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© Courtesy Rock Werchter

The big 4-0

Pioneering festivals Rock Werchter, Dranouter and Lokerse Feesten all hit 40 this summer



Tom Peeters

More articles by Tom \ flanderstoday.eu

Rock Werchter opened the birthday festivities last weekend, and this summer Dranouter and Lokerse Feesten are also celebrating their 40th edition. These pioneers helped create a summer festival scene as connected to the Flemish soil as pigeon racing and cyclo-cross but with a far wider (and wilder) international appeal. Flanders Today went looking for the seeds of the success.

Standing on the Rock Werchter festival site, on the first of four sold-out days, among three stages and 88,000 visitors, looking at the impressive line-up of 79 acts, it's hard to imagine how it all started. Back in 1975 there were only six bands playing on one stage – that's if you can call a construction of wooden planks on beer crates a stage.

An estimated 650 people visited the maiden edition of the rock festival that is now frequently acclaimed as the best in the world. With the 1970s entrance fee of 100 Belgian francs, you can now just about afford a beer.

"Everybody was sitting on the grass, and there was one tap," says music journalist Jan Delvaux, who has documented the 40 editions of Belgium's premier rock festival in a coffee-table book filled with memories and behind-the-scenes stories. At first, Herman Schueremans, now CEO of the local office of organisers Live Nation, was just another face in the crowd at the Rock & Blues Festival that would go on to become Rock Werchter. "He knew the then thriving Leuven music scene well and was already organising a small festival in the nearby village of Herent," explains Delvaux. "But he lacked the backing and audience of his Werchter colleagues."

His encounter with Hedwig De Meyer, a local DJ, engineering student and member of the Chiro Werchter youth movement that initiated the event, would be crucial for the development of the festival landscape. Nearly 40 years on, managing Rock Werchter and the international staging company Stageco, they are both world leaders in their respective businesses. "You can call it a coincidence that they were neighbours," Delvaux says. "But I doubt it. In Silicon Valley, visionary entrepreneurship came out of garages; the Flemish festival landscape was rooted in countryside meadows and Chiro grounds where the most active people in local community life decided to finally do something during the summer." At the same time, 60 kilometres west of Werchter, boredom was one of the major reasons a group of people started Lokerse Feesten, as the book *40 jaar Lokerse Feesten* (40

Red Devils' World Cup ends

Belgium back home after 1-0 quarter-final defeat to Argentina



Leo Cendrowicz

More articles by Leo \ flanderstoday.eu

Belgium's World Cup hopes came to an end on Saturday after a 1-0 quarter-final defeat to Argentina. An early first-half strike by Gonzalo Higuain ensured it was Argentina who progressed to the semi-finals, with Belgium taking the plane home from Brazil.

The goal came after Lionel Messi pirouetted around Marouane Fellaini and fed Angel Di Maria, whose deflected kick hit Jan Vertonghen and fell nicely for Higuain to thump a half-volley into the bottom corner.

The first half also saw Kevin De Bruyne test keeper Sergio Romero with a 25-yarder, and Argentina suffered a blow when Di Maria limped off just after the half-hour. Eden Hazard was billed as

Belgium's answer to Messi but he struggled to make inroads. The first-half header that he stooped to make from a cross by Vertonghen flew wide and that was pretty much that. He picked up a yellow card and was later replaced by Nacer Chadli. Wilmots later accused Argentina of being an "ordinary" team who had employed gamesmanship to secure their win over his side, which he said they did not deserve. He said Argentina's manager, Alex Sabella, had only wanted to destroy the game. "How many shots did Argentina have?" he asked. "Seriously. If we'd played this way we'd have been destroyed by the Belgian press. We are disappointed to go home."

The Belgian team were expected to return to Brussels on Monday, but asked fans not to come to the



© Carlos Ezequiel Vannoni / JCM Agency / Fotoarena/ Corbis
Argentina's Lionel Messi delivered a brilliant performance, while the Red Devils missed chances

airport to welcome them. The Brussels city authorities had planned

a welcome parade through the city centre, but it was uncer-

tain whether that would happen. Wilmots has instead talked of a "Fan Day" in early September.

A letter written on behalf of the squad was posted on the Belgian Football Association website on Saturday, thanking fans for their "world class support", adding that "it was really fantastic to see how you have lived this World Cup with passion, and we can assure you that your support has touched us enormously".

Earlier, a 2-1 victory over the United States in the Brazilian city of Salvador was enough to propel Belgium into the quarter-finals. De Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku got the extra-time goals that finally undid an astounding night's work by Tim Howard, a giant in goal for the Americans.

Half a million Flemings pay too much of income for housing

\ [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/POVERTY-MONITOR](http://tinyurl.com/poverty-monitor)

More than half a million people in Flanders are paying more than 40% of their net income on housing, putting them at risk of slipping into poverty, according to the latest annual Poverty Monitor. Experts consider 40% the maximum that should be spent on housing – including mortgage, maintenance and provision of utilities.

The numbers have been continually growing, from 400,000 people in 2010 to 510,000 in 2012, the latest year for which figures are available. In 2012, there were

380,000 people in arrears on loans for housing and/or utilities, as well as other housing-related loans such as for furniture or household equipment.

According to the Monitor, which has been produced annually since 2010 by the government of Flanders, 11% of the population is living under the poverty line, which is 60% of the median income for the region: €1,002 a month for a single person and €2,104 for a couple with two children. That accounts for 680,000 people, up from 610,000 in 2011.

Of the total, 90,000 people were living below the poverty line despite having a full-time job. Flanders' figures are better than most, however: Its 11% poverty rate is well below the EU average of 17%. Only the Netherlands and the Czech Republic, both at 10%, fare better. Flanders' goal, laid out in its 2020 Pact, is to reduce the number of people living in poverty to 430,000 by 2020 – a reduction on the latest figure of 250,000. \Alan Hope

Sierre investigation closed without charges

The Swiss investigation into the bus crash in March 2012 that killed 28 people from two schools in Flanders, including 22 children, is now definitively closed, the prosecutor for the Valais canton said. The investigation concludes that the driver, who died in the crash, was responsible for the accident, but that his legal culpability cannot be established, said the Swiss prosecutor, Olivier Elsig.

A group of parents of the victims, however, are not prepared to accept that decision. "This decision is incomprehensible," read a statement sent out by the group's lawyers. "The parents are of the opinion that the investigation leaves a lot to be desired."

The parents have engaged the Dutch forensic agency IFS to carry out enquiries they think Elsig has ignored, in particular into the

state of mind of one of the two drivers, who was taking medication for depression and who, the parents claim, may have crashed the bus deliberately in an act of suicide.

"The families would like to stress that they are not out to damage the driver's reputation," said the statement. "On the contrary, they consider that he, too, is a victim." The group now intends to appeal

Union threatens another train strike

The socialist ACOD union has threatened to strike again after the summer if its demands are not met. Last week saw major disruption as the union went on strike for 24 hours.

Although the strike

action by ACOD Spoor was not joined by their Christian counterparts of ACV Transcom, the strike led to 3,000 of 3,700 routes being cancelled. Four in 10 companies reported staff missing from work, while morning and evening rush-hours were dense as rail travellers turned to their cars.

"Anyone who thinks

that our members are now content is mistaken," said Jean-Pierre Goossens, national director of ACOD Spoor. "We now expect management to cut through several remaining knots. If we have not obtained clarity by mid-September, we will strike again."

The unions complain that a refusal by the rail authority NMBS to fill job vacancies has led to rail workers being unable to take vacation days they are owed. \AH

Elsig's closure of the case. IFS carried out its own reconstruction of the accident in a tunnel in Sierre and has asked for DNA evidence from the driver to be made available to them.

The coach carrying children and staff from the two Flemish schools – in Lommel and Heverlee – home from a skiing holiday crashed in a niche in the tunnel, killing 22 children, four members of staff and

both drivers, and injuring 24 more children.

The widow of the younger driver, Evy Laermans, said she was satisfied with the conclusion of the case. After "an extremely long and thorough investigation," she said, "nothing new has been discovered. Let this stand as proof that what happened on 13 March 2012 was an accident, and nothing more." \AH

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

150,000

children started their summer holidays by taking part in one of the 570 organised playground activities across Flanders. Only 25 municipalities in the region have no organised holiday activities

250,000

tourists visited First World War sites in the Westhoek of West Flanders in the first five months of this year, provincial tourism agency Westtoer said. Tyne Cot Cemetery alone brought in 180,000 visitors, 36% more than last year

8.2 million

kilograms of raw animal manure exported by Flemish farmers in 2013, according to the Flemish co-ordination centre for manure processing. The manure goes to be used as fertiliser on farms in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen

381

Canada geese culled by the Agency for Nature and Woodland in the park in Tervuren last week, a measure made necessary by the large numbers of aggressive foreign geese in the area, the agency said

9%

of adults who took part as children in organised sporting activities suffered serious emotional abuse, according to a study carried out for the Flemish government; 8%, suffered physical abuse and 5% inappropriate sexual contact

WEEK IN BRIEF

The rail authority NMBS will seek a solution in the next few months to the growing demand from passengers for **Wifi on trains**, CEO Jo Cornu said. While Wifi is technically difficult because a connection is rapidly oversubscribed by passengers, a solution may lie in providing amplification for the 4G signal, which would provide a reliable data connection which is often missing at present. However, that solution would involve costs for each passenger.

Civil servants working for the Brussels region will no longer be given a day off work in **compensation for giving blood**, the region said. Red Cross Flanders said it was worried the numbers of blood donors would go down as a result. Flemish and federal government employees lost their blood day in 2013. In 2012, 374 Brussels employees gave blood, with about half claiming a day off later.

The world of Flanders' racing pigeon fanciers is recovering from the "biggest disaster in 20 years", after thousands of **birds failed to return home** after being loosed in France for a race last month. The birds, some worth thousands of euros, came into severe weather soon after being loosed and it is thought they lost their bearings and are unable to find their way home. Owners have criticised the sport's governing body, the Duivenbond, for allowing the loosing to go ahead.

Crèches in Brussels affiliated to the Flemish family organi-

sation Kind & Gezin may **not be obliged to use Dutch** only in their day-to-day activities, the Constitutional Court has ruled. However, a priority given to children from Dutch-speaking households is legal, the court said. Likewise, the requirement for the crèche director and one other member of staff to be Dutch speakers was upheld.

Piet Van Eeckhaut, one of the country's most prominent and recognisable criminal advocates, has died unexpectedly while on holiday in Turkey. He was 74. Van Eeckhaut was born in Aalst and argued his first assises case in 1972, after which he represented clients in more than 100 major cases, many of them making national headlines. He worked with his daughter Nina, who sat alongside him in the case of Kim De Gelder, tried for the Fabeijesland crèche killings of 2009, when they represented some of the victims.

Second-hand bookshop **De Slegte is to disappear** from the Meir in Antwerp after 50 years, company director Jan Bernard de Slegte said. The premises are suffering from wear, he said, and the owners of the building have demanded a rent increase. De Slegte navigated a difficult time this year when the Dutch owners of the chain, which has eight shops in Flanders, went bankrupt. The founder bought it back and continued trading. The antiquarian shop which De Slegte runs nearby on the Wapper will continue to trade and the chain will now look for a new location in Antwerp.

Multimedia entertainment company Studio 100 has **won a case in the Dutch courts** against Flappelientje, an organiser of children's shows, who they claimed had plagiarised the Flemish TV sensation *Kabouter Plop*, a show featuring a group of singing and dancing gnomes. The court in Amsterdam found that the Vrolijke Kabouters (Happy Gnomes) were too similar to *Kabouter Plop*, and ordered Flappelientje to change their look. The court also found that the character Pret Piraat (Fun Pirate) was a copy of Studio 100's Piet Piraat (Pete the Pirate), star of another successful TV show.

The mayor of Ypres has issued a **ban on all water-related activities** on two lakes in the city after the discovery of the toxic cyanobacteria, which can be dangerous to humans and to wildlife. The bacteria, also known as blue-green algae, were found in the Zillebeke lake last week, and later in the Dikkebus lake. The ban covers boating, surfing and swimming, but not fishing as long as there is no contact with the water.

