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“Shamelessly romantic”

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker talks about her new piece, based on Arnold Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*



Débora Votquenne

More articles by Débora \ flanderstoday.eu

A new work by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker is always something to look forward to, but this time she's opened herself up to a narrative structure – and how. A woman must communicate to her lover that she's pregnant with another man's child.

It must have been the late 1990s. A friend and I sneaked into a former technical school in Leuven designed by famous modernist architect Henry van de Velde. The extraordinary building with its uncountable windows and distinctive ceramic wall tiles would soon be closed to the public to undergo restoration.

We wanted to enter this modernist temple not just because we were intrigued by the architect's work, but also because we wanted to grab what would probably be our last chance to see the original setting for the film made from the famous *Rosas danst Rosas* choreography by the grande dame of contemporary dance, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker.

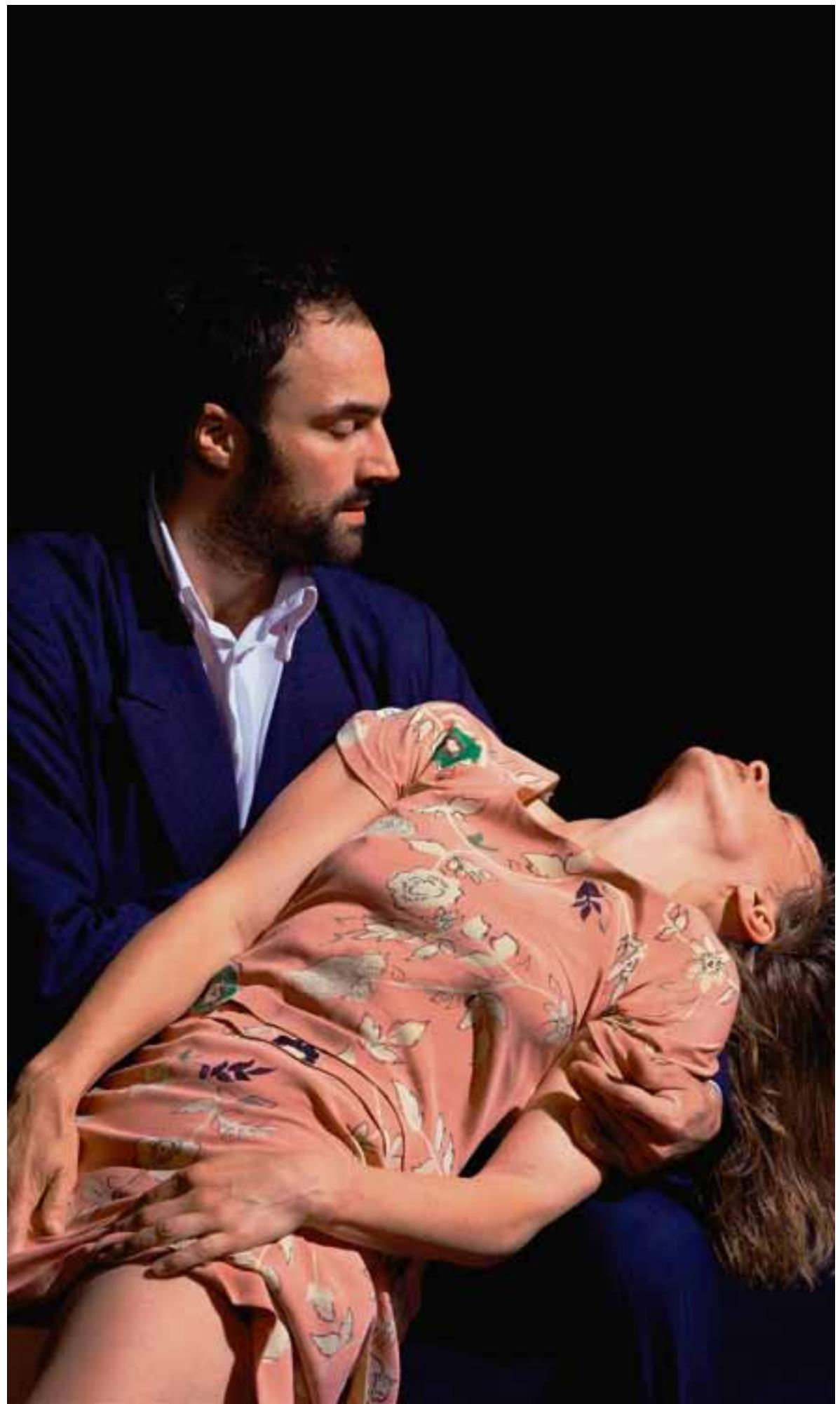
This unique performance, with captivating repetitive music, was my first encounter with her work. Today I am meeting her at her dance studio in the Vorst district of Brussels, where she is putting the final touches to her new *Verklärte Nacht*, which will have its world premiere at the Ruhrtriennale festival in Bochum, Germany, this week, before being performed at her studios in

“

It is an ode to the way people can share their love for each other

September.

It's a performance for three dancers. The light is neutral and objective, yet the story is romantic, as is the music. The piece opens with a man and a woman walking in the moonlight. The woman subsequently tells the man she loves that she's expecting a baby by another man, who she does not love. The man responds to her unexpected confession with endless generosity; he says that the love they feel for each other will transfigure



© Anne Van Aerschot

Welsh war memorial unveiled

Ceremony in Langemark draws Welsh tourists and first minister



Alan Hope

Follow Alan on Twitter \ @AlanHopeFT

A permanent memorial to the Welsh soldiers who died in the First World War was unveiled at the weekend in Langemark, West Flanders, by the Welsh first minister, Carwyn Jones.

The memorial (*pictured*), designed by Welsh sculptor Lee Odishow, depicts a bronze dragon atop a stone plinth, made from stone transported from Pontypridd in Wales to Flanders. At the base of the memorial is soil gathered from the summits of Mount Snowdon and Pen Y Fan, as well as the home of Welsh poet Hedd Wyn. Wyn was fatally wounded near the site, on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. He is buried at Artillery Wood cemetery near Boezinge.

"This year we mark the centenary of the start of the First World War," said Jones at the ceremony. "It is timely that we should be unveiling this memorial now, as a mark of respect and remembrance for all those from Wales who faced unimaginable adversity here."

He also paid tribute to those who had campaigned for a permanent memorial to

the Welsh dead, against the initial reluctance of the Welsh government. "I congratulate all involved in this very important campaign. This impressive monument is testament to the enduring need to continue to strive for peace in our own time."

The campaign raised more than €124,000 on its own, before the government allotted €31,000 to the effort. The ground was donated by the municipality of Langemark-Poelkapelle, and the garden surrounding the monument was a gift from the province of West Flanders.

After the unveiling, a number of Welsh groups took part in the nightly Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres, accompanied by the North Wales Rugby Choir. An estimated 40,000 Welsh soldiers died in the war. "People not born yet will come here to remember the dreadful history this memorial represents," said Peter Carter Jones, co-ordinator of the Welsh Memorial in Flanders group. "We will not forget them."

The ceremony was also attended by Flemish



© Courtesy Twitter/@fmwales

minister-president Geert Bourgeois, Langemark-Poelkapelle mayor Alain Wyffels and hundreds of Welsh people who travelled over

for the event.

In related news, all the graves at the Flanders Field American Cemetery in Waregem, West Flanders, have now been adopted, under a plan introduced this year after US president Barack Obama visited the site. The cemetery is unique in being the only place in Flanders where American First World War dead are buried.

In the Brussels municipality of Oudergem, meanwhile, 48 First World War dead are to be honoured by having QR codes attached to streets named after them. The dead of the municipality had 47 streets named after them in the 1920s – one street bears the name of two brothers. Now anyone scanning the QR code with a smartphone or tablet will be taken to a website featuring more information on the person concerned. Wednesday, 20 August is the 100th anniversary of the day that the Germans marched into Brussels, the first time since the formation of Belgium that the city was occupied.

Athletes campaign for recognition of Special Olympians

A trio of top Belgian athletes, including Red Devil Kevin De Bruyne, have launched a remarkable publicity campaign in support of the Special Olympics. The campaign involves photos of De Bruyne, sprinter Kim Gevaert and table-tennis player Jean-Michel Saive, doctored to give each of them the distinctive appearance of someone with Down's Syndrome, and the question: "Would you still be a fan if I looked like this?"

The Special Olympics European Summer Games take place in Antwerp from 9-20 September, but organisers think that the event will not receive the attention it merits. "An example of this problem is the reception given to the Belgian delegation after the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens [in 2011]," organisers said in a statement. "Despite the 83 medals they were bringing home, there was no-one outside a handful of family members waiting for them at Zaventem. No applause. No cheer-



Kevin De Bruyne and a Special Olympics athlete become one in a new campaign

ing. Not a banner to be seen."

More than 2,000 athletes from 58 countries will take part in 10 disciplines in Antwerp, including swimming, gymnastics and athletics. All sporting events are free and open to the public. Only the opening ceremony in Brussels Expo and the closing ceremony in the Sportpaleis require tickets.

