

Bus accident report

Swiss authorities present the results of their investigation into March's tragic event



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India calling

The annual Global India Business meeting is taking place in Flanders this month

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Sounds like summer

Dizzy from trying to figure out which music fest is right for you? Check out our guide

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The tipping point

A non-profit with a business plan hopes to convince leaders to save the Brussels Royal Conservatory before it's too late

Marie Dumont

There are ceilings falling down, mould growing and pigeons nesting in the roof. Brussels Royal Conservatory falls more into ruin every year. One-third of the premises is now unusable, and the state of affairs doesn't help with the recruitment of new students. A local organisation of music enthusiasts is trying to save one of the most unique conservatories in the world

The bat was impossible to ignore. Round and round it flitted, mostly hugging the concert hall's frosted glass ceiling but occasionally darting towards the singer on stage, a young woman who bravely continued as the audience ducked their heads.

A semi-finalist at the Queen Elisabeth competition four years ago, she had come well prepared to cope with the stage fright, the treacherous programme, the ruthless jury. But no one, surely, had warned her about the bats.

Or perhaps they had, for the Brussels Conservatory is almost as famous for the colonies of bats and pigeons that reside in the roof and take naughty pleasure in disrupting concerts as for its glorious architecture and fine acoustics.

This year, though, Queen Elisabeth contestants have been spared such winged intrusions. Not because the gaping holes in the Conservatory's roof have been fixed, but because, for the first time in the contest's history, the first rounds and semi-finals did not

take place there, decamping instead to Flagey.

It wasn't the bats that prompted the move. The state of the building, rather, has reached a tipping point that makes concerts nearly impossible. "The roof is sagging, and it can no longer hold up the lighting equipment," says Peter Swinnen, the director of the Flemish half of the Conservatory. "Last year, we could just about manage. This year, we can't."

Because the Queen Elisabeth is such a high-profile event, the decision has done much to foreground a problem that for years has been brushed under the (threadbare) carpet: the Royal Conservatory of Brussels, this mainstay of the capital's musical life and beacon of fine teaching, is falling apart.

FACE OF FLANDERS

Alan Hope

Michel Vandenbosch



This month the Belgian animal rights organisation Gaia celebrated its 20th anniversary and marked the event with an awards ceremony attended by politicians and other notables. It's a sign of how far animal rights issues have come: What started out being seen as a bunch of troublemakers now has significant status and regular media attention. That's a free-range feather in the cap of Michel Vandenbosch, philosopher and founder of the organisation. Vandenbosch, 50, was born in Ukkel and studied moral philosophy at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). But his conviction that something needs to be done about animal rights is far from complex: Humans, he once told the Dutch magazine *Filosofie*, suffer from "ethical arthritis" when it comes to animal welfare, and the cure is quite simple. Just look the animal in the eye. That basic recipe of empathy led him to set up Gaia in Brussels in 1992. The name comes from the Greek goddess of the earth, by way of the Gaia Theory of chemist James Lovelock, which states that all living organisms form a single complex and self-regulating system. Along the way, Vandenbosch's

work has brought him face to face with how cruel humans can be – not only to animals but to animal rights activists. The most remarkable example is the 1988 protest at the slaughterhouse in Anderlecht, when he was badly beaten by a number of livestock dealers directly in front of press cameras. His fellow protesters intervened, but Vandenbosch had to stay for a spell in hospital. The tide has now turned somewhat in public opinion, especially among young voters, which helps explain the presence at the birthday awards of Louis Tobback, mayor of Leuven, praised for his action in 1995 when, as interior minister, he banned street horse races in Sint-Eloois-Winkel and Krombeke in West Flanders. Also present were Flemish public works minister Hilde Crevits and representatives of supermarkets Colruyt and Lidl, who also received awards. Perhaps the most fulsome tribute came from Piet Vanthemsche, chairman of the farmers' union. "A lot of farmers felt attacked by Vandenbosch and company because of their hard-line approach. But their actions did lead to new rules that improved animal welfare and led to more attention for animal welfare within the agricultural industry."

News in brief

Two people charged with causing the death of a 23-year-old woman during a so-called **exorcism in Brussels in 2004** were sentenced to nine years in prison for torture. One of the two was the woman's husband, who believed she was possessed by demons. Four others received suspended sentences. The parents of the victim have lodged an appeal against the sentences, which they consider too lenient.

A house in Tessenderlo, Limburg province, was partially destroyed last week after being **struck by lightning** during severe weather across the region. No-one was injured. Elsewhere in Limburg, fire services were called out to deal with flooding, and strawberry growers complained that the wet weather in the south of the province risks destroying a large part of the crop, as fruit grown in the open becomes waterlogged or rots in the field.

Archaeologists in Mesen, West Flanders, have **uncovered a system of trenches** and an underground bunker used by German troops during the First World War. The area around Mesen was defended by the German army for three years, from 1914 to 1917, and the trenches are in good condition, despite the area having been heavily bombed later.

A pilot project to **supply food banks with surplus fruit and vegetables** from the REO auction market in Roeselare, West Flanders, has been adopted as a permanent arrangement. The West Flanders food bank, which provides food aid to the poor, was able during the six-month pilot project to deliver more than 21 tonnes of quality produce donated to about 3,600 recipients.

Monk, one of the most renowned Flemish cafes in central Brussels,

has closed after owner Marco Versele disappeared from view, leaving staff to run the business alone. Staff locked the doors last week after running out of beer, and Versele remains incommunicado. On the good news side, another Flemish stalwart in the Dansaert area, Kafka, will reopen at the end of the month under new management. The previous owner closed up shop in April when the property's rent went up. The new tenant has not yet been identified.

The XIOS university college in Diepenbeek, Limburg province, will this autumn launch a **post-graduate course in developing applications**, or apps, for smartphones and tablets. Tristan Franssen, coordinator of the course, said nothing of the sort currently exists. "Right now, apps are developed by programmers and hobbyists, while in fact it's a whole skill of its own." Apple announced last week that its users have downloaded three billion apps to date, while Android users have downloaded 10 billion.

Production house Woestijnvis, new owners of VijfTV and VT4, will **change the names to VIJF and VIER** respectively beginning on 3 September. Programmes for the autumn season include a daily current affairs show, a new series of the quiz *De Slimste mens ter wereld* (previously on the VRT) and imports such as *Dallas* and *The Client List*.

A Mechelen court has decided to **hold suspected rapist Steven VdH** for another month after arresting him last week. An investigation has linked the 39-year-old man from Balen, Antwerp province, to at least nine cases of rape and sexual abuse of minors since the early 1990s while serving as a leader in several youth clubs and sports teams. Police are investigating the possibility of more victims.

The domain-name extensions **.vlaanderen, .brussels and .gent** are among the new extensions being considered by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). The organisation intends to increase the number of extensions permitted, as existing extensions like .net, .org and .com are almost exhausted. Other extensions requested include .art, .bank and .cafe.

The European Company Sport Games will be hosted by Ghent University in 2017, the European Federation for Company Sport has announced. The games take place every two years and last for five days. Ghent was in competition with Athens and Salzburg.

► www.ecsg2013.eu

The Flemish comedy sketch series ***Wats? (What If?)* has won the Best Comedy award** at this month's Banff World Media Festival in Canada. The series, by production house Shelter, is recording its second season.

At least 20 people in Limburg have been **infected with the EHEC bacterium**, a variant of the toxic E coli bacterium, which is produced in the gut. Four of the victims were hospitalised in Genk and Overpelt for kidney dialysis. The infection has been traced to a batch of *filet américain*, which is made with raw meat, the federal food safety agency said.

The management of the Atomium in Brussels is in talks with the Tokyo Tower in Japan, which attracts three million visitors a year, to become **twin attractions** similar to twin city initiatives. In a meeting held during the recent federal trade mission to Japan, the Atomium suggested that the two share publicity and exhibitions. Talks on the subject will continue.

FLANDERS TODAY

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OFFSIDE

Alan Hope

You can go your own way

Once in a while something comes along that makes everything that went before look prehistoric, and that's the case with the new Leuven-based City Trip Planner. On their website, you have a choice of 16 cities, among them Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, Leuven and Mechelen. Choose one, then set about making a city guide tailored to your needs and – unlike the average tour guide – no-one else's. On my recent foray, I chose Antwerp. In the menu of options, I'm allowed to apply stars – one to four – to different subjects. I decided on full-out shopping (four stars), attractions and activities and streets and squares. I gave no stars to museums or churches, just to be difficult. With one click, the site provided a two-day guide with activities from 10.00 to 18.00, with a detailed itinerary, a map and notes on what I would find along the way. That includes Villa Tinto and the red-light district, the statue of Brabo (pictured), the Groenplaats and the Friday Market. The times allotted to each attraction might not



suit you – the Butchers' Hall gets 90 minutes and the statue of Leopold I only five, but even that can be customised: There's an option to scrap a particular element and recalculate the whole trip. You can also get travel directions, buy a train ticket or book a hotel (from the selection offered). City Trip Planner has a free app for

Android and iPhone, but you have to pay €4 to download or print your customised trip. But compare it to the price of a guidebook, and it starts to look pretty reasonable. City guides are available in English, and for the Flemish cities, also in Dutch.

► www.citytripplanner.com

The tipping point

Brussels Conservatory is one of only a few that were purpose-built in the 19th century

► continued from page 1

Quick fixes no longer enough

Both Swinnen and his French-speaking counterpart, Frédéric de Roos, have long been clamouring for something to be done. "All this is listed!" fumes Swinnen as he takes me on a tour of the premises, pointing out the yellowing paint, the peeling stucco and mouldy walls. "It ought to be maintained and renovated."



Save our conservatory: Peter Swinnen

Instead, decision-makers only allow the occasional quick fix whenever an issue becomes too pressing. ("As useful as mopping up when the tap's still running," Swinnen rails.)

The situation, meanwhile, is getting critical. It rains on the audience. Outside traffic can be heard from the concert hall. Heating the place is a ruinous headache. Then there's that huge piece of ceiling that came crashing down in a classroom last year. Luckily, no one was hurt.

"Every week something breaks down, and I have to close off yet another part of the building," says Swinnen. The concert hall's upper gallery is now off-limits to the public. The elegant townhouses on the site's south-eastern edge that were donated by wealthy patrons and used as classrooms and offices now sport broken windows, gaping floors, thick dust and "no entry" signs on almost every door. In one room, a grand piano stands forlorn, its keyboard forever silent – it fell through the ceiling a few years ago, and no one has bothered to take it away.

About one-third of the Conservatory is currently unusable, forcing administrators to redeploy teaching to often unsuitable annexes across town. Swinnen first arrived as a student in 1983, returned as a teacher and has held the post of co-director for the past four years. "It was bad enough when I first arrived," he says. "But never did I think it would come to this."

A unique conservatory

It is hard to imagine that the grimy façade half concealed behind an

overgrown courtyard on the busy Regentschapsstraat is the work of 19th-century architect Jean-Pierre Cluysenaar, who also designed the swish Sint-Hubertus galleries near the Grote Markt. Both are fine examples of Belgian eclectic style with their ample proportions and florid ornaments.

But what makes the Conservatory really special is its alliance of form and function. "It is one of the few purpose-built conservatories of the time," explains Swinnen. "It is perfect as such, with its high ceilings, sound-proofed rooms and a concert hall right in the heart of the school." Add to that its location in the Zavel and a short walk to the museums and venues on the Kunstberg, and you'll understand why it should be an ideal place for students.