Supermarket chain Delhaize has issued a **withdrawal notice** for bleach and demineralised water, both from the 365 brand, in packaging of 5 litres, after it was discovered that some packages marked demineralised water actually contain bleach. The products concerned were sold in June. Customers should return the product to the shop where it was bought for a refund.

HTTP://TINYURL.COM/NMBSPLAN

the Dutch rail authority – and the return of €33 million in deposits. By June, Fyra was facing lawsuits for compensation and the service was a thing of the past.

But there was no talk of replacing the Benelux train. The replacement only goes as far as The Hague, forcing anyone who wants to go on to Amsterdam to change trains, or go by Thalys. That's about to change. In the new train timetable due to be implemented on 14 December, there appears a schedule for a train from Brussels to Amsterdam 16 times a day, stopping at Brussels Airport, Mechelen, Antwerp, Brecht-Noorderkempen and Breda, then on to Rotterdam and The Hague and terminating in Amsterdam. \ AH



© S Sepp/Wikimedia Commons

month 5% of all trains had been cancelled, and another 55% were late. Trains that did make it arrived with bits falling off, wiring dangerously exposed and other serious problems. It was withdrawn in January 2013, and the Italian constructor was given three months to sort things out or face the cancellation of the NMBS order of three trains – the existing trains were property of

FACE OF FLANDERS



Petra Van Mulders

There's a new star in the Belgian firmament, and for once it has nothing to do with football. Particle physicist Dr Petra Van Mulders, 29, last week became the youngest ever team leader at the world's most important physics laboratory.

From September she will take over the leadership of a team of 80 researchers on a project at Cern, the European Centre for Nuclear Research, in Geneva, Switzerland. The team is working on the CMS Detector, or Compact Muon Solenoid, part of the Large Hadron Collider, which you can see behind Van Mulders in our photo.

The Large Hadron Collider or LHC is famous for the discovery of the Higgs Boson, and also provides the means of researching dark matter, additional dimensions to the ones we're familiar with and other scientific notions which for most of us belong to the pages of sci-fi novels.

The CMS weighs 12,500 tonnes and is basically a coil of superconducting cable which generates a magnetic field 100,000 times stronger than the one generated by Earth. The CMS experiment, meanwhile, is one of the largest scientific collaborations in history, and involves 4,300 particle physicists, engineers, technicians, students and support staff from 162 institutes

in 42 countries.

Van Mulders will be joining the project for two years, working to identify *b* quarks, also known as bottom or beauty quarks, which would take a book to explain. Suffice to say that the qualities of the *b* quark are important to know, in order to fully understand the Higgs Boson, or Brout-Englert-Higgs particle as we must learn to call it.

Van Mulders was born into a travelling military family in Machelen near Brussels, and took a Master's in physics in 2006 at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). In 2010 she obtained a PhD from the VUB and the University of Antwerp, having worked for a time at Cern on her thesis.

After a brief pause for motherhood, she continued working on developing a technique for better identifying *b* quarks and discovering new ones. That's what brought her to the attention of the CMS experiment.

Despite her ground-breaking appointment, she remains modest. "The team includes several important professors, but I won't be standing on the table shouting 'I'm the boss here'. That's not how science works. To be honest I'm a little bit scared, because no matter how nice this recognition is, I still have to prove myself." \ Alan Hope

OFFSIDE

The little train that did

It's had more adventures than Thomas the Tank Engine, and the Benelux train is coming back to life, if we're to believe reports. The Benelux train used to run between Brussels and Amsterdam Centraal (*pictured*), via Mechelen, Antwerp, Roosendaal, Dordrecht, Rotterdam, The Hague and Schiphol airport. Nothing could be simpler: You go to the station, you buy a ticket and hop on, and about three years later you're in Amsterdam.

Then along came Fyra, a new high-speed train that would cut the travel time to just over two hours, but would require a reservation and cost more. It would also replace the Benelux train entirely, so there was no choice. Fyra started in December 2012, and by the end of the first

FLANDERSTODAY

 Flanders
State of the Art

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5TH COLUMN

Losing out, either way

The formation of a federal government is hard enough as it is in this country, and now the EU decision on Arco complicates matters even more. The European Commission has ruled that the 2011 state guarantee on funds deposited with the co-operative Arco is illegal state aid. The Commission considers the "co-operants" shareholders – and not savers, as the then federal government did. As a result, the 800,000 families involved may lose investments totalling up to €1.5 billion, as Arco was a major shareholder in Dexia bank, which collapsed in 2011. The consequences are particularly tricky for Koen Geens (CD&V), the parting minister for finance, who has promised to pay the co-operants back. Geens intends to appeal to the European Court of First Instance in Luxembourg, a procedure with an uncertain outcome. He also faces a discrimination claim by the shareholders of another collapsed bank, Fortis, who cannot count on a state guarantee.

On top of the legal and financial aspect of the case, there is the political fallout. When it comes to Arco, Geens' party can only lose. The Christian-democrats are closely associated with ACW (now called beweging.net), the workers' movement that owned Arco and encouraged its members to invest in it. CD&V will be blamed if the co-operants – ordinary people rather than hardened stock holders – do not get their money back. No money, no vote for CD&V, some of them said even before the elections. However, if the state has to fork out the €1.5 billion at taxpayers' expense, this will anger others. CD&V wants the new federal agreement to include a "plan B" to pay back the co-operants. While most parties agree, CD&V will have to pay a price for this at the negotiating table. To make sure plan B is carried out, CD&V hopes Geens becomes finance minister again. This is just another demand, on top of a long wish list. Also on that list: Kris Peeters as prime minister, Marianne Thyssen as European commissioner, Open VLD excluded from the government of Flanders...

CD&V may get its way on these points, but it will have to make concessions, in the first place to N-VA. Maybe that is why N-VA, which attacked ACW ruthlessly in the run-up to the May elections, leading to the resignation of Geens' predecessor, is keeping quiet on the issue now.

Anja Otte

More articles by Anja \ flanderstoday.eu

Negotiators aim to balance budget

New federal government formation continues with party consultations



Anja Otte

More articles by Anja \ flanderstoday.eu

Technical workgroups are preparing the toughest decisions yet for a new government of Flanders, as they search for €1.2 billion to balance the budget. On Wednesday, the central group was due to meet to finalise the long-range budget. The talks should be finished by the end of this week, although there is little hope of having a new Flemish government by 11 July, Flemish Community Day.

The government of Flanders' aim for a balanced budget is complicated by a number of factors. First there is state reform, which gives Flanders extra responsibilities (see story below), but not the €850 million extra budget needed. Also, the EU demands that investments in education and welfare, worth €750 million, be included in the



© Courtesy Flemish Parliament

Lawmakers at the Flemish Parliament during its inaugural session after the May elections

budget. All of this results in a shortfall of €1.2 billion. On top of these budget efforts, more will be

needed to allow the new government of Flanders to fund policies of its own: building schools, reducing waiting lists for special care institutions and investing in research and development. The technical groups will also calculate the impact of potential policy changes in new responsibilities such as housing bonus and child allowance.

In related news, the Brussels Region negotiations advance at full speed. Negotiators from Open VLD, CD&V, N-VA, PS, CDH, S.PA and FDF have agreed to adapt the child allowance system so that the sum received becomes equal for each child. This replaces the "progressive" system, in which the sum per child increases for each successive child.

Finance minister to appeal EU ban on Arco guarantees

Acting federal finance minister Koen Geens has said the government will appeal against a decision by the EU Commission that states that a government guarantee on funds deposited with Arco is illegal. Arco is the investment arm of ACW, the General Union of Christian Workers, and was a major shareholder in Dexia Bank when it collapsed in 2011. Unlike ordinary shareholders, who lost all or most of their investment, Arco savers, known as co-operants, had a state guarantee, which in the end covered €1.5 billion in investments by some 800,000 people.

The situation was contested by other investors who claimed discrimination, partially because then prime minister Yves Leterme and finance minister Steven Vanackere are both members of CD&V, which has particularly strong links to ACW. Geens is also politically close to ACW. The Constitutional Court is due to rule soon on a discrimination case brought by other shareholders.

The European Commission has now decided that the guarantee

is a form of illegal state aid and cannot be paid out. Arco's co-operants are not in the same position as savings account holders – who are protected by law – but rather than ordinary shareholders, with all of the risks that entails.

Geens' position is that the trust placed by the co-operants in the government in 2008 must be respected. When Dexia began to suffer difficulties, they could have withdrawn their savings and caused an immediate and catastrophic crash; instead they stayed on board on the strength of a promise of a state guarantee.

Geens intends to appeal to the European Court of First Instance in Luxembourg, a procedure that will take at least a year. Had the decision of the Commission been in favour of the guarantee, co-operants would have received their money then anyway, when the liquidation of Arco is complete in 2015.

"If Luxembourg says we were wrong, then we have to take care of an alternative ourselves," said Geens. \Alan Hope

Dewael new speaker of House of Representatives

Patrick Dewael (Open VLD) is the new speaker of the federal House of Representatives, after a voting round filled with suspense. With the support of his own N-VA, as well as CD&V and MR, the road to the speakership had seemed wide open for Siegfried Bracke.

In the end, Bracke faced not one but three opponents: former speaker André Flahaut (PS), Meyrem Almaci (Groen) and Dewael, who was supported by the entire liberal group. After both Flahaut and

Almaci withdrew their candidacy in a second round, the vote tipped towards Dewael.

Dewael is a former minister-president of Flanders and a former federal minister of interior affairs. He has chaired the House of Representatives once before, between 2008 and 2011. When a new federal government is formed, a new speaker may yet be appointed. Traditionally, the function is negotiated as part of the federal formation. \AO

Sixth state reform implemented

The sixth state reform, agreed in the previous federal government, was implemented on 1 July with the transfer of extra government responsibilities to the regions and communities.

The goal of the reform is to allow the regions to function more efficiently. Between 2015 and 2018, some 2,300 civil servants will be transferred from the federal to the Flemish government services. Among the new responsibilities are road safety policy and housing tax, including the so-called housing bonus, a tax exemption on mortgages. Flanders also becomes responsible for child allowance, which will remain unchanged until 2016. After that, the government of Flanders may decide to change the

system – to give each child an equal allowance, for instance.

Another new Flemish responsibility is employment. The Flemish agency VDAB, which provides support for anyone looking for a job, can now also penalise unemployed people who turn down job offers. The government of Flanders also becomes responsible for energy distribution tariffs. The difference is likely to go unnoticed by individual gas and electricity consumers, as the tariff is part of their energy bill. However, it is expected that the consumer will have to contribute towards the "green certificates", used to subsidise solar panels in recent years, making energy more expensive. \AO

New government subsidies for cultural heritage projects

Flanders' departing culture minister, Joke Schauvliege, has awarded more than €500,000 in subsidies to the care and accessibility of cultural heritage projects.

The projects include experimental research into the use of 3D pictures for the preservation and accessibility of industrial and agricultural heritage in Kortrijk. Another project aims to make the Collection Ludwig Burchard accessible. Burchard was a renowned German scholar and collector of work by Peter Paul Rubens; his collection is an important resource for research into Baroque art.

Other projects look into the student movements in university city Leuven, the oral history of historic convents and abbeys, gender relations during the First World War, carts used by merchants, the Euro-

pean eating and drinking culture and a 16th-century map of Bruges by Marcus Gheeraerts.

The government is also earmarking €21,000 for the new annual summer course for the study of the arts in Flanders, which will be launched next year with The Age of Van Eyck in Context. The English-language course, which will take place in Bruges, Ghent and Brussels, is an initiative of several institutions, including Antwerp's Fine Arts Museum, Bruges's Groeninge Museum and the art history departments of the universities of Ghent and Leuven.