A video of the local campaign can be viewed on YouTube: http://youtu.be/DJCK43Q_Bxo. \ AH

Merckx, Coninx remember Robin Williams

Cycling legend Eddy Merckx and film director Stijn Coninx spoke last week about their personal relationships with American actor Robin Williams (*pictured*), whose death last Monday at his home in the San Francisco Bay Area was confirmed to be a suicide.

"He was a great supporter of Lance Armstrong, so I got to know him during the Tour de France," Merckx told VRT radio. "On my 60th birthday, he gave me the script for the film *Insomnia*. I didn't know him very well, but he was a very agreeable person to spend an evening with."

Williams, he said, was a "cycling fanatic. He knew who I was and what I had done. If you're a cycling fan, the name Merckx means something to you. I cycled with him a few times in America."

In 2007, Williams autographed an Eddy Merckx sweater for an auction to benefit cancer organisation Kom Op Tegen Kanker. The actor was in Belgium and said in an interview that Merckx was possibly "the greatest rider of all time" and that he was "a great character. I own a couple of his bikes. I love riding with him."

Coninx, meanwhile, worked with Williams in the 1990s on a film about the life of Father Damiaan, the 19th-century Belgian priest famous for his care of people with leprosy in Hawaii.

Coninx, director of the recent *Marina* and the



Oscar-nominated 1992 film *Daens*, told VRT radio that he and Williams had "kept in touch, and I hoped one day to be able to work with him".

Williams, he said, was a big supporter of the Damiaan project. Coninx, in Los Angeles at the time, was invited by Williams and his wife, a producer, "to start working on a screenplay with Williams in an apartment they owned. I worked there every day for three months. Whenever Robin Williams was around, he was fantastic – very straightforward and very funny. He was trying to be a normal family man with a normal family life. I was very surprised when I found out, but things had not been going well the last few years with him. He seemed to be extremely lonely within his stardom. I'm happy to have known such a fantastic human being." \ AH

0800 123 00



€52,000,000

Flemish Brabant's new free phone number with details in English, French and German on programmes for residents to learn Dutch

profit reported by multimedia entertainment company Studio 100 for 2013, the highest ever, up from €41 million in 2012. The company's turnover increased by 4.5% to €160 million over the same period

456



€686,700

public officials, only 5.5% of the total, reported having no outside employment, according to figures reported to the Court of Auditors (see also Offside, p3)

raised in fines by a single speed camera, situated on the Rooigemlaan in Ghent, which caught more than 13,000 speeding motorists last year

892



hedgehogs killed on the roads of Flanders so far this year, as many as in all of 2013, according to a project of nature conservancy organisation Natuurpunt

WEEK IN BRIEF

Sales of pears have doubled in Belgium since Russia announced a boycott of EU fruit earlier this month, according to the auction market in Limburg. The new harvest of early-season Corina pears is now in shops, and a Twitter campaign was launched to local growers, most of them in Limburg. The effort was given a boost by the mayor of the town of Peer, Steven Matheï, who called on YouTube for people to eat more pears.

Despite concerns earlier in the week after a tent was toppled by heavy winds, this year's **Pukkelpop festival has been deemed a success** by organisers. Extra anchors were added to the Club tent, which had fallen in on Tuesday, two days before the festival's start. There were no further problems with the tent during the four-day festival. In 2011, a local storm raged through the Pukkelpop site near Hasselt, collapsing tents and stage equipment and killing five. This year, the sold-out festival counted 70,000 visitors a day.

A container in which **35 illegal immigrants were being transported** to the UK came from Zeebrugge, investigators have said. The container was discovered in Tilbury docks near London. One of the men inside died during the crossing. Dock workers were alerted by banging and shouting coming from inside the container. The Bruges prosecutor's office will now study security footage to determine whether the migrants, most likely the victims of human traffickers, were loaded in the container in Zeebrugge or at an earlier stage of the journey.

Nafissatou Thiam's heptathlon bronze was Belgium's sole medal from the **European Athletic Championships** (EAC) in Zurich last week. The Brussels-born Thiam, 19, won the Golden Spike last year as Belgium's best female

athlete. The men's 400m relay teams finished seventh in the EAC final, while Anne Zagré placed fourth in the 100m hurdles. Bashir Abdi was fifth in the 10,000m, and Thomas Van der Plaetsen came 10th in the decathlon.

A group of residents of the Brussels district of Sint-Agatha-Berchem has completed the construction of a **communal oven**, where residents will be able to bring anything requiring baking, such as bread, pizzas or pastries. The oven is part of a project by Berchem Lokaal en Duurzaam (Berchem Local and Sustainable), which was awarded a grant of €15,000 from the environmental office Leefmilieu Brussel.

The federal interior ministry has announced that it will draft more **stringent regulations for special police corps** to avoid such incidents as the death of Jonathan Jacob in a Mortsel police cell in 2010. Antwerp's Special Intervention Squad was seen in a video, released just last year, striking Jacob repeatedly. Antwerp's police department again made headlines earlier this month for violent behaviour during the breaking up of a bar fight in the north of the city.

The **heavy metal festival Rommelrock**, due to take place in Maasmechelen, Limburg, last weekend, was cancelled by the city council on the advice of police, amid fears the festival could be the location for clashes between rival motorcycle gangs. An attempt to have the festival moved across the border to a venue in Maastricht was unsuccessful.

Consumer organisation Test-Aankoop has gathered details of more than 100 people claiming compensation for the **state of the Belgian campsite Devil-lage** in Brazil during the World

Cup. The site turned out to be less well appointed than supporters were told, with insufficient sanitary amenities, no wifi and poor electrical supply. An offer of €50 compensation per night was "unsatisfactory" and must be increased, Test-Aankoop said.

Tourism businesses at the Flemish coast have expressed outrage at comments by VTM weather forecaster Jill Peeters that **summer is over**. Peeters was speaking as the weather picture showed occasional sunny periods but frequent showers, some of them heavy. The coast, however, was looking forward to a profitable Ascension weekend, perhaps the last of the season. "This could cost us a lot of money," said Bart Boelens of Horeca West Vlaanderen. "You can't say the summer is over when we still have temperatures of 20 degrees. A lot of people are quite happy with those temperatures."

The public transport users' group TreinTramBus (TTB) said that it is disappointed in the changes made to the **new rail timetable**, due to come into force in December. Rail authority NMBS was ordered by the federal government to review its plans after widespread complaints, but, according to TTB, "the problems that existed before are still there". That includes the loss of many early and late trains, crucial to those who work early or late shifts and to Brussels' cultural sector, the organisation said.

Tele-Onthaal, the volunteer helpline, is looking for **100 new volunteers** to help maintain and extend its service in Flanders. Volunteers work four hours a week. The service currently works with 575 volunteers offering telephone help 24 hours a day on the free number 106. Candidate volunteers can call that number or email federatie@tele-onthaal.be for more information.

OFFSIDE Political workaholics

It's official: according to the Court of Auditors, Jozef Dauwe is the hardest-working public official in the land, with no fewer than 58 jobs.

Every year, members of the federal parliament and other elected bodies, as well as holders of certain other public offices, are required by law to submit a list of all of the positions they occupy, whether remunerated or not, to the federal Court of Auditors. The lists are published in the government's official journal, *Belgische Staatsblad*, but Cumuleo.be is good enough to put everything in an easily searchable form. The latest figures available relate to 2013.

Dauwe (pictured) is a provincial deputy for East Flanders, responsible for culture and religious



© Willy Van Damme

institutions. He is also a lawyer, and those are his two main jobs. Others include directorships of the Verko/DDS waste management agency for Dendermonde, chair of the economic council for East Flanders, deputy chair of the East Flanders provincial development company and a paid directorship of the roofing company ADW. He's also chair of three woodland

charities and a landscape agency, a monument protection society, a local history group, an archaeological museum and a student centre. He sits on the boards of the Festival of Flanders, the Ghent Film Festival, the Roger Raveel Foundation, the Royal Ballet of Flanders, the Royal Society of Bibliophiles and Dendermonde's Ros Beiaard Committee.

With his 58 posts, Dauwe creeps ahead of his old rival Ludwig Vandenhove, a provincial deputy in Limburg. He can only list 55 posts, five of them paid. The law requires all relevant officials to file a list of their posts, as well as their assets. In 2013, 336 failed to submit a list of posts and even more – 432 – refused to disclose their assets. \ AH

FACE OF FLANDERS



© Transcontinental Race

Kristof Allegaert

Watching cycle races, one usually sees endless footage of slow-moving phalanxes of riders shot from above, one of whom will, after several hours, split from the pack and win. Flanders' latest cycling victory, however, had nothing of that.

Kristof Allegaert, a secondary school teacher in Kortrijk, has just won the Transcontinental Race from London to Istanbul – more than 3,400 kilometres. There's no course; riders make their own way from one checkpoint to another. Although there are rules: Allegaert had to double back and take an alternative route after being told a ferry crossing he made was disallowed. He lost five hours. To say he won comfortably would be a monumental understatement: when he arrived in Istanbul his nearest competitor, Richard Dunnet from the UK, was still in Greece, 520km away. The other nearest rival, Jeff Ibbett, also from the UK, was near Dupnica in Bulgaria. There were 88 riders in total this year. Allegaert, 40, arrived at the second checkpoint at the Stelvio Pass in Italy at 21.51 on the 11th; Ibbett at 10.28 the next day, and Dunnett at 14.03, also on the 12th. Another 26 riders didn't

check in until the 14th, and 12 of them were more than three days behind Allegaert.

