when their sources are anonymous) and, like a journalist, tells its story by means of a series of questions. More specifically, four questions about the history of Bruges, which are answered by the various sections of the parcours. We won't give away the answers here; you'll find them contained in the fairly extensive texts hung on the walls. If you don't read Dutch, there are folders in other languages available at the entrance.

### Was Bruges originally by the sea?

For anyone familiar with Bruges and the coastal plains between the city and the sea, the history of the landscape is fascinating. The first part of the exhibition takes us back to the Middle Palaeolithic, between 70,000 and 35,000 BC, when the area was peopled by sparse tribes of Neanderthal hunter-gatherers, roaming the sandy, treeless plains. They fled as the Ice Age approached; only when the temperatures turned again, around 14,000 BC, did humans return. As temperatures rose still further, so did the sea level, and much of the land was under water. The remains of campsites have been found from this period, with evidence of tools and weapons as well as building materials. The first farmers appeared about 5,000 BC, with



Roman ships once traversed the waters on the coastline of what is now Belgium



Stone tools from the early middle ages

### More reliable sources

#### Related activities in other parts of Bruges

- In the suburb of Sint-Andries is a replica of a Merovingian house of the sort in which people would have lived in the sixth century, built of wood, clay and reeds. And it's not just an empty structure: It's used by locals as a leisure centre and open daily from 14.00 to 17.00 for free visits.
- The lives and habits of those Gallo-Romans of Julius Caesar's time are the subjects of a programme of events in the Ginter region, south-west of Bruges. The programme follows a wide range of themes, including food, clothing, homes, funerals, religion and literature. The full programme (in Dutch) can be downloaded at [www.ginter.be](http://www.ginter.be).
- Finally, the tourist offices of Bruges and the Ginter municipalities, as well as the Gruuthuse museum, are offering a free walking and cycle map of the area, which points out some of the most interesting locations relating to the exhibition.



# floods, oh my

crops and domesticated animals, as well as more permanent settlements. Most of the plain was by now a bog, with one prominent sand-ridge running from Oudenburg in West Flanders to Aardenburg in what is now the Netherlands. Later on this ridge, Bruges would be built.

## Was there a Roman camp in Bruges?

We now skip ahead to the time of Julius Caesar, about 57 AD, when the local Gallo-Roman people were living in more extensive settlements, growing food and trading with other areas. The Romans built defensive camps along the coast, including at Oudenburg, where a *castellum*, or small Roman fort, had existed for some time.

In the meantime, a large part of the population fled the area. A major marching camp has been excavated near Maldegem, between the two major encampments of Oudenburg and Aardenburg. Torhout was a second-level centre, while Bruges, at the confluence of roads and rivers, may have been of some importance to trade.

As well as evidence of this Roman activity, the exhibition also includes fragments of two Roman boats discovered during port excavation in 1899 at Fort Lapin, now on the northern edge of the Bruges city ring. There's also a rich collection of artefacts excavated from the *castellum* of Oudenburg.

## Was Bruges the capital of Flanders in the early Middle Ages?

From the fifth century on, the area was part of

the Frankish empire, though the new inhabitants who came to the area were, according to pottery remains, related to Frisians, Saxons and Angles. Objects such as tools and utensils have also been found from Northern France, suggesting the existence of trade. Flanders then was just one shire, with the main centres at Rodenburg, Aardenburg and Torhout.

The coast was by this time tidal, with the plain flooded at high tide. Bit by bit, silting had the effect of reclaiming more land from the sea which now became accessible to agriculture, mainly sheep farming, which in turn gave rise to a thriving wool trade.

## Did the Vikings found Bruges?

The first mention of the name of Bruges (called Bruggia or Bruccia) appears at the end of the ninth century, but similar names, referring simply to port bridges, were common throughout the North Sea area. A manuscript on view lists the highlights from the reign of the Carolingian kings from 741 to 829 and refers to a garrison that repelled an attack by Scandinavian ships. The first written mention of Bruges was in an inventory of the treasure left behind after the sacking of Sint-Baaf's abbey in Ghent in 851, which includes a gold cross sent to Bruges for safe keeping.

Bruges, however, is only mentioned as a growing city in the early 12th century, with mentions of the digging of the famous canals, city gates, the market square and five churches. We owe that knowledge

to a journal kept by Galbert of Bruges, clerk to the Count of Flanders, detailing the power struggle following the assassination of Charles the Good. And that's where we leave the "sources", just at the moment when Bruges is about to become one of the most important cities in northern Europe, and indeed the city you can still see today, outside of the museum's gate.

*Uit goede bron* is a modest exhibition and, aside from its scholarship, is ultimately disappointing, lacking impact – and that's especially true for young visitors. It may be heretical to say so, but these days it takes more than a few pot shards, a manuscript or two and a lot of lengthy texts to make a vibrant, exciting exhibition that's going to attract the general public.

The Gruuthuse is a museum of the old school, and, like it or not, the competition these days is with museums like the just-opened MAS in Antwerp and the city museum STAM in Ghent, which tackle the histories of their respective cities with every new technique available. ♦

## Uit goede bron

Until 16 October  
Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse  
Dijver 17, Bruges

→ [www.uitgoedebron.info](http://www.uitgoedebron.info)

## The final showdown

### A sole Flemish competitor makes it through to the Queen Elisabeth finals

Of the six competitors from Flanders who were selected to take part in the Queen Elisabeth Competition, one of the most prestigious – and difficult – music competitions in the world, one has made it through to the final 12.

This year is devoted to vocalists, and Thomas Blondelle, a 28-year-old tenor from Bruges, could not have chosen a better semi-final programme as a shop-window for his talent: the romantic Rossini (*Otello*), the classical Mozart (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), the modern Poulenc (*Banalités*, with texts by Guillaume Apollinaire), and the bombastic Wagner (*Das Rheingold*).

His closer, the famous and formidable *Erlkönig* by Schubert, is a virtuoso piece, based on a text by Goethe and involving three dramatic voices: a terrified child, a frantic parent and (not to give too much away) the figure of Death. While in other pieces Blondelle may have erred too far on the side of operatic acting (hand-waving and overwrought facial contortions), here he managed to maintain the feeling of three voices speaking through him, and his emotional expression was, while one could never describe a singer's acting as subtle, at least measured and restrained.

For the final, he is preparing works by Handel, Mozart and Carl Maria von Weber. The finals take place in Bozar in front of De Munt Symphony Orchestra under Carlo Rizzi, which is one of the toughest tests for a vocalist, who mostly spend their time working in opera or choral with an ensemble of singers or alone on stage with a piano. Very few perform alone on stage with an orchestra – an experience that must be terrifying enough for a veteran, let alone a young singer.

Blondelle's chances are good because the jury has



Flanders' hope in the Queen Elisabeth: Thomas Blondelle

a lot of opera representatives on board and because tenors are always popular with the public. The winner in 2008 – the last year vocalists were featured in the competition – was a tenor, the only one in the competition's history.

"The Queen Elisabeth competition is a piece of Belgian tradition, like mussels with *friet*," Blondelle said after the announcement. "Coming back to Brussels after three years in Germany was a little bit like going on holiday. I'm planning to go on enjoying myself in the final."

Another Belgian will also be in the finals: Sébastien Parotte, a baritone from Verviers in Wallonia. Parotte

made it to the semi-finals in 2008, and that was where he ended – much to the surprise of many, who saw him give one of the more charismatic stage performances. His programme for the semi-final featured Mozart, Handel, Hugo Wolf, Poulenc and Rossini. The semi-final performances are available to watch at [www.cobra.be](http://www.cobra.be).

The other 10 finalists are from France, Serbia, Russia, Korea and the United States. The finals take place from 18 to 21 May at 20.00. The laureates, in the top six places, are announced after the Saturday night performances. ♦

→ [www.cmireb.be](http://www.cmireb.be)

## CULTURE NEWS

The only Flemish nominee for the 2011 **Libris Prize for Literature** has won the prestigious award, which comes with a €50,000 purse. Yves Petry won for his novel *De maagd Marino* (*The Virgin Marino*), which is based on a horrific cannibalistic murder in 2001 Germany. (*See Flanders Today*, 27 April). The jury report noted that the book "takes a scandal of the tabloid press and turns it into a mysterious novel using beautiful images and an enigmatic narrative." The Libris Prize is for literature written in Dutch.