"Flanders has a dynamic world of cultural heritage, which spares no effort to reach the public at large," said Schauvliege. "These subsidies will further enhance innovation in this area." \AO

The big 4-0

The Flemish festival scene has come a long way since the 1970s

continued from page 1

Years of Lokerse Feesten) explains: "There's a growing awareness that Lokeren is nearly a dead city in August. Most people leave for holidays during the local fair. Who stays at home for the usual *gaaibollingen*, card-playing and cycling races?"

Inspired by the Gentse Feesten in next-door Ghent, a few local youth clubs tried offering a music programme on four consecutive days. No one could have imagined that four decades later they would have the international stars of their debut year, Neil Young and Patti Smith, in their 10-day line-up.

Mostly, there were no big plans involved, as local examples were rare. There were a few city events, some niche music festivals and Jazz Bilzen, the first big Belgian open-air pop festival, dating back to the 1960s but defunct since 1981. "The world was still small, and people here were not dreamers but doers," explains Delvaux. "The prudence of our festival pioneers was illustrative of that mentality. Herman Schueremans worked in a civil service office and later at a record company."

Until 1982, that is, when Schueremans' (by then) double festival T/W, with the young U2 in its line-up, was reaching 64,000 people (24,000 in Torhout and 40,000 in Werchter).

Marie-Louise "Wiske" Op de Beeck followed the developments from day one. "I married one of the former Chiro members who started the festival," she says. First she helped with the catering, and later she established the information stand at the entrance, helping anyone with a problem.

This mix of organisational talent and empathy is why visitors and volunteers call her Mama Werchter. Now retired, she still volunteers at the Werchter X Museum, beautifully housed in a former brewery in the shade of the village church.



© Photos courtesy Festival Dranouter

From the Dranouter folk festival in the early days, before the festival scene took off in Flanders

sounds coming from across the Dijle river, she admits rock music is not really her style. "I used to visit the site just to see my husband, who was responsible for mobility. This year I will try to see Stromae, but to me the festival is much more

summer full of music, for every taste: City festivals were gaining popularity in Leuven, Tienen and Lokeren, there was blues in Peer, world music at Sfinks in Boechout, folk in Dranouter and alternative sounds at Pukkelpop in Kiewit.

Music fans were offered different genres at locations spread across the region. "In the beginning, most of the so-called niche festivals also stuck to their genre," says Marnique Deswarte, who used to select the bands for the folk festival in the village of Dranouter, close to the French border in West Flanders. That festival, also turning 40 this summer, was initiated by Alfred Den Ouden, who ran a local folk club. At first it took place on the playground of the boys' school, but soon it moved to a nearby field. "In those early days, there was an unspoken agreement not to encroach on the territory of your colleagues," says Deswarte.

Influenced by the success of Paul Simon's *Graceland*, Dranouter broadened its horizons from folk to music rooted in tradition.

about maintaining friendships and community life and taking the initiative than about music."

Delvaux: "Wiske is the perfect illustration of how local the breeding ground of our Flemish festival scene is. Thanks to this solid local cement, our festivals could grow gradually, reaching a first boost in the second half of the 1980s."

All of a sudden, Flanders had a

That could just as well be rock or pop. As a result, the festival grew quickly, only kept in check by a proliferation of festivals and (free) city events.

In recent years, it has been returning to its roots. But still: "In the last 15 years, the distinction between festivals has become less pronounced," says Deswarte. "An artist such as Elvis Costello could play Peer this year, but just as easily Werchter, Dranouter or even Gent Jazz, where he headlined last year." The Flemish pioneers now have to deal with a global festival market. Not only has the festival landscape become professionalised and internationalised, the business has undeniably changed with the introduction of the internet and falling music sales.

These days artists depend on concert fees to make money. "We

used to be one of the few, now we are one of the many," says Deswarte. "Years ago, if we wanted Ry Cooder, we contacted his management in the US, looked at the options and paid for four plane tickets. I used to choose 80% of the line-up myself. Now we are dependent on international tour schemes and the offers of management offices." Through the eyes of today's youngsters, any comparison with the past looks anachronistic. "I started in the telex era," recalls Deswarte. "I had to go to the post office in Ypres to send a telex to Africa or the US. To make phone calls, I had to get up at night, depending on time zones. If you wanted to check out a band, you had to actually go to the concerts." None of these evolutions have stopped the success of the local festival scene. Some festivals disappeared after one rainy edition too many, bad management or heavy competition, but others appeared in their place.

"Often I've wondered if this festival audience is a specific group of people that likes watching bands standing in muddy fields, with like-minded people, like there is also an audience that fancies amusement parks," says Delvaux. "But it's not as simple as that."

It's more like the sum of its parts, he says. "The summer calendar was empty at a time when people had more free time. We are a small and rich region, so all those festivals take place in our back garden, and we have the money to pay for them. The supply of bands, especially local ones, seems endless. And by being able to offer the big international names, Schueremans educated his audience, serving as a role model for other organisers."

At the same time, sociological changes seemed to be in favour of the festivals. "A few generations back, people in their adult life spent their leisure time in local branches of family or women's associations; now they help organise festivals to spice up their social lives," explains Delvaux.

And even though the field has become professionalised, it's still a rewarding way to be with friends. You don't have to tell Wiske that. I meet her again, this time with her husband, on the festival site just before Metallica take the stage. "But of course, that's just a coincidence," she says, winking.

Rock Werchter Sinds 1975 is published by Manteau; 40 jaar Lokerse Feesten by Lokerse Feesten vzw

FestivalDranouter
Dranouter, West Flanders
Lokerse Feesten
Lokeren, East Flanders

“To me the festival is much more about maintaining friendships and community life than about music

"It's all one big family," she says during a personal tour, getting nostalgic in front of the old pictures. "Here you see Herman Schueremans' father counting banknotes, and here his mother is cleaning the festival field with a rake. And this is my daughter with some colleagues from Stageco. The whole village was – and still is – involved."

While we hear the first festival

1-3 August

1-10 August

WEEK IN BUSINESS

Biotech

\ Celtic Renewables

The Ghent-based Bio Base Pilot Plant has signed a €1.5 million agreement with the Edinburgh University spin-off to test and develop applications to turn whisky by-products into bio-fuels.

IT \ Cegeka

The Hasselt-based IT services provider is paying €24 million to acquire the German and Italian affiliates of the Austrian Brain Force Software company. The move will allow Cegeka to expand with operations in Italy, Germany, Austria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Legal \ Zhonglun

The Chinese corporate law firm has opened an office in Brussels as part of its international development. As a result, the Brussels firm Janson Baugniet will be represented in six of Zhonglun's W&D offices in China.

Oil \ ExxonMobil

The US oil giant ExxonMobil is to invest \$1 billion (€731 million) in a new coking unit at its refinery in the Port of Antwerp, the company announced. The new unit will convert crude oil into diesel and fuel for ships. The investment brings ExxonMobil's spending in Antwerp to \$2 billion in less than 10 years. The Antwerp refinery has a refining capacity of 320,000 barrels a day.

Parking \ Interparking

The Brussels-based parking operator has acquired the French Park'A company managing 17 car parks in Paris, Antibes, Nice and Cherbourg. Interparking will now operate some 50 car parks for a total of 23,000 places in 14 French cities.

Retail \ AS Adventure

The outdoors and sport equipment retailer, which has been put on the market by the UK-based Lion Capital fund for €375 million, may be acquired by Mike Ashley, owner of Newcastle United football club and the Sports Direct chain of clothing and equipment in the UK.

Tobacco \ Davidoff

The Swiss cigar and smoking paraphernalia group has renovated its two Brussels stores and installed new smoking rooms to meet growing demand for its luxury brands.

Stronger airport “could create 10,000 jobs”

Brussels Airport's CEO publishes memo to government negotiators



Alan Hope

More articles by Alan \ flanderstoday.eu

A stronger Brussels Airport with more flights and a regime of harmonised noise levels could deliver up to 10,000 new jobs over the course of the next 10 years, according to the airport's CEO, Arnaud Feist. Feist (pictured) was presenting a memorandum he has prepared for the negotiators who are putting together federal and regional governments. The memo, which will also go to mayors of the municipalities around Zaventem, calls for an increase in flights from a maximum of 74 per hour at present to 80, and the disappearance of the maximum of 16,000 night-time slots per year, a restriction imposed in 2009. The global maximum is no longer close to being reached, but the measure contains a maximum



of 5,000 flights taking off from Zaventem, which cause the most noise nuisance, and that figure is continually growing. The Feist memo also rejects plans to extend the period during which

night flights are deemed to take place, which is currently from 23.00 to 6.00.

Meeting those requirements would lead to a stronger airport capable of providing 10,000 new jobs in 10 years, Feist said. Otherwise the jobs of 60,000 people currently employed by the airport could be at risk, he said.

In the first six months of this year, Brussels Airport saw nearly 10 million passengers pass through, an increase of 12% on the same period last year. The main reason is the arrival of low-cost airline Ryanair in February, bringing its own passengers, but also putting pressure on other airlines to lower their prices, leading to more passengers.

Biomass plant for port of Ghent

Mechelen-based company Belgian Eco Energy (Bee) has presented its plan to establish a large biomass plant in the port of Ghent. The project, called Bee Power Gent, is expected to cost around €300 million; the plant should produce electricity for about 450,000 households and create 120 jobs. Bee Power Gent is one of the three plants that will still benefit from the green certificates for electricity production on the basis of biomass, which the government of Flanders has recently abolished for new projects. The other two are renovated coal plants belonging to Electrabel and E.ON, which will

both work on the basis of classic wood pellets. The Bee Power Gent plant will function on another type of fuel, such as plantation wood and wood waste. The founders say the plant will be established in an industrial area with relatively little habitation, the biomass fuel will be supplied via ships and the plant will emit clean air. Environmental organisations Bond Beter Leefmilieu, Greenpeace and WWF, however, expressed concern over the amount of carbon dioxide that will be emitted and the lack of transparency on the origin of the biomass. \ Andy Furniere

Mobistar and Base take government to court

Mobile service providers Mobistar and Base have begun legal action against the federal government, alleging that it is refusing to pay the fees associated with providing customer details.

“We want to co-operate with the justice system, but there are limits,” a Mobistar spokesperson said. “Especially when our sector is being so heavily taxed. Everyone should pay their debts.”

Every year, prosecutors and inves-

tigating magistrates submit applications for details of some 100,000 customers regarding telephone and internet connections. The reasons differ: One request may be in preparation of a telephone tap, another to find out the location of a mobile phone at a stated time. Each request requires a fee, set by law. The companies complain that the state is late in paying, with the total bill thought to be about €39 million. \ AH

Ambitious cycling policy “worth €300 million”

If the Brussels-Capital Region introduced an ambitious cycling policy, it would be worth €300 to €550 million to the economy and triple the number of cycling-related jobs, a study for Brussel Mobiliteit has concluded. At present, the study said, there are 230 jobs in the region directly related to cycling, including bike messengers and the sale, mainte-

nance and hire of bicycles. With the right policies, that number could grow to 660 by 2020, says the report.

The local economy would also benefit as cyclists tend to do their shopping in local businesses. Other benefits are more general, including better health, less pollution, less traffic and lower transport costs.

Rise in prepaid bank cards for kids

Child development experts have issued a warning over the growing use of prepaid bank cards by children to make purchases online. The cards are charged with sums of money that can then be used to pay anywhere a credit card can be used. Because these are not credit but debit cards, and use incurs no debts, there are far fewer restrictions on obtaining one.

Depending on the bank, young people need to be 16 or 18 years old to obtain a card, but parents can obtain them for their children who can then use them freely. Belfius and Bpost impose no minimum age for using the

cards; KBC and ING restrict their use to children over 10. However, children are too young to have a proper appreciation of which traders are trustworthy and which are not, according to Pedro De Bruyckere, a pedagogical expert at Arteveld university college in Ghent. Bank cards should be limited to children over 15 or 16, he said.

Banks and other issuing institutions like Bpost stressed that parents have full control over how much and on what children are able to spend using the cards.

\ AH

Postal workers protest possible job losses

About 1,000 postal workers demonstrated in Brussels last week at the office of acting economy minister Johan Vande Lanotte. Workers fear the national post office Bpost will lose out on a contract to deliver newspapers, which would result in the loss of at least 2,500 jobs.