So how did he do it? A check of his times illustrates that he cycled non-stop without sleeping. In his blog, he details last year's race, which he also won. The stages were: London – Nivelles, 334km, 11h in the saddle; Nivelles – Strasbourg, 420km, 16h; Strasbourg – Stelvio Pass, 445km, 17h; Stelvio Pass – Klagenfurt, 431km, 16h27; Klagenfurt – Osijek, 430km, 15h20; Osijek – Jagodina, 343km, 13h50; Jagodina – Istanbul, 865km, 33h.

Apart from the first day (and time spent on the ferry), Allegaert never travelled less than 343km a day. The Tour de France, by comparison is 3,500km, and the riders take 21 days to cover it. Allegaert did the same distance, without support of any kind, arriving on Sunday to finish in five days.

"I spent a lot of time on preparation, so that I only had one thing to do: keep pedalling until I got to Istanbul," he told *De Standaard*. "It's easier to keep going than it is to rest and then have to leave again." \ Alan Hope

\ www.transcontinentalrace.com

FLANDERSTODAY

 Flanders
State of the Art

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EDITOR Lisa Bradshaw

DEPUTY EDITOR Sally Tipper

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Alan Hope

SUB EDITOR Linda A Thompson

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Kelly Hendricks

AGENDA Robyn Boyle, Georgio Valentino

ART DIRECTOR Paul Van Dooren

PRESS Corelio AdPro

CONTRIBUTORS Daan Bauwens, Rebecca

Benoot, Derek Blyth, Leo Cendrowicz, Katy

Desmond, Andy Furniere, Diana Goodwin,

Toon Lambrechts, Katrien Lindemans,

Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Tom

Peeters, Senne Starckx, Georgio Valentino,

Christophe Verbiest, Denzil Walton

GENERAL MANAGER Hans De Loore

PUBLISHER Corelio Publishing NV

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

Gossetlaan 30 - 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

tel 02 373 99 09

editorial@flanderstoday.eu

SUBSCRIPTIONS

tel 02 467 25 03

subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

or order online at www.flanderstoday.eu

ADVERTISING

02 373 83 24

advertising@flanderstoday.eu

VERANTWOORDELIJKE UITGEVER

Hans De Loore

Bourgeois in parliament to discuss budget cuts

“A totally new relationship between the government and the people of Flanders”



Derek Blyth

More articles by Derek \ flanderstoday.eu

Flemish minister-president Geert Bourgeois and budget minister Annemie Turtelboom were called back to the Flemish parliament last Thursday to explain their proposed budget cuts.

Parliament speaker Jan Peumans had ordered a special committee session following a complaint by opposition parties that they had not been informed about budget cuts that were circulating in the press.

The new Flemish government recently announced that €8 billion in budget cuts would have to be made, leading to speculation about where they would fall. Flemish public transport authority De Lijn and public broadcaster VRT are likely to lose large subsidies, while families are likely to see a drop in child benefits and a hike in childcare costs.

Bourgeois (pictured) has repeatedly stated that exact figures would only be ready to be released next month and would be part of the annual September Declaration. But Groen chair Wouter Van Besien called for the government to “engage in adult politics”, saying the public had “the right to see the figures”.

“It’s clear that there have to be cuts,” Van Besien said in an interview on Radio 1 on Thursday morning. “But the question is: How do we spread the load? The current plan is totally out of order. The biggest cuts are affecting families and associations. The whole life cycle is going to become more expensive: crèche, studying, buying a house, living in a retirement home.”

Meanwhile, youth organisations such as the scouts and guides are afraid that they will also face big cuts in their budgets following the government’s announcement that it plans to save €1 billion in subsidies paid to associations. “We are worried about what Geert Bourgeois will announce in his September Declaration,” said Leen Van Vaerenberg of the Chiro youth movement. According to Christophe Lambrechts of the Flemish Scouts and Guides organisation, the cuts could force them to raise membership fees.

At the hearing last Thursday afternoon, Bourgeois repeated that the government was committed to achieving a balanced budget by 2015. He criticised the opposition for focusing on cuts while ignoring the commitment to investment.



“The government plan is not just to save money but also to invest,” he told parliament.

He then explained that the scope of the government’s plans was unprecedented. “It is the most ambitious reform plan ever put forward by a Flemish government,” he said. It would, he added, “create

a totally new relationship between the government and the people of Flanders”.

But Bourgeois refused to offer specific figures. He repeated that the government had not yet agreed on any budget and that it would only do so once it had obtained approval from the federal plan-

ning office.

“The leaked figures come from working documents that are being discussed by the various negotiating parties,” he noted. He also joked that the leaked reports were a symptom of *komkommertijd* (literally cucumber time), or the silly season, when newspapers desperately search for stories to fill their pages. “The press has made a cucumber out of a gherkin,” he said.

During the debate, the opposition parties continued to insist on the need for transparency. “You have done nothing to remove the uncertainty,” said Björn Rzoska of Groen. Ingrid Lieten of the socialist SPA was also critical. “On the basis of the leaked figures, it appears that an unfair portion of the bill will be footed by families and that associations will have to make big sacrifices,” she said. “Right now, there is uncertainty. You can remove that uncertainty by providing information. Please just give us the budget plan that you have worked out.”

Bourgeois refused to release figures ahead of the September Declaration but did say that “the government is not going to use an axe”.

Socialists and greens criticise student loan proposal

Flemish parties SPA and the Groen have criticised a proposal by a leading academic to introduce student loans to cover higher university fees. The proposal came from André Oosterlinck, former rector of the University of Leuven, to help students pay the higher fees due to be introduced by the new government of Flanders.

Oosterlinck suggested in an interview with *De Standaard* that the government intro-

duce low-interest loans for “students who find the higher fees too heavy a burden”. He said that banks would be interested in implementing such a scheme as it would bring them new customers.

“This is definitely not the model we have in mind for a friendly Flanders,” said Björn Rzoska of Groen. He pointed to the United States and Britain, where students leave university in debt and often have problems

repaying their loans. “They are often forced to postpone the next step in their lives, such as buying a house or having children,” he said.

Rzoska warned that banks would start vetting students and their parents to ensure they were solvent. “Students will not only be assessed by professors, but also by banks, to make sure they have enough money to cover the fees.” \ DB

Rand mayors request return to previous flight plan

A group of 26 mayors of the Flemish municipalities around Brussels – the area known as *de rand*, or the rim – have joined together to call on the Flemish and federal governments to find a solution to the problem of aircraft noise.

The mayors fear that a ruling by a court at the end of last month will lead to an increase in the numbers of aircraft flying over the *rand*, which has long complained of noise nuisance. A judge ordered the government to scrap two changes to flight routes, which means diverting aircraft away from Molenbeek, Anderlecht, Etterbeek and Oudergem. The loss of the two routes leaves only two other options in the meantime, and both



take departing aircraft directly over *rand* municipalities.

A statement issued by the mayors warns

that any increase in traffic may jeopardise “the delicate social support for the airport, which is a crucial economic engine for the region and for the country”.

They call for a return to the situation of a few years ago “under which a logical system of preferential runway use was in operation, allowing a spreading out of flight routes. Only in this way can peace return to the broad surrounding area of the airport and legal certainty be restored.”

The federal government, which has authority over flight routes administered by Belgocontrol, has three months to come up with a solution or face a fine of €50,000 a day for non-compliance. \ Alan Hope

Brussels keeps mortgage relief to attract residents

The Brussels-Capital Region will continue its mortgage tax relief in a bid to persuade more Flemish people to settle in the city. The new centre-right Flemish government has said that it will cut mortgage tax relief (the *woonbonus*) on mortgages signed after 1 January 2015. The move will mean a loss of about €1,300 a year for the average family with a mortgage, according to tax experts. Brussels will keep the *woonbonus* at its current level until at least 2017, in the hope that more people from Flanders will move into the city. Despite being one of the richest regions in Europe, Brussels has a shortfall in tax revenue as many people work in the city but live in Flanders and Wallonia, where their income tax is paid. But under the recent wave of state reforms, Brussels has new fiscal powers that could finally tip the balance in its favour. “Tax policy will be restructured to encourage new residents to move to the city and so pay their taxes here,” said the government in a statement. \ DB

“Shamelessly romantic”

From poem to music to stage, story's narrative remains intact

\ WWW.ROSAS.BE

continued from page 1

(hence *verklären*) the child, so she should carry the baby as if it were his.

Such on-stage storytelling can be challenging in a dance piece, admits De Keersmaeker. “Especially, telling a romantic story is a difficult thing,” she says. “When you expose too much romance, you risk losing the impact it has on the audience.” *Verklärte Nacht* is her humble attempt to respond to this challenge. “It is an ode to the way people can share their love for each other.”