Two Flemish films were accepted to screen at the **Cannes Film Festival**, which began this week. *Badpak 46* (*Swimsuit 46*), about the trials of being a large-size adolescent, is in competition for the Golden Palm for short films. The 15-minute film is the graduation project of Wannes Destoop. *Blue Bird*, meanwhile, the second film by Gust Van den Berghe, who won plaudits last year in Cannes for his *Little Baby Jesus of Flandr*, is part of the festival's Directors' Fortnight. The film is based on the play by turn-of-the-20th-century Flemish writer Maurice Maeterlinck.

It's been quite a month for Flemish choreographer **Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker**. Just two weeks before the Paris Opera Ballet performs her 2001 piece *Rain* – the first time one of her full-length productions is being performed by a company other than her own – the American Dance Festival announced that they are giving her their Lifetime Achievement Award. Former recipients of the €50,000 award include Trisha Brown, Pina Bausch and Martha Graham. De Keersmaeker released a statement on 29 April, International Dance Day:

"I think dance celebrates what makes us human.

When we dance, we use... the mechanics of our body and all our senses to express joy, sadness, the things we care about.

People have always danced to celebrate the crucial moments of life, and our bodies carry the memory of all possible human experiences.

We can dance alone, and we can dance together. We can share what makes us the same, what makes us different from each other.

Dancing is a way of thinking. Through dance, we can embody the most abstract ideas and thus reveal what we cannot see, what we cannot name...

I think that ultimately each dance is part of a larger whole, a dance that has no beginning, and no end."



# The best of both worlds

## Ancienne Belgique fills the Domino void with two new concert series

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Every end is a new beginning. Last month, the Ancienne Belgique in Brussels organised the 15th and last edition of Domino, a music festival that lived and breathed adventure. “We decided to call it a day,” says Kurt Overbergh, the AB’s energetic artistic director, “but we didn’t want the festival to wither away; we wanted to go out with a bang.”

And a bang it was! Japanese *noise meister* Merzbow played the final concert of the festival, but that performance was also the start of new series at the AB, **The Art of Noise**. And from next week, it has a counterpart, **Silence Is Sexy**. “One of the functions of the AB is exposing underground music to a larger audience,” explains Overbergh.

“I’ve always been intrigued by noise,” he continues. “But I only recently discovered, thanks to the book *Noise/Music: A History* by Paul Hegarty, that the foundations of noise music are almost a century old! In 1913, the Italian futurist Luigi Russolo published the manifesto *The Art of Noises* in which he describes the city as an industrial jungle, a characteristic that should be reflected in the music of its time.”

In the 21st century, noise music is a popular as ever, Overbergh stresses, “although you never hear it on the radio and can only read about it in small-

scale magazines.” The AB has been programming that music, but now it’s more structured. Overbergh: “Then we had the idea to tie this in with music at the other end of the spectrum – new contemporary composers that have links with pop music.”

### The power of silence

Enter the second new series, **Silence is Sexy**. “In the work of a lot of new composers I feel a sensibility for silence,” Overbergh explains. “The title comes from the German band Einstürzende Neubauten, who started out in the 1980s playing industrial noise, but have in the past 10 years embraced the power of silence.”

The logos for both series speak volumes: The Art of Noise logo sports the noise machines Russolo made in the early part of the century. The logo for Silence Is Sexy is 4’33”, a reference to experimentalist John Cage’s (in) famous composition. The idea was that whatever instrument a musician chose to play should remain untouched for four minutes and 33 seconds. Essentially, it was a composition of silence. “Cage’s idea was that whatever the set-up is, you’ll always hear some environmental sounds,” explains Overbergh.

The next Art of Noise evening presents the Cleveland trio Emeralds.

“With analogue synths, they create an impressive wall of sound,” says Overbergh. Silence is Sexy, meanwhile, starts with a concert of the famous Japanese composer and pianist Ryûichi Sakamoto, who has won awards the world over for his film soundtracks, including *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence* and *The Last Emperor*. He teams up with German Alva Noto (*pictured*), “a minimalist electronic sound magician who brings an almost mathematical approach to his music.”

Two days later Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhannsson, who doesn’t shy away from electronics either, will be at the AB. His music will be interpreted by a string quartet. If you’re open for some musical adventure, the AB has quite a lot in store the next weeks! ♦

### Silence is Sexy

23 May: Alva Noto + Ryûichi Sakamoto  
25 May: Jóhann Jóhannsson

### The Art of Noise

20 May: Emeralds + Floris Vanhoof + Jean DL

Ancienne Belgique  
Anspachlaan 110, Brussels

→ [www.abconcerts.be](http://www.abconcerts.be)



Art of Noise: Alva Noto

© S. Yen

## New music

### Beuzak

#### Homebrew

Eight years after his last release Pieter-Jan De Smet finally has his fifth album out, this time as Beuzak (Ghent dialect for a pain in the neck). *Homebrew* is a self-released, one-man affair: De Smet wrote the songs, recorded them himself, played all the instruments and designed the artwork. He hasn’t lost one inch of his talent: He is still one of Flanders’ best singer/songwriters. On *Homebrew* he covers the field between manic rock (“My Soft Spoken Brother”) via dreamy melancholy (“Miss Amelia (Continental Drift)”) to Scott Walker-esque crooning (“This Ship”). The songs don’t exactly reflect a hopeful view on life, but that doesn’t make them less mesmerising.

→ [www.myspace.com/beuzakmusic](http://www.myspace.com/beuzakmusic)

### Arbeid Adelt!

#### \_live@AB2011

TV personality Marcel Vanthilt is an all-round entertainer. Thirty years ago he headed the short-lived band Arbeid Adelt!, which combined swinging electro-pop with satirical lyrics. Earlier this year Arbeid Adelt! was revamped for a concert in the AB series Rewind, for which bands play a classic album from start to finish. Arbeid Adelt! chose their own mini-album *Jonge helden* (*Young Heroes*), which lasts only 20 minutes! Luckily, they added some of their other cult hits like the indestructible “De dag dat het zonlicht niet meer scheen” (“The Day the Sunlight Shone No More”). *\_live@AB2011* is a frivolous, vivid and highly entertaining album that doesn’t wallow in nostalgia.

### Tricycle

#### Queskia?

Since the release of his soundtrack for *Aanrijding in Moskou* (*Moscow, Belgium*), accordion wizard Tuur Florizoone has become a household name. He’s a busy bee who engages in loads of different projects. One of them is Tricycle, a threesome with saxophonist-flutist Philippe Laloy and double bass player Vincent Noiret. Their third album *Queskia?* contains jazz fortified with world and folk and varies from languishing to ebullient. While Noiret is laying out a solid rhythmical footing, Laloy and Florizoone challenge each other like two bickering old friends. Charming.

→ [www.tricycle.be](http://www.tricycle.be)

### Amatorski

#### TBC

Three years after its inception, Amatorski has released its debut album. The Ghent foursome blends folk, pop, electronics, strings and brass into a unique combination, although not all elements are present in every song. On the contrary, they champion fleshed-out compositions. (The epic, free-jazz climax of “8 November” being the proverbial exception.) This less is more approach highlights the dreamy vocals of lead singer Inne Eysermans. TBC? Not their talent, that’s beyond dispute!

→ [www.amatorski.be](http://www.amatorski.be)



## VENUE



### Open-air Theatre Rivierenhof

Turnhoutsebaan 247

Antwerp

Almost every Flemish hamlet has its own music festival, but being able to enjoy it seated in a beautiful park remains quite exceptional. Openluchttheater, or open-air theatre, Rivierenhof is one of Flanders’ few permanent open-air stages and by far the largest. As long as it doesn’t rain, it’s a magical place to attend a concert, whether sitting or standing.

It opens its “doors” on 17 June with soul singer Angie Stone and funk legend George Clinton, and closes them again on 1 September with Daan. The latter concert is already sold out, the former almost. But with a few concerts every week, there’s still a lot to enjoy: folk-punk survivors The Pogues, grunge pioneers Dinosaur Jr, tango renovators Gotan Project, weird folkies CocoRosie or the Irish songstress Sinéad O’Connor, to name but a few.