The concert hall alone is a gem. Seating only 650, it allows an intimacy that neighbouring Bozar would be at a loss to achieve. And its acoustics are admirable. "The whole of Europe wants to record here," says Swinnen. Though "if they do now, they take the risk of having to redo a take whenever a tram rattles past."

The concert hall houses an organ by French instrument maker Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, who also built the one in Paris' Notre-Dame. One of only two organs in the world not made for a church that still stand in their place

"Everyone likes the idea of the Conservatory being renovated, but no one is willing to pick up the tab"

of origin (the other one is in Poland), it is a superb instrument. But don't expect to hear it anytime soon. "Until two years ago, we switched it on once a year for maintenance," Swinnen explains. "We've given up: There's so much dust accumulated in it that it would create a short circuit and set it on fire."

Funding conundrum

Today, the Conservatory is both a busy venue that holds around 200 concerts a year (student performances and chamber music organised by Bozar and the Midis-Minimes summer festival) and a music school with 1,200 students, most of them from abroad. In fact, it's two music schools, for the Conservatory was split between the two language communities back in 1967. The building, meanwhile, belongs to the Belgian state. And there lies the problem. "Everyone likes the idea of the Conservatory being renovated," Swinnen says, "but no one is willing to pick up the tab. It's a typical Brussels problem."



And yet the Conservatory is a rare success story in terms of Flemings and francophones living and working together. Although divided on paper, the two schools share the premises, including the library, which houses a remarkable collection of scores by, among others, Telemann and CPE

Bach. "Whenever the francophones are short of a teacher, we send one in, and vice versa," says Swinnen. "Language is never an issue: We're an international and multilingual crowd."

Conservamus plan awaits approval

Rahim Hachem Samii, a lawyer who specialises in real estate issues, thinks it is precisely the lack of physical separation between the two conservatories that causes the conundrum. "That situation somehow wasn't anticipated in Belgium's legal framework," he explains. "There is no box to tick for the renovation of a shared building." Samii is president of Conservamus, a not-for-profit organisation set up in 2007 by a group of music and heritage enthusiasts in a bid to find a solution to this institutional deadlock. Although his professional background has been invaluable for drafting legal texts and enlisting the best contractors, his motivation is strictly



personal. "I remember going to concerts in the early 2000s," he says. "I was struck by how beautiful the place was and couldn't understand why it was so run down."

Conservamus has drawn up a business plan that maps out the necessary renovations in the hope of eventually turning the Conservatory into a thriving and viable venue. His ideal? Paris' Cité de la Musique. The cost? €50 million.

"But redoing the concert hall alone would only cost €10 million and could be done in just one year," he quickly adds. The rest could be spread out over time or scaled down, depending on the money available.

Public and private partners have already pledged money, but nothing can be done until a public limited company is set up to oversee the works and manage the place. "The project is sitting on the federal government's

table, waiting to be signed," says Samii. "The problem is, there's always someone to quibble and think they can come up with a better plan."

Meanwhile, time is running out. "Luckily, the building is very solid," says Samii. "But take the sculpted windows: They're 100 years old and the paint has worn off, leaving the wood exposed. If we act fast, we can get away with just repainting them, which will cost €500 per window. If we wait another five years, we'll have to replace them, and that will cost €10,000."

Swinnen is one of Conservamus' staunchest fans. "I am with them two hundred percent," he tells me as we round off our tour. "If their plan doesn't work out, I don't know what will."

► www.conservamus.be

THE STUDENT VIEW

A handful of students are enjoying a spot of sunshine in a grim-looking courtyard outside the Conservatory between exams. When asked about the building, their grievances don't take long to surface. "The sound's awful, and it stinks!"

Precious time that could be spent practising, they say, is too often wasted on waiting for a classroom to free up or chasing down keys "which, more often than not, open the wrong doors," says Sophie Buysse, a young Antwerpenaar who came to study jazz singing after five years in

law school. "I don't mind because I'm a singer. But imagine double-bassists having to lug their instruments around!"

Buyse chose Brussels over Ghent and Rotterdam, where she'd also been offered a place, because she wanted to study with Belgian jazzman David Linx. I ask her if she regrets her decision. "Well, "Rotterdam has great facilities and fabulous rehearsal rooms. So, although I do love the atmosphere and the teachers here, and I am definitely learning a lot, I suppose I do regret it, a little bit."

Swiss prosecutor reports on March bus crash

The cause of the crash was most likely simple human error, say investigators

Alan Hope

Human error on the part of the driver is the most likely cause of the coach crash in Sierre, Switzerland, according to the public prosecutor for the area. The crash of the coach on 13 March carrying students and teachers from two Flemish schools took the lives of 28 people, including 22 schoolchildren, Olivier Elsig, prosecutor for the Valais canton (*pictured*), met with parents of victims last week in Sint-Truiden and reported that the investigation had ruled out three possible causes: the driver was not going too fast, there was nothing technically wrong with the bus, and there was no other vehicle

involved in the accident.

Regarding exactly what did cause the bus to crash, Elsig had no firm news to report. The origin of the crash, he told a press conference in Brussels after the meeting, most likely lies with simple human error.

Swiss investigators are looking again at video images from the tunnel and at the medical records of the two chauffeurs to determine if driver Geert Michiels, 34, may have become unwell and lost control of the bus. A toxicological investigation is still under way, but alcohol has already been ruled out. The accident happened when the coach grazed the right-hand wall of

the tunnel, then about 75 metres on collided head-on with the corner of a safety niche. The bus was travelling at about 100 km/h, exactly the speed limit in the tunnel.

The full investigation is expected to take another three months, Elsig said, at which point the Swiss authorities will give a press conference to announce their findings.

"My husband was a very responsible driver with a lot of love for his job," commented Michiels' wife Evy Laermans. She was not aware of any health problems. The Swiss prosecutor's report was welcome in providing more information, she said,



although she was disappointed that Swiss authorities had ruled out the coach's cruise control as a possible cause of the accident. The equipment was destroyed in the crash.

BHV split a concern for Brussels residents

The splitting of the judicial district of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV) was last week approved by the federal parliament's committee on institutional reform. The changes see the single existing court of the area split into a French- and a Dutch-speaking court. In future, only one-third of the judges will have to be bilingual, compared to two-thirds now. The reform has caused some concern as the Dutch-speaking side will have 20% of the total number of magistrates, while it is expected to handle 30% of the cases. The proposal also includes a promise to measure the burden of work of the Dutch-speaking side, at which point the final number of magistrates can be adjusted. The prosecutor's office will also be split, into a Dutch-speaking office in Halle-Vilvoorde and a bilingual office in Brussels.

Meanwhile the splitting of the electoral district of BHV, already approved by the committee, is presenting problems for the Flemish in Brussels, as changes mean that it will become virtually impossible to see a Fleming elected to the federal parliament for Brussels. Until now, the inclusion of the Flemish areas of Halle and Vilvoorde in the district compensated for the low numbers of Flemish voters in the capital itself. Now they will disappear into the provincial district of Flemish Brabant. A suggestion by CD&V chair Wouter Beke that all Flemish parties could present a united list in Brussels so as not to split the vote has received little support from other parties.

Rush-hour lanes to ease traffic congestion

Motorists on the E40 between Brussels and Leuven should be looking forward to less congestion during rush hours, thanks to the decision by Flemish mobility minister Hilde Crevits to open up the shoulder emergency lane to commuters on the motorway starting this week. The same will happen with the shoulder lane on the E34 between Antwerp and the Noorderkempen exit.

The first such lane was opened last autumn between the Antwerp Ring and Ranst in the direction of Hasselt and has cut 30 to 50 minutes off journey times. In the next three years, more shoulders will be opened up during rush hour, including on the E19 from Antwerp to Sint-Job and another between Sterrebeek and Holsbeek in Flemish Brabant.

Computers for Brussels schools

Brussels-Capital Region will provide 3,100 new computers for 391 primary schools in the third phase of the multimedia plan of minister Brigitte Grouwels, responsible for information technology. The plan, to be completed by the end of the year, involves 108 Dutch-speaking schools and will cost €4.5 million. "The emphasis will be on open-source software and operating systems," said Grouwels. "Thanks to a multimedia computer and a digital projector, teachers will be able to use the right tools to make lessons a good deal more interactive."

Protest against culture subsidy cuts

Workers and supporters of about 20 social-cultural organisations demonstrated outside the Flemish Parliament in Brussels on 13 June against advice received by culture minister Joke Schauvliege that would see eight of the 20 organisations in the sector lose their subsidies. "You can't carry out a dynamic policy with a package like this; this is peanuts," commented Patrick De Wit of neighbourhood social platform De Vieze Gasten in Ghent. Other organisations involved included the Brussels Zinneke Parade and the Tutti Fratelli artistic platform of Antwerp.



THE WEEK IN FIGURES

70%

of those voting in October's municipal elections already know who they will vote for, according to a poll by iVox

€79,026,422

won by a resident of Antwerp province in the last EuroMillions lottery, for a stake of €10. The win is the second-largest ever seen in Flanders

6

stork chicks ringed this year in the Zwin nature reserve on the coast, compared to 24 last year. Nature workers blamed the cold and damp spring conditions, as well as a nest of predatory stone martens

123

homeless people in Brussels received a premium for agreeing to leave the streets and move into houses run by the city's social aid agency. The figure is considered low, a result of the lack of adequate housing

21,343

flights took off and landed over the municipalities of the Brussels periphery last year, a 12.3% increase on 2010 and a cause of severe health problems for residents under the main routes, according to Professor Lieven Annemans of Ghent University

FIFTH COLUMN

Anja Otte

Leading lady

What a week this was for Annemie Turtelboom of Open VLD. The federal minister for justice came under criticism after she announced that Sharia4Belgium's Fouad Belkacem, believed to have inspired recent riots in Molenbeek, would have to now serve out an earlier sentence in prison. Arbitrary justice, the man's lawyers and some members of parliament called this, which Turtelboom refuted immediately. But Turtelboom ended the week with good news, as two new candidates for the Open VLD list in the city of Antwerp were revealed. Police chief Eddy Baelemans and school director Karin Heremans are not just local celebrities, both were also close to Patrick Janssens, who is running for another term as socialist mayor.

As *Flanders Today* went to press, there was also talk of model-turned-entrepreneur Phaedra Hoste joining the list. Hoste was elected before, on a Christian-democrat (CD&V) list in her home town of Bruges, but quit politics, citing the lack of catering as one of the reasons. "Spending a whole evening in a meeting with just the one glass of water is not for me," she said.

The tracks of Turtelboom's new protégées somewhat reflect her own. Turtelboom started off as a promising young politician in the CD&V. Failing to get elected in parliament, she switched parties, to VLD (Open VLD's predecessor), where then prime minister Guy Verhofstadt took her under his wing.

In 2007, she again failed to gain a seat, but she became minister for migration and asylum in the federal government nonetheless. Most people expected a swift exit for Turtelboom, when she fought with her socialist colleague Marie Arena over an asylum crisis. Surprisingly, when the government was reshuffled, Turtelboom got promoted to home affairs. In 2011, she became the first minister for justice in decades without legal training. Turtelboom's rapid rise to become Open VLD's leading lady is remarkable. She has had some help from high places, but no-one doubts her many qualities – as a politician and as a person. The minister is praised for her common sense, her good cheer and fashionable appearance, with a preference for Belgian designers. "Everyone loves Annemie Turtelboom," *De Standaard* put on the cover of one of its supplements. Everyone? That remains to be seen in the city to which she moved recently. The Antwerp local elections are a duel between Patrick Janssens and N-VA's Bart De Wever, with little room for a wild-haired liberal lady. Then again, this would not be the first time Turtelboom surprises everyone.