So much romance and storytelling is unusual for De Keersmaeker, who dialled back the narration in her previous works to an almost invisible level, for the public at least. For the choreographer, the dance had to speak for itself, had to be bigger than the story. Maybe that is why she describes the new *Verklärte Nacht* as being “shamelessly romantic”.

“Romanticism is often seen as something old-fashioned. It does not fit the time in which we live,” she says. “It doesn’t fit our lives or the current society. Romanticism is automatically associated with classic ballet but not with contemporary dance.”

And although it may seem unlikely given her penchant for routines with tight rhythmic sections and strong geometric patterns, she confesses to being a romantic soul.

De Keersmaeker is one of Belgium’s best-known choreographers and one of the most acclaimed contemporary choreographers in Europe. She studied at the Mudra dance school in Brussels and the Tisch School of Arts in New York in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Her 1982 work *Fase, Four Movements* to the music of Steve Reich has been described as one of the most influential pieces of choreography of that decade.

When De Keersmaeker set up her dance company Rosas and created the world-famous choreography *Rosas danst Rosas*, she became known to an even broader audience. This legendary performance continues to inspire people around the world. American pop star Beyoncé bluntly copied it in one of her music videos just a couple of years ago. Today, she runs the dance school P.A.R.T.S., which she founded in association with the De Munt opera. She also continues to create new work, which are subsequently performed around the world. In 2008, De Keersmaeker was given the honorary



© Anne Van Aerschot
Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker mixes poem, composition and dance in *Verklärte Nacht*



© Anne Van Aerschot

Two dancers struggle to maintain their love for each other as they face the unexpected

title of Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.

Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg’s *Verklärte Nacht*, or *Transfigured Night*, is the piece to which De Keersmaeker’s performance is set. It is itself based on a 19th-century poem by German poet Richard Dehmel.

De Keersmaeker’s choice of Schönberg’s piece may surprise some. “My oeuvre goes from Bach to Mozart and Beethoven directly over to Modernism,” she says, “I have mostly been ignoring the entire romantic period.” Yet this is not the first time that she’s chosen Schönberg’s narrative music. In 1995, De Keersmaeker set one of her pieces to *Verklärte Nacht* for the Schönberg programme *Erwartung/Verklärte Nacht* at De Munt. But, she says, “this is not a re-take of the previous work. It has become a completely different choreography.”

Following the less-is-more principle, De Keersmaeker completely stripped down the first production to its present minimalist setting. “In 1995, there were six couples on stage. The couples of men and women were all fragmented, but this time I chose to work with only one couple, and a third man, only for a short time in the beginning. This set-up gives the narrative level of the performance – Dehmel’s poem and the storytelling music of Schönberg – full attention and intensity. The passion and the generosity of the man’s love are drawn to the front.”

The decor also heeds this philosophy. The rich scenery used in 1995 has been replaced with a sober setting, with the objectivity of the stage standing in strong contrast to the epic music.

When I ask De Keersmaeker why she decided to again use Schönberg’s *Verklärte Nacht* music and turn it into a new and different production, her answer is rather philo-

sophical. “A production only lasts as long as the performance. Contrary to sculptures or architecture, which last for ages, dance is a living art form. When the choreography is no longer brought to the stage, the artwork simply ceases to exist.”

“

This work is a fascinating dialogue between the past and the present

But she is now also a different person from who she was in 1995, she says, and today’s dancers have also changed – two factors that also influenced her choice. “A new generation of dancers is born,” she says. “Everything changes: this work is a fascinating dialogue between the past and the present.” Much like De Keersmaeker, Schönberg was not known for being an avowedly romantic artist. The Austrian composer may have wanted to be known as a modernist musician first and foremost, but his romantic sextet *Verklärte Nacht* ended up becoming his most performed masterpiece. Schönberg wrote it in 1899. But the then arts establishment did not like the work. “The theme of a man’s ability to accept the child of another man as his own was controversial, and it still is,” De Keersmaeker says. Because the music was narrative, based on

and illustrating a poem, it was also seen as less sophisticated. Almost verse per verse, Schönberg’s music follows Dehmel’s poem. “The music grows from minor to major following the tormented state of the woman, about to confess her secret to the man she loves. The harmony that comes afterwards is a pure translation of the state of minds of the main characters,” De Keersmaeker explains. By opting for the more voluptuous orchestral arrangement for string orchestra as interpreted by French composer Pierre Boulez rather than for the original sextet, the choreographer was able to create the necessary space so that the voluminous music could have its intended impact.

“Boulez manages to bring the Romantic elements in a type of balance without creating overkill,” she says. “At the same time, it creates some contrast between the minimalist setting on stage and the richness of the music”.

For *Verklärte Nacht*, De Keersmaeker was inspired by the sculptures of Auguste Rodin, who lived in the same period as Schönberg and whose oeuvre is outspokenly Romantic. “Although statues are inevitably static, Rodin’s work shows a great amount of drama and movement. I find this duality very interesting,” she says.

She adds that she was also inspired by upward and downward spiral movements. “A two-part DNA structure going up and down is a very basic movement, and, at the same time, it is something utterly organic,” she says, adding that the combination of these three elements made the choreography what it is today.

5-11 September

Rosas Performance Space
Van Volxemlaan 164, Brussels

WEEK IN BUSINESS

Beverages
\ Creve Drinks

The drinks distributor, based in Waarschoot, East Flanders, paid some €15 million in an agreement with the tax authorities to avoid prosecution for false invoicing. The company was accused of delivering beer without invoices and pocketing the VAT due. The deal also involved a settlement by seven executives with the prosecutor's office for an undisclosed sum. The company's operations have since been broken up and sold to AB InBev.

Brewing \ Cantillon

Cantillon, one of only two breweries in the Brussels-Capital Region, has invested €500,000 in a new storage building, allowing the brewer to double production. Cantillon brews lambic beer, which needs to mature for up to two years before bottling. The new premises will allow the company to cope with a huge export demand.

Human resources
\ Yacht

As many as 88% of bosses would reorganise their executive team if obstacles to firing staff were removed, according to a poll by human resources consultants Yacht, part of Randstad. The company said the figures showed a fundamental mismatch caused by a lack of vision on the part of companies, with negative economic consequences.

Retail \ Ikea

Transport unions carried out actions at Ikea stores in Ghent and Zaventem last week to protest at the company's method of organising transport in Belgium. According to the unions, Ikea uses mainly Eastern European drivers who are offered less pay and worse conditions. The company said it had no special arrangements regarding the nationality of its drivers but insisted all were acting within the law.

Transport \ NMBS

The new Desirio trains ordered by the rail authority NMBS from German manufacturer Siemens are breaking down an average of every 8,000km, rail boss Jo Cornu admitted in an interview with *Knack* magazine. By comparison, the average distance covered by a standard train between breakdowns is 30,000km. Some of the 305 trains ordered are intended for use on the future Brussels regional express network.

Uncertainty over effect of Doel closure on power supply

Terroism being investigated as possible cause of recent sabotage



Alan Hope

More articles by Alan \ flanderstoday.eu

Belgium could face power shortages this winter because of the closure of the nuclear power station Doel 4 on the left bank of the Scheldt river in East Flanders. Last week it was revealed that the incident that closed the station is being investigated by State Security as a possible terrorist act.

Two parliamentary committees – business affairs and interior – are due this week to meet in a joint session to consider the contingency plans for shortages of electricity. Power distributor Elia said last week the situation was at present not serious, but warned that shortages could occur when the weather gets colder. "We risk having problems around the end of October, beginning of November," said spokesperson Barbara Verhaegen.

With the sudden and unexpected closure of Doel 4 (*pictured*), half of Belgium's nuclear capacity is now out of service. The reactors at Doel 3 and Tihange 2 have been out of commission for some time following the discovery of material defects.

Doel 4 was closed down after a leak of 90,000



© Alan Hope

litres of oil into the steam turbine, in an incident now being investigated as sabotage after investigators from the federal agency for nuclear control (Fanc) found evidence that the leak had been caused deliberately. Members of the station's personnel have been interviewed and a new rule imposed that they may only enter technical installations two at a time.

Both Electrabel, the owners of the station,

and Fanc have stressed that at no time was the nuclear zone of the station breached or endangered. Nonetheless, the investigation has attracted the attention of the State Security service. The federal prosecutor, meanwhile, is investigating the possibility that the sabotage was a terrorist act.

The station will likely remain closed until the end of the year. The oil that leaked was intended to lubricate the main turbine, which overheated as a result and must now be repaired.

Municipalities across the country are demanding details of the federal government's switch-off plan. At times of severe electricity shortage, the government has a plan to uncouple some rural areas from the network, most likely between 17.00 and 21.00, when demand is at its highest.

However, no one outside the government or distributor Elia has a clear idea of what areas would be concerned, or under what circumstances. The government has promised to provide a definitive list of affected areas to the provinces by next month.