→ [www.openluchttheater.be](http://www.openluchttheater.be)



# Getting the swing of it

In a basement in Ghent, the Shortie George awaits

COURTNEY DAVIS

The sound of a trumpet lures me down a flight of stairs to a small basement where I find a number of couples speaking an odd language. Shim Sham. Boogie Back. Shortie George. Tic Tac. All the vocabulary of the Lindy Hop, a style of swing dance made popular in the early 1920s.

While consistently popular over the years, Flanders' love affair with swing has been on the noticeable up-and-up over the past decade. With swing parties regularly thrown by Radio Modern and websites like [www.lindyweb.be](http://www.lindyweb.be), it's easy to find a spot with classic, upbeat jazz to dance to nearly any night of the week.

But if you don't know your Charleston from your Balboa, then taking a class to learn the basics of this high-energy style of dance is a logical first step.

A wealth of teachers, locations, times and levels, means here is no shortage of courses on offer across Flanders and Brussels. The teacher for this particular Wednesday night beginner lesson in Ghent is Joris Focquaert, who offers two classes at the Ingang school of dance, as well as three classes on his own. A professional performer, his introduction to the Lindy Hop was accidental.

"I had a teacher who used swing music and the Charleston to get us warmed up before our theatre class. I didn't know what it was yet," he explains. "Afterwards I realised we were unknowingly doing swing to Benny Goodman."

The 28-year-old's start as a dance teacher was equally serendipitous. "I wasn't looking to teach, but people had seen me perform as part of Dipsy Doodles – a four-person swing performance troupe – and wanted to learn. At the last minute, I put together two classes last summer. Learning how to teach is still a big challenge; I know how to dance, but breaking it down and making it easier for others is difficult."

It doesn't seem to be a challenge today, as he repeatedly and patiently repeats a new step for the 15 students in the class. He turns on the music, and the class begins a set routine they've learned over the last two months. Standing in the front, his black pants snug around his petite frame, he counts out the beats, calling an occasional reminder: "Step ball change, step ball change, drag your toe, Boogie Back!"

After this routine is danced individually, they focus on partner dances. No one has a single set partner; instead, the girls float from one man to the next. "In the Lindy hop scene, you dance with everyone," explains Focquaert. "So we're giving tools to our students so they can learn to lead or follow with anyone. It isn't just arm and footwork; we want to create a way to make people lead or follow more naturally with the entire body as opposed to just arms and legs. People get to dance with various bodies



Joris Focquaert (second from right) is part of the four-piece performance troupe the Dipsy Doodles

and have different perceptions of rhythm. It's not an easier way of learning, but in a few months, people are more comfortable dancing with other people."

## Partnering up

The couples lesson starts with a slow review of the Charleston, a hoppy step moving backwards and forwards that can be done at a nice steady rhythm. Soon, the tempo kicks up a notch, and the same move is performed at a frenetic, air-kicking pace, which leaves the various couples breathless and smiling.

It is this easy-going atmosphere that attracts so many students to this type of dance. "Charleston is part of the Lindy Hop," says Focquaert. "Think of it like a rubber band – jumping and stretching, compressing, jumping again. As opposed to very stiff or static or in one spot, like the Tango. I like the Tango, but it's a different technique, a different atmosphere."

Jonas Bonte and his partner Deborah Leroy, both 26, agree. "We tried both the Tango and the Lindy Hop on an open dance day, where we could experience different classes for free. The tango was more difficult, more serious. The Lindy Hop was more fun."

Stephane Durand, with his fiancé, joined them for the class because "it seemed like you didn't need as much experience or talent. You don't have to be very smooth."

As I watch the various skills levels, the lack of talent is obvious

and yet irrelevant. No one is watching or judging, laughter is often heard over the tinny sounds of the clarinet and each dance ends with a smile. As I rotate from one dance partner to another, they shyly put their arms around my waist and start tapping their toes to the beat before I'm propelled forward and back, turned and dipped. When I stumble, which is often, I'm rewarded with a grin, and when I finish a session sans error, I'm really the only one who notices.

"Good Lindy Hop is getting horizontal, getting stretchy. Getting big. Unconsciously perhaps, people make connections with cartoons, bounding and looking goofy. And this is cool," he confirms. "People here are having fun like kids. To see people being enthusiastic without thinking about what you look like or being self-conscious, that is great." ♦

→ [www.de-ingang.be](http://www.de-ingang.be)

## The Dipsy Doodles

See Joris Focquaert shake his tail feathers with rest of the Dipsy Doodles jazz dance performance group on 27 May during the Brussels Jazz Marathon

→ <http://thedipsydoodles.wordpress.com>

## STREEKPRODUCT SERIES

ALAN HOPE

### Cubercons

We tend to think of *streekproducten* (regional products) as local, seasonal and produced according to craft principles. So it's a surprise to find a product recognised by the Flemish region with the *streekproduct* label that's among the most widely available in the country.

The cuberdon, commonly known in Flanders as *neusjes* (noses), is a conical sweet, about 2.5cm in diameter and height, of a deep burgundy colour with a smooth, matt surface. Inside the hard crust is a centre of purple syrup. The recipe is said to have been invented by a Ghent apothecary in 1873. Two Flemish producers have obtained the *streekproduct* label, but the market leader by far is Confiserie Geldhof in Eeklo, located, most appropriately, just outside Ghent.

The company was started by Antoine Geldhof in 1954, and he still visits the factory every day. His son Tony is managing director. The recipe is a family secret, but we know it involves sugar, fruit flavour

(principally raspberry) and gum arabica, made from the resin of the African acacia tree.

Using a metal stamp, indentations are made in a wooden frame filled with corn starch, explains sales manager Daniel Bernon. The holes are filled with the mixture, then the whole frame is baked in the oven. The sugar in the mix forms a crust, which continues forming as time goes on. For this reason, cuberdons have a shelf-life limited to eight weeks.

That's also the reason they're practically unknown outside of Belgium: The product is too fragile to travel well and too short-lived to make it attractive to importers.

As to the taste, opinions are divided. My teenaged children find them delicious. I could barely tolerate the tiniest bite; It is just too sweet. The crust is pure gummy sugar, and the inside, reminiscent of its origins, has a medicinal taste that reminded me of Calpol, a paracetamol syrup for children sold in the UK. However, unlike



Calpol, as Daniel Bernon assured me, cuberdons contain no artificial sweeteners or flavourings.

For those who love them, good news: The company recently launched a bottled cuberdon sauce for pouring over waffles or ice cream. Later this year, they're planning

to launch a sandwich spread and a jam. Cuberdons themselves are widely available at street markets. Check that the product you're getting carries the label.

→ [www.streekproduct.be](http://www.streekproduct.be)

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## Shakespeare retold DESDEMONA

ANNA JENKINSON

Earlier this year, American theatre and opera director Peter Sellars called up his friend Jan Goossens, artistic director of KVS, to ask for help. It seems that one of the European co-producers for his new piece *Desdemona* had pulled out, and the German performance was cancelled. Would it be possible to stage it in Brussels instead? "Eight times out of 10 these things are not possible because of scheduling commitments," Goossens tells me. But not this time. *Desdemona* comes to the KVS later this month, just days after its world premiere at the Wiener Festwochen festival in Vienna. With a text written by Nobel Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison and music by award-winning Malian musician Rokia Traoré, the production is in fact a major coup for the KVS and its partner Bozar. *Desdemona* will go on to be performed worldwide, including at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York and at the Barbican as part of the London 2012 festival during the Olympic Games. "It's not every day you can put on a production by Peter Sellars with Rokia Traoré on stage and a text by a Nobel Prize winner," says Goossens. "We're definitely very lucky to get it and to get it now, so early." *Desdemona* grew out of Sellars' staging a couple of years ago of Shakespeare's *Othello*. "He felt

there were many aspects of the piece that he hadn't been able to deal with," explains Goossens, who worked as an assistant and dramaturg for Sellars in the late 1990s and has stayed in touch ever since, even spending his summer holiday last year at Sellars' home in Los Angeles. Sellars, for instance, didn't hear enough from the women in the play, and in particular from Desdemona, the wife of Othello. So he thought about how the women could re-tell the story. He approached Morrison, a friend of his, about writing the text. The American director had wanted to collaborate with her on a theatre project for years, but knew it had to be the right one. *Desdemona* presented the ideal opportunity, and Morrison said yes almost immediately. Next, Sellars started thinking about how he could integrate music into the production. "Peter is at his strongest when he can approach a subject matter through music. Music is his natural connection to most things he cares about in life," says Goossens. Sellars asked Traoré, a Malian singer, songwriter and guitarist he had worked with during a festival a few years earlier, to write the music. The work is a conversation between Desdemona and her mother's African maid, Barbara, a character only mentioned fleetingly in Shakespeare's play. Traoré (pictured above) is onstage with her band,

joined by actress Elizabeth Marvel (*True Grit*). Sellars is here, too, to introduce every performance. Sellars' work strikes a chord with the philosophy of the KVS, not least because the American director was influential in defining the KVS' role when Goossens started there in 1999. "He has been very formative for us," says Goossens. "He said we should imagine for ourselves what the role of a theatre in a country like Belgium and a city like Brussels should be today...He was very clear that we should not be a display-window for culture in a prestigious sense. We should contribute to the city of tomorrow and involve all artists from all communities." Goossens admires Sellars first as an artist, but intertwined with that is the political dimension of his work. "He's retelling a Shakespeare story from the perspective of women, mainly black women. That's partly a political statement," he says. "If you present that in 2011 at the Flemish city theatre in Brussels, that has a political dimension, too. It's in line with our ongoing attempts to give voice to artists and communities that are otherwise not enough heard." ♦