“When it comes to quality, we are competitive, but when it comes to price, there is a problem,” said Jean-Pierre Nijns of the socialist union ACOD.

The Belgian postal market was liberalised in 2011. When the EU allowed Bpost to receive government funding for a number of services it delivers, it demanded that the contract to distribute newspapers and magazines be put to public tender. A decision about the contract by the federal government is expected by the end of the year. The new contract will start in 2016. \ Anja Otte

An “ambitious” policy would involve investing €22 per inhabitant of the region per year in cycling facilities. It would also see cyclists accounting for 20% of all non-foot traffic, with 15% of all cyclists former motorists. In those circumstances, the benefits would amount to between €5 and €9 for every euro invested, the study claims. \ AH

New test for cardiac death

UA scientists' new test could help stop sudden death during sport events



Andy Furniere

More articles by Andy \ flanderstoday.eu

Antwerp University (UA), the University Hospital of Antwerp (UZA) and biotech company Multiplicom have developed an innovative genetic blood test to track the risk of sudden cardiac death. Multiplicom, a university spin-off company headquartered in Niel, Antwerp province, specialises in creating molecular tests and offered its knowhow and technology to the UA and UZA medical researchers.

“With our test kit, doctors can examine all relevant 51 genes at once

The new PED MASTR test, which took a year to develop, will considerably improve testing for the risk of sudden cardiac arrest. It is estimated that one in 1,000 people are at risk of dying from such heart failure. The disorder especially

affects young, seemingly healthy people, often while they're engaging in intense physical exercise like marathons or football matches. In May, a 28-year-old runner died from sudden cardiac death during the 20km run through Brussels. “The risk for these cardiac arrhythmia is difficult for cardiologists to determine,” says Dirk Pollet, CEO of Multiplicom. “The abnormalities are not always clearly visible on ECGs.”

Genetic blood tests are very useful in testing for the disorder, since genetic predisposition plays a major role. Family members of people who suffered a sudden cardiac arrest have a 50% chance of inheriting the genetic predisposition for the heart problem.

“Until now, the genetic blood tests could only analyse one or two genes that may cause sudden cardiac arrest,” Pollet explains. “But with our test kit, doctors can examine all important 51 genes at one time and thus detect dangerous mutations much more easily.” Those with such a mutation have a 90% higher risk of suffering from sudden cardiac arrest at some point in their lives.

The test also allows doctors to arrive at a much quicker diagno-



© courtesy 20km of Brussels
Sudden cardiac death affects young athletes while they engage in intense physical exercise

sis than was previously possible. “Instead of at least six months to analyse one or two genes in a blood sample in the lab, our test makes it possible to get a result on 51 genes in a few weeks,” Pollet says. Doctors can thus more quickly take targeted preventive measures, which in turn could save lives. The test is already being used at the UZA medical genetics centre and will be launched on the Euro-

pean market in September. The test costs around €1,300, but the medical insurance agency RIZIV has said it will make efforts to make it more affordable in Belgium. IWT, the Flemish government's agency for innovation through science and technology, supported development of the PED MASTR test with a €100,000 grant.

WEEK IN INNOVATION

Women choosing preventive mastectomy Increasing numbers of women in Flanders with the BRCA gene – the “breast cancer gene” – are taking the preventive measure of having one or both breasts removed, according to local hospitals and clinics. About 40% more women with the gene mutation had a mammogram in the past year than in the year before, to determine their risk of breast cancer. The issue was brought to public attention last year when actress Angelina Jolie spoke about her decision to have a double mastectomy. There are no concrete figures on the increase of preventive mastectomies, but *De Morgen* reports that the university hospitals of Ghent, Antwerp and Leuven have noticed a clear increase; some surgeons say the number has doubled in five years.

Astronomers determine stars' ages

Researcher Konstanze Zwintz and her team at the Institute for Astronomy at the University of Leuven have demonstrated that stars emit different sound waves depending on their age. They measured the acoustic vibrations of 34 stars aged under 10 million years and between one and four times the mass of our sun, using ultrasound technology. Stars are often born in clusters if a part of their molecular cloud – consisting of gas and dust particles – contracts and shrinks due to gravity. They become “adult” stars that remain stable for a long time. The age of young stars has been hard to determine until now; the molecular cloud from which the stars originate gives only a rough indication because it includes both young and older stars.

Ritalin could relieve stuttering, says VUB

Ritalin, prescribed mostly for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and marketed in Belgium as Rilatine, could have a positive effect on people who stutter, according to researchers from both Free University of Brussels institutions (VUB and ULB). Participants took Ritalin once and then had to read out a text and speak spontaneously. Stutters decreased from 33 to 22 on average during the reading of text and from 19 to eight during free speech. All had previously tried traditional treatments without success. The researchers point out that it is too soon to recommend Ritalin as a medication against stuttering. \ AF

Test-Aankoop puts hospital inspection reports online

\ WWW.TEST-AANKOOPBE



© Ingimage

If you're a Test-Aankoop subscriber, you can now use the consumer organisation's website to compare the care offered at hospitals across Flanders and Brussels at a glance. Test-Aankoop offers the inspection report data compiled by the Flemish government's Zorginspectie, or Care Inspectorate, which paid unannounced visits to all 56 Flemish hospitals and their 94 branch campuses last year.

“Many hospitals already publish statistics on the quality of their care on their own websites, but this is mostly done in a way that makes it impossible for citizens to decipher quickly,” says Martine Van Hecke, co-ordinator of Test-Aankoop's health services. “Also, the Care Inspectorate's reports did not include standardised parameters until this year, which made it difficult to compare hospitals.”

Each year, the Care Inspectorate makes unannounced visits to hospitals in Flanders and Brussels' University Hospital to monitor different aspects of the care offered. This time, the Care Inspectorate monitored surgery services in hospitals, focussing on nine themes – hand hygiene, apparel, sterilisation techniques, sterilisation devices, patient identifica-

tion, completeness of patient files, checklist for safe surgeries, staffing and maintenance of devices.

When the inspectors were particularly unhappy with certain aspects, the hospitals had to undergo a second unannounced inspection, which is clearly indicated on the Test-Aankoop website. All the surveyed hospitals passed the second inspection. “But this does not necessarily mean that the problems are fixed in the long term,” says Van Hecke. “It definitely is relevant to show where certain hospitals failed the first time.”

One remarkable conclusion of the government's inspection reports was that 20% of doctors in Flemish hospitals do not respect the proce-

dures around hand hygiene. “This is very disappointing, as there have been several campaigns emphasising the importance of good hand hygiene to prevent infections,” says Van Hecke.

A second negative result was that in eight Flemish hospitals – or one out of seven – an anaesthetist was not always present at the side of patients under narcosis. Yet, the constant presence of an anaesthetist is required to make sure that patients receive enough oxygen and that their blood pressure and heart rate remain stable.

On the positive side, almost all the hospitals obtained good or outstanding scores on patient identification, with many of them using

patients' wristbands that contain their personal data. This patient identification is of crucial importance when patients can't give their identity themselves, when they are under anaesthesia, for instance. While Test-Aankoop says that an important step towards more transparency in hospital care in Flanders has been made, the organisation also feels more needs to be done. “Instead of passively making complex reports available to those who demand them, the Flemish government should actively inform citizens in a way that is accessible,” says Van Hecke.

Test-Aankoop launched a petition earlier this year for a government website to be created that compares hospital care. In April, the petition, which contained 36,328 signatures, was handed to Flemish welfare minister Jo Vandeurzen, who promised concrete measures in the near future.

Next year, the Care Inspectorate's reports will be made available to the public via a government website. The government also launched a broader project to set up an online platform that provides accessible information around hospitals' quality indicators. \ AF

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The state of teaching in Flanders

OECD study highlights strengths and challenges for teaching profession



Andy Furniere

More articles by Andy \ flanderstoday.eu

\ WWW.EDUBRON.BE

While most teachers in Flanders are happy with their career choice, a significant percentage are bullied or intimidated on a weekly basis by their students. These are two of the main conclusions of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (Talis), an initiative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Every five years, Talis examines the working conditions and perceptions of teachers and school directors worldwide through online questionnaires. In 2013, school staff from 34 countries and regions participated. In Flanders, 2,681 teachers from 198 primary schools took part, as did 3,129 teachers from the first grade in 168 secondary schools. This edition of the survey in Flanders was co-ordinated by the Edubron research group at Antwerp University.



© Hero Images/Corbis

teachers."

Vandamme, who is also a professor of educational sciences at Ghent University, feels policy-makers need to take measures to encourage more experienced teachers to take classes in areas with many disadvantaged pupils.

Talis also showed that 9% of teachers from the first year of secondary school, or almost one in 10, are intimidated or bullied by their own students at least once a week. In Europe, the only place with a worse situation is Estonia, where 11% of the teachers reported working in such challenging conditions.

According to school directors, bullying is one of the main factors that negatively influence the atmosphere at school and one of the principal reasons why new teachers quit and even give up their careers as educators.

The Christian education union COC confirmed the seriousness of the problem in *De Standaard*. "We get more and more notifications from teachers who are confronted with these issues," said Wim Dhollander of COC. "Especially in cities, some teachers can barely teach lessons anymore, they just try to hold on."

According to Dhollander, there are many more victims than the survey shows. "The complaints from staff don't always reach the directors, and many bullied teachers are too ashamed to ask for help because they consider it a big failure. Talking about it remains a taboo."

He adds that the school directors also don't always

take the complaints seriously and say that it is part of the job. "If the situation escalates, some suggest that the teachers leave the school, which of course doesn't solve anything." Dhollander emphasises that it is essential that the problem is recognised quickly and that action is taken.

Another problematic conclusion is that not even half of the teachers – only 45% – said they felt society appreciated their work. This, however, is a high score in comparison with other OECD countries.

Concerning the quality of education, the report states that the level of teaching in Flanders is high, but it is worrying to find out that a Flemish teacher still sees their job as a very individual activity – a conservative view of teaching, according to experts.

Teachers, for example, spend very little time on communication with parents and their colleagues. Three-quarters of all teachers said they never participated in the observation of other teachers' lessons, while 31% of teachers in primary education and 64% in the first year of secondary education never teach classes together.

Yet research shows that the quality of education increases when teachers learn from each other by, for example, visiting colleagues with a different approach. "We need to improve the co-operation and communication by investing in feedback, guidance and continuing training," says Vandamme. He warned that the level of Flemish education may decrease considerably if this conservative view of the profession is not adjusted.

On gender differences, the survey demonstrates that a majority of the teachers are women – 83% in primary education and 68% in the first year of secondary education. On the management level, women make up 59% of school directors in Flemish primary education and only 39% in secondary education. This latter score is very low compared to other countries included in the OECD survey.

WEEK IN EDUCATION

More youngsters wear earplugs at festivals

The number of young people protecting their ears against loud music at festivals has increased from 3% in 2011 to 15% today. That is the main conclusion of research carried out by Antwerp University among 550 young festival-goers. The rise can be explained by the Flemish government's recent prevention campaigns, according to Annick Gilles, who just finished her PhD on the topic. "Many youngsters now indicate their concerns around music that is too loud," she told *De Morgen*. "A few years ago, most young people didn't consider it a problem to suffer from tinnitus for one day, but they increasingly realise that the damage can be permanent."

Record number for medical entrance exam

A record number of students participated in the entrance exam for doctor and dentist studies, which took place last week in Brussels. The number registered for the exam increased by about 40% from 2011, from 4,079 to 5,742. As usual, about 90% of the students registered to take the exam showed up. The biggest increase was among students from the fifth year of secondary education – more than 900 this year. The number of students from the Netherlands, on the other hand, decreased, from 894 in 2013 to 828 now. Students were first tested on their knowledge of the sciences and then had to take a test on information acquiring and processing.