Employers reluctant to hire former juvenile offenders

Secondary school graduates who admit to delinquency in their past when applying for jobs see their chances of success sharply diminished, according to research from Ghent University. Economists Stijn Baert and Elys Verhofstadt sent out nearly 1,000 fictional letters of application for existing vacancies with Flemish employers between December 2012 and April 2013. For each vacancy they sent two letters – one that openly referred to a period spent in youth detention, and the other that did not but was otherwise identical.

Candidates who said nothing had 17.5% positive reactions; delinquent candidates only had a 13.6% response rate – either a request for further information or an invitation to an interview. The distinction, the researchers reported, was more pronounced in the case of male employers and in the case of applicants with lower educational achievements. Delinquent candidates had 58% less chance of a response from a male employer representative than their counterparts without a detention history.

According to international research, the paper

said, unemployment problems for former delinquents have lasting consequences for society. Unemployment is an important factor in determining whether a former offender returns to crime, and short-term unemployment tends to breed long-term unemployment: After a certain amount of time, the chances of finding a job greatly decline.

Discrimination against former youth detainees, however, is not grounds for legal action under Belgian law. \ AH

Delhaize faces problems in Eastern Europe

Brussels-based supermarket chain Delhaize suffered an unexpected loss of €45 million in the second quarter of the year, mostly due to problems with the group's operations in Serbia, the company reported.

Delhaize's problems in Serbia stem from the country's economic instability, with negative economic growth and retail deflation. Those problems alone prompted the company to declare a reduction in assets of €151 million.

Meanwhile, Delhaize has completed the sale of 39 stores in Bosnia to Tropic Group. Now the Serbian stores are all that remains of the Delta Maxi group Delhaize took over in 2011. The group has already sold its holdings in Albania, Montenegro and Bulgaria. At home, Delhaize also reported problems, including pressure on price margins and market share. Although CEO Frans Muller referred to "market share loss," the company has declined to reveal a figure. Turn-



© Courtesy Delhaize

over in Belgium was down 1.2%, but sales overall were up 0.5% to €5.27 billion – largely as a result of strong growth in the US of 3.3%.

The underlying results, excluding the Serbia-induced loss, were within expectations, and the company's share price rose 5% in the course of the day.

In June, Delhaize announced that 14 stores in Belgium would close and 2,500 staff made redundant, leading to industrial action across the country. \ AH

600 possible new airport jobs at Brussels Airport

Growth in passenger numbers could mean the creation of up to 600 new jobs at Brussels Airport, a transport economist has calculated. The airport expects to pass the 20 million passenger mark this year for the first time since the collapse of Sabena in 2001. At present, the airport is handling 6,000 passengers a day more than last year – growth of nearly 5%. In the first half of the year, it saw 12.2 million passengers pass through its gates, 900,000 more than the same period in 2013, putting the 20 million goal within reach.

At the request of the Persgroep media house, economist Eddy Van de Voorde of the University of Antwerp made a calculation that such growth could lead to the creation of 600 new jobs.

The reason for the spectacular growth in passenger numbers, according to the Centre for Aviation, is the arrival of Ryanair last February, which extended the number of flights available from Zaventem and brought a whole new section of the market to Brussels Airport. According to a study conducted by the centre, four out of 10 tickets sold in Belgium are for low-cost flights. In 2011, the proportion was one in four.

There was growth elsewhere as well: Brussels Airlines transported 648,000 passengers in July, an increase of 11.4% on the same month last year. The increase in passenger numbers was larger than the increase in flight options, according to spokesperson Geert Sciot, leading to an increase in seat occupancy of 3%. The airline is "feeling no negative effects of competition" from Ryanair, he said. \ AH

Art conservation 3.0

Brussels professor brings maths and arts closer, one pixel at a time

 Ian Mundell
More articles by Ian \ flanderstoday.eu

Art historians and conservators no longer reach for a magnifying glass when they want to take a close look at a painting. Instead, they create a very high-resolution digital image that they can examine on a computer screen. But once they have this digital image, all sorts of other possibilities open up, possibilities that are being explored by Ann Dooms and her team at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). Dooms is a mathematician who became interested in applying maths to image processing. This led her to establish a Multimedia Forensics research team at VUB's Electronics and Informatics department, where she is also a professor.

One of the group's interests is to explore how image processing can contribute to the investigation and conservation of art. On the investigation side, it has been involved in a project developing brush-stroke analysis as a means of authenticating and dating paintings at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Meanwhile, its conservation work includes participating in the restoration of Van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece.

The results of a more modest, but no less demanding conservation project can currently be seen at the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels. This involves Paul Gauguin's "Portrait of Suzanne Bambridge", a work from the artist's time in Tahiti, which is now in a worrying state of repair.

The first step in the conservation effort was to create a high-resolution digital image of the painting, but in the course of doing this work, another challenge emerged - the texture of the canvas. This is not a problem when examining the painting with the naked eye, but at high resolutions it becomes a significant disturbance in the



© MRBAB
The VUB team created a high-resolution digital image of Paul Gauguin's "Portrait of Suzanne Bambridge"

image. Devising a way of removing the canvas pattern from the digital image is not as easy as it might sound.

In one sense the weave is regular, so that it can be expressed mathematically as a series of waves overlying one another. But because the canvas has been primed, stretched, and manipulated throughout its life, the pattern is imperfect. "You get deviations from that perfect pattern of waves, so although you can model it mathematically, you have to take these random distortions into account," Dooms explains.

By comparing the ideal pattern of the canvas with what appears in reality, her team was able to devise a mathematical filter that automatically removes the trace of the canvas from whatever area

of the digital image is under scrutiny. "The most important thing is that, if you remove the canvas, nothing of the paint or the cracks or the holes in it, move in your digital image. That was the very tricky part."

The next step will be to map the cracks in the surface of the portrait. This is a different kind of challenge because there is no regular pattern that can be modelled. Instead the computer has to be taught to recognise the typical characteristics of cracks: they are long, thin, connected, and create islands. "Those are all properties that you can try to describe mathematically, but it is not something nice like a sine wave or a cosine

wave." The aim is to devise a method for creating a map of the cracks on any painting. This would help in conservation efforts and also allow further deterioration to be detected, for instance after a painting has travelled to another museum on loan. It should also be possible to fill in the cracks on the high-resolution digital image, although that involves working out what paint is missing. "How we see that as human beings is one thing," Dooms says, "but to explain that to a computer is much more difficult."

Royal Museums of Fine Arts
Regentschapsstraat 3, Brussels

Until 25 January

Long waiting list for popular LEIF card

Increasing numbers of Flemings are demanding the LEIF card, which makes end of life wishes - such as euthanasia, life-extending treatments and organ donation - clear to medical staff.

Nearly 30,000 people in Flanders already have a LEIF card, and there is a waiting list of two months. The card is an initiative of the palliative care physician Wim Distelmans and his Information Centre on the End of Life (LEIF) in Wemmel, Flemish Brabant. The card has been available since early 2013.

According to Distelmans, there is



so much demand because many people are concerned about a dignified end of life. "Increasingly, people want to make sure they receive euthanasia when they end up in a coma, for example, and can't ask for it anymore themselves," Distelmans told VTM.

\ Andy Furniere

Chloroquine can stop growth of cancerous tumours

Researchers at the Flemish life sciences research institute VIB have discovered that the medicine chloroquine, normally used against malaria, also neutralises abnormal blood vessels in cancerous tumours.

This blood vessel normalisation not only decreases the spread of cancer cells, it improves blood flow within the tumour, which enhances the effects of chemotherapy treatment. When the aggressive spread of cancer cells is stopped, anti-cancer medications can reach the cancer cells more easily.



Experiments with test animals had earlier demonstrated that chloroquine could be used to battle cancer when combined with chemotherapy. But until now, it was assumed that chloroquine only affected the cancer cells directly. \ AF

WEEK IN INNOVATION

Gene activation leads to tumours

Researchers at the University of Leuven (KU Leuven), with Harvard University in the US, have discovered a mechanism that plays an important role in the development of cancer. They have discovered how certain "sleeping" genes are activated, which leads to the growth of tumours. They found that the activation of these genes was caused by a defect on the gene known as SUZ12. This mechanism was identified in tumours of people with the hereditary Von Recklinghausen's disease, but it also plays a role in the development of tumours in other patients. In experiments with mice, the researchers have already succeeded in returning the activated genes to a "sleeping" state. The tumours of the mice stopped growing and became smaller.

New stem cell donor age limited to 40

Registering as a stem cell donor in Belgium is now only possible until the age of 40, down from the previous age of 50. The age limit has been lowered because the pool of registered donors is ageing. "Once you are included in the register, you remain a candidate donor until you are 60," explains professor Christian Demanet, biologist at the University Hospital of Brussels. "Many of our current donors will have to be removed in the coming years because they have become too old." Demanet says the chance of a match amounts to 1 to 2% over a period of 30 years. "We can increase the chance of a match by lowering the registration age, and people will thus be included in the register for a longer period of time."