Government invests €100 million in imec

New nanotech cleanroom in Leuven is expected to create 2,000 jobs

Alan Hope

The Leuven-based nanotechnology research centre imec has been granted €100 million from the government of Flanders as start-up capital for the creation of a cleanroom for the production of silicon wafers. The clean room will cost an estimated €1 billion and provide 2,000 jobs – 500 directly employed and 1,500 indirectly.

The announcement was made last week in Japan, where Flemish innovation and government investment minister Ingrid Lieten and imec chief officer Luc Van den Hove are part of the Belgian trade mission led by Prince Filip.

The €100 million comes on top of imec's regular €48 million annual subsidy. The Flemish government is the first investor to sign on for the development of the cleanroom: The lab hopes that the government's grant will encourage investors from the private sector, as well as additional funding from the European Union, which currently earmarks about €15 million annually in research subsidies to imec.

"Imec is a world leader in nanotechnology and has to remain so," Lieten commented. "This investment will enable imec to attract the best researchers in the world and carry on making more breakthroughs for the good of society."

A cleanroom is a controlled environment for scientific research, where the presence of atmospheric pollutants such as dust, vapours, micro-organisms and other particles are strictly limited. At the highest level, cleanrooms limit the number of particles of five micrometres (five-thousandths of a millimetre) to only 0.35 per cubic metre. By contrast, the normal air in a room contains more than 35 million of such particles per cubic metre.

The new cleanroom will be imec's third and will be used for the development of a new generation of silicon wafers used in chips. "These will, for example, allow the manufacture of patches that can constantly monitor heart rates and be controlled wirelessly," Van den Hove said. "It might also be

possible to detect cancer cells in blood samples at an early stage using sensors."

A tech ecosystem

Imec employs about 2,000 people, and the new investment would lead to 500 more jobs. In addition, another 1,500 jobs could come indirectly as a result of the operation of the cleanroom and the technology it produces. "We have attracted a whole ecosystem to Flanders," as Van den Hove put it. Imec has been responsible for about 35 spin-off companies over the last 20 years.

In April imec published its annual report, which showed 5% growth in 2011 to revenues of €300 million. Imec research is widely used in the fields of health care, smart electronics, sustainable energy and safer transport. While in Japan, Van den Hove signed a cooperation agreement with Tohoku University in the city of Sendai, which will involve an exchange programme for students, researchers and academic staff.

"This is an excellent opportunity



for Flanders to remain at the top of nanoelectronics in the world," Van den Hove said. "It was also a matter of urgency. If we do not make this investment, we risk losing our leading position."

► www.imec.be

Achielle wins craftsmanship prize

Bicycle manufacturer Achielle from Pittem, West Flanders, has been awarded this year's prize for craftsmanship-based industry, given by the



► www.achielle.be

federal minister for small businesses Sabine Laruelle. Achielle is a family firm founded in 1946 by Achiel Oosterlinck, whose grandsons still run the company. Achielle bicycles are unselfconsciously retro, the range even featuring "Oma" and "Opa" (Grandma and Grandpa) models, with the slogan: "We don't make bikes, we make your bike".

The jury praised the company's constant striving for quality, its mix of hand crafting and modern machinery and its tailor-made product. The prize is worth €3,000. The Public Prize, meanwhile, went to Nino Tondat, a producer of terrazzo and mosaic tiling in Eeklo, East Flanders.

Taxman now on the tail of diamond industry

As the fraud investigation into a number of Antwerp's diamond dealers has stalled as a result of an internal judicial battle between the prosecutor-general's office and the Antwerp prosecutor's office, last week it was reported that tax inspectors are carrying out their own investigation into allegations that up to 300 diamond industry names had secret bank accounts at HSBC in Switzerland designed to avoid paying tax.

The HSBC investigation began in 2009 when a former employee of the bank was accused of stealing private client information. Police in Nice found details of over 79,000 account holders in

his possession, and the French tax authorities searched them for evidence of tax evasion. The files eventually made their way to the Special Tax Inspections office in Belgium.

The Antwerp prosecutor assigned an investigating magistrate to the case, but clashes between him and the prosecutor's superior have led to the legal case running aground. But the tax authorities have investigative powers of their own and are now proceeding with an investigation into 300 account holders in Antwerp thought to have dodged €700 million or more in tax. There are approximately 1,850 diamond traders in the port city.

Flemish Facebook for business

A Flemish innovation consultant this month launched a new social media website for businesses. De Kracht Van Vlaanderen (Power of Flanders) offers a platform for innovative companies to meet and potentially form relationships. The site has so far attracted just over 20 companies, including an expert in candidate relationship management, a specialist in gifted education and an expert in real-time bidding, as well as the West Flanders Innovation Centre, wireless telecom company Newtel and satellite communications agency Newtec. Site developer Geert Van Wouterghem writes: "Think what social media has done for social interaction, and then think what it could do to help your innovation move forward."

► www.dekrachtvanvlaanderen.be

Small business confidence up

The quarterly index of small-business confidence, called the KMO Barometer, turned positive last quarter for the first time in more than a year. The index now stands at 97.9, up from a deep point of 96.2 the previous quarter. However, it is still under the "healthy" figure of 100.

"One swallow does not make a summer," commented Karel Van Eetvelt, director-general of Unizo, which maintains the index. "Small businesses are more hopeful, but the government will have to work hard to merit business' confidence. An economic relaunch would attract more swallows."

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Aviation

► Brussels Airlines

Brussels Airlines' 1 June inaugural flight to New York's JFK airport was fully booked and reservations for the months ahead are above expectations, reports the company.

Chemicals

► Solvay

The Brussels-based plastics and chemical products group is investing €155 million to build an epichlorohydrin production unit in Taixing, northwest of Shanghai. The new unit, with a capacity of 100,000 tonnes a year, will begin operations in the second half of 2014.

Chocolates

► Godiva

Brussels-based chocolates producer Godiva, owned by the Turkish Yildiz group, has plans to open 15 additional stores in China over the coming 18 months and expects its number of outlets in the country to pass the 100 mark within four years.

Energy

► Mermaid

The Mermaid consortium, including energy supplier Electrabel, has been selected to build the seventh and last wind farm off the coast of Flanders. It will be located about 60 kilometres off the coast of Knokke, with a capacity of 450 megawatts. The total amount invested in off-shore wind farms is expected to reach some €8 billion to produce up to 10% of Belgium's electricity.

Materials

► Umicore

The Brussels-based multi-national materials and equipment group is building an additional production facility for the production of automotive catalysts near its Bad Säckingen plant in south Germany to meet demand. The new facility is expected to come on stream in mid-2013.

Packaging

► IDB

IDB Belgium, the Genk-based specialist in cheese packaging, is being taken over by the Dutch Friesland Campina dairy products. IDB Belgium has 160 employees and annual sales of some €100 million.

Property

► AG

AG Real Estate, the property affiliate of the AG insurance group, has acquired four of the retirement homes operated by the Flanders-based Vulpia group for some €60 million.

The Indian connection

As Flemish and Indian business and political leaders prepare to meet in Antwerp, we look at the growing links between the two

Alan Hope

On 24 and 25 June, a select group of business and political leaders from Flanders and India will be welcomed to Antwerp by Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters, for the annual Horasis Global Business India meeting. The invitation-only event has been organised by Voka, the Flemish chamber of commerce. "This summit is similar to the World Economic Forum, but with a focus on emerging economies," explains Luc Lewel, the managing director of Voka's Antwerp-Waasland office. "We are extremely proud that this conference is coming to Antwerp because it will raise the profile of our city and our region as the ideal entry to the European Union and as the perfect location for European head offices."

Voka Antwerp-Waasland last November led a business mission to Mumbai, accompanied by Cathy Berx, the governor of Antwerp province. The event this week will explore

different ways of bridging India's economy with the rest of the world, including Flanders. Antwerp is used to the presence of a predominance of Indians in its diamond industry, where about 3,000 Indians work. Delegates will also look at ways to create partnerships in other sectors, such as clean technology, port activities and the creative industries. Among the companies represented will be Hero MotoCorp, India's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters; Piramal Healthcare of Mumbai; Moser Baer, the world's second-largest maker of optical storage media like CDs and DVDs; and Tata Communications, operator of India's largest data centre in Pune.

Partners in trade

India is an important export partner for Flanders, with exports in the first nine months of 2011 increasing by more than 24% on the same period from the previous year. Flanders



Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters at the Horasis annual meeting in Zurich earlier this year

Investment & Trade has three offices in the country, in Bangalore, Mumbai and New Delhi. Belgium is India's second-largest supplier after the US, and Flanders accounts for 98% of Belgium's exports to India. In 2007, Indian airline Jet Airways chose Brussels as its European hub

for onward connections to the US and Canada, the company's only secondary hub outside of India. In February, the Port of Antwerp signed a cooperation agreement in Mumbai with the Association of Multimodal Transport Operators of India, aimed at helping Indian exporters bring freight to more

European destinations, and including the creation of the digital platform India Natie to exchange information. Last year Antwerp handled about five million tonnes of freight going to and from India, out of a total of 187 million tonnes. Then in May, the port's international investment arm, PAI, entered a strategic alliance with Essar Ports, one of the largest private-sector port companies in India. "Essar Ports is a highly regarded, strong and reliable partner with a lot of know-how in India," says Antwerp port authority president Marc Van Peel. "We will rely on them for the development of port activities in India. The Port of Antwerp will share our knowledge and expertise on port development and strategy with Essar Ports. This added value for both parties will create breeding grounds for further development of both regions."

www.horasis.org

Power to the people

Flanders funds a programme working to improve working conditions for labourers in India

Andy Furniere

To help improve the working conditions of labourers in India, the government of Flanders is financing a project by the Geneva-based International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the central eastern states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. In particular, the initiative aims to empower workers employed at brick furnaces or kilns. Last December, Flanders responded to a request from the Indian ministry of labour and employment to fund a project called "Reducing Vulnerability to bonded labour in India through the promotion of decent



The ILO project especially targets brick furnace workers, who are most often victims of bonded labour

work". Flanders is allocating €380,000 to the project, which will run for two years. The ILO is responsible for the implementation of the initiative. The project aims to improve workplaces and to organise and unionise workers and link them to social security schemes run by the Indian government. "A lot of the Indian workers are internal migrants from other districts who are not familiar with the local dialect and legislation. They are very vulnerable to exploitation by recruiters," says Wannes Carlier of the Flemish department of foreign affairs' policy division. "The purpose is to make labourers aware of their rights and bring them together in unions so that they can obtain and defend decent working conditions." The project especially targets people working at brick furnaces or kilns, who are most often victims of bonded labour. To begin the project, the exact labour conditions in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh are being assessed. After an evaluation next month, the ILO and the Indian labour ministry will gradually sensitise the labourers through a dialogue with the local communities. In 2010, the government of Flanders changed its thematic priority from the creation of employment to improving labour and environmental standards. Instead of focusing on developing countries, Flanders is financing more projects in emerging economies such as India because of their growing importance in foreign policy. The Flemish government is now also promoting sustainable work in the forestry sector of Brazil. Since starting the cooperation in 1991, Flanders has funded more than 30 ILO projects.

www.ilo.org/sapfi

Looking further

An Indian-Flemish educational exchange takes students to three continents

Andy Furniere



Students in the 3Continent Master of Global Management programme study in Antwerp, New York and at this school in Bhubaneswar, Orissa