**26-29 May**  
**KVS Bol**  
Lakensestraat 146, Brussels  
→ [www.kvs.be](http://www.kvs.be)



© H. Deerenberg



### Antwerp

#### Kelly's Irish Pub

Keyserlei 27  
[www.kellys.be](http://www.kellys.be)  
**MAY 20** 20.00 Mouse Music  
**MAY 21** 20.00 History-X

#### Lotto Arena

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345  
[www.teleticketservice.com](http://www.teleticketservice.com)  
**MAY 20** 20.00 Laura Pausini

#### Sportpaleis

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345  
[www.sportpaleis.be](http://www.sportpaleis.be)  
**Until MAY 22** 19.00/20.30 Marco Borsato  
+ Roel van Velzen & band

#### Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00  
[www.trixonline.be](http://www.trixonline.be)  
**MAY 18** 19.30 Riverside. 20.00 Meat Puppets + The Dandies  
**MAY 19** 19.00 Amon Amarth + The Black Dahlia Murder + Evocation  
**MAY 23** 20.00 The Wombats + Morning Parade

### Bruges

#### Stadsschouwburg

Vlamingstraat 29; 050.44.30.60  
[www.ccbrugge.be](http://www.ccbrugge.be)  
**MAY 20** 19.30 The Black Heart Procession

### Brussels

#### Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24  
[www.abconcerts.be](http://www.abconcerts.be)  
Concerts at 20.00:  
**MAY 18** Empyr. Friendly Fires + Braids  
**MAY 19** Cat's Eyes + Mon-O-Phone.  
Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven  
**MAY 20** Emeralds + Floris Vanhoof + Jean DL  
**MAY 22** Deaf Havana + Dance Gavin Dance + Break Of Day  
**MAY 23** Alva Noto + Ryuichi Sakamoto  
**MAY 25** Jóhann Jóhannsson

#### Café Belga

Flageyplein; 02.640.35.08  
[www.cafebelga.be](http://www.cafebelga.be)  
**MAY 22** 22.00 Brigitte

#### Café Central

Borgval 14; 0486.72.26.24  
[www.lecafecentral.com](http://www.lecafecentral.com)  
**MAY 24** 21.00 Experiment'z featuring Y.E.R.M.O. + Xavier Dubois

#### Escale du Nord

Aumalestraat 2; 02.528.85.00  
[www.escaledunord.net](http://www.escaledunord.net)  
**MAY 22** 17.00 My TV is Dead

#### Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89  
[www.fuse.be](http://www.fuse.be)  
**MAY 21** 23.00 Axel Boman + Bloody Mary + Sierra Sam, more

#### Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15  
[www.cirque-royal.org](http://www.cirque-royal.org)  
Concerts at 20.00:  
**MAY 18** Animal Collective + Teengirl Fantasy  
**MAY 19** Yodelice + Lily Wood & The Prick + Pale Grey  
**MAY 20** The Tallest Man on Earth + Francis  
**MAY 21** Grant Lee Buffalo + Heidi Spencer and The Rare Birds  
**MAY 22** Mercury Rev 'Deserter's Songs' + The Walkmen + Royal Bangs

#### Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32  
[www.botanique.be](http://www.botanique.be)  
Concerts at 20.00:  
**Until MAY 29** Les Nuits de Botanique 2011, pop/rock festival

#### Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34  
[www.recyclart.be](http://www.recyclart.be)  
**MAY 19** 21.00 Eugene

#### Théâtre 140

Eugène Plaskylaan 140; 02.733.97.08  
[www.theatre140.be](http://www.theatre140.be)  
**MAY 21** 20.30 Bill Callahan and Sophia Knapp

#### VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07  
[www.vkconcerts.be](http://www.vkconcerts.be)  
**MAY 21** 21.00 The Slackers

## GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

### Pukkelpop

18-20 August

Single tickets for the first day of Pukkelpop, Flanders' second-biggest rock festival (and some would say its best), are sold out – not surprising considering the headliner Foo Fighters (pictured). But don't despair, you can still see the torchbearers of American grunge by buying a combi-ticket for all three days of the festival for €155. Or you can simply buy day tickets for Saturday and/or Sunday to catch Eminem, The Offspring, dEUS, Apocalyptica, Suicidal Tendencies and a wealth of other bands, playing under the skies in Limburg.



→ [www.pukkelpop.be](http://www.pukkelpop.be)

**MAY 23** 21.00 Guano Apes + Royal Republic

### Ghent

#### Charlatan

Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57  
[www.charlatan.be](http://www.charlatan.be)  
**MAY 18** 20.00 Kurt Vile & The Violators + Spindrift  
**MAY 21** 20.00 Esben and the Witch + SX

#### Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060  
[www.vooruit.be](http://www.vooruit.be)  
**MAY 25** 19.30 DJ Shadow – Live From The Shadowsphere

### Hasselt

#### Muziekodroom

Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13  
[www.muziekodroom.be](http://www.muziekodroom.be)  
**MAY 19** 19.30 3OH!3 + Innerpartystem + Hyro Da Hyro  
**MAY 20** 20.00 Reiziger + JFJ

### Kortrijk

#### De Kreun

Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44  
[www.dekreun.be](http://www.dekreun.be)  
**MAY 18** 20.30 Akron/Family + Moon Duo + Eric Copeland (Black Dice)  
**MAY 21** 20.00 Steak Number Eight + Salvador  
**MAY 23** 20.00 Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti + SX

### Leuven

#### STUK

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20  
[www.stuk.be](http://www.stuk.be)  
**MAY 19** 20.30 13&God + Saroos

### Ostend

#### Kursaal (Casino)

Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00  
[www.kursaalooostende.be](http://www.kursaalooostende.be)  
**MAY 21** 19.30 Erik & Sanne by Candlelight  
**MAY 25** 20.00 Motown Music

### Sint-Niklaas

#### OJC Kompas

Driekoningstraat 48; 03.776.72.70  
[www.ojckompas.be](http://www.ojckompas.be)  
**MAY 20** 21.00 Red Zebra + Thieves of Silence + Zanni

## MORE THEATRE THIS WEEK

**Eszter Salamon** → **Kaaithater, Brussels** →

**Abattoir Fermé in L'Intruse** → **Vooruit, Ghent**

**Wim Vandekeybus' Monkey Sandwich** → **deSingel, Antwerp**



# Agenda



## Antwerp

### Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53  
www.busterpodium.be  
**MAY 18** 21.30 Playtime Session  
**MAY 24** 20.00 Jazzcafé 9th edition  
**MAY 25** 22.00 Pieter Baert Trio

### Café Hopper

Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33  
www.cafehopper.be  
**MAY 22** 16.00 Mohito  
**MAY 23** 21.00 The Flying Fish Jumps

## Brussels

### Archiduc

Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52  
www.archiduc.net  
**MAY 23** 22.00 Tell Me Why I Do Like Mondays

### Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
www.art-base.be  
**MAY 19** 20.00 Magic Swing

### Beursschouwburg

August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50  
www.beursschouwburg.be  
**MAY 18** 20.00 Brussels Soundpainting Collective