Record requests for disability benefits

The federal social security department had to refuse a record number of applications for disability benefits last year, according to the annual report of the Persons with a Disability directorate-general. Half of the 101,297 requests were declined. The number of applicants has increased by 40% over the past five years. About 630,100 people in Belgium have an officially recognised disability for which they can receive benefits. Last year, €1.88 billion in benefits was paid. \ AF

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An investment in the future

Raising college enrolment fees is reasonable, say education experts



Daan Bauwens

More articles by Daan \ flanderstoday.eu

Subsidies to Flemish colleges and universities could decrease by more than €163 million over the next five years if the rumours on upcoming government budget cuts are accurate. Given the existing need for extra funding for research and personnel in higher education, it seems likely, according to analysts, that the cuts will be compensated through higher registration fees. Despite fierce criticism from the Flemish Association of Students (VVS) and opposition party SPA, a growing number of experts from across the political spectrum are encouraging an increase of enrolment fees.

The higher education sector is in dire need of money, according to a recent analysis by a team of investigative journalists at public broadcaster VRT, which showed that the budget for higher education in Flanders – some €1.68 billion – has remained unchanged in the last five years, while the combined enrolment figures have risen from 187,785 in 2008 to 224,947 in 2012 – a 20% increase over four years.

“

You will earn more than people without a diploma for the rest of your life

“We have a quality problem,” says professor Ides Nicaise, education expert and researcher at the University of Leuven (KU Leuven). “It has become impossible to organise support for students with difficulties. It is becoming harder



The Flemish Association of Students is concerned that raising the fees will discourage some youngsters from going to university

to programme different courses for students in different fields of study. Even the supervision of Master's dissertations has become difficult to organise.”

If the proposed government cuts would indeed be compensated by higher registration fees, a year at university would soon cost €800 or €900 instead of the current €620. “But this adjustment only compensates for budget cuts,” says Nicaise, “it does not solve the quality problem.”

According to KU Leuven professor emeritus Roger Blanplain, a return to the previous level of quality would only be possible if the fees were increased to €1,500.

According to VVS president Bram Roelant, the real cost of higher education already heavily exceeds the €600 sticker price. He estimates that the actual cost of one year in college is €12,500 for the average student. “Pushing up the

price even higher is not acceptable,” he says. “It will demotivate youngsters from certain study streams from taking part in higher education.”

Rudi D'Hauwers, policy advisor at the Flemish government's department of education, says the situation is more complex than that. “The government has a choice: They can increase the tax pressure on the whole population to fund higher education. Or they can ask a higher individual contribution to cover the extra costs,” he says. “We know that 70% of 18-year olds enrol in higher education. Is it fair to make those 30% who don't pay for the education of the others?”

According to Nicaise, the return on investment for higher education in Flanders is so high that an increase in the fees is justified. “When you graduate from higher education, you will earn more than people without a diploma for the

rest of your life,” he says. “According to our own research, graduating from a higher education institution gives you a return of 8.7 to 17% on your investment. If the returns are that high, it is justifiable that you cover part of the costs yourself and don't let society pay.” Still, many experts are pleading for a new and better system of scholarships or study loans to compensate for the higher enrolment fees. “It is not the registration fee itself, but the real cost of a higher education that demotivates people in lower income classes,” says Nicaise. “The current system of scholarships only takes direct costs into account – fees and books – but leaves indirect costs, such as housing and daily living expenses, out of the equation. If we want to make higher education more democratic, we need to reform and increase scholarships at the same time.”

Q&A

PhD student Tom Deliens recently examined the relationship between the lifestyles and year-end results of first-year VUB students. His research was the first European study to look at the relationship between health and exam scores among university students.

What did you investigate exactly?

We compared the differences in students' physical condition at the beginning of the academic year, at the start of the second semester and at the end of the year. We questioned the students about their lifestyles at the beginning of the second semester. We asked if they ate a lot of fries or vegetables, for example, drank a lot of alcohol or soft drinks, or did a lot of sports. If they mostly travelled by bike, were on any kind of diet or spent a lot of time in front of the TV, or behind

a computer or game console. At the end of the year, we linked the changes in their physical condition and lifestyles to their exam results.

What did you find?

Our main discovery was that students who had an increasingly unhealthy lifestyle and gained weight, got lower marks. Heavy consumption of alcohol and dieting were, in particular, decisive factors for poor exam results. We also found that students who mostly ate in student restaurants did worse.

How do you explain these results?

Our main explanation is that the deterioration of lifestyles is linked to a lack of self-discipline, which is also indispensable in studying for exams. The self-discipline of these students is especially tested, since for most of them it's their first year in higher education, and for many it's the first year that they are living independently, away from their parents.

In the case of dieting, it may be that students on a diet often only succeed in maintaining discipline temporarily and suffer from relapses, which means they may have trouble studying intensively for a considerable amount of time. Concerning the student restaurants, we don't want to criticise them. They offer healthy



food, but too often students just opt for fries anyway.

Do you have any advice?

We know from earlier studies that raising the prices of food products has a direct effect on consumption. So it may be an option for student restaurants to make fries and soft drinks more expensive and vegetables and fruit cheaper. Interview by Andy Furniere

WEEK IN EDUCATION

UGent and KUL among world's top 100 universities

Ghent University (UGent) and the University of Leuven (KU Leuven) have made the top 100 in this year's world's best universities ranking: UGent in 70th place and KU Leuven in 96th. Last year, UGent was 85th and KU Leuven fell just outside the top 100. Antwerp University dropped out of the top 300 and is now listed in the top 400. In certain areas, UGent and KU Leuven make the top 50: UGent scores well for life and agricultural sciences (41st), while KU Leuven reaches 39th in clinical medicine and pharmacy. The list, published by Jiao Tong University in Shanghai, ranks the 500 best universities in the world and is dominated by universities from the US.

Roadies wins Tom Thumb prize

The Flemish Youth Council has awarded its annual Tom Thumb Prize to Roadies, the project that saw two Flemish teenagers trying out a different job every week for 10 months. Roadies was set up by Klasse, the Flemish education department's multimedia platform that publishes the magazines *Klasse* and *Maks!*, with the Flemish public employment agency VDAB. The prize is given to a person or project that has made an exceptional contribution to youth. For the Roadies project, Brecht Herteleer and Hanne Reumers tried out 40 jobs and described their experiences online and in a variety of media outlets.

Too many requests for special education

In the last academic year, 783 children were declined a place in Flanders' special education system. According to the Agency for Education Services, the number of declined requests has increased considerably in recent years: In 2012-2013, there were only 415 refusals. Nathalie Lievens of primary school De Horizon in Aalst told *De Standaard* that schools had a lack of space to cope. She feels the increased demand – and the increase in refusals – has been caused by the Flemish government's M decree, which comes into force in 2015 and aims to move as many students as possible into regular education. It makes it more difficult, said Lievens, to register a child with a mild mental disability or learning disorder in special education.

WEEK IN ACTIVITIES

Lissewege Light Festival

Stroll the cobblestone streets of picturesque Lissewege in West Flanders, illuminated only by candle- and firelight. Fire artists, street performers and musicians provide extra atmosphere along the way. *23-24 August, 21.00, free* \ www.brugge.be/lichtfeest-lissewege

Four-Day of the Ijzer

Annual march organised by the Belgian military to commemorate the casualties of both World Wars, especially those who fell in the Westhoek during the First World War. Four walks are planned each day, between 8 and 32km long. Open to Belgian and foreign military and civilians. Closing ceremony in Ypres on 23 August. *20-23 August, registration from €5*

\ www.4daagse.be

Living Heritage Expo

The biggest gathering of local heritage breeds of farm animals and livestock, including Flemish draft horses, sheep, cattle, goats and chickens. Special exhibition on the role of animals in the First World War. *24 August, 10.00-18.00, Provinciaal Domein Puyenbroek, Wachtebeke, free*

\ www.sle.be

Bollekesfeest

Four-day celebration of Antwerp's gastronomic specialities and regional products, named after local beer De Koninck, affectionately known as a "bolleke". With show cooking, themed walks, live music and entertainment. *21-24 August, free* \ www.bollekesfeest.be

International Fireworks Festival

Not just a fireworks show but an international competition, with teams from England, Slovenia, Italy and the Czech Republic competing for the top prize. *21-27 August, every other night at 22.00, closing show on 27 August, Duinbergen Beach, Knokke-Heist, free.*

\ www.tinyurl.com/knokke-fireworks

Urban BBQ

Gourmet culinary event featuring artisan food market in the heart of Woluwe Park in Brussels. Five top chefs will prepare a selection of small plates. For €15 you can enjoy a cocktail, appetiser, main course, dessert and coffee. *24 August, 10.00-17.00*

\ www.urbanbbq.be

Strange bedfellows

Beveren thrift shop teams up with local prison to the benefit of both



Andy Furniere

More articles by Andy \ flanderstoday.eu

When a new prison opened in the East Flemish town of Beveren a couple of months ago, the local outcry was swift and strong. Not-for-profit waste organisation Ibogem, whose offices and thrift shop are situated just 500 metres from the prison, however, looked beyond the commotion and saw an opportunity: Their new neighbours could help them with an expansion of their thrift store. "Because of a lack of staff and working space, we could at that time process and offer for sale only part of the useful goods we received," says Wim Beeldens, general director of Ibogem. "As a result, many suitable items ended up in the waste containers."