In August, the first students enrolled in the 3Continent Master of Global Management programme will graduate after studying for four months each in Antwerp, New York and Bhubaneswar, the capital of the eastern Indian state of Orissa. This programme, offered by the Antwerp Management School, trains the next generation of managers, giving them a global vision and the ability to deal with people and circumstances in different cultural environments. More than being successful, they learn to contribute to tomorrow's society. In Bhubaneswar, the students learn about creating economic chances for the poor and non-competitive strategies. Twenty-three international students are currently studying management for four months in Manhattan. They moved there after a stay of four months in agricultural Orissa, and after spending their first four months at the Antwerp Management School. Between trips, they have 10 days off to prepare for the drastic change of scenery and lifestyle. "We want to immerse them completely in these three contrasting cultures so that they develop a vision of the different global business environments

and societies," explains Bie De Graeve, director of the 3Continent programme. At the Xavier Institute of Management in Bhubaneswar, the students learned about the growth of emerging economies, like India, and how to involve people at the bottom of the economic pyramid in business. But they also stepped outside the classroom to go on study and cultural trips. They met NGOs working in tribal villages, visited mining plants and went with Indian students on a survival expedition in the jungle of Jamshedpur, in the bordering state of Jharkhand. "The management education is only one dimension of the programme," says De Graeve. "We hope to open their eyes to the world so they graduate as mature individuals who look further than their personal careers." Next year, 35 students of a variety of nationalities will participate in the Master's programme. The goal is to offer the experience in two years' time to 60 students coming equally from the three regions. The tuition fee is €24,750 in total. De Graeve: "It's a considerable investment but still cheap compared to similar programmes in the United States."

www.tinyurl.com/3continent

The Jet set

Trade and collaboration mean Brussels is a major hub for travellers flying between India and North America

Leo Cendrowicz

There is a corner of Brussels Airport in Zaventem that briefly blooms as an Indian bazaar every morning. At the Jet Airways gate in Concourse B, around 250 passengers, most of them of Indian origin, gather for the morning flights to Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai. "It's a lovely sight," says Stefan Hollands, Jet Airways manager for Belgium and Luxembourg. "It's like you've arrived in India. They like to travel as a family, and it's very colourful: There is a lot of chatter, a lot of joy and a lot of movement." The airport's Indian moment is all down to Jet Airways, the Mumbai-based airline that is India's largest. Controlled by billionaire Naresh Goyal, it chose Brussels five years ago as its European hub, from where it fields six flights a day, seven days a week. (The others are JFK in New York, Newark in New Jersey, and Toronto, making Brussels a "scissors hub" operation for flights to North America.) In Zaventem, it happens very fast: All six flights land between 7.30 and 8.00, and all



Stefan Hollands is Jet Airways manager for Belgium and Luxembourg

leave by 10.30. "There is a lot of pressure in that moment to handle that one peak load, but it means that for the rest of the day, the flight operations are over," says Hollands.

Strong market and solid relationships

There were many reasons for Jet Airways to choose Brussels. First, it is a strong market: Belgium is India's 10th biggest trading partner, with the Antwerp diamond trade generating a lot of traffic, while the automotive, banking and biotechnology sectors are also important. Secondly, from a bureaucratic point of view, Jet Airways was offered traffic rights (mainly because of the collapse of former Belgian flag-carrier Sabena).

Other helpful factors were the good relationships with the Belgian and Flemish governments and a partnership with Brussels Airlines that ensures passengers can transfer easily to almost any major European or African destination. These key links mean Jet Airways always has its own gates rather than remote boarding arrangements, which is important since its flights often carry a high proportion of elderly people. Hollands says the only logistical headache is passenger and luggage screening for transfers: While the initial screening is accepted by transfer authorities in Europe and the United States, a separate process is still needed during the Brussels-India transfer. "We raise this at every occasion we can with the Indian, Belgian and European authorities," he says.

The company's reach, says Hollands, is much

wider than its 40 staff in Brussels would suggest, as it has outsourced many key jobs like check-in, fuelling and cleaning (to Flight Care), catering (LSG) and security (Securitas). He cites a University of Leuven (KUL) study showing that Jet Airways accounts for 600 to 800 jobs directly and 2,000 jobs indirectly in Belgium.

Family business

Hollands, 38, studied engineering at the KUL, with a minor in aviation, and recently earned an MBA at Vlerick Leuven. Formerly at Sabena, he helped negotiate the Jet Airways hub in 2007 and travels every month or so to the company headquarters in Mumbai. "You have to get used to Indian work culture at Jet Airways," he says. "Things go much faster than in Sabena; the decision process is shorter." But it is still a family business, owned 80% by one man, Naresh Goyal, who is still actively involved in the running of the company.

Jet Airways operates a fleet of 101 aircraft, with over 400 flights daily to 76 destinations

"You have to get used to Indian work culture at Jet Airways. Things go much faster; the decision process is shorter"

worldwide, and enjoys a 29% domestic market share in India. With an average age of 4.37 years, the airline has one of the youngest aircraft fleet in the world. And the market is still surging: Indian air passenger traffic grew 20% last year. "Since the economy is growing



All six Jet Airways flights land in the same 30 minutes, when Concourse B at Brussels Airlines becomes a colourful, swirling mass of Indian families

so fast, there is a big pool of traffic that needs to be serviced," says Hollands.

Staying put, for now

There have been rumours that Jet Airways is considering shifting its hub operation for flights to North America to Munich. They have been fuelled by the company's recent application for 35 weekly frequencies between India and Germany. While Munich would appear to have a larger origin and destination (OD) market with North America and India, Brussels has the edge to North America. Munich lies close to the automotive heartland

but that does not mean we are going to be leaving." What he can say is that the European operations will expand. "More long-haul aircraft will be coming in over the next 18 months. Although we have not decided which routes, it is definitely an expansion. The real question is more about which alliance we want to be in."

The numbers reveal that OD traffic between India and Brussels is larger than Munich, (roughly 140,000 versus 85,000 annual passengers). More importantly, OD traffic between Brussels and the US is heavier than from Munich (around 700,000 versus 600,000). But perhaps most significantly, Jet Airways has already built up strong loyalty in the Brussels-North America market, which is equally critical for the viability of these flights. Moving to Munich would mean that they would have to start from scratch in building customer loyalty, which is likely to be retained by Lufthansa anyway.

All this suggests that Jet Airways is likely to stay in Brussels for a while, at least. And that means there is a part of Brussels Airport that will be forever India every morning.

► www.jetairways.be

Diamond days

Antwerp World Diamond Centre's first president with Indian roots looks back on his term

For two years, Nishit Parikh served as president of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC). The chief executive of diamond company Diarough, he was the first person of Indian origin to stand at the head of the Antwerp diamond sector's primary representative organisation. As his term as president comes to an end, he assesses the achievements and setbacks during his term.

What was the significance of becoming the first person of Indian origin at the head of the AWDC?

It was an honour for myself and for the Indian community in Antwerp. You could say it was an acknowledgement of the strength of the Indian community in the diamond sector here. More than 50% of Antwerp's diamond business is in the hands of the Indian community.

Is it easy to integrate as an Indian businessman in Flanders?

I came here as a 10-year-old boy in 1975, when my father started our diamond company in Antwerp, and I soon felt at home. To me, this is one of the nicest regions in which to live.

How would you evaluate the evolution of Antwerp's diamond trade?

When I started as president of AWDC, we were coming out of a recession.



"It was a fruitful period": Nishit Parikh has just ended his term as president of the AWDC

Although business is still slow at times, I feel as though we are back on track. An important evolution during my term was the growing Chinese influence on the diamond sector worldwide. If Antwerp wants to keep competitive, it has to attract more Chinese businessmen.

Is India also a main competitor?

In my opinion, India is still more a manufacturing centre, while Antwerp is principally a trade centre. Instead of being competitive, I think the two business models are complementary.

What was the highlight of your term as president?

It was a fruitful period. Launching our master plan at the beginning of the year was an important strategic event for the future of the diamond trade here. We opened a diamond pavilion at the MAS museum and last month organised our first Antwerp Diamond Academy, with master classes and seminars on topics such as corporate responsibility, innovative entrepreneurship, social media, web sales and ICT security. The presence of Virgin founder Richard Branson as guest of honour was fantastic to raise interest for the launch of Diamdax, the world's first online diamond exchange platform.

How are these initiatives improving the future of the Antwerp diamond sector?

Diamdax has already produced about €100,000 in sales revenues in its first month, and these figures should only increase as the platform becomes better known. The diamond academies will take place every two months and enrich the knowledge of diamond traders, on financing aspects, for example. And the diamond museum at the MAS makes us visible to the general public.

How do you look back on the local scandals of the last year – the allegations of fraud and tax evasion against diamond traders?

Listen, every business sector has its bad apples; the diamond business is no exception. We are one of the most monitored sectors; all of our imports

and exports are strictly checked. We are cooperating with the police and the government to improve the situation in the future. We also have a strict internal control system at our federation. Whoever doesn't play by the rules will be thrown out by our committee.

interview by Andy Furniere

EUROPALIA



India will be the guest country for next year's Europalia, Brussels' biennial arts and culture festival. Europalia India begins on 3 October 2013

► www.europalia.be

Flanders is the festival capital of Europe, or so they say, with more summer music festivals per capita than anywhere else. Whatever the truth in that statement, there's still an astonishing number and diversity of outdoor tunes, whether your bag is metal, folk, pop, jazz or just hanging out in the sunshine with the kids.

Sun

Genk on Stage

22-24 JUNE

GENK CITY CENTRE, STADSPLEIN 1

The 10th anniversary edition of the free rock, pop and hip-hop music fest features De Mens, Daan, Milow, Suzanne Vega, Hooverphonic, Gers Paradoel, Das Pop, The Scabs, Will Tura, Tom Dice, Sioen and more

www.genkonstage.be

Graspop

22-24 JUNE

FESTIVAL SITE DESSEL, ANTWERP

The small village of Dessel turns into a head-bangers' Mecca on the third weekend of June. See critic's choice.

www.graspop.be

Rock Werchter

28 JUNE - 1 JULY

FESTIVAL SITE WERCHTER
(FLEMISH BRABANT)

Flanders' biggest music festival, with a third stage added this year, boasts no less than 80 acts. As usual, the line-up is eclectic, with a focus on radio-friendly alt rock. Biggest names include Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pearl Jam, Editors, The Cure and local pride dEUS. It's already sold out, as usual, but you can try your luck at their ticket exchange if you've missed out.

www.rockwerchter.be

Gent Jazz Festival

5-14 JULY

BIJLOKE, GHENT

Jazz, but not only jazz, in a fabulous courtyard. See critic's choice.

www.gentjazz.be

Cactus Festival

6-8 JULY

MINNEWATERPARK, BRUGES

A stunning setting, a family-friendly atmosphere and the most eclectic line-up you'll find at a one-stage festival are the main ingredients of Cactus. We call it proven quality. See critic's choice.

www.cactusfestival.be

Gooikoorts

6-8 JULY

DORPSTRAAT, GOOIK
(FLEMISH BRABANT)

This is the 10th edition of this festival of traditional folk music. If you think Dranouter's line-up has become too diversified, this might be just your thing. Expect panpipes, violins, accordions and people who wear socks with sandals. Every year about 5,000 share in this folk fever in the heart of the Pajottenland.

www.gooikoorts.be

Vijverfestival

7 JULY

TOWN HALL SQUARE, DILBEEK

A small and cosy one-day fest that focuses on local talent. Gabriel Rios is the main crowd-puller with his solo set, but be sure to look out for new grunge collective Bed Rugs, the opener of the main-stage. Activities for kids are included in this eco-friendly festival.