### Café Kafka

Visverkopersstraat 2; 02.504.99.00  
www.stoemplive.be  
**MAY 24** 21.00 Two Tone Seven

### Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20  
www.flagey.be  
**MAY 25** 19.30 Manfred Eicher - Sounds and Silence

### Le Cercle des Voyageurs

Lievrouwbroersstraat 18; 02.514.39.49  
www.lecercledesvoyageurs.com  
**MAY 19** 21.00 Thomas Champagne Trio featuring Peremans  
**MAY 24** 19.30 Martin Daniel Solo

### Le Chat-Pitre

Notarisstraat 1; 0475.63.11.77  
www.myspace.com/chapitre  
**MAY 25** 20.00 Chrystel Wautier Trio

### Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50  
www.soundsjazzclub.be  
Concerts at 22.00:  
**MAY 19** Mess' Trio **MAY 20** No Vibrato  
**MAY 21** Peter Hertmans Quintet **MAY 23** Master Session Erik Vermeulen **MAY 24** Borderline Quartet

### The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
www.themusicvillage.com  
**MAY 18** 20.30 Bill Sheffield **MAY 20** 21.00 Heinz v. Hermann & Paolo Loveri Trio **MAY 21** 21.00 Steve Yocum & the Multifarious All Stars **MAY 24** 21.00 Exams Concerts - Session 4 **MAY 25** 21.00 Brussels Jazz Quartet



## Antwerp

### Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00  
www.zuiderpershuis.be  
**MAY 20** 20.30 Noshad Nishad Ali & Mastana Party

## Brussels

### Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
www.art-base.be  
**MAY 20** 20.00 Aldona  
**MAY 21** 20.00 Altland, klezmer and sevdalinka

### Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98  
www.atelier210.be  
**MAY 25** 20.00 What The Folk: Noa Moon

### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**MAY 25** 20.00 Billy Boyd: Scottish songs

### Viage

Anspachlaan 30; 070.44.34.43  
www.viage.be  
**MAY 20** 22.00 Latin Club featuring Contrabando



## Antwerp

### deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28  
www.desingel.be  
**MAY 18** 20.00 Il Giardino Armonico conducted by Giovanni Antonini: Handel, Geminiani, Vivaldi  
**MAY 19** 20.00 Dietrich Henschel, baritone; Oxalys, chamber music ensemble: Mahler, Reger, Zemlinsky

## Bruges

### Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02  
www.concertgebouw.be  
**MAY 18** 20.00 Eric Le Sage, piano: Schubert, Schumann  
**MAY 20** 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic conducted by Michel Tabachnik: soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (Ligeti, Katchaturian, Johann, Richard Strauss)

## Brussels

### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**MAY 22** 11.00 Anemos Saxophone Quartet: Ida Gotkovsky, Jean Absil, Astor Piazzolla, Thierry Escaich

### Espace Senghor

Waverssesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40  
www.senghor.be  
**MAY 18** 20.00 Anne Renouppez, soprano; Eliane Reyes, piano: Debussy  
**MAY 23** 20.00 Nicholas Isherwood, bass-baritone: electro-acoustic music by Marc Appelbaum, Enrico Cocco, Daniel Teruggi, more

### Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37  
www.kcb.be  
**MAY 21** 20.00 Vittorio Ghielmi, Rodney Prada, viola da gamba; Luca Pianca, lute: Marin Marais, Jacques de Gallot, Sainte-Colombe, Forqueray  
**MAY 23** 20.00 Till Fellner, piano: Haydn, Kit Armstrong, Schumann, Liszt

### St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral

Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.507.82.00  
www.cathedralestmichel.be  
**MAY 19** 20.00 Olivier Latry, organ: Liszt

### Surf House

Stroobantsstraat 51; 02.513.54.66  
www.solidarite-savoir.be  
**MAY 22** 16.00 MP4: Dvorak, Terry Riley (charity concert to benefit Solidarité Savoir)

## Ghent

### Conservatorium (Miryzaal)

Hoogpoort 64; 09.269.92.92  
www.debijloke.be  
**MAY 19** 20.00 Quatuor Mosaiques: Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart

### De Bijloke

Jozef Kluykensstraat 2; 09.269.92.92  
www.debijloke.be  
**MAY 20** 20.00 Masques conducted by Olivier Fortin: Johann Rosenmüller, Buxtehude, Muffat, Biber  
**MAY 21** 20.00 Exaudi vocal ensemble conducted by James Weeks: Andrea Gabrieli, Filip Rathé, Michael Finnis, more



## Antwerp

### deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28  
www.desingel.be  
**MAY 19 & 22** 21.15 Medea: world première of a new opera by composer Flemish Wim Henderickx and playwright Peter Verhelst; produced by Muziektheater Transparant, staged by Paul Koek, music performed by the HERMÈS Ensemble (in Dutch)

### Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02  
www.vlaamseopera.be  
**MAY 21** 20.00 Blond Eckbert: one-act contemporary opera by Judith Weir for four singers and chamber ensemble, staged by Wouter van Looy, with Oxalys conducted by Robin Engelen (in the original English with surtitles in Dutch)

## Ghent

### Vlaamse Opera

Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02  
www.vlaamseopera.be  
**Until MAY 21** 15.00/19.30 Claudio Monteverdi's Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria (The Return of Ulysses), conducted by Federico Maria Sardelli, staged by Michael Hampe (in the original Italian with surtitles in Dutch)



## Antwerp

### Fakkelteater Rode Zaal

Hoogstraat 12; 070.246.036  
www.fakkelteater.be  
**MAY 21-22** 15.00/20.30 The Ronald Lee White dancers in From Paris to Brasil, choreographed by Raphaël Breens

### Theater 't Eilandje

Kattendijk-Westkaai 16; 03.203.95.85  
www.flandersballet.be  
**MAY 19-21** 20.00 Introdans in Strawinspiratie, with music by Stravinski, choreographed by Nils Christie

## Brussels

### Halles de Schaarbeek

Koninklijke Sint-Mariastraat 22; 02.218.21.07  
www.halles.be  
**MAY 22-24** 20.30 Madame Plaza, choreographed by Bouchra Ouizghen



## Antwerp

### deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28  
www.desingel.be  
**MAY 18-21** 20.00 Ultima Vez in Monkey Sandwich by Wim Vandekeybus

### Fakkelteater Theatercafé

Hoogstraat 12; 070.246.036  
www.fakkelteater.be  
**Until MAY 29** 12.00-14.00 Hotel Vocal: musical theatre (in Dutch)

### HetPaleis

Theaterplein 1; 03.202.83.11  
www.hetpaleis.be  
**Until MAY 22** 15.00/20.00 Ultima Thule & HetPaleis in Door de bomen het bos (The Forest Through the Trees), puppet theatre (ages 12 and up; in Dutch)

### Klokhuis Theatre

Parochiaanstraat 4; 03.231.76.87  
www.vlaamsfruit.be  
**MAY 21** 20.30 Philippe De Maertelaere in Caveman, one-man comedy show (in Dutch)

## DON'T MISS

### Kinderhoogdag

22 May, 13.00-18.30

GC de Kam, Wezembeek-Oppem

This terrific family day is intended to bring together kids (and their parents) living in the belt of municipalities surrounding Brussels, whatever their language. You'll find street theatre, musical interludes and workshops both cultural and artistic. There are more *Kinderhoogdagen* (a cute name that means Kids' High Holidays) throughout the year in various locations; check the website for details.