The prison, meanwhile, was looking for labour opportunities for its inmates. So since June, nine prisoners have been working for the Ibogem thrift shop at a new workshop set up at the prison. The two partners hope that their collaboration will help convicts prepare for their re-integration into society. Following Ibogem's example, three commercial companies have also contracted prisoners at Beveren to work for them.

The federal justice department is responsible for the screening of the inmates, who are admitted to the programme on the basis of their motivation and skills. Ibogem pays €6 per hour for the prisoners' labour. They receive only part of this sum as payment, after costs for administrative services, among other things, have been deducted.



© Bativox
Ibogem's thrift shop on Schaarbeekstraat now has a lot more on its shelves

During normal work days, which run from 8.00 to 16.00, the prisoners perform three kinds of tasks in the workshop. One group inspects and sorts the textile materials, another focuses on small electronic devices, while a third group repairs bicycles. This bicycle repair service is part of a larger professional training programme. The inmates, who remain under surveillance of the prison guards, are assisted and monitored by two Ibogem staff members.

According to Beeldens, there was no need for extensive additional training for those staff members working with the inmates, although they were instructed to meticulously observe the necessary regulations. "It's important for our staff to maintain a purely professional relationship with the

workers," explains Beeldens, "and to not discuss personal issues or information on the functioning of Ibogem." The Ibogem staff are also not told about the criminal acts the convicts have committed.

The project offers significant economic and ecological advantages, since it allows the thrift shop to expand its stock of merchandise and to reduce its amount of waste. The added social advantage is also considerable. Thanks to the collaboration, the Ibogem store can, for example, provide much more of their inexpensive merchandise to low-income residents in the area. For the prisoners, the project offers the chance to earn pocket money, which they can use to buy credits for telephone calls or to surf the internet. But Beeldens also sees more fundamental advantages.

"Instead of sitting isolated and idle in their cells, they develop skills, which can be useful when they return to the general labour market," he says. "They don't just fine-tune their technical skills, but they also learn to work in a team again and develop their sense of self-discipline."

Ibogem has also set up a small thrift shop with second-hand clothing at the prison workshop. Some prisoners – those who don't have family nearby, for example – often don't have much in the way of clothing.

According to Beeldens, the collaboration has been extremely successful for both parties. "The convicts work so well we sometimes have trouble keeping up with them," he says. "We notice they look forward to the work because it brings more variation into their daily lives."

While the initiative has not led to any security problems, the project did make headlines recently when mobile phones and kitchen knives were found among the product load that Ibogem delivered to the prison workshop.

"But those were discovered before they could end up in the hands of convicts," confirms Beeldens. "We have now introduced an extra preliminary sorting procedure that should avoid these kinds of incidents in the future. It would be a pity if a positive project like this was negatively branded."

Beeldens also feels that their system of collaboration could be a model for other non-profits with budgetary constraints.

BITE

Beernem regional products

\ WWW.TINYURL.COM/BEERNEMSTREEKPRODUCT

Earlier this year, when city council members of West Flanders municipality Beernem decided to show off its local products, choosing 11 to crown as *Beernems streekproducten*, or Beernem Regional Products.

To qualify, the businesses had to demonstrate that their products were closely linked with Beernem's history, either through the regional character of their ingredients or traditional method of production.

Beernem invited Mozes Media to get creative with the concepts, and it responded with a new label (complete with bear head logo) and attractive presentation, all bundled into a brochure titled: *Beernem... mysterieus en verrassend lekker!* (Beernem... mysterious and surprisingly tasty!!), which can be picked up at the town hall and participating businesses, or downloaded via the Beernem city website.

The selected products from Beernem are: bear cake from Claeys Bakery, farm-fresh products from

Colpaert, buttercream truffles and bear-shaped pralines from Demuyt, Flor gin (original and herbal), Houtlandse juices, burgers from Meerberghoeve, Beernem stew from butcher Patrick, Oelems Galetje from Pat's Coffee, beer from breweries Rostune and Vliegende Paard and, last but not least, strawberries and other fruit and honey from 't Aeksterendeke.

Two of the products make reference to Beernem's fondness for bears. *Beer* means "bear" in Dutch, and the town flag proudly bears (ahem) three yellow bears against a blue backdrop.

That explains the bear cake and bear pralines. The former is a cake with brown sugar and rhubarb, making it the ideal dessert to top off a summer barbecue. It's decorated with a marzipan bear. The bear-shaped pralines from chocolatier Demuyt, meanwhile, are not only cute, they're hand-made and come in dark, milk or white choc-



© www.mozesmedia.be

olate. Demuyt also rolls truffles out of buttercream. Enough said. Pat's Coffee opened last year in Oedelem, part of Beernem. The artisanal coffee roaster and tearoom serves their cuppa with a tasty waffle-like cookie of their own creation, known as 't Oelems Galetje. It's this cookie that earned them the regional product label.

Two local breweries made the cut, as well. Brewery Rostune has garnered attention with its Wannes blond, Linde kriek, Amber and Dubbel donker beers and for brewer Brecht Vanerostyne's traditional way of doing things, using natural ingredients and an open brewing kettle. Vliegende Paard Brewery, applauded by Beernem especially for its Préaris Quadrupel, was selected by renowned beer website ratebeer.com as "Best New Brewer from Belgium 2013".

"Everyone knows famous regional products like cuberdons, *mattenstaarten* or *Elixir d'Anvers*, but Beernem also has its own regional products," said Flemish politician Barbara Vandenbrande during the presentation of the new label at Beernem's town hall last month. "Regional products can be described in just a few strong words: authentic, sustainable and local, a strong bridge between producers and consumers." \ Robyn Boyle

Flanders off the beaten path

Revenge campaigns, ghost castles and country churches: the secrets of Flemish Brabant



Toon Lambrechts

More articles by Toon \ flanderstoday.eu

The rich heritage of Flanders has left many traces behind. Some are touristic highlights, others remain virtually unknown. Flanders Today went in search of its quirkiest historical spots for our five-part series: Flanders off the beaten path. This week we visit the province of Flemish Brabant, unearthing forgotten tales of revenge, haunted castles and country churches

Ons are you've never heard of Meensel-Kiezegem, one of those long village names it's easy to forget. But the cemetery behind Meensel's local church bears witness to one of the most dramatic events of the Second World War. Like in the rest of Flanders, the German occupation sowed deep divisions in Meensel-Kiezegem, two villages in Flemish Brabant that have formed one municipality since 1824. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the residents received the occupier with hostility and suspicion, and some locals joined the resistance movement.

Some villagers, however, welcomed the Germans with open arms. Among them was the conservative, Catholic Merckx family from Kiezegem. Four Merckx children became active in the Flemish nationalist collaboration, with son Gaston even leading the local chapter of the Vlaamsche Wacht (Flemish Guard), a paramilitary organisation that collaborated with the Germans.

The Merckx family's good relations with the Germans stirred up a lot of resentment among the villagers. On 30 July, 1944, things took a turn for the worse. Gaston, on his way home from a local fair, got into a fight with three men; he was stabbed and killed.

The immediate result of this was an unprecedented and brutal revenge campaign. On 1 August, members of the German and Flemish SS carried out a raid in Meensel. Three members of the resistance were shot on the spot; 15 others were taken to Leuven's prison. But that's not where the story ends. A day later, during his funeral service, Gaston's mother calls for further action. She asks that more than 100 people be arrested and deported so that they would, in her words, "die of hunger and deprivation". The family even drafts a list of potential victims. The list gets to Robert Verbelen, leader of DeVlag (the German-Flemish Labour Community), a man with a reputation for cruelty.

On 11 August, the Merckx family was given the revenge they had been waiting for. Under the leader-

ship of an SS officer, a large operation took place in which as many as 350 Germans and Flemish collaborators participated. Meensel was completely surrounded, while several raids were also staged in Kiezegem.

A homestead went up in flames, and one of its residents dies in the fire. A large group of villagers were rounded up and questioned. Seventy-six people are eventually taken away to prison. Seventy-one of them ended up in the German concentration camp Neuengamme; most of them were never heard from again.

With 55 residents of Meensel-Kiezegem and 12 from the surrounding area dead, the final outcome of the event was tragic. The village of just 900 lost 7% of its population. After the war, Gaston Merckx's brothers fled, most likely to South America. The rest of the family were sentenced to life in prison.

A monument and cemetery today honours the victims of the events at Meensel-Kiezegem. The graves are inscribed with the names of the dead and the places where they died. A commemoration ceremony is organised annually to this day. Meanwhile, in Neuengamme, Germany, a special statue was erected for the victims of Meensel-Kiezegem, which is visited by a group of residents from the village each year.

A haunted castle

Hidden between the hills of the Hageland region is the authentic, imposing Horst Castle. And like any castle worth its name, Horst comes with a few ghost stories. Horst has everything a medieval castle needs: a robust tower, a moat, half-ruined outbuildings and beautiful, green grounds with few elements that bring to mind the 21st century. The castle was built in the 14th century by the lords of Horst and was already a fortified farm at that time.