www.vijverfestival.be

Rock Herk

13-14 JULY

PARK OLMENHOF, HERK-DE-STAD
(LIMBURG PROVINCE)

For 29 years, this festival has been free, but this 30th edition comes with a price-tag (not a big one, we hasten to add – €32 for the two days in

CRITIC'S CHOICE: METAL

Graspop

Flanders' biggest metal fest is back this year with its strongest line-up in ages. Although the initially planned Black Sabbath reunion concert was restricted to the British Download Festival earlier this month, Ozzy Osbourne is still headlining Graspop and is bringing some other friends instead. Motörhead, Slayer, Megadeth, Europe, Twisted Sister, Machine Head and Guns N' Roses are the other powerhouses of metal and hard rock that will look to disturb the peace in the small town of Dessel. Besides that, every other metal sub-genre is represented, too. You wouldn't want to let down the Viking metal enthusiasts or deathcore aficionados, would you? Take note: Metal-heads are not as violent as you might think. Despite the aggression displayed in the shrieking riffs and grunted vocals, the atmosphere at Graspop in the small town of Dessel is super friendly. **Laurent Bouckaert**



CRITIC'S CHOICE: BLUES

Blues Peer

This all-blues festival in the small town of Peer in Limburg province has been going since 1985, building quite a reputation in Western Europe. The late Stevie Ray Vaughan headlined it multiple times, along with other huge names such as Dr John, Ben Harper and Canned Heat. This year's line-up is again a mouth-watering prospect for any self-proclaimed blues fan, with living legend BB King, recently reformed Flemish band El Fish, John Fogerty, the North Mississippi All Stars and John Kay & Steppenwolf (pictured). An odd collaboration will finish off the first evening, as legendary Flemish blues guitarist Roland teams up with crooner Helmut Lotti and an all-star band that will mainly play blues and rock'n'roll classics to get you through the night. **LB**



advance). Rock Herk is probably the most relaxed alternative festival in the whole of Flanders and used to be the region's best free festival. An entry fee, though, means it can attract bigger names: Dinosaur Jr, the Raveonettes, the Gaslamp Killer and Tocadisco are well-known headliners rather than the hidden gems organisers used to book.

www.rockherk.be

Blues Peer

13-16 JULY

FESTIVAL SITE PEER
(LIMBURG PROVINCE)

Belgium's best known blues-and-roots festival in the heart of Limburg manages to surprise every year with a mouth-watering line-up. See critic's choice.

www.brbf.be

10 Days Off

13-23 JULY

VOORUIT, GHENT

A thrilling mix of all things electronic in Ghent's most beautiful and historically important arts venue. See critic's choice.

www.tendaysoff.be

Brosella Folk & Jazz Festival

14-15 JULY

THE GREEN THEATRE, BRUSSELS

Brosella combines the best of both jazz and folk, with each of the two days dedicated to one genre. As if the dedication to these styles of music isn't Belgian enough, it's worth noting that the Atomium looks out over the audience's shoulders as well. Jazz cats will undoubtedly melt for the collective of European Jazz Trumpets on closing day.

www.brosella.be

CRITIC'S CHOICE: ECLECTIC

Cactus Festival

In both location and line-up, Cactus proves to be a festival. Even without music, it's hard not to fall in love with the medieval city. And the truly original mental bliss. "Many artists have said that the sense of time and composure of the crowd, as well as the feeling of being part of something bigger than yourself, is what makes Cactus special." John Hiatt & the Combo, Razorlight, Chris Cornell, and many others wouldn't be Cactus if it didn't spice things up with a bit of rock. Checking out cutting-edge bands Low, Explosions in the Sky, and many others surely can do no harm to your kids' cultural development. **LB**



Gentse Feesten

14-21 JULY

ACROSS GHENT

The largest music and street theatre festival in the world, the Gentse Feesten draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to the centre of Ghent each July for the 10-day outdoor bash that never sleeps (quite literally). Every square is a stage, and the biggest are the Polé Polé Latin and world music stage across the canal, the Trefpunt stage of world music at Sint-Jacobs square and the appropriately named Boomtown, with mostly local rock bands in the Kouter square. The rest of Ghent's squares are given over to eclectic music themes, including crooners, covers and country. The whole thing is free and more focused on quantity than big names. Some highlights of the line up of hundreds include An Pierlé, Walter De Buck, Petula Clark, The Hickey Underworld, Raymond van het Groenewoud, Eva De Roovere, Vive La Fête, Kommil Foo, Dez Mona and Daan

www.gentsefeesten.be

Suikerrock Tienen

26-29 JULY

TIENEN CITY CENTRE
(FLEMISH BRABANT)

Flanders' sweetest festival (dubbed Sugar Rock for its city industry) hosts Belgium's biggest acts, alongside a few international names. Thursday and Friday are great for lovers of unadulterated rock, featuring ZZ Top, Alice Cooper, Triggerfinger and Status Quo. Saturday and Sunday are traditionally reserved for a more mainstream audience, and this year is no exception: Mika, Gabriel Rios, Daan, Arsenal, Ozark Henry and Texas are all on the bill.

www.suikerrock.be

Sfinks Festival

27-29 JULY

BOECHOUT, ANTWERP

As the stronghold of multicultural music, Sfinks aims to please the more adventurous festival-goer. African or South American rhythms,

Summer soundtrack

Guide by: Laurens Bouckaert,
Lisa Bradshaw, Sally Tipper

be Flanders' most scenic and atmospheric festival love with Bruges' Minnewaterpark, the green final Cactus line-up alone offers three days of setting has something magical," claims organiser nparable to a gig in a hall because of the pa-the clear acoustics." The big names this year are ell, Paolo Nutini and Daniel Lanois, but Cactus with a few more challenging underground acts. ions in the Sky, Blonde Redhead and Yeasayer evelopment. Did I say kids? I did. Cactus is the ection provides all kinds of children's entertain-



Eastern European gypsy blues... it's easy to find much to like at this family-friendly "excursion into enriching cultures", as the fest's website so eloquently puts it. Sfinks has a rich history of memorable moments: Every one of the late afrobeat stalwart Femi Kuti's visits proved to be unforgettable musical experiences. The line-up this year includes Kid Creole & the Coconuts, Zita Swoon Group, Marco Flores and Narasirato.

www.sfinks.be

Bruksellive

28 JULY

THE GREEN THEATRE, BRUSSELS

Although it's free, any visitor of underground concerts during the year will note this line-up is something special. Bruksellive offers a very eclectic mix of indie and avant-garde names, such as the exquisite French outfit Nouvelle Vague, the warm and experimental electronica of the UK's Floating Points and the smooth tech-house of Chilean Matias Aguayo, who made a noted stop in Brussels' techno club Fuse this year. Easily accessible by metro, too.

www.bruksellive.be

Reggae Geel

3-4 AUGUST

ZANDSTRAAT, GEEL

(ANTWERP PROVINCE)

A must-visit for every lover of all things reggae and its related genres (dancehall, ska etc). The legendary John Holt, writer of many of the genre's classic tunes, is the biggest name on the bill at this nice little fest with a super positive vibe.

www.reggaegeel.com

Dranouter

3-5 AUGUST

DRANOUTER (WEST FLANDERS)

It's not just folk purists who can bask in Dranouter's line-up as it gets more diverse every year, while still holding on to its roots. The Levellers, the Waterboys and West Flemish

folk outfit Het Zesde Metaal have a history of playing the festival, while more unusual names include Sergeant Garcia, Seasick Steve and Spinvis. Be there and be surprised by the West Flemish hospitality!

www.festivaldranouter.be

Lokerse Feesten

3-12 AUGUST

GROTE KAAI, LOKEREN

(EAST FLANDERS)

This annual city centre festival always manages to impress with its rock-solid alternative line-up and a typically Flemish carnival atmosphere. Last year's edition caused a lot of media fuss as the organisers decided not to serve meat on the evening notorious vegetarian Morrissey was playing. The bill has not been completed yet, but the Beach Boys, Bryan Ferry, P.I.L., Echo & the Bunnymen, Gorillaz, Orbital and New Order are names that could inspire anyone to feel like a Lokeren local for the evening, meat or no meat.

www.lokersefeesten.be

Antilliaanse Feesten Hoogstraten

10-11 AUGUST

BLAUW FOREST, HOOGSTATEN

(ANTWERP PROVINCE)

For lovers of Caribbean music, this festival is an annual pilgrimage. This year, shake it to the smooth party tunes of Tony Dize, Morgan Heritage, Destra Garcia and Henry "Aventura" Santos. For two days each August, the Netherlands Antilles come to Antwerp.

www.antilliaansefeesten.be

Marktrock Leuven

10-11 AUGUST

OUDE MARKT & VISMART, LEUVEN

Leuven's old market place is referred to by some as "the biggest bar in the world", as the number of pubs there exceeds even the Flemish average of downtown drinking facilities. We say: What better location for a festival? After 30 years, Marktrock is still going strong, although it has been scaled down a bit and now focuses solely on Belgian artists. Flemish punk rock pride The Kids and new wave-icons the Neon Judgement are headliners.

www.marktrock.com

Pukkelpop Hasselt

16-18 AUGUST

KIEWIT, HASSELT

A successful edition this year should blow away those clouds still hanging over the festival that suffered tragedy last year when five people died and more than 50 were injured in a freak storm that led to a stage collapsing. Pukkelpop is Flanders' second biggest music festival (behind Rock Werchter) and sold out for the first time last year. This year's final day is already sold out, but Thursday and Friday still have a lot to offer for the alternative souls: Björk, the Stone Roses, Bloc Party, the Afghan Whigs, Mark Lanegan Band and Santigold, among others.

www.pukkelpop.be

Jazz Middelheim

16-19 AUGUST

PARK DEN BRANDT, ANTWERP

A household name of Europe's jazz festivals, Jazz Middelheim's 2012 edition is dedicated to Brussels' harmonica legend Toots Thielemans, who celebrated his 90th birthday this

year. Toots is the festival's godfather and has played there on every occasion. The live rendition of his soothing and atmospheric tunes between Middelheim's trees always guarantees goose bumps. It'd surprise us if he didn't have anything special in store for the crowd on his first Middelheim appearance as a 90-year-old jazz legend. Other names include Ornette Coleman and Paolo Conte.

www.jazzmiddelheim.be

Feest in het Park

23-26 AUGUST

DONKVIIJVER, OUDENAARDE

(EAST FLANDERS)

Oudenaarde's Feest in het Park is probably the best way to end the summer, a fact that is always reflected in the line-up, which honours the smoother and sunnier sounds in the music world. As usual, Feest in het Park of-

fers a lot of reggae, ragga, ska, house, dub-step and electro in Oudenaarde's city park. The line-up includes Beenie Man, the Internationals, Sizzla, Mr Scruff, Vive La Fête and Felix Da Housecat.

www.feestinhetpark.be

Maanrock

25-26 AUGUST

MECHELEN CITY CENTRE

This Mechelen equivalent of Marktrock is getting bigger than its inspiration. The main acts on the multiple stages are Shameboy, Raymond van het Groenewoud, the Scabs and Guido Belcanto. Hong Kong Dong, the experimental band of the children of Flemish painter and cartoonist Kamagurka, will be headlining a smaller stage and are a live experience you'll definitely want to absorb.