Future students to practise maths online

Hasselt University (UHasselt) has launched an electronic learning environment through which future students can voluntarily improve their maths skills. Students who have registered for a Bachelor's degree at UHasselt will receive access to the platform, which gives an overview of the topics they should be able to master by the start of their studies. It will at first be used by the faculties of sciences, business-economy and industrial sciences, but more may follow. The tests and exercises can concern elementary algebra concepts but also more complex matters like trigonometry. The platform is one of the tools UHasselt is using to facilitate the transition from secondary to higher education. \AF

“

Bullied teachers are often ashamed to ask for help

Talis demonstrated that almost nine out of 10 Flemish teachers are satisfied with their job and would chose the same career if the clock was turned back. The satisfaction rate decreases drastically, however, when teachers have "difficult" classes in schools with many children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Of all the surveyed countries and regions, Flanders is the one where the most new teachers end up at such schools. "This is not a good career start for young teachers," Dirk Vandamme, head of the OECD's Innovation and Measuring Progress Division, told *Deredactie.be*. "It also has negative consequences for the quality of education in these schools; we have to make adjustments in the recruiting policy for

Q&A

Ghent is pondering the possibility of letting its many students live in empty buildings. Alderman for city development and housing Tom Balthazar explains why

Why is this measure needed?

First of all, let me emphasise that this is just a small detail of a larger future plan for student housing. The first version of this plan has still not been finalised. But we do need to increase our capacity of student housing. It is a recent trend: A growing number of students rent private houses and share the costs. They live in houses that are actually meant to be family homes. We do understand that this is cosy and fun, but it does have negative consequences: The pressure on the private rental market increases, and rental prices go up, as do selling prices.

Why empty offices and shops?

We definitely don't want to use units that are already designated for housing. But it does occur quite often that offices and shops have to be renovated or repurposed. The full process – obtaining permission, drawing up the plans, having the right licences – can take up to four years. During this period, given that all safety and health standards are met, the space could be inhabited by students.

Is this a new idea?

Not entirely. There used to be a university restaurant in the middle of the Overpoort, the main street



in the city's student district. Now it has become a fitness hall and

a little supermarket. In the years between the closure of the restaurant and the start of the renovation, three students lived there. It wasn't a first then, either. We have seen this situation happen several times around the city.

What other measures are you proposing?

We need more space for students to live in. So there's a need for new complexes of student apartments. We are also considering allowing the *hospita* system, meaning families can take a student into their house. According to the current rules for student housing, that is not allowed. Interview by Daan Bauwens

WEEK IN ACTIVITIES

Kid Rock

Concert for kids with top performers on the main stage, plus bouncy castles, archery, trampolines, go-karts and more. **10 July, 9.30-17.00, Standaard Wetteren football club, Massesteenweg 65A, Wetteren, €12**

\ WWW.KID-ROCK.BE

Leuven on Stage

Free city-wide street theatre festival, with continuous performances by international groups, including circus acts, fire artists, puppeteers and more. Also workshops, repair cafe, face painting, free art hunt. **11-13 July, Leuven city centre**

\ WWW.LEUVENINSCENE.BE

Cherry Festival

Free expo with more than 250 varieties of cherries from Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, guided tours of the historic cherry orchard, stands with local cherry preparations and products, plus children's activities. **13 July, 10.00-18.00, Landcommanderij Alden-Biesen, Kasteelstraat 6, Bilzen**

\ WWW.BOOMGAARDENSTICHTING.BE

Waregem Greenbelt

Choose from four bike routes between 15 and 80km and walking routes of 6, 10 and 14km. Each route includes at least one rest stop with refreshment or snack and participants are entered in a prize raffle. **13 July, starting at 7.30, Grote Markt, Waregem, €5**

\ WWW.WAREGEMSEGORDEL.BE

Laugh Festival

Free street theatre, comedy and music festival. Don't miss the parade on Friday evening featuring Brazilian samba bands, African drums and Chinese lion dancers. **8-12 July, parade and outdoor performances on 11 July at 19.00, Houthalen-Helchteren**

\ WWW.LACHFESTIVAL.BE

International Cartoon Festival

The theme this year, in partnership with the University of Leuven, is "Everyone's a Genius", with a focus on cartoons about science, DNA and genetics. Original comic strips and cartoons from international artists. **13 July-14 September, 10.00-19.00, festival tent on the beach at Knokke Casino, free.**

\ [HTTP://CARTOONFESTIVAL.KNOKKE-HEIST.BE](http://CARTOONFESTIVAL.KNOKKE-HEIST.BE)

Urban storytelling

Ghent film project brings together multiple scripts and directors



Daan Bauwens

More articles by Daan \ flanderstoday.eu

\ FACEBOOK.COM/FOLLOWGENT

Both would-be and professional screenwriters will soon have a chance to see their stories come to life in full-feature motion pictures, and this for the second time. Just like last year, Irish movie producer Declan Lynch – who divides his time between Dublin and Ghent – is looking for 10 short scripts, which will be woven together in a 90-minute feature to be screened at the Ghent Film Festival in October.

FollowGent 2014 will be realised, as it was last year, with a budget close to zero. Looking back on 2013, Lynch described their first run as a learning experience. "We succeeded in making an 80-minute feature that was screened at the festival twice," he says. "But this year we're trying to do things a bit differently."

Last year, the scripts had to feature both a male and female character. "As a consequence, most of the scripts were about relationships, except for one horror script that was based on Nosferatu," Lynch says. "This year, the story can be about anything, as long as it uses the city of Ghent as a backdrop."

Lynch expects to receive scripts both from veteran and first-time writers. Last year, Jo Verhenne, a bio-engineer who had taken just one screenwriting course at the time the call for scripts went out, was selected with a script based on Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*.

"In my version, the men were replaced by women," Verhenne tells me, resulting in *Reservoir Cats*. "Of course, the question was: Will they kill each other as easily as the men in the original flick?"

Thrilled to see her story acted out



© Follow Gent FollowGent2014 producer Declan Lynch says last's year edition was a learning experience



© Follow Gent Reservoir Cats takes a gender-bending look at Quentin Tarantino's cult classic

and produced by professionals, Verhenne is now writing a new script for this year's edition. "My next story will contain a lot more humour," she says, adding that that's "much harder to write, but much more fun".

Maryam Kamal Hedayat was also among last year's 10 selected screenwriters. After graduating from film school, she primarily worked as a producer. It was only after seeing last year's open call and noting one important missing element that she dared write her first screenplay. "There was no script that dealt with the immi-

grant community," she says. "How can you paint a picture of the city of Ghent without talking about its migrants?"

For her film, Kamal Hedayat wanted to show another side to the migrant story. "It tells the story of two ordinary people leading normal, everyday lives – a Moroccan boy and a Tunisian girl," she explains. "They grow up in small villages outside of Ghent and then move into the city to study. They meet, get married and after some years they break up. Their foreign origins are but a backdrop to their personal story."

Unlike most of the other writers, Kamal Hedayat directed her own script, but under enormous time constraints. "There wasn't enough time to prepare well. At the same time, a lot of people at the screenings had questions about the ending of the script: What would happen to the characters now they had broken up?"

So, Kamal Hedayat set to work on a sequel for this year's edition. "It's quite probable that the story of the Tunisian girl will be interwoven with the story of one of the other characters from one of the other scripts used in last year's film," she says.

In Lynch's view, this inter-relatedness is exactly what FollowGent2014 is aiming for. "There needs to be more interconnectedness between the featured scripts than we had last year," he says. "This will make the movie stronger and more enjoyable to watch. But that also means there will need to be more interaction between the directors and more interplay between directors and writers. Writers can be asked to redraft their story, maybe even a couple of times. Directors can decide in which direction they want the universe of the film to move."

But knowing his film needs to be finished and ready for screening in October, the producer remains modest. He has already received six scripts and is now on the lookout for directors. "Everything depends on how engaged the writers and directors are," he says. "It all depends on the energy of people."

Interested writers can send their scripts to followgent@gmail.com until 1 August

BITE Sweet lobster

Two weeks ago it was Fish of the Year, last week it was Ostend chefs, and this week we complete the seafood trifecta with lobster.

But not just any old lobster. The Flemish tend to eat lobster from Norway, Scotland and – if you're a customer of Sergio Herman at The Jane in Antwerp – from the Oosterschelde. That's the part of the Scheldt estuary north of the islands of North and South Beveland in Zeeland, the Netherlands. It's closed off from the sea by the storm surge barrier built after the disastrous floods of 1953.

But lobster we're concerned with today is from Nova Scotia, and it was brought to us two weeks ago by the province of Nova Scotia, and specifically by Renee Lavallée, who goes by the handle of "Feisty Chef" online.

Lavallée is a Québécoise who now lives in the wild Atlantic province and runs the Shack Oyster Bar on the seafront in the capital, Halifax, as well as a sandwich place in Dartmouth, where they serve lobster rolls. In the Atlantic provinces of Canada



and the US, lobster is cheap and plentiful – a food for the average citizen (probably because the rich found it too difficult to eat with any elegance). According to Christof Malysse of the import business Lobsterfish in Deerlijk, West Flanders, Belgians are demanding customers. The Nova Scotia variety goes down well because the lobster is small, its flesh compact and meaty. The Atlantic coast is relatively clean, washed by Arctic currents, but the Canadians differ from

the Americans in the way the lobster grows. US lobsters tend to grow too fast, Malysse explains, so that the flesh is less solid, largely composed of water, making the yield of edible meat much lower than its denser Canadian counterpart.

That solid, dense character of the Nova Scotia lobster was revealed in the dishes served by Lavallée at a recent press event hosted by the province of Nova Scotia. Her *amuse* of tartare of lobster was perfectly capable of holding its own against chicons and citrus; a tail in a bisque *monté au beurre* with asparagus tips and fava beans accentuated the lobster's sweetness; and a steamed baby lobster with melted butter and dill sported an accompaniment of mousseline of carrot so rich and smooth it very nearly pushed the crustacean into second place. But not quite. Nova Scotia lobster is imported by Lobsterfish and can be ordered online from their headquarters or in person at their Brussels branch on Brandhoutkaai in the Sint-Katelijne area.

\ Alan Hope

\ WWW.LOBSTERFISH.BE

A tale of two cities

Permanent open-air art route Unie Hasselt-Genk connects Limburg's biggest cities



Katy Desmond

More articles by Katy \ flanderstoday.eu

WWW.UNIEHASSELTGENK.BE

It all started with a bridge. The Tuikabel Bridge to be exact, a cable-stayed bridge that reaches over the Albert Canal linking the two Limburg cities of Hasselt and Genk. Once dubbed "one of the most pointless pieces of architecture in Belgium", it was built in the late 1970s to accommodate traffic between these two neighbouring cities. But the motorways it was meant to serve were never laid.

Today, however, the Tuikabelbrug has been given new life, serving as the centrepiece for Unie Hasselt-Genk, an expansive programme of open-air art in which contemporary artists and local cultural organisations establish connections, new and old, physically and socially, between the two cities.

Headed by Z33 in Hasselt, Limburg province's institution for contemporary art, Unie Hasselt-Genk welcomes the works of 12 national and international artists who contributed works to 20 locations in, around and between Hasselt and Genk. Surrounding these different works are many cultural events, from rock music to culinary creations, with many of them running until October.

The programme gives locals and visitors the chance to take in some fresh air and explore art that reflects and incorporates the surrounding cultures and environments of the two cities. The works are set up as an art route that visitors can explore by foot, bike, train and even boat (for works along the canal).

Curator Tom van Gestel created Unie Hasselt-Genk – *unie* meaning "union" in Dutch – to help join two cities that he sees as geographically very close, but culturally nearly diametric opposites: Hasselt is an old, traditional Flemish city with a medieval historical centre, while Genk was ostensibly built in the 20th century to house mine workers.

"The two cities lie 15 kilometres apart; both have about 70,000 inhabitants. They speak the same language," he says. "But they are totally different." But, he says, they are very complementary. "What one city has, the other city does not."

The Unie Hasselt-Genk art programme, then, is about building connections, and the Tuikabelbrug is key. "I see this bridge as a kind of symbol," the curator says. "It has no meaning except that it is monumental and it is in between the two cities."