→ [www.kinderhoogdag.be](http://www.kinderhoogdag.be)

### Rataplan

Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40  
www.rataplanvw.be  
**MAY 19 & 21** 20.30 Els Dottermans and Katelijne Verbeke in Annie MG Schimdt (in Dutch)

### Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900  
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be  
**MAY 19** 20.00 Deborah De Ridder in Tell Me on a Sunday (in Dutch)  
**MAY 20-22** 14.00/19.30 Peter Van Den Begin in Peter & De Wolf (in Dutch, ages six and up)

### Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00  
www.zuiderpershuis.be  
**MAY 22** 20.30 Belgische Improvisatie Liga in BIL-Finale!  
**MAY 25** 20.30 Jaz/Europe

## Leuven

### STUK

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20  
www.stuk.be  
**Until MAY 18** 20.30 Compagnie Cecilia & KVS in Vorst-Forest, directed by Titus De Voogdt and Johan Heldenbergh (in Dutch)



## Antwerp

### 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

### Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55  
www.extracity.org  
**MAY 20-JUL 3** Museum of Display, a series of presentations that look at definitions of 'art' and the 'institution' within the scenario of a fictional museum, with works by various artists

### Fashion Museum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70  
www.momu.be  
**Until AUG 14** Unravel: Knitwear in Fashion, a wide variety of knitted garments and accessories from across the centuries, with a focus on high fashion pieces and their vernacular interpretations

### Koningin Fabiolazaal

Jezusstraat 28; 03.203.42.04  
www.provant.be  
**Until JAN 8** 2012 The Moderns, top pieces from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts (KMSKA), including works by Emile Claus, James Ensor and Marc Chagall

### Maagdenhuismuseum

Lange Gasthuisstraat 33; 03.338.26.20  
ocmw.antwerpen.be/Maagdenhuismuseum  
**Until JUN 26** Armoede... of kansen voor iedereen? (Poverty... or Opportunities for All?), images of poverty in Antwerp, from the middle ages through today

### Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)

Hanzestedenplaats 1; 03.338.44.34  
www.mas.be  
**Until DEC 31** Masterpieces in the MAS: Five Centuries of Images in Antwerp, the first temporary exhibition in the new museum shows how Antwerp and Flanders significantly influenced 16th- and 17th-century Western European imagery

### NICC

Tulpstraat 79; 03.216.07.71  
www.nicc.be  
**Until JUN 5** Invocations of The Blank Page, group show of works using blank sheets of paper

### Photo Museum (FoMu)

Waalse 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  
**Until JUN 5** Julien Maire: Mixed Memory, works from early film and projection projects, including the camera obscura and the magic lantern

### Plantin-Moretus Museum

Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50  
www.museumplantinmoretus.be  
**Until JUN 5** Playsante huysinghe op eenen hof, prints, drawings, topographic views and books provide a glimpse at the numerous country homes bought up outside of Antwerp in the 16th century

### Silver Museum Sterckshof

Hoofdvonderlei 160; 03.360.52.52  
www.provant.be  
**Until JUN 5** A Touch of Nature, jewellery designed by students from the Provinciaal Instituut Sint-Godelieve  
**Until JUN 12** Van haarnaald tot schoengespe: Accessoires in goud en zilver (From Hairpin to Shoe Buckle: Accessories in Gold and Silver), 14th- to 20th-century European accessories

## Bruges

### Raakpunt

7 Sint Jakobssstraat  
www.raakpunt.be  
**Until JUN 30** Decors, work by Flemish photographer Peter De Bruyne

### Stadshallen

Markt 7; 050.44.82.82  
www.cbrugge.be  
**Until JUN 12** Berni Searle: Interlaced, installations, video and photographs by the South African artist

## Brussels

### Argos Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03  
www.argosarts.org  
**Until JUN 18** What Will Come, videos and installations by contemporary Spanish artist Jordi Colomer  
**Until JUN 18** Mise en abîme: Dismantling the Economics of Television, videos by Richard Serra, Ant Farm, more  
**Until JUN 18** Ria Pacquée: Westerly Winds, photos, slides, notes and videos by the Belgian artist

### Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72  
www.atomium.be  
**Until DEC 9** Belgium & Immigration: Understand Better So We Can Better Understand One Another, interactive exhibition on migration to Belgium

### Autrique House

Haachtssteenweg 266; 02.215.66.00  
www.autrique.be  
**Until DEC 31** Victor Horta: A Lost World, works highlighting decisive moments in the career of the architect born in Ghent 150 years ago

### Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80  
www.stripmuseum.be  
**Until MAY 29** L'Empreinte Delcourt, 25 years in the life of comic strip editor Guy Delcourt  
**Until OCT 2** The Publiart Adventure, comic strip in advertising

## GETTING LOANS AND MORTGAGES IN BELGIUM

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### Contact details

**Philip Arnold**  
**03/336.48.03**  
[philip.arnold@telenet.be](mailto:philip.arnold@telenet.be)



**Beursschouwburg**  
August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50  
www.beursschouwburg.be  
**Until MAY 27** Waiting and Watching: South African Moments, four young photographers' images of ordinary South Africans

**Bozar**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**Until JUN 12** Maurice Frydman: Plasticités, works made from plastic materials by the contemporary visual artist  
**Until JUN 12** Jordi Colomer: What is to Come, film, maquettes, photos and installations by the contemporary Spanish artist (also at Argos)  
**Until JUN 24** Junctions: Jean-Louis Vanesch, work by the Belgian photographer

**Brussels Expo**  
Belgiëplein 1; 070.25.20.20  
www.kingtutbrussels.be  
**Until NOV 6** Tutankhamun: His Tomb and His Treasures, reconstruction of the Ancient Egyptian king's tomb, with over 1,000 replicas of funerary objects, including amulets, coffers, chairs, weapons, musical instruments and more

**CIVA**  
Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71  
www.civa.be  
**MAY 20-OCT 2** Brussel, een sterk staaltje van engineering (Brussels, Engineering Prowess), the world of engineers in the Brussels region

**City Hall**  
Grote Markt; 02.279.64.24  
www.brupass.be  
**Until JUN 11** Deportation and Genocide: A European Tragedy, documentary-style reminder of historical events  
**De Markten**  
Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25  
www.demarkten.be

LISA BRADSHAW



## Luc Monheim retrospective Until 22 May Cinema Zuid

The late Luc Monheim was an artist, particularly known for plastic sculpture, who got into the business of decorating film sets and eventually decided he'd try his hand behind the camera. The result is an odd and fascinating collection of films, heavily influenced by the Fleming's favourite literature: *The Divine Comedy*. On Friday, you can catch 1976's *Dieu le veut (God Wills It So)*, a story set in the middle ages about a group of women who live in the footsteps of looters to survive. Monheim himself in fact wasn't happy with the way this film turned out and remade it as *Deus lo volt* with extra money from the French community. Unfortunately, the films are being shown against each other at the same time, so you have to take your pick. Later in the weekend, you can see *Exit Exil*, the story of a stripper who tries to go home again (*pictured*). Films are preceded by shorts by Monheim and introduced by his sister or producers.

→ [www.cinemazuid.be](http://www.cinemazuid.be)

**Until JUN 5** Fred Bervoets, prints by the Flemish artist

**Design Vlaanderen Galerie**  
Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60  
www.designvlaanderen.be  
**Until MAY 20** This is Humin, innovative design projects by 30 companies and 20 designers from across Flanders

**Espace Photographique Contretype**  
Verbindingslaan 1; 02.538.42.20  
www.contretype.org  
**Until JUN 5** Reconstructions: The Feminine Structure of the World/Presence of Women, photos by Hungarian photographers

**Flemish Parliament - De Loketten**  
IJzerenkruisstraat 99; 02.552.40.43  
www.vlaamsparlement.be  
**Until JUL 11** Raoul De Keyser: De dingen die ik zie (The Things I See), drawings and paintings by the Flemish artist

**Fondation pour l'Architecture**  
Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80  
www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be  
**MAY 21-AUG 28** Anne Heringer: Building Differently, plans, sketches and photographs by the German architect

**House of Folklore and Traditions**  
Eikstraat 19; 02.279.64.11  
culture@brucity.be  
**Until JUN 26** L'Union fait la frite (Unity is Fried), paintings of Brussels fritkots by Belgian artist Gilles houben

**ING Cultural Centre**  
Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92  
www.ing.be/art  
**Until JUN 19** Joan Miró, the lyrical painter, paintings, etchings, sculptures and drawings by the Catalan artist

**Jacques Franck Cultural Centre**  
Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20  
www.ccjacquesfranck.be  
**Until JUN 19** Untitled 5.11, installations by contemporary American artist Peter Downsbrough

**Natural Science Museum**  
Vautierstraat 29; 02.627.42.38  
www.naturalsciences.be  
**MAY 22** 10.00-18.00 Open-door day in honour of International Biodiversity Day, featuring BiodiverCITY, the new gallery on biodiversity in the city

**Royal Museum of the Armed Forces**  
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33  
www.legermuseum.be  
**Until SEP 4** 1945-2002: Belgian soldiers in Germany, rare photographs documenting 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries  
**Until OCT 16** War&Game(s), photographs by Virginie Cornet and toys from the preiod of the First World War