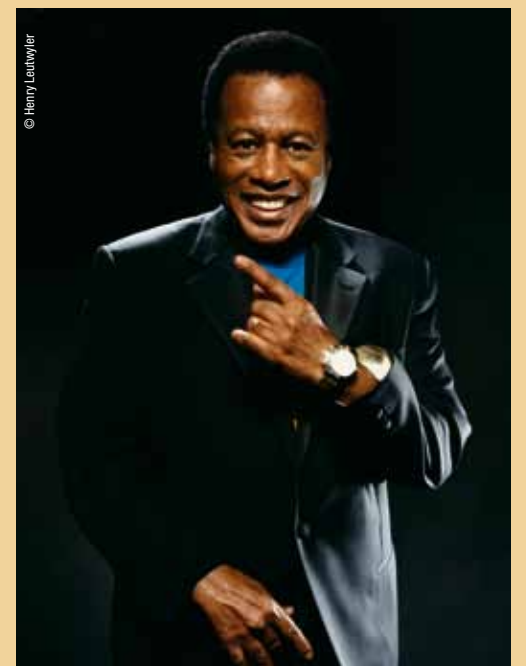
www.maanrock.be

CRITIC'S CHOICE: JAZZ

Gent Jazz Festival

Gent Jazz is a rather young festival, having its first edition in 2002 under the name of Blue Note Festival. The strategy is to introduce the genre to a larger audience by mixing up traditional jazz names with more airplay-generating artists out of the soul, blues and indie-pop worlds. They also provide an excellent platform for local jazz talent. The mid-sized garden of the medieval Bijloke arts complex makes for a pleasant atmosphere. The biggest jazz cat on the bill is the legendary Wayne Shorter (*pictured*). Listen out, too, for the angel-like voice of Antony Hegarty of Antony and the Johnsons (with the Metropole Orchestra), the free-flowing soul of D'Angelo and soul pioneer Bobby Womack. For a really riveting summer night, we'd suggest the dark but soulful chamber pop of British band Tindersticks.

LB



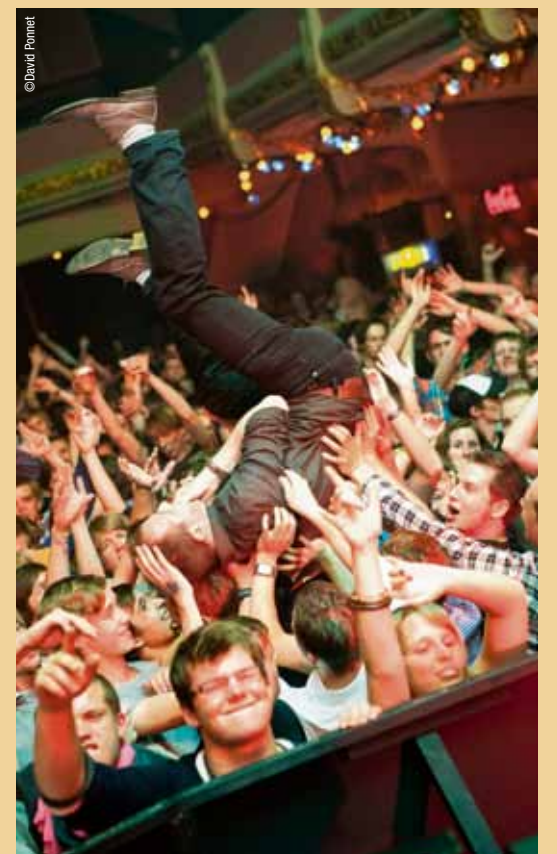
© Harry Lautewyler

CRITIC'S CHOICE: TECHNO

10 Days Off

If you want to know whose beats are currently the most innovative or most danceable, head to the Voorruit in Ghent on one of these 10 nights of electronic music mania. 10 Days Off, which takes place during the Gentse Feesten, offers a mix of all styles of electronic: deep house and minimal (Booka Shade, Mark E, Maceo Plex), straight-up Berlin techno (Len Faki, Ambivalent), experimental or avant-garde (Teebs, Matthew Herbert, Nosedrip, DJ Koze), disco-influenced house (DJ Harvey, Jacques Renault). Expect world-class pioneers such as Richie Hawtin (his 12th visit!) and Etienne De Crécy. We would recommend checking out John Talabot, a Catalan producer, whose critically acclaimed album *fin* is one of the best electronic releases so far this year. His warm blend of Balearic electronica, cosmic disco, Chicago house and even afrobeat will provide a sensual clubbing experience, perfect for a hot summer night. Even if all this is Chinese to you, if you like to party, you won't go far wrong at this festival.

LB



© David Ponnet

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THE NEXT WAVE OF MOBILE

If you think your iPhone is amazing now, just give it 10 more years

Mobile phones are evolving ever faster. Their hardware is becoming more versatile, and the number of available applications is exploding. You can still use them to make a simple phone call, but for many that's no longer their most important function. At a recent visionary seminar organised by Leuven.Inc, experts discussed the future and developments in mobile platforms.

Today's smartphones are ideal devices to measure, analyse and share data about yourself. There are the camera and sensors, a permanent internet connection and social networks at your fingertips. In addition, a growing number of gadgets and devices connect to smartphones, many with extra sensors and intelligence.

"There are smartphone apps that allow runners to store information about their routes and running speed," says Erik Duval, a professor of computer sciences at the University of Leuven (KU Leuven). "In combination with a heart-rate monitor, they can add data about their physical shape and exertion level. And with a dedicated headband, you may monitor your sleep, not only recording how long you sleep but also what the quality of that sleep is. Still more applications allow you to keep track of your energy balance. They



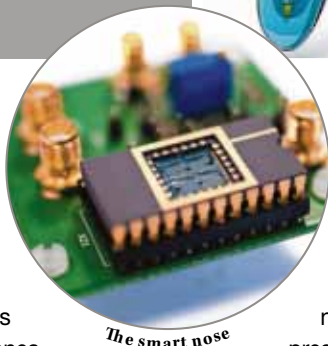
Check your heart rate with your mobile

combine information about your physical activity with your caloric intake. For that to work, however, you still have to manually enter information about what you eat. But that could change in the future."

A NATURAL EXPERIENCE

The success of these new mobile applications largely depends on users experiencing them naturally, fulfilling their needs within their everyday lives.

David Geerts is the research manager at the Centre for User Experience Research of KU Leuven and at the ICT innovation group IBBT. "It's important to observe users of mobile applications – to look at how they interact with their smartphone and in which environments they use it," he says. "Most users, for example, use their mobile phones in places where there is a lot of background noise: in the pub, while walking the streets. Part of the background noise is harmless, but the horn of a car, a bicycle bell or a sudden cry may signal danger. At that moment a



The smart nose



The Nokia Human Form

mobile application should turn its sound down and maybe even dim the screen." Starting from observations like these, says Geerts, "we can formulate a new requirement for future mobile phones: They should be able to pick up background noise and even interpret it. Nokia has recently presented a concept for a natural mobile device. It has a fully touch-sensitive casing that is transparent and bendable, and it reacts if you touch, twist or shake it."

BUT CAN YOU MAKE IT

All smartphones or tablet computers, from whatever make or model, have a battery, a processor and memory, hardware for the wireless connection, one or more cameras and sensors and a display and casing. How will these components evolve to support new future applications?

"In the future, you'll be able to monitor your caloric intake by taking a picture of your plate. The camera will recognise the food"

Rudy Lauwereins is director of imec's Technology Office. "We develop new types of displays, with electronics that can be printed on flexible surfaces," he explains. "In that respect, the Nokia concept is certainly a picture of what is ahead. Another possibility would be to equip a small phone with a larger display that could be folded or rolled up. As for the cameras, it's certainly possible to add more pixels. But what



Seminars with Leuven.Inc

High-tech network organisation Leuven.Inc regularly holds visionary seminars. Experts from research institutes and high-tech companies present and discuss future technology developments.

► www.leuveninc.com

would be more interesting is to make stronger zoom lenses."

Today's cameras have a digital zoom: They take part of the picture that the camera has captured and blow it up to a larger size, computing the extra pixels. So there are no new image details or added sharpness. But by using micro-mirrors, chips with a surface of millions of small mirrors, it is possible to create real zoom lenses without the large glass optics – zoom lenses that do just as well as the expensive lenses on today's digital reflex cameras.

"And instead of capturing the three basic colours – red, green, blue – we could measure a much more complete light spectrum, going from the infrared via the visible colours to the ultraviolet," says Lauwereins. "As each material gives off a unique light fingerprint, the camera could use such an image to identify all the objects and materials in an image. So if in the future you want to use your smartphone to monitor your caloric intake, you just have to take a picture of your plate. The camera will recognise the food."

SMARTNOSE

Mobile phones already include accelerometers, gyroscopes and GPS receivers. But research centres work on a host of other sensors. There is, for example, a "smart nose", a sensor that is able to recognise thousands of chemicals in the air. Included in a smartphone, this would allow you to monitor the air quality in your office, for instance.

Lauwereins: "I also expect that future smartphones will be used more and more as base stations for the wireless sensors on your body, in your house and in the environment. An example is the heart monitor that we designed and that can send its results to a smartphone."

Finally, the memory included in smartphones will keep on growing at a phenomenal rate. "By 2018, on a chip the size of the nail on your little finger, you'll be able to store 10 years of video in YouTube quality," says Lauwereins. "And in 2028, the same chip will hold our whole life in 3D-HDTV format."

"Some people already use their smartphones to document their lives," notes Duval. "Every day they take tens of pictures and add comments. In a few years, they will be able to store the film of their life, with all possible sensor parameters."

Geerts adds: "Bringing all these developments together will be very complex. But the result will be mobile platforms that offer designers many more possibilities to make applications that are much more natural and meaningful."

► www.imec.be

Publisher:
Katrien Marent
for imec





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Publisher: Philippe Wallez, cours Saint-Michel 60, 1040 Brussels.



Attacking it together

Ten years on, Absynthe Minded releases their fifth album and conquer Europe

Christophe Verbiest

Absynthe Minded play 90 shows a year, and Bert Ostyn looks forward to every one of them. “I get restless if we haven’t played live for a while,” he says. “If you want to know what Absynthe Minded stands for, you have to see us live. Records are just documents of a period. It doesn’t mean they’re not important; making an album puts you mentally in shape for something new. But the concerts are the essence of what we do.”

Singer and guitarist Ostyn, 30, has been using the name Absynthe Minded since 1999 and applied the name to the band that formed in 2002. Eight years after their debut *Acquired Taste*, the new album, *As it Ever Was*, is the band’s fifth.

Hard workers? Ostyn: “I think so, yes. Everything we do – rehearsing, touring, you name it – we do industriously. We’re very passionate about the band.”

Step by step, Absynthe Minded have been building a fan base throughout Europe. *As it Ever Was* has the backing of Universal France, an important major label. That’s not a coincidence, since their fame is growing rapidly in France.

They’re not the only ones. A whole slew of Belgian artists has been embraced by the French. “‘Belgian’ is a hallmark in France,” says Ostyn. “They don’t make the regional difference, though. Ghinzu, dEUS, Girls In Hawaii, Absynthe Minded – for them it’s all part of the Belgian wave.”

For the past 10 years, playing in Absynthe Minded has been the main profession for the members. “Of course we’ve had our lows,” he admits. “That’s part of it. But it has never curtailed our enthusiasm. Once you decide to go for it, you should not look back.”