Van Gestel's main focus was never the exact type of art – visual or otherwise – that was presented in the Unie programme. What he was concerned about was creating relationships: Many of the pieces have an interactive or social aspect aimed at connecting the cities, whether their people, their institutions or their physical infrastructures.

Therefore, the artworks pop up in public meeting spaces – for example in the Cambrius bar in Hasselt, where the Antwerp-based artist Rinus Van de Velde staged a *tableau vivant*. Using the tableau as well as Rembrandt's "The Night Watch" as a guide, Van de Velde drew an enormous charcoal mural portraying a bar that never was – one where real, local pub-goers are depicted next to the artist's friends and heroes.

"Rinus thinks he has a very boring life, always sitting in his studio, so he is always imagining himself sitting in totally different situations, like being in a chess championship against famous chess players," van Gestel explains. "Now he wanted to create a scene in a bar where everyone would be people he admires in the arts."

Even pieces that look like more straightforward, formal artworks have an underlying social message. Felice Varini's "Trois ellipses ouvertes en désordre", for instance, uses the roofs and facades of 99 buildings in Hasselt's city centre to create an enormous painting. "More than 100 homeowners had to sign agreements that people could walk across their roofs," van Gestel says. "So it brings together quite a lot of people in the centre of

Hasselt to make this work possible." In his efforts to unite communities, van Gestel also recognises and harnesses the connecting power of the non-visual arts, seen in projects like Circumstance's *Periphery songs*, a series of soundwalks that lead visitors through the lives of four local people in a swirl of language and music inspired by the surroundings.

In Genk, the home of 19th-century artist Emile Van Doren, today a museum of the artist's work, was again transformed into a residential workspace. In a project called *De Rock*, Dutch artist Erik Odijk transformed the museum into an artists' colony, hosting an impressive list of artists, including Vaast Colson, Jean Bernard Koeman and Rudy J Luijters, among many others.

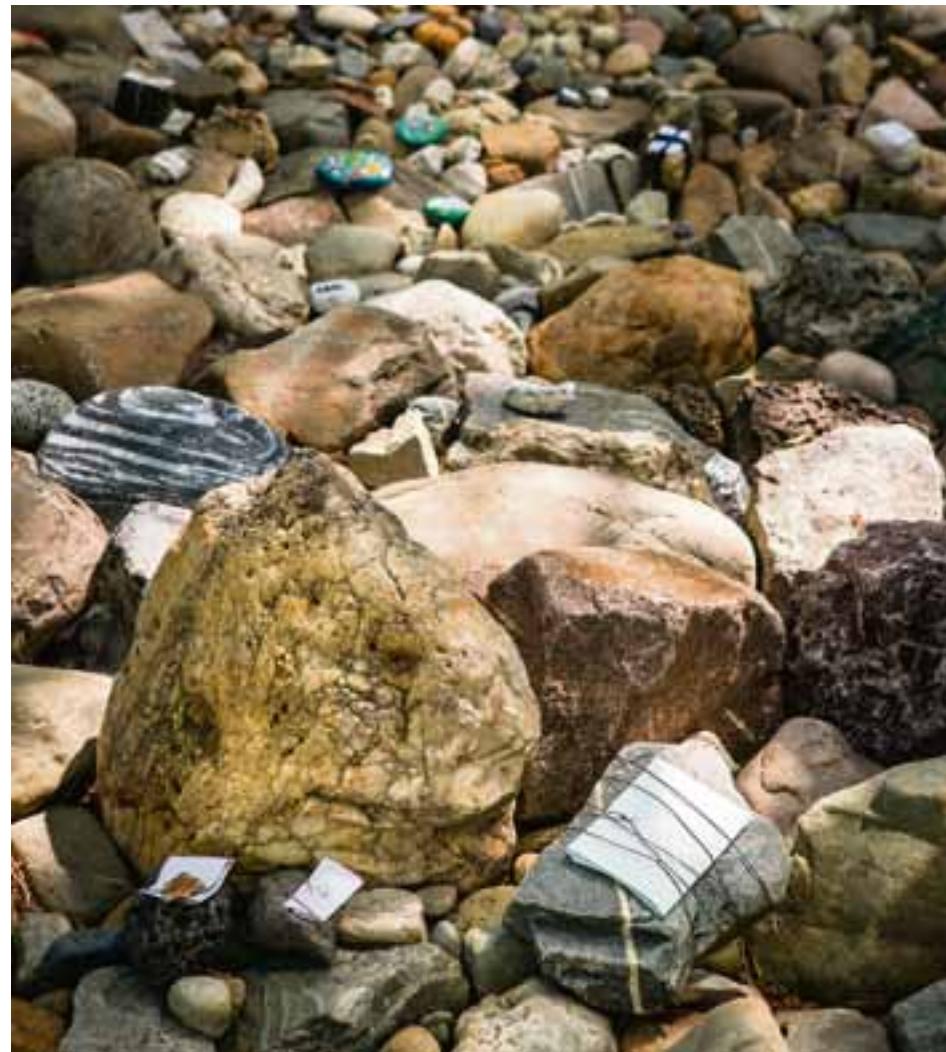
Using the house and surrounding grounds as their playground, the artists turned the space into an unusual sculpture garden of rocks, representing memories and commemorating people and experiences of the artists' lives.

To close the summer programme, van Gestel thought up an elaborate finale that he describes as "the apotheosis of the project." In October, *The Sound of Hasselt-Genk* will take place, a mega-musical event aimed at symbolically uniting the two cities through sound.

Van Gestel asked composer Wim Henderickx to write two scores that he believes encapsulate each city according to its own unique soundscape. Two groups of some 350 musicians and participants, one starting in Hasselt and the other in Genk, will march toward each other, meeting at the Tuikabelbrug – the bridge to nowhere. There, the tracks will combine to make one musical whole, uniting the cities at this important space of physical connection.

But Hasselt and Genk's symbolic union does not end with this grand finale. Many of the works will remain in public spaces, forming a permanent art route for locals and visitors to enjoy.

"I do not see the *Unie* as an exhibition. It is something that has a beginning, but hopefully it will never end," van Gestel says. "I hope the sounds of the finale will go on, played by carillons in the bell towers or whistled by the people while riding their bikes or walking in the city."



© Kristof Vrancken



Dutch artist Erik Odijk collaborated with many other artists to create *De Rock*, a sculpture garden of sorts (above); The infamous Tuikabel Bridge between Hasselt and Genk (left); Felice Varini's "Trois ellipses ouvertes en désordre" features the roofs and facades of 99 buildings in Hasselt's city centre (right)



© Kristof Vrancken

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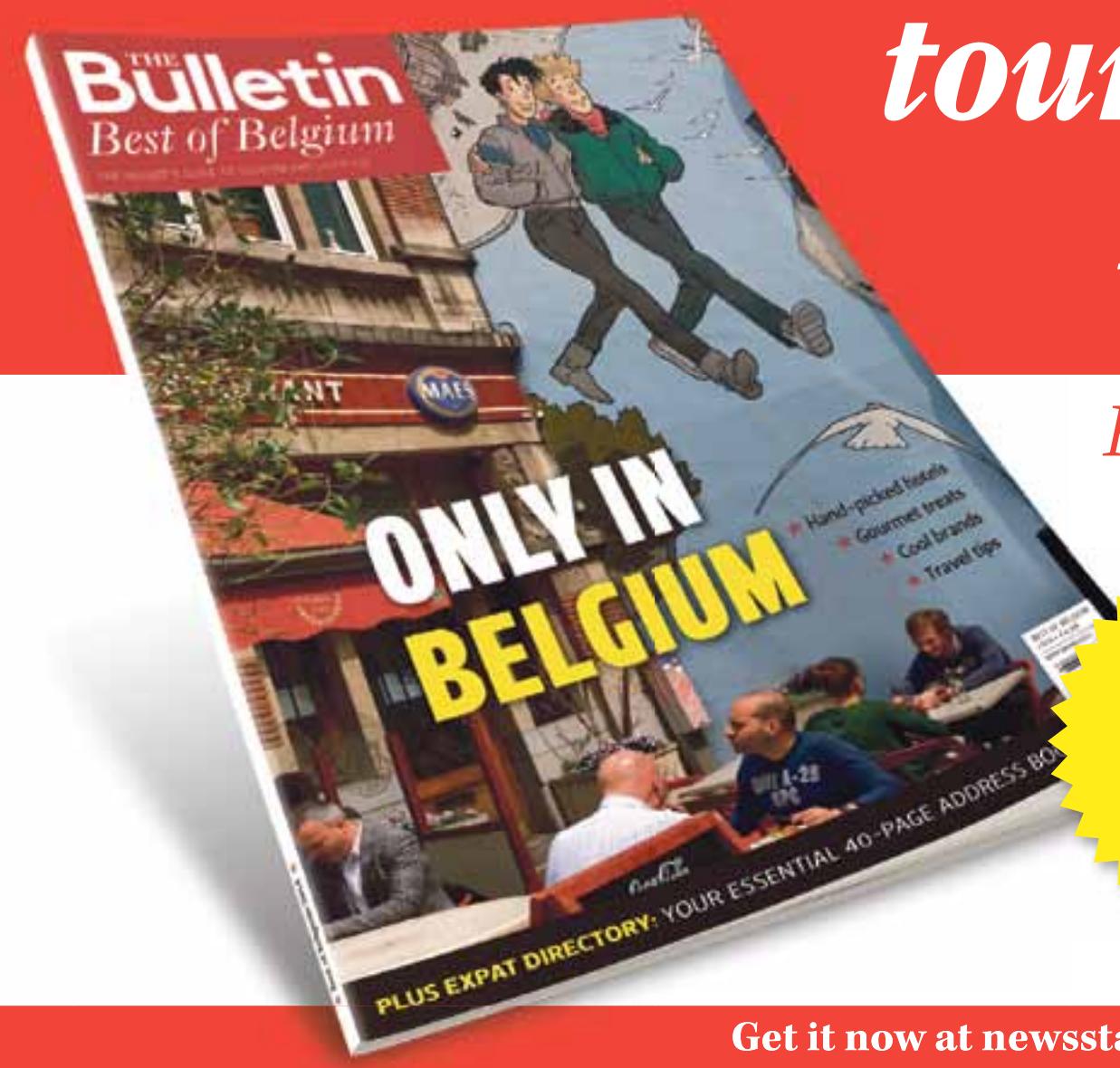
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The funny side of failure

Nele Van den Broeck on her honest songs that tell it like it is



Christophe Verbiest
More articles by Christophe \ flanderstoday.eu

\ WWW.NELENEEDSAHOLIDAY.COM

Everyday hardships are behind the songs that Flemish singer-songwriter Nele Van den Broeck – aka Nele Needs a Holiday – hopes will make her famous. She talks to Flanders Today about the woman behind the music.

“I have big dreams,” says Nele Van den Broeck, who goes by the stage name Nele Needs a Holiday. “I feel like the character in the song by Eels: ‘I dream about so much it is absurd. I want to be an international pop star, the whole shebang.’ Her laughter, for the first but certainly not the last time, fills the Ghent coffee house where we’re talking. “On the other hand, at times I think: Nele, you’re almost 30; aren’t you too old to keep on dreaming? At one of those times I wrote the song ‘Give up the Dream and Get Pregnant’.”

In that song are the lyrics: “It’s better to be loved by one than adored by a million”. But after what she’s just said, it’s difficult to believe that. “I just made a horrendous confession, didn’t I? Because it’s a huge taboo among musicians to say you want to be famous.” But don’t get her wrong: “Not at any cost, of course. I want to be famous because of my music!”

Music was her first love and will probably be her last, but the word “versatile” could have been invented for 29-year-old Van den Broeck. She’s an actress (in Flanders and Vienna, where she’s a part of the ensemble Motschnik), she has worked for television and radio, you can book her to give a theatrical scientific lecture, and did I mention she studied Spanish and German? And of course, she makes music.

“I started writing songs when I was 13,” she says, “but I only found my voice when I was about 20, when I started to write the kind of songs I do as Nele Needs a Holiday. I can say that music is what’s closest to my heart.”