**Royal Museum of Fine Arts**  
Regentschapstraat 3; 02.508.32.11  
www.fine-arts-museum.be  
**Until JUN 5** Walter Leblanc, kinetic and optical works by the late Flemish artist  
**Until JUN 26** A selection of the most important artworks from the 19th- and 20th-century collection, including Salvador Dali, Giorgio de Chirico and Paul Delvaux  
**Until SEP 4** Art and Finance in Europe: 18th-Century Masterworks in a New Light, 20 major works by Franceso Guardi, Benjami Wolff, Léonard DeFrance, more

**Sint-Gorikshallen**  
Sint-Gorikspan 23; 02.502.44.24  
www.howdoyoudobrussels.com  
**Until MAY 31** How Do You Do... Brussels?, photos, interview extracts and mixed media by 48 foreigners living in Brussels

**Tour & Taxis**  
Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49  
www.tour-taxis.com  
**Until MAY 31** From Brussels: Xiè Xiè Shanghai, a look at the Belgian pavilion from the World Expo last year, plus information on business opportunities involving China (www.thankyoushanghai.com)  
**Until JUN 19** Zes miljard mensen (Six Billion People), photo project by Yann Arthus-Bertrand  
**Until JUL 4** America: It's Also Our History!, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork

**Deurle**  
**Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens**  
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23  
www.museumdd.be  
**Until JUN 5** Christopher Williams,

photographs by the American photographer  
**Until JUN 5** On the Way to the Peak of Ecstasy, film projects by Flemish artist Thomas Bogaert  
**Until JUN 5** Picture This: Sophie Kuijken, paintings by the Flemish artist

**Ghent**  
**Design Museum**  
Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99  
www.designmuseumgent.be  
**Until JUN 13** Fantasy Design, works by young people from Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Spain  
**Until JUN 13** L'Objet Sublime, over 300 ceramic works from 1875-1945 France

**Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)**  
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03  
www.smak.be  
**Until JUN 5** Joy and Disaster, work by contemporary Hungarian artists  
**Until JUN 5** Carlos Rodríguez-Méndez: Agua Caliente (Hot Water), gigantic minimalist sculpture by the Spanish artist  
**Until JUN 5** MARCEL: The Marcel Broodthaers Room, work by the late Belgian artist  
**Until JUL 3** Michaël Sailstorfer: Raum und Zeit, sculptures by the German artist  
**Until SEP 18** Jorge Macchi: Music Stands Still, paintings, sculptures, installations and video by the Argentinian artist

**Hasselt**  
**Fashion museum**  
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21  
www.modemuseumhasselt.be  
**Until JUN 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

**National Jenever Museum**  
Witte Nonnenstraat 19; 011.23.98.60  
www.jenevermuseum.be  
**Until JUN 5** De kunst van het drinken (The Art of Drinking), paintings of drinking scenes by 19th- and 20th-century Belgian artists

**z33**  
Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60  
www.z33.be  
**Until AUG 21** Kris Verdonck: EXHIBITION #1, installations and videos by the Flemish theatremaker and artist

**Kemzeke**  
**Verbeke Foundation**  
Westakker; 03.789.22.07  
www.verbekefoundation.com  
**Until JUN 12** Tom Woestenborghs: Salvation Can Be Found in the Illusion of Involvement, installations, prints and drawings by the Flemish artist

**Knokke-Heist**  
**White-Out Studio**  
Van Bunnanlaan 58A; 050.62.93.63  
www.whiteoutstudio.be  
**Until JUN 5** Jan Dibbets 3X, photographs of conceptual works by the Dutch artist (also in Mechelen)

**Kortrijk**  
**Benedengalerie**  
Hazelaarstraat 7; 056.23.98.50  
www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be  
**Until JUN 12** Dirk Braeckman, photos by the Flemish artist

**Leuven**  
**Museum M**  
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29  
www.mleuven.be  
**Until MAY 22** Pedro Cabrita Reis: One After Another, A Few Silent Steps, work by the multi-media Portuguese artist  
**Until JUN 12** Gebonden Beelden, rare books  
**Until SEP 25** Pieter-Jozef Verhaghen: In het spoor van Rubens (In the Footsteps of Rubens), paintings by the 18th-century Flemish artist

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

**Mechelen**  
**Exhibition Halls**  
Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00  
www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be  
**Until JUN 5** Jan Dibbets 3X, photographs of

conceptual works by the Dutch artist (also in Knokke-Heist)

**Meise**  
**National Botanic Garden of Belgium**  
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20  
www.plantentuinmeise.be  
**Until OCT 2** Groene Omszwervingen (Green Detours), works made of leaves and flowers by Sandrine de Borman following her year as artist-in-residence  
**Until NOV 6** Kriebelbeestjes van het bos (Crawling Bugs in the Woods), photographs of insects by Barbara Cook

**Tervuren**  
**Royal Museum for Central Africa**  
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11  
www.africanmuseum.be  
**Until SEP 4** FetishModernity, exhibition created by six European museums exploring the notion of modernity  
**Until SEP 4** Artists in Residence: Sammy Baloji & Patrick Mudekerezan, arts, sciences and collections.

**Turnhout**  
**De Tweede Helft**  
Graatakker 5  
www.twintigplusnuldrie.be  
**Until JUN 12** Tom Woestenborghs: Salvation Can Be Found in the Illusion of Indifference, installations, prints and drawings by the Flemish artist

**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



**Antwerp**  
**Boekenmarkt:** Outdoor book market every fourth Saturday  
**MAY 21** 11.00-16.00 at Sint-Nicolaasplaats  
03.226.40.68, www.provant.be

**Rommelant:** Flanders' oldest and biggest flea market with antiques, furniture, clothing, records and more  
**MAY 21-22** 10.00-18.00 at Antwerp Expo, J Van Rijswijklaan 191  
03.260.81.22, www.rommelant.be

**Brussels**  
**Checkpoint Festival:** Multidisciplinary festival featuring film, exhibitions, concerts, performances, readings, workshops and more on the theme of 'meeting point'  
**MAY 19-28** at Sazz'n Jazz and La Tentation  
www.sazznjazz.be

**Falcons for Everyone:** Discover the peregrine falcons roosting atop the Cathedral of St Michael and St Gudula, live and in detail thanks to cameras installed within inches of the nest  
**Until JUN 7** at the front of the Cathedral Sinter-Goedelevoorplein  
www.falconsforeveryone.be

**Kunstenfestivaldesarts:** International festival of contemporary performing arts, dedicated to reflecting the world in which we live via performances, installations and films  
**Until MAY 29** in venues across the city  
www.kfda.be

**On Y Danse Tout En Rond:** Theatre, dance, film, video and music festival  
**Until MAY 28** at Beursschouwburg, August Ortsstraat 20-28  
02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be

**Queen Elisabeth Competition:** Annual classical music competition devoted this year to vocals  
**Until MAY 21** at Brussels Conservatory, Bozar and Musical Instruments Museum  
www.qeimc.be

**Tervurenlaan Feest:** Tervurenlaan's annual birthday party, car free and filled with stands featuring children's activities, world gastronomy, music, sport, arts, music, an antique fair and Brussels car rally  
**MAY 22** 10.00-19.00 in Tervurenlaan, Etterbeek  
02.773.05.36, www.etterbeek.be



## Swapping at the discotheque

Set off to a party in one outfit and head back home in another. From 23 to 28 May it will happen to a lot of women, as six clubs across Flanders and Brussels host "swapping". Swapping (also called swishing) originated in the US but has gained a foothold in Flanders, especially in clothing shops. The concept is simple: make a selection of nice clothes you no longer wear, team up with a group of girls and start swapping! For the big spring edition in Hasselt (23/5 Versuz), Bruges (24/5 Entrenous), Ghent (25/5 Culture Club), Leuven (26/5 3Hoog), Brussels (27/5 Havana Club) and Antwerp (28/5 Café d'Anvers) a few rules apply. Show up by 19.00, pay €10 and hand over your clothes to a team of stylists. They'll reward each item with "swap dots" – up to four. The more clothes you bring, the more dots you get. Around 20.00, browse the racks with clothes, try them on, then hang a "wanted" sign on the items you fancy. Should there be several girls after the same item, you use your swap dots to bid. Stylists will even help you make the right outfit choices. But the €10 you've paid goes much further: A Toni&Guy team of hairdressers and make-up artists are available for a complete make-over, and *Flair* magazine photographers will snap pictures of the new you. Make sure you pick up your goodie bag before you leave! All the events finish by midnight, at which point you can hit more clubs and bars in your new tops.