Growing intuitively

Ostyn isn’t really a narrative songwriter; he’s more like an impressionist with words. “Indeed, I don’t have a clear, plain story to tell,” he says. “It’s more about letting



On the prowl: the team of Absynthe Minded, led by Bert Ostyn, second from right

emotions grow inside the listener. I want my lyrics to be open for interpretation: That way you can address more people. As a listener I like those kinds of songs, too. Bob Dylan, one of the greatest songwriters, also has that knack. Think of the songs ‘Like a Rolling Stone’ or ‘Ballad of a Thin Man’.

As it Ever Was is the most pop-oriented record of Absynthe Minded’s discography. “Our previous album was quite introspective,” explains Ostyn. “Things have changed, indeed. *As it Ever Was* is a new step in our career. We improvised less. The arrangements are different, too, partly because Sergej (*Van Bouwel*, bassist) bought some old synthesizers.”

None of those changes, the Absynthe Minded frontman clarifies, stem from a very conscious process. “Our music grows intuitively. But after noticing that the first songs we wrote for the

“If you want to know what Absynthe Minded stands for, you have to see us live”

album were up-tempo, we chose to pursue that path. You have to keep challenging yourself. In the beginning with the band, I tried to control our sound. After 10 years, it’s easier to let go of.”

One thing hasn’t changed, though. “I

come up with the songs, but we *attack* them together. I have very defined ideas about some songs, but others change a lot after they have been moulded by the band.”

In the title track of the new album, Ostyn sings in the chorus: “Your life won’t be the same as it ever was”, which recalls the famous chorus of Talking Head’s “Once in a Lifetime”.

“You’re not the first one to point that out,” says Ostyn. “I know the song, and

I like those lyrics, but it’s certainly not a conscious reference.”

The title *As it Ever Was* is, says Ostyn, inextricably linked to the album cover. “You see me, out of focus, amidst an anonymous group of people. It says something about me: I like to sit at the sideline observing people and wondering what they just have done or are bound to do.”

Dissolving anonymously in a big group of people. It sounds contradictory for a musician, since isn’t going on stage asking for attention. “Not really; I need the balance between the two,” says Ostyn. “That’s why I love cities: You can hide yourself in a crowd.”

► www.absyntheminded.be

MUSIC REVIEWS

dEUS

Following Sea • Play It Again Sam

On 1 June, dEUS released, completely out of the blue, their seventh album, *Following Sea*. There was no announcement, no press release, no interviews. The approach conflicted completely with the prevailing way of working, but if there’s one band able to do that without being punished commercially, it’s dEUS. *Following Sea* entered on the highest spot of the Flemish charts and went gold in its first week, which means 10,000 copies sold.

The album contains songs written at the same time as those for predecessor *Keep You Close*, released last September. They weren’t right for that album, but the band didn’t want to lose them. *Following Sea* is nearly as good as its predecessor and certainly less nervous. dEUS rock less than they have done in the past years, but that’s



no loss, since the power is swapped for subtlety. Songs like “Nothings” or “The Soft Fall” deserve a spot in the band’s canon, though the most surprising song is “Quatre mains”, the first dEUS song in French.

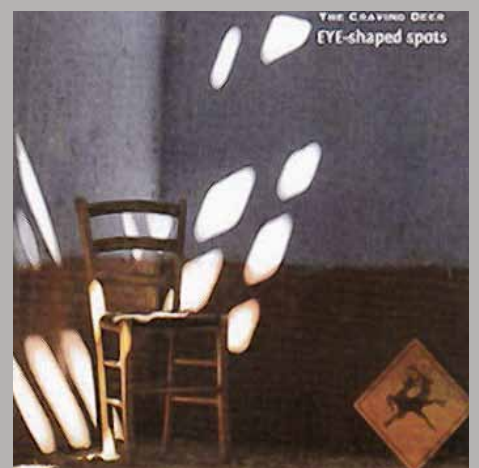
► www.deus.be

The Craving Deer

Eye-Shaped Spots • Les Brousses Sessions

Half a year after the Flemish press completely overlooked (guilty as charged, your honour!) *Eye-Shaped Spots* by The Craving Deer, it’s getting a very, very deserved re-release. The second album of this folk duo is a small masterpiece. Rein Vanvinckenroye (acoustic guitar & voice; from the sadly missed band Troissœur) and Natalie De Man (voice), with some help from harmonica player Steven Troch, present a dozen spartanly arranged songs. Vanvinckenroye’s voice, reminiscent of a young Leonard Cohen with a bit more melody, contrasts elegantly with De Man’s siren call. The guitar playing – unadorned when possible, intricate when necessary – is as mesmerising.

► www.vi.be/thecravingdeer



then Brussels will come to you

Dansand!

Lisa Bradshaw

Flanders, as we know, has an uncomfortable relationship with Brussels. The latter might be the official capital of the former, but, to many residents of both, that is neither particularly evident nor relevant.

Dansand understands this and, every two years, invites the abundant dance and choreographic talent that resides in Brussels to Ostend for a long weekend. If the Flemish will not come to Brussels, a rich and rewarding part of Brussels will come to them.

Performers at Dansand work, live or have studied in the capital, and the festival is curated by Kathleen Van Langendonck, programmer at Brussels' Kaaitheater. Former editions have found Wim Vandekeybus' powerful dancers climbing ladders straight into the air, against the backdrop of the open sea; Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui tumbling around, rubbing sand into his hair; and dancers coupled along the beach, their energetic pieces made

all the more difficult in the soft sand. Charlotte Vanden Eynde, meanwhile, who studied at P.A.R.T.S dance school in Brussels, took her performance straight into the water four years ago (*pictured*). She has been asked back this year, where she forms one of the performances in a new Dansand initiative called First Dates, in which dancers and musicians play on the beach stage together, in a performance that is largely improvisational on both sides.

The beach stage is a hard surface but covered in sand. Performers can only practice on the stage a few days before their performances, where they are also at risk of being hampered by the wind and weather. That's part of the inventiveness of Dansand – to embrace the challenges posed by a coastal environment. Even if it rains, says Vanden Eynde, “we're supposed to carry on. We have to try to imagine how it will be”.

The Flemish dancer is performing with Ghent jazz pianist Christian Mendoza. The pair have practiced



very little to make the performance more spontaneous, but Vanden Eynde knows essentially how she wants to dance – in a way that works specifically with the outdoor environment. “I work a lot with my hands,” she says. “I will move them in such a way that it looks like I'm

touching or feeling something.” The entire performance, she says, will reflect a journey, “like a trip with music and movement”.

The other First Date is between dancer Samuel LeFeuvre of Brussels company Peeping Tom and the marvellously eclectic Stef Kamil

Carlens of the Zita Swoon Group. Another must-see at Dansand, meanwhile, is Meg Stuart's *Damaged Goods* in *Atelier II*. Even if you've seen the original *Atelier* – in which the audience sits on scaffolding that encircles the dancers – you'll want to sign up for this adapted version; bulldozers are working now to dig out our seats in the sand.

The final night headliner spot, though, belongs to Needcompany's *25 Moves*, a celebration of a remarkable 25 years of success for co-creators Jan Lauwers and Grace Ellen Barkey, who have set trends in dance/theatre fusions both at home and abroad.

Every night of Dansand closes with a DJ-hosted after-party, where you can show off your own personal moves.

Many performances at Dansand are free, though most on the Beach Stage require a ticket. Tickets can be purchased for individual performances; a festival pass is available for €50 in advance

28 June to 1 July | Along the boardwalk of Ostend | www.dansand.be

FOOD & DRINK

Garnaalfeesten

Oostduinkerke is the only place in the world where shrimp are caught on horseback. These days, this method is hardly profitable, but, thankfully, there is a group of fishermen continuing the tradition. Every last weekend in June, this unique heritage is honoured during the Garnaalfeesten, or Shrimp Festival. People flock to the coast to see the fishermen in action and, of course, to taste the fruits of their labour. The whole weekend revolves around the humble North Sea shrimp, from games and entertainment for kids, to special menus at restaurants and even a Shrimp Parade on Sunday afternoon. That's when Mieke Shrimp and her Ladies of Honour make their way through the streets. **Robyn Boyle**



23-24 June | Across Oostduinkerke | <http://bezoeker.koksijde.be>

MORE FOOD & DRINK THIS WEEK

East Flanders

Fietsfeest Leiestreek: Annual bike ride through the region along the River Leie, with entertainment and food & drink stops along the way

JUN 24 from starting points in Dadizele, Deinze, Ingelmunster and Spiere-Helkijn

► www.toerisme-leiestreek.be

Mariekerke (Antwerp province)

Fish and Folklore Festival: 35th annual festival in the old fishers' village on the River Scheldt with music and a fish-tasting parcours

JUN 23 10.00 across the city centre

► www.mariekerke.be

Ostend

Vrienden van de Smaak: Reserve a place to experience this new concept, a gastronomic dinner in a secret outdoor location

JUN 23 somewhere in Ostend

► www.vriendenvandesmaak.be

SPECIAL EVENT

The 500 Hidden Secrets of Brussels

Scottish expat Derek Blyth (former editor of *Flanders Today*) has lived in Brussels for more than 20 years. He knows the city inside out. Looking for the tastiest fries? Most romantic cafés? Best places to get fit? Blyth answers all these questions and many more in his new book *The 500 Hidden Secrets of Brussels*, a great guide for visitors who want to avoid the usual tourist spots and for residents who are keen to track down the city's best-kept secrets. Come hear him present his book with his characteristic wit, then join him a couple of days later when he hosts a free walking tour through downtown Brussels (both events in English). **RB**



Book launch:

21 June, 19.00 | Waterstones, Brussels

Free but reserve at 02.219.27.08 or events@brussels.waterstones.com

Guided walk:

23 June, 16.00 | from Sint-Goriksplein, Brussels

Free but reserve at derekblyth@mysecretbrussels.com

► www.mysecretbrussels.com

MORE SPECIAL EVENTS THIS WEEK

Meise

History of the National Botanic Garden: Reading by Dr Denis Diagre on the “National Botanic Garden between 1826 and 1970, mirror of Belgium and child of Africa” (in Dutch)

JUN 24 15.30 at Nieuwelaan 38

► www.plantentuinmeise.be

Nieuwpoort

Highlights of Nieuwpoort: Guided bicycle ride along the most unique spots in and around the coastal city, including churches and watermills

JUN 23 10.00 from Akkerwinde, Sint -Jorisplein

► www.pasar.be/nieuwpoort

VISUAL ARTS

Mapping Cyprus: Crusaders, Traders and Explorers

Few histories are as turbulent as that of Cyprus. The island has forever formed a gateway between west and east, making it a favourite target of crusaders for centuries. This exhibition presents the country's history chronologically, from its occupation by Richard the Lionheart in 1191 to independence from Britain in 1960. It includes an impressive collection of more than 140 objects, from rare medieval manuscripts and maps to paintings and engravings. But possibly the most fascinating are the more than 50 icons, most of which have never been seen outside the walls of the churches and monasteries from where they come, reflecting the lives of Cypriots through the centuries. **RB**



22 June to 23 September
Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels |
► www.bozar.be

MORE VISUAL ARTS
THIS WEEK

Brussels

Sense of Place: A look at our relationship with the environment in the context of European photography, featuring some 160 works by 40 photographers from every member country of the EU
Until SEP 16 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
► www.bozar.be

Ghent

Borek Sipek: Collection of furniture and glass works by the Czech architect-designer
Until AUG 31 at Design Museum, Jan Breydelstraat 5
► www.designmuseumgent.be