Most of Van den Broeck’s songs are inspired by hardships – great and small – that she encounters. Every time something goes awry in her life, she writes a song about it. “When I feel down, ideas for songs pop into my head. I don’t feel like I deserve credit for that. Of course, it’s not a finished song. In the end, writing a good song is 1% inspiration and 99% transpiration. It’s easier when you’re stable and aren’t lying in bed with a hangover until three in the afternoon.”

There isn’t much fiction in her songs, Van den Broeck says. “In ‘Drunk Song’, I sing ‘For



Nele Van den Broeck, aka Nele Needs a Holiday, is heading to London to study songwriting, after releasing her debut album

everybody to be seen / I kissed a guy of 17’. He was actually 20, but that doesn’t rhyme. So that’s an exaggeration, but I don’t sing things I have never thought or that have never happened to me. ‘I’m Not Famous But I Am Free’ is about a dodgy manager who ran away with my money. All the clichés you can imagine, but they’re true: It happened to me!”

Van den Broeck got kicked out of the Brussels arts school RITS in her third year. She took revenge by completing a Master’s in

drama at Ghent’s KASK and by writing the song “Loser’s Twist.” When in 2008 she won the musical competition at Ostend’s Theater aan Zee festival, she explicitly dedicated the song to her former RITS teachers. And she has a song called “Do You Remember Made in Taiwan?”. She chuckles. “Made In Taiwan was a band I got kicked out of when I was 20.” And it has disappeared in the mists of time. It sounds like she has a slightly vindictive side. “Guilty as charged!” she says.

“Vengeance is a great source of inspiration.” But there’s more to her songs, in which she is also frankly honest in analysing her own shortcomings. “You can do your absolute best and still fail,” she says. “Many of my songs are about failure. Writing about these experiences is a great way to put things in perspective. And I hope to lift the taboo around failure.”

Van den Broeck, who grew up in Merchtem in Flemish Brabant, is moving to London this summer to study songwriting at the London Centre of Contemporary Music. “I’m especially aiming to enhance my skills in arranging songs,” she says. “The study is important, but so is being in London. I hope to make interesting contacts in the music world.”

A few days before she starts her studies, at the end of September, her debut album, *It’s My Party*, will hit the streets. Finally! Six years after Theater aan Zee, and four years since she reached the final of Humos Rock Rally, Flanders’ most influential rock competition. Since then she has released only a few singles and an EP.

“I had to get better,” she says candidly. “At the time of the Rock Rally, I already had my songs, but I had to grow as a musician.” She is releasing *It’s My Party* herself. “I seriously underestimated the work that goes with it.” With a clouded-over face, she says: “It’s basically sending emails the whole day. At times, I’d love to throw my computer out of the window.”

On her website she mentions her “complete lack of self-confidence”. If that’s true, she hides it well. “At times, I’m overwhelmed by self-hatred.” And the lack of self-confidence? She hesitates, uncharacteristically. “I believe in my songs; I know they’re good. But one of the new ones is called ‘Blabla’, in which I sing: ‘Talking to other people scares the hell out of me’.

“I know nobody believes this, but it is true. I have to pass a threshold to start talking to people. But instead of just stepping over it, I take a run and wildly jump over it: I talk too much and too loudly. When I go to openings, parties or whatever, I play the happy Nele. Being an extrovert is my way of hiding my fears.”

Nele Needs a Holiday plays at M-idzomer in Leuven on 1 August and then across Flanders

MORE NEW MUSIC

Frank Vander linden

Alles wat ze doet

While his band De Mens are taking a sabbatical, singer and guitarist Frank Vander Linden releases this less-is-more EP *Alles wat ze doet* (*Everything She Does*). In five austerely arranged songs (piano, cello, acoustic guitar, but never all of them together) Vander Linden sings about what has always been one of his key subjects: *amore*, the trials and tribulations it brings, but also its possible power (“ze doet je verzen zingen die je niet kent”, “it makes you sing lines that you don’t know”). A song like “Het is maar verdriet” (“It’s Only Grief”) reflects his love for a sadcore band like Red House Painters. It’s music that goes straight to the heart. ★★★★

► www.frankvanderlinden.be

De Nieuwe Snaar

Best of • Parlophone

On 25 April, De Nieuwe Snaar gave their last concert, after a career that had lasted 32 years. This *Best of* gives a great overview of their amazing musical output. De Nieuwe Snaar built a career out of musical shows spiced up with (visual) humour. But this compilation proves that their songs are more than strong enough to stand on their own. At the core they’re folky, but the foursome from Duffel also excel in doo-wop, rockabilly, pop, calypso, boogie, country, jazz and even hip-hop (their famous ‘Dynastic Rap’). Their intelligent lyrics show that Dutch is, contrary to what Flemish musicians sometimes suggest, a flexible language to sing in – if you’re a great lyricist. *Best of* is a worthy epitaph. ★★★★

► www.denieuwsnaar.be



© Johan Jacobs

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Party for end of "The Sequence"

When the Flemish Parliament inaugurated "The Sequence" by artist Arne Quinze in 2008, the understanding was that the piece would stand for five years. Already having extended the popular piece for a year, the parliament has announced a street party to mark its dismantling this month. "The Sequence" is a wooden arch constructed of orange-painted beams, 80m long and spanning Leuvenseweg between the parliament building and the parliament's offices across the road. It was installed for the Festival of Politics held by the parliament in 2008. Since then, it has become a striking landmark. The wood from the piece will be recycled. To form a more lasting memory of the artwork, the parliament invites anyone who has a photo or video of "The Sequence" to upload it to the Facebook page, where it will be part of a digital monument. The free party will be held under the work on 12 July and will include a lightshow and a DJ set by Lefto. The fun begins at 21.00.

\ WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/VLAAMSPARLEMENT

Herman Teirlinck home for sale

The municipality of Beersel in Flemish Brabant is to put the home of Flemish writer Herman Teirlinck (1879-1967) up for sale, after closing the museum installed there. Teirlinck, a poet, magazine editor, author, journalist, playwright and arts functionary, lived in the house for 31 years up to his death, but Beersel closed the museum last year to save money and due to lack of interest. The government of Flanders has listed the house, together with two adjoining plots of land. Beersel is appealing the listing of the land in court, claiming loss of income.

Monument prize nominees announced

The four nominees for this year's Monument Prize have been announced: Ursel Castle in Bornem, Antwerp province, the former railway station in Moerbeke-Waas, East Flanders, Huis Proot in Koekelare, West Flanders, and the non-profit De Muren Spreken, in Londerzeel, Flemish Brabant. The Monument Prize is awarded annually to a public or private initiative of particular importance for monuments, landscape or archaeology. Each nominee receives a prize of €2,500. The one chosen as the winner in September – to coincide with Monument Day – receives an extra €12,500.

Making the local cut

Six of Belgium's best and brightest photographers on show at Bozar



Katy Desmond

More articles by Katy \ flanderstoday.eu

Pointing to a picture of a beautiful Indian woman in an elegant azure sari sitting on a four-poster bed, smoking a cigarette and staring dreamily towards the ceiling, Nicholas Lewis tells me: "She is a Bollywood actress, and this is her bedroom." We are standing in *The Belgian Six* photography show, which takes up four rooms in Bozar. Lewis, founder and editor-in-chief of the English-language bi-annual magazine *The Word*, which covers photography, music and art in Belgium, is giving me a tour of the exhibition, which he curated as part of the Summer of Photography festival now on in Brussels until the end of August. The photograph is by Max Pinckers, one of six young photographers Lewis selected to be part of "the Belgian Six", a name that tips its hat to the famous Antwerp Six designers who dominated the European fashion scene in the 1980s.

The exhibition presents the work of six photographers whom Lewis believes to be at the top of the list of local talent to watch out for. Apart from Pinckers, that group includes Sarah Eechaut, Hana Miletic, Sébastien Bonin, Bieke Depoorter and David Widart.

Lewis says that choosing which artists would be included in the show was an easy task. "We always knew what we wanted to represent in the show," he says. "These photographers just kind of popped out by themselves."

Several of the artists had worked with Lewis on *The Word* assignments; others the curator had only followed from afar. None of them are currently represented by a gallery, but Lewis warns that this does not mean they are novices. "You cannot call them emerging photographers because they have already had a lot of shows and a lot of interest from publications," he says. "But they are also not yet established; they're really on the cusp."

With his broad knowledge of the type of work photographers are doing today, it was always clear to Lewis that diversity would be key to the exhibition. "It is the intention to represent different strands of photography, so you have everything from documentary photography, to something that is much more abstract, leaning towards painting, to Dash Snow-like autobiographical work."

While each has a different approach, according to Lewis, what they share is a unique, intriguing vision on photography today.

The scenarist

At 25, Pinckers is both the youngest of the Belgian Six and the biggest name of them all.



© Max Pinckers
Max Pinckers' series *Will They Sing Like Raindrops or Leave Me Thirsty* shatters illusions about life in Bombay



© Sarah Eechaut
Sarah Eechaut is the only one of the six artists who turns her lens on her own family life

"Max Pinckers is becoming very important in photography, especially in the last two years," adds Christophe De Jaeger, Bozar's programme co-ordinator for the Summer of Photography.

Shot in Bombay, Pinckers' photographs are of elaborately staged scenes built in the subjects' real surroundings. While they look like film sets, Pinckers' work also shatters illusions about life in Bombay.

"This is her life; this is where she lives," Lewis says, describing the earlier picture, which is part of Pinckers' *Will They Sing Like Raindrops or Leave Me Thirsty* series. "A woman smoking – you would never see that in film in India. It really makes a statement."

This hyper-reality in his photographs is quickly becoming Pinckers' trademark. "He stages scenarios, but in a way that can be taken seriously," the curator explains.

in quite stark or harsh contexts," Lewis says. "Most of the time, she goes into places that are very poor, but you do not feel like you are exploiting them. You do not feel like you are looking at poverty, but that you are looking at their lives."

The documentarian

Like Depoorter, David Widart looks to real life for his art. However, his work is edgier and more raw than the others', inspired by the artist's interest in hip-hop and gang culture.

Lewis compares Widart's work to that of the late American photographer Dash Snow. "He has a lot of heavy-hitting imagery that really screams to be heard, but, for the most part, he goes to interesting places and photographs what he sees around him."

The activist

Brussels artist Hana Miletic, meanwhile, presents a series of photographs of hairdressers' shop windows in the Brussels district of Molenbeek. "There is an intensity to the photos," says Lewis. "She also photographed the pavement in front of the windows, recontextualising her work within the typical Brussels cobblestones."

Instead of the cool, detached eye of the documentarian, Miletic's work carries with it a message, says Lewis. "Her work has points it wants to get across about culture. She makes social statements with photography."

The painter

Sebastian Bonin is a photographer without a camera. He does not take photographs. Instead, he creates portraits of colour using a technique in which he projects coloured light onto photograph paper, making for strange effects of bright, Pantone-like colours.

"Photography is much more of just a process, a means to an end for him. If he could do this with paint, he would do it with paint," Lewis says.

The mother

Lewis calls Sarah Eechaut the "most emotional and tactile of the photographers". The Ghent native is the only one of the artists to put her own family life forward as art. "She is all about the feeling and the relationships she manages to build with the subjects she photographs," says Lewis, pointing out that her work began to develop along these lines 18 months ago when Eechaut first became a mother. "There is a new fragility that has come to her work and a maturity as well."

Until 31 August

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels

Join the party

Flemish Community Day

July 11 Across Flanders

WWW.VLAANDERENFEEST.EU
WWW.BRUSSELDANST.BE

On 11 July, 1302, a force of civil militias from the County of Flanders defeated an army of French knights on a field outside Kortrijk. Later named the Battle of the Golden Spurs after the spurs taken from the field as trophies by the victorious Flemish, it was a notable event in military history as one of the few times that infantry prevailed over an opponent mounted on horseback.