→ [www.swapping.be](http://www.swapping.be)

**Ghent**  
**Côté Jardin:** Free outdoor concerts, including classical, jazz, world and more  
**MAY 22** 11.00-00.00 at Muziekcentrum De Bijloke, Bijlokekaai 7  
www.bijloke.be

**Stealing the Mystic Lamb:** American author and art historian Noah Charney presents his new book (in English)  
**MAY 26** 19.00 in the crypt of St. Baaf's Cathedral  
promotie.toerisme@gent.be

**Kortrijk**  
**Multi-Mania:** The biggest free multi-media conference in Europe featuring keynote speakers and workshops  
**MAY 23-24** at Kortrijk Xpo, Doorniksesteenweg 216  
www.multi-mania.be



## bite

ROBYN BOYLE

## De Cluysenaer

An artist finds inspiration in a flower and starts applying paint to a blank canvas. Chef Stef Roesbeke starts with a nip from a dram of Single Malt Scotch and from there conceives all kinds of flavour connections, resulting in culinary masterpieces in which the smallest ingredients work to accentuate every aspect of the whisky's complex flavours. All the cooking classes in the world won't teach you this: It takes an amazingly sensitive palate and a creative mind. How else could one know that the little grains of mustard and miniature pickle in an appetiser of *Gentse kop* help to bring out the fruity aromas in a 12-year-old Tomatin? Or that the scallop starter, elegantly arranged on a dark grey slate with asparagus, radish, spring onion, thinly sliced cucumber roll-ups, rocket salad and some vinegar-and-sugar marinated mushrooms, makes the ideal companion for Aged Oak Tullibardine. Granted it's the first time I drank whisky with a meal, usually reserving the spirit for late nights by the fire or an after-dinner tippie in a jazz club. This describes whisky's traditional reputation but one that is changing rapidly, thanks in part to De Cluysenaer and its unique marriage of Flemish cuisine and Scottish malt whisky. Husband-and-wife duo Stef and Krien have always had a sort of love affair with

Scotland and its national drink, and they visit the country every year. That's why, after their restaurant opened 11 years ago in East Flanders, clients began coming to them for travel advice. It didn't take long before they decided to combine passions, making their whisky collection (an impressive 800 bottles) part of the business. They sell it, pair it with food and incorporate it in their cooking – a concept that is apparently well received, as the restaurant is often fully booked. Next up is a cup of rich, velvety white asparagus soup with bits of the seasonal veg and shrimp bobbing about, topped with a handful of fresh coriander. What's this? A little pipette makes an attempt at being inconspicuous, but we pick it up straight away. It's filled with whisky, the same one we're drinking: a full-bodied 1994 anCnoc from the Eastern Highlands. Mixed in with the soup, the whisky loses its intensity and gives the creamy asparagus a nice turfy touch. This is followed by braised breast of pigeon resting on a bed of plump red beet and onions marinated in...wait for it...coca-cola. The cola comes across as quite natural, contributing some sweetness to offset the sharp onion. On top of the moist pigeon is a circle of smooth *foie gras*. As for the whisky, Stef is spot-on again with his pairing of Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban, a 12-year-old Highland



© Rob Mitchell - Stillmotion.com

with a ruby port cask finish. We're far from finished, but not one person is feeling drunk or woozy. Our mains arrive with a copper-coloured glass of Glengoyne Sherry Cask. The nose is sweet and luxurious, calling to mind raisins and toffee, and the first sip is loaded with flavours of honey and oak – my favourite by far. It's paired with a juicy slice of Ibérico ham, the very best Spanish pork from acorn-fed pigs, plus witloof, soft clouds of puree – lightly fried on the outside – and a sauce made with the same Glengoyne. Dessert offers welcome refreshment in the form of sweet cuberdon ice cream (see page 11) and cold and creamy panna cotta. There's another pipette, this time filled with a strawberry-whisky *coulis*.

It tastes slightly medicinal, so I prefer to sample this whisky straight out of the glass. The 10-year-old Bowmore Tempest Batch 1 is smoky and spicy, just the right way to round off a most pleasurable experience.

→ [www.cluysenaer.be](http://www.cluysenaer.be)

- 📍 Kluzendorpstraat 82, Evergem (East Flanders); 09.357.73.37
- 🕒 Mon 11.30-15.00; Thurs-Sun 11.30-15.00 & 18.00-22.00 (Fri&Sat until midnight)
- 💶 Mains: €20-€25
- ★ Seasonal French-Flemish dishes in a warm and friendly setting, paired with the perfect whiskies

Contact Bite at [flandersbite@gmail.com](mailto:flandersbite@gmail.com)

## TALKING SPORTS

## The race is on!

It's a day etched in the diary of anyone who uses their running shoes to actually run: the 20km of Brussels, on Sunday, 29 May. While cities and towns across Flanders all have their own local races – notables include the Antwerp marathon and 10 mile last month, the 15km Dwars Door Brugge earlier this month, and the 10km Gent Stadsløop this weekend – the 20km of Brussels is the one that everyone wants to do. For a start, it's the biggest. The Antwerp races combined gathered 3,600 entries, while the Brussels marathon/half marathon last October got around 8,800. Yet the 20km of Brussels issues 30,000 numbers – and even that is well under the number of applications that it receives. (Safety and logistical concerns mean organisers have had to put a ceiling on numbers.)

Indeed, in recent years there has been a surge in applications due to the rise of charity runs – pioneered by the London Marathon – and the increasing efforts by businesses to use the event as a staff team-building initiative.

The scale is reflected everywhere in the event, which takes in a momentous route along city landmarks and leafy avenues. It starts and finishes in the Jubelpark, an epic setting for any race, and thunders up Wetstraat, past the Royal Palace, up towards the law courts, down the length of Louizalaan, into the Kamerenbos, along Franklin Rooseveltlaan and Vorstlaan and, finally, back towards town past Woluwepark and up the fearsome hills of Tervuurselaan.

The massive organisation involves diverting traffic,



LEO CENDROWICZ

generating sponsorship, ensuring medical facilities along the route, forging all those medals and distributing some 150,000 plastic bottles of water (and clearing them all up by 19.00, four hours after the start of the race). Their responsibilities include how to manage the 750 volunteers, where to put the 30 bands that play along the route and how to process the results of the 25,000 or so who complete the race. The first edition in 1980, gathering 3,500 runners at the Heizel stadium, was indulged by the Brussels authorities, who assumed it would never become more than a one-off event. It is now the highlight of the Belgian running calendar, which may well clog up the roads for a few hours, but will provide an extraordinary challenge to thousands.

## THE LAST WORD...

## Bright sparks

"We do a lot for students with learning difficulties, but there's nothing for good students. When I suddenly had a student who got 920 out of 1,000 in her first year, I realised I was going to have to do something about it."

Professor Hubert De Brabander of the University of Ghent, which plans to introduce an honour school

## On the lookout

"Between June and August, the grain grows high in our rural municipality. That's why I'm asking the farmers to be alert to every suspect movement and report it."

Lennik, Flemish Brabant, has a new Militia alderman, whose job it is to deal with terrorist threats

## High hopes

"You could happily smoke half a kilo of this stuff; the worst that would happen is you might feel a bit queasy."

Hemp farmer Dirk Talpe from Kruiseke, West Flanders, who has a 3.6 hectare field planted with a low-THC strain of cannabis

## Taking no chances

"It's true there's no problem here with youngsters hanging around. We want to keep it that way, which is why we brought in the regulation."

The town of Ternat is introducing a curfew and a ban on loud music – a measure to tackle a problem mayor Ronald Parys admits does not exist

## NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #181

## Focus

The Port of Antwerp has announced the construction of a rail line directly to Chongqing, China. We'll tell you why and what it means for business at Europe's second-largest port

## Arts

Flemish artist Gert Robijns has built a large-scale replica of parts of Gotem, Limburg province, where he grew up. Why on earth would he do that?

## Living

De Struise brewery is in Oostvleteren, not to be confused with Westvleteren, which produces a beer about which we often rave. Yet De Struise is not hiding in anyone's shadow. We meet the four men behind one of the world's best brewers