Leuven

From Before Teniers Until After Ensor: Collection on loan from the Noordbrabants Museum in the Netherlands, including some 30 masterpieces, late-Gothic woodcarvings, cityscapes and paintings by followers of Bosch, Rubens and Van Dijk alongside contemporary works by Van Gogh and Ensor
Until AUG 26 at Museum M, Vanderkelenstraat 28
► www.mleuven.be

FESTIVAL

Zomer van Antwerpen

Summer in Antwerp is magical. For two whole months, entertainment is scattered all over the city – concerts that take you to southern climes, outdoor films on the river, theatre, dance and circus performances, all-night parties and the Zomerfabriek, a temporary café, performance spot and exhibition site off the beaten path on Minckelersstraat. When the sun shines, its terrace is packed, and its mood is both buzzy and casual. If you have a few too many during the Late Night Sessions, the Zomerfabriek – on the site of a former factory, as the name implies – sports a uniquely decked out hostel for your overnight needs. Even nicer for early-evening cocktails is the summer bar at Ledeganckkaai. Go there before Muziek in de Wijk, for instance, featuring Brazilian, African and Cuban music. Don't miss Sweden's Cirkus Cirkor in *Wear it Like a Crown*, in which the playful company transform everyday objects into something else entirely. Slightly more grown up is the beautifully titled *The House That Built Us*, a wordless theatre production, in which the past of a home comes to life, and *13 1/2*, in which angels waiting at Central Station guide you through a story about Antwerp's dearly departed. Events at Zomer van Antwerpen tend to sell out in advance, so check the online programme now to plan your summer in the port city. **RB**



29 June to 2 September | Across Antwerp | ► www.zva.be

MORE FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

Brussels

Out Loud!: Free outdoor films, concerts and parties on the roof terrace of the Beursschouwburg
Until JUN 30 at A Orisstraat 20
► www.beursschouwburg.be

Willebroek (Antwerp province)

Kanaalfeesten: Annual festival along the Willebroek Canal, with music, street theatre, a *braderij* and kids' activities
JUN 22-23 along the canal
► www.kanaalfeestenwillebroek.be

CAFÉ SPOTLIGHT
Greenwich

Kartuizerstraat 7, Brussels

Long before the Kartuizerstraat was a bustling shopping street with trendy concept stores and vintage clothes shop, there was café Greenwich. The place was renowned for its chess players, smoky atmosphere and stunning Art Nouveau interior, dating back to around 1916. But as the latter was in desperate need of renovation, Greenwich closed its doors in 2009 for a make-over. Two-and-a-half years, €5 million and a new owner later, Greenwich is open again. It's no longer just a bar, but a brasserie with a food menu of local specialities, served by waiters dressed in black and white. The wooden floor is polished, the smoke is gone, the tables don't stick anymore, and the golden decorations on the ceiling shine beautifully. The chess players are gone, too, replaced by working lunches and tourists. On the menu are steak and fries, *paling in 't groen* (eel in green sauce), pasta dishes and salads. There's a lunch of the day as well, with classics such as meatloaf or asparagus. The drinks menu is as good as ever, from pilsners to geuze to Trappists. An interesting new feature is the choice in cocktails. While Greenwich may not feel like a go-to place for a sunny cocktail on the terrace, it would be ideal for a late apéro or fancy drink before heading elsewhere. As the brasserie is huge, and the tables are nicely spread, it could also be the perfect place for a romantic date. Should you end up there alone, there's a magazine rack with multilingual literature. And yes, Greenwich still has the prettiest toilets in Brussels. The old tiles were removed and replaced with white-and-black mosaic. The ladies' is shiny white, but the Art Nouveau touches come back in the men's room, where the urinals are separated by cast iron and frosted glass.

open every day, 10.00 to midnight



Katrien Lindemans

BITE

Robyn Boyle

Z'hoor ★★☆☆

The cold, wet spring has me longing for a taste of the Mediterranean, so my friend and I book a table at one of Antwerp's many Moroccan restaurants. Z'hoor, in the hip Zuid district since 2004, boasts a nice colourful décor and warm atmosphere. The amicable owner shows us to a cosy spot at the back, where we are seated at a romantic candle-lit table for two. With our bottle of Rioja comes a basket of crusty bread with homemade garlic butter and green and black olives. We order a vegetarian mezze starter without knowing what to expect and are hugely impressed with the platter of seven surprising and tasty salads. We rank them in order by our favourites, starting with a cinnamony cole slaw with apples and raisins, followed by a creamy sour potato salad, red beets and fresh coriander, cucumbers in yoghurt and toasted sesame seeds, grated carrots in orange juice and two types of tomato salsas, one spicy. Then there are four *brik*, or fried phyllo dough triangles stuffed with sheep's cheese. These are best of all – crisply fried, oily and aromatic. Such an appetiser sets the bar high for what's to come, and the mains don't quite meet our expectations. Our server lifts off the tops of the tajines, revealing two different meat dishes in sauce so hot it is still boiling. My friend's lamb with prunes and roasted almonds initially has great flavour thanks to a lovely mixture of spices and sticky prunes. But after a few bites, he's had it; the sauce

is overwhelmingly sweet. My chicken tajine has the opposite problem; it's on the bland side. Although the meat is tender and tasty, I have to add quite a bit of salt and pepper to make up for its overall lack of flavour. The sauce also *too* abundant: It hides the tender vegetables underneath, such as carrots, peas and green beans. I would not hesitate to go back, however, for the vegetarian mezze alone or to try one of their couscous dishes or salads, which include *brik* filled with any number of things from goat cheese to tuna to chicken and almonds. I might even be tempted to try another tajine, but then the *kefta*, based on meatballs and eggs. The evening comes to a close around midnight, after paying the €65 bill and engaging in a quick, friendly chat with the owners. They tell us how the place fills up quickly in the winter, when a reservation is most necessary.



www.zhoor.eu

- Verschansingstraat 28, Antwerp; 03.238.88.30
- Tue-Sun: 17.00-midnight
- Mains: €14-€19
- Royal portions of Moroccan couscous, tajines and salads in a warm atmosphere

TALKING DUTCH

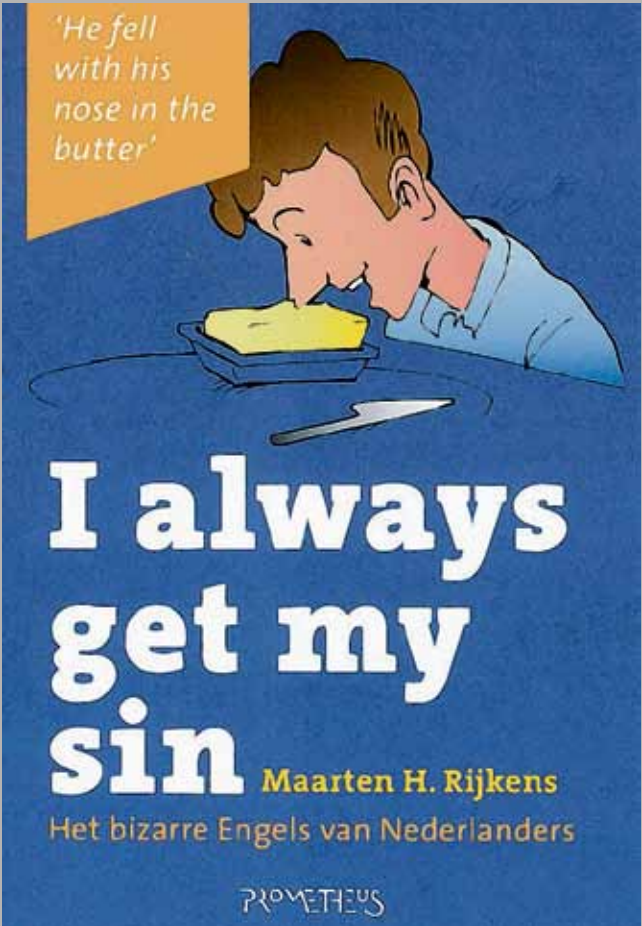
Philip Ebels

How do you do?

I almost blushed the other day when I peeked inside the brand new Talking Dutch email box to see if anything had arrived. There were a dozen or so emails, waiting to be opened. All of them have been, and most of them have also been answered. To the senders of those that haven't yet had a reply, I apologise. You will. But it wasn't the look of all those emails that almost made me blush – even though I was happily surprised. It was Kristiaan, whose letter addressed me as *Filip de Schone* –

Philip the Fair – and gave the column his thumbs up. *Goed bezig!* he said, using a typical expression, meaning “nice work!” or “well done!”. He asked: “Would you translate it as ‘well busy’?” Well, Kristiaan, if you wanted to find the literal translation, yes. But the problem with expressions is that the literal translation often doesn't make any sense – or worse, means something totally different and sometimes just plain absurd. *I Always Get My Sin* for example, is the title of a book filled with the

odd English you sometimes get from Dutch speakers. *Ik krijg altijd mijn zin* actually means “I always get what I want”. (*Zin*, really, is untranslatable. The closest is “sense”. *Onzin* means nonsense. *Zin hebben in iets* means “to feel like doing something”. *Ik heb zin om naar de bioscoop te gaan*, I feel like going to the cinema.) Another classic is: “I don't want to fall with the door in the house, but...” *Ik wil niet met de deur in huis vallen*, *maar...* is something you say when you don't want to be rude by cutting to the chase but are still going to. (Something Dutch speakers, so they say, are particularly good at.) And then there's: “He is not the first the best!” *Niet de eerste de beste* means “Not just any...”. For instance, *zij is niet de eerste de beste popmuzikant*, she is not just any other pop musician.” The cover of the book is an illustration showing a guy “falling with his nose in the butter”. *Met je neus in de boter vallen* means to get lucky, often through being at the right place at the right time. (Butter used to be a good thing, I guess.) *Nu al een promotie! Hij valt er echt met zijn neus in de boter*, A promotion already! He was certainly lucky to get that job. And then, of course, there are those well-meant phrases that, when translated incorrectly, can be dangerous. So don't get mad the next time a Dutch speaker comes up to you, shakes your hand, smiles and asks: “How do you do and how do you do your wife?” What he is trying to say is: *Hoe gaat het met u en hoe gaat het met uw vrouw?* How are you and how is your wife? If anybody knows any other good ones, you know where to send them!



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The last word...

Sporting summer

“During the Olympic Games, I'll go with Princess Mathilde and the family to London to cheer on the Belgians. The children are already completely excited.” Prince Filip, who also complained last week that he had no time to watch the European Championships because he was leading a trade mission to Japan

In vino celebritas

“Success is like alcohol: Enjoy it, but in moderation.” Flemish actor Matthias Schoenaerts

Kiddie cafe

“In exchange [for a menu price of €8], parents can leave their children here the whole morning while they go shopping.” The first restaurant uniquely for children, De Kinderkok, has opened in Antwerp

It's a tough job, but...

“Sometimes I have the feeling I'm good for nothing.” Lawyer Sven Mary, defence counsel for Sharia4Belgium's Fouad Belkacem

NEXT WEEK
IN FLANDERS TODAY

Cover story

Have you ever heard of a “Vlamigrant”? That's the name of an exhibition taking place in Antwerp about Flemish emigrants. We'll tell you about the wars, economics and social upheavals that make up the history of Flemish emigration

News

Belgium is the new chair of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Remembrance, and Mechelen hosts a plenary conference this month. News editor Alan Hope talks to members of the local organising team about their priorities for the coming year

Living

Your kids will be out of school soon. Don't panic, we have some awesome suggestions for how to keep them busy during those looong summer days in the first of our weekly series on activities for young people over the next couple of months