The battle has come to be seen as symbolic of the struggle for Flemish language rights and political equality within the Belgian state. It was only in 1973 that the anniversary of the battle was declared the Feestdag van Vlaanderen, or Flemish Community Day. Since 1992, the government of Flanders has organised Vlaanderen Feest!, an 11-day festival promoting Flemish awareness and unity.



© Alexander Meeus

Performances by Flemish artists, especially performances in Dutch, abound. Vlaanderen Feest! is one of the sponsors behind Vlaanderen Muziekland, a free concert series featuring Flemish bands that travels from city to city all summer. On 11 July, the show comes to the Grote Markt in Antwerp, with a fully Dutch-language festival edition. The concerts are also broadcast on TV channel Eén. Brussels, meanwhile, does Flemish Community Day in a big way, with performances in the Grote Markt, De Munt and the region's parliament building. A highlight is the annual Brussels Dances

(pictured), where this year you'll learn steps to the song "O Saracino" and then show off your own moves as DJ Buscemi and the great accordionist Rocco Granata take the stage. It all happens on the Grote Markt, but the party continues afterwards at De Munt.

Brussels also hosts a big parade on the day, circling around the centre from Europaplein to Muntplein. Expect musicians, artists, baton-twirling and a spot of yellow. At the local level, there are dozens of events taking place in the days leading up to 11 July and on the holiday itself. In Bruges, the girl's chorus Scala give a free concert on 10 July, and a free rock festival the following day features popular '90s band Gorki. In many cities, such as Hasselt and Mechelen, public singalongs to Flemish hits are an annual tradition. Check the website for events in your neighbourhood. \ Diana Goodwin

CONCERT

Sergio Mendes

15 July, 19.00

Rivierenhof, Antwerp

WWW.OPENLUCHTTHEATER.BE

Let's face it, we have Brazil on the brain. So it's an opportune time for one of that country's best-loved musicians to visit us. Antwerp's open-air theatre hosts the composer, pianist and singer Sergio Mendes, who has been fusing traditional Brazilian sounds with American jazz for over 50 years. The industry



MUSIC FESTIVAL

Cactus Music Festival

12-14 July

Minnewaterpark, Bruges

WWW.CACTUSFESTIVAL.BE

Cactus Muziekcentrum organises international pop and rock concerts in Bruges all the year round, but this weekend is their claim to fame across the region. Twenty bands from Belgium and beyond perform open-air sets in Minnewater Park. Yes, you can even camp there, in the middle of the city. Although international in scope, Cactus spotlights home-grown talent. The festival's opening day sees performances by four buzz-worthy Flemish acts: Coely (pictured), Admiral Freebee, Arsenal and Selah Sue. Other guests hail from the UK (Massive Attack, Mogwai), the US (Mark Lanegan, M Ward) and even Niger (Bombino). \ GV



VISUAL ARTS

Pierre Alechinsky

Until 16 November

Erasmus House, Brussels

WWW.ERASMUSHOUSE.MUSEUM

In 1950 Pierre Alechinsky won the Young Belgian Painters Prize, opening the floodgates of opportunity. Before long, the Brussels-born painter was showing in Paris, Tokyo and New York as a member of the world-famous Cobra group. Although he ensconced himself in Paris early on, Alechinsky has always maintained ties to his homeland. In the exhibition *Grass Writings*, two of his series are on display; one is inspired by the ambitious 18th-century Danish botanical catalogue *Flora Danica*, and the other explores the power of sight. The artist's peculiar apprenticeship is evident in both. Alechinsky never set out to become a painter. In art school he studied typography and printing. When he picked up the



© Pierre Alechinsky Longues-vues

paintbrush later in life, he would let his previous design training inform his practice. \ GV

FAMILY

Parkkaffee

Until 31 August

Parkkaffee, Ghent

WWW.PARKKAFFEE.BE

Every summer the sleepy Ghent suburb of Mariakerke comes alive thanks to Parkkaffee. The two-month festival takes place in the massive back garden of a small castle, complete with pond, hammocks, evening bonfires, food, cocktails and circus caravans. Yes, this event is for the carny in all of us. Tarot readers are on duty daily, and the programme



is brimming with special performances by illusionists, acrobats and musicians. This Sunday, youth performers (and their horses) from local circus school Circusplaneet put on a family-friendly workshop called STROEF! If you miss them at Parkkaffee, you can also catch the Circusplaneet crew later in the month at Gentse Feesten. \ GV

Concert

Brussels

Marie Wannant Band: Brussels' art-deco landmark Archiduc makes the first day of the work week fun again with the free concert series Tell Me Why I Do Like Mondays. This week's guests: Belgian *chanteresse* Wannant and her electro-rock group (including Arno's bassist Mirko Bavonic). **14 July, 21.00, Archiduc, Antoine Dansaertstraat 6**

WWW.ARCHIDUC.NET

Classical

Brussels

Ismini Giannakis: The Belgo-Greek soprano performs a matinee concert of works by Mozart, Puccini and Ravel, accompanied by pianist Tonia Tambouri. **13 July, 14.30, Art Base, Zandstraat 29**

WWW.ART-BASE.BE

Visual arts

Ghent

Roger Ballen: Ghent's psychiatric hospital-cum-museum exhibits the surreal work of Roger Ballen. The New York-born, South Africa-based photographer specialises in uncanny compositions, incorporating birds, masks and other psychoanalytical symbols. **Until 3 August, Dr Guislain Museum, Jozef Guislainstraat 43**

WWW.MUSEUMDRGUILAIN.BE

Music festival

Gierle (Antwerp province)

Sjock: This rock'n'roll festival, inaugurated way back in 1976, celebrates its 39th edition with headliners The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion and The Sonics. But the act to watch is up-and-coming Detroit psychobilly outfit Koffin Kats. **11-13 July**

WWW.SJOCK.COM

Brussels

Brosella Folk and Jazz: Nearly as long-lived as Sjock, this festival unfolds its 38th edition in two parts: Saturday is all folk and Sunday is all jazz. The venue is one of the capital's hidden gems: the Groentheater, in the shadow of the Atomium. **12-13 July, Groentheater, Ossegempark**

WWW.BROSELLA.BE

Film

Brussels

Kinshasa Beat: Inspired by Belgian director Marc-Henri Wajnberg's eye-opening documentaries, Flagey presents a programme of recent films about life in the Congolese capital. **Until 28 August, Flagey, Heilig-Kruisplein**

WWW.FLAGEY.BE

Talking sports

Tour de France comes to Flanders Fields



Leo Cendrowicz

More articles by Leo \ flanderstoday.eu

This year's Tour de France, which started on Saturday, passes through Ypres and other wartime killing fields as the world's greatest cycling race commemorates the centenary of the First World War.

Several stages will run this year along the war's fields, trenches and fronts in northern France and Belgium. Although the three-week Tour began in Leeds, England, it crossed the English Channel three days later, and riders and fans will have several occasions to pay homage to war victims. Stages 5 to 10 largely trace the 645-kilometre Western Front, starting within sight of Ypres' Menin Gate and progressing to the Swiss border. The 1914 Tour was the last before a five-year suspension due to the war. Of the 145 riders starting on 28 June, the day Archduke Franz Ferdinand was shot and the war began, 15 of them, including three Tour champions, would die in the fighting. In all, an estimated 45 cyclists who had raced in pre-war Tours were killed in the war. And what of this year's riders?

The best Flemish chance is likely to be Jurgen Van den Broeck, who finished fourth in 2010 and 2012. He crashed out of last year's Tour de France, seriously injuring his knee, but appears to be returning to his best now. The 31-year-old Lotto Belisol rider from Herentals, Antwerp province, is again a podium contender this year, but don't expect him to get close to favourites Chris Froome and Alberto Contador.

One potential contender is Jan Bakelants, winner of the second stage last year and brief holder of the yellow jersey. Bakelants, 28, from Oudenaarde in West Flanders, finished the tour 18th overall, making him the top Flemish finisher.



© Tim De Waele/Corbis

Flemish cyclist Jurgen Van den Broeck on the podium last month

Three big local names will be absent from the Tour. Flemish favourite Tom Boonen is not taking part, claiming he wants instead to focus on shorter races in Belgium and Spain. Jelle Vanendert, who came third in the ranking for the red-and-white checked jersey for the climbers in 2011, has been dropped by his Lotto-Belisol team. Also sitting it out is Philippe Gilbert, the third-placed sprinter in the 2011 Tour: He is also focusing his programme on Belgium and Spain, before he bids to take the world road race title for the second time in his career.

Teamwise, Flanders started with two strong contenders. Wevelgem-based Omega Pharma-Quick Step were early favourites, with top sprinter Mark Cavendish from the UK and Switzerland's Tony Martin – however, Cavendish was forced to pull out of the competition after fracturing his collarbone in a crash on the first day. And with Van Den Broeck, the Lotto-Belisol team will be present in the sprints, the breaks and the overall ranking battle.

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Poll

Schools plan to charge parents up to €270 a year for supervising pupils while they eat their packed lunches. What do you think?

a. One in three school kitchens recently failed a health inspection. Schools should be thanking parents for taking the pressure off

67%

b. The government decided that lunchtime supervision is not part of a teacher's paid duties, so they should pay the fees

25%

b.. School isn't free babysitting; parents need to pay if teachers watch their kids outside of the classroom

8%

Another pretty overwhelming result: By a majority of two to one you rejected the sandwich tax charged by many schools for the supervision of packed-lunch kids at lunchtime, based on the news story that one in three school kitchens failed an inspection, so the schools can hardly claim to be

offering any reasonable alternative. Be that as it may, the problem will need to be resolved by September, because the charges are most likely going ahead. Teachers won the right some time ago not to have lunch supervision duties counted as part of their normal hours, and

the chances of any new government taking that away are slim. What's more likely is some kind of cap, well below the €270 a year charged by one school for watching kids eat what their parents provided.

Next week's question:

Ghent alderman Tom Balthazar has suggested letting students live in empty shops and offices. What do you think?

Log in to the Flanders Today website and click on VOTE to let us know what you think

www.flanderstoday.eu

VOICES OF FLANDERS TODAY

Giles Richard @giles555

They give the world those delicious chocolates and this is how you repay them Argentina?! #WorldCup2014 #belgium-vsargentina

Laura ♥ Break Free @Twi_Arianator

Saw the sun going down. Now it's already going up. #festival#RockWerchter #RW14

Ryan Chote @ryanchote

Horse-drawn carriage carrying #Omer #beer in #Brussels. A really delicious blonde #ale FYI!... <http://instagram.com/p/qAhl-CoaD/>

NATV @natalisucks

Update! We're at the Ommegang Medieval Festival, commemorating Charles V! #Ommegang #Brussels <http://instagram.com/p/qAF-NqywP8/>

Carles Carboneras @carbonectrix

A rare sight - children playing in the street! #brussels #summertime

R.Lukaku Bolingoli @RomeluLukaku9

Thanks for our support! You're awesome! Strive for greatness for the euro 2016! #Belgium #RedDevils pic.twitter.com/KLx89uqef5

Ruth Green @rootrunning

I've never had to think about Belgium this much in my life. #USAvsBEL

THE LAST WORD

Will power

"We feel terribly betrayed."

The nieces and nephews of the late Leon Van Dierendonck, farmer and animal transporter from Bruges, were left with nothing when he bequeathed his €3 million fortune to the Flemish League against Cancer

Blunder bus

"Scandalous and disrespectful. De Lijn can come too late – which they do all the time – and they don't have to compensate anyone."

The parents of Kristof Bruininkx are outraged at a bill for €109.75 sent by De Lijn for delays caused by an accident in which their son lost his life

Tough talk

"I have no need for compassion. Not being able to walk again ... of course I was devastated for a couple of hours, but there are worse things in life."

Motocross racer Joel Roelants, aged 25 from Grobbendonk in Antwerp province, has been told he will be paralysed from the ribs down after a severe accident in Italy

Kiss victory goodbye

"I'm sad. In the 75th minute I put some extra red lipstick on specially, but it didn't do any good."

Actress Joy-Anna Thielemans watched Belgium's defeat from the VIP area at Werchter festival



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