Over the next centuries, the castle was destroyed and rebuilt several times. In the 17th century, it came into the hands of Maria-Anna Van den Tympel, who had the building significantly altered to the aesthetic standards of the time. Although noble families from the neighbouring town of Leuven often hunted in the area, Horst Castle subsequently slid somewhat into obscurity. This explains why it never received a complete make-over like many other local castles and why it has preserved its medieval charms to this day.

Which makes the ghostly legends all the more compelling. The most famous is that of the Black Coach. According to the tale, every night,



© Toon Lambrechts
A cemetery in Meensel-Kiezegem honours the victims of the revenge spree that cost 55 lives

a black phantom carriage can be seen travelling up and down the lanes of Horst. The only passenger is one of the former Horst counts. While alive, he was punished for killing a priest.

Why he committed that crime never became clear. According to one version of the story, he was jealous because the priest got along a little too well with his wife. According to another, he was outraged that the pastor didn't wait for him to celebrate Mass.

Another Horst castle legend concerns a treasure under the seventh step of the tower, one that no-one has ever found. A clearly visible crack in the tower is also rumoured to have been caused by lightning. That, in any case, is not true. The crack is simply the result of poor architectural design. A number of stories from *The Red Knight* Flemish comic book series also take place in Horst castle.

The church of Bruegel

There's something special about the church of Sint-Anna-Pede. It is the only existing known church to appear in a painting by Flemish Primitive Pieter Bruegel the Elder. It's amazing how green the countryside just outside of Brussels can sometimes be. Sint-Anna-Pede, a neighbourhood in Iterbeek, is still surrounded by meadows, and the village church is a veritable gem. Now looking old and a bit rough, it was originally built in typical Romanesque style in 1250. A garden stretches out around the church, surrounded by lime trees that themselves look a respectable age.

Such a place is nothing if not picturesque, something Pieter Bruegel the Elder would probably agree with. When the painter



© Toon Lambrechts
A sign in front of the Pede church informs visitors of the Bruegel connection

settled in Brussels in 1563, the valley of the Pede brook was one of his favourite places to paint. Unsurprisingly, the church of Sint-Anna-Pede makes an appearance in one of his works – "The Parable of the Blind".

The painting depicts a procession of six blind men, just as they are about to tumble into a ditch. The work is believed to allude to

a Biblical parable in which Jesus referred to the Pharisees. The church of Sint-Anna-Pede can be seen in the background of the painting. Today, "The Parable of the Blind" hangs in the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples, Italy. If that's a bit too much of a trek, you can fortunately visit the real deal much closer to home.

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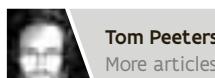
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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

25 years of lunch-time concerts

Boterhammen in het Park is the timeless music festival that keeps on giving



Tom Peeters

More articles by Tom \ flanderstoday.eu

WWW.ABCONCERTS.BE

Offering top-quality performances by Dutch-language artists to Flemish commuters in Brussels – that was the simple goal of the Ancienne Belgique (AB) concert hall when they first organised the Boterhammen in het Park festival in the idyllic Warande Park in the centre of the capital in the summer of 1990.

If you take a closer look at the posters for that first edition, which are on view all summer in the Brussels library and information centre Muntplein, you'll see that the festival has always been able to rely on some of the biggest names in Flemish and Dutch music. From the veteran Dutch singers Boudewijn De Groot, the late Ramses Shaffy and Bram Vermeulen to their Flemish counterparts Johan Verminnen, Raymond van het Groenewoud and Jan De Wilde – they all put their shoulders to the wheel for this event that simultaneously made it a point to showcase emerging local talent.

"Our concern was indeed mainly artistic," says

“

We want to show how rich our language is and how it fits into a broader culture

Jari Demeulemeester, the former AB director who started the initiative. He says that this approach went back to that of Mallemunt, the Brussels music festival he organised in the 1970s at Muntplein, where the careers of bands such as De Snaar, which later became De Nieuwe Snaar, took off.

"I wanted to take the pulse of the scene of the Low Countries, introduce interesting new artists and explore what was happening in Dutch-language music, from folk to



kleinkunst or cabaret to *polderpop*," he says. But Demeulemeester's ambitions exceeded the merely artistic. The idea to stage something culturally engaging for Flemish commuters in Brussels had been brewing for a while, and lunchtime seemed like the ideal moment to organise something along those lines, as had been demonstrated by the success of noon-time poetry and theatre events. The festival name, which translates as "Sandwiches in the Park", is a nod to that lunchtime hour.

When Brussels City's cultural department asked Demeulemeester to organise something in Warande Park, there was no holding him back. "Everybody was so enthusiastic," he says. "When the Flemish government also decided to support us financially, Boterhammen was launched."

Boterhammen in het Park also created additional opportunities for AB. "There were quite a few Dutch-language artists we couldn't really programme during the regular concert season," Demeulemeester explains. "And a lot of these artists brought a special show to

Boterhammen, one with respect to the location – an idyllic bandstand in a picturesque park."

This fairy-like setting was always mirrored by the festival posters. "They all look very sweet, as if they are saying: 'Now you can not only find dwarfs, elves and pixies in the park, but also magical musicians.'

AB first organised Feeërieën in 2003 hoping to recreate that same bewitching atmosphere in the evening. This Boterhammen sister festival sees national and international, mostly emerging and often melancholic singer-songwriters and bands perform as the sun sets over the park. (see p15)

Because of its focus on Dutch-language artists, Boterhammen does not have a huge pool of performers to draw from, but in terms of styles and genres this 25th anniversary edition is again pretty diverse. Flip Kowlier, who sings in the dialect of West Flanders, opens the festival, while local hero

25-29 August, 12.00

van het Groenewoud will close the festival four days later.

Between the two of them, a younger generation of artists such as Maaikie Ouboter, Hannelore Bedert and Stoomboot will also take the stage, while De Fixkes and Kapitein Winokio will offer light-hearted entertainment for young and old. A homage to the late Antwerp folk singer Wannes Van de Velde will also be organised, while Yevgueni singer Klaas Delrue will present his first – wait for it – French-language album.

Delrue's performance is obviously the odd one out. "The conscious choice not to offer a mix of languages was one of the main reasons why Boterhammen could develop its identity," says Demeulemeester. "We want to show how rich our language is and how it fits into a broader culture, even if it attracts mainly Dutch-language day-trippers, commuters and officials."

Demeulemeester sees another reason behind the festival's enduring success in its ability to set and operate within certain limits. "There's a measure for everything," he says. "The great drama today is that everyone is trying to replace the dated annual fairs with big open-air events, or they all want to organise pop concerts, even when our city squares are not suitable for that."

When the Boterhammen festival for instance at one point temporarily relocated to the nearby Spanjeplein, Demeulemeester had the opportunity to invite the popular Flemish band Clouseau. He didn't do it.

"I knew people would miss the cosiness we stand for," he explains. "We always embraced the idea of offering a musical oasis, but that's not possible when it's too crowded. Respect for the urban space has always been sacred to us. We're not only taking care of our artists and our audience; the stones and trees also have to be satisfied."

Warande Park, Brussels

Something to sing about

Pop-up choir brings amateur singers and local artists on stage together



© Jasper Léonard
Lifting each other to a higher level: Hans Primusz

After the pop-up store and the pop-up restaurant, please welcome the pop-up choir, a new concept created by Flemish musician Hans Primusz. For more than five years, the vocalist, arranger and conductor has organised workshops for amateur singers. Each workshop leads up to a public performance, the apotheosis in the performance careers of most participants, who largely lack any stage experience. This month, Primusz presents his latest edition, *In Koor 2014*, organised by his non-profit ZaterdagZondag.

"Half of the participants have never sung in a choir before," he says about the initiative that started off as an experiment, but has become a staple of the summer season. "The power of a choir is that the members lift each other to a higher level. Participants who have never sung harmonies before are guided by their

neighbours, allowing them to stay on key." In the beginning, Primusz only worked with choir members between the ages of 15 and 30, but now he welcomes people of all ages. "I don't mind that I always have to work with new people," he continues. "On the contrary, it's great fun to see each group developing its own identity and charm."

Accompanying the choir are professional guest vocalists Frank Vander Linden, lead singer of renowned Dutch-language pop trio De Mens, Antwerp DJ Merdan Taplak and the Ghent indie rock duo Too Tangled. The choir also includes Flemish singer-songwriter Mira, who was the first professional artist to join.

Of course, the appeal of the guest vocalists is a major reason for some of the participants to join the workshops. "For some, being on stage with one of their heroes is certainly a plus," confirms Primusz. The choice of the songs is made by both Primusz, who writes

23 August, 20.00

Merdan Taplak & Too Tangled in Koor (15-30, 50+)
deSingel, Desguinlei 25, Antwerp

30 August, 20.00

Frank Vander Linden in Koor (31-50)
Cultuurpunt Altena, Antwerpsesteenweg 79, Kontich

new arrangements, and the artists. This autumn, Primusz will be touring Belgium and the Netherlands with *Kintskuroi: Een Gedanste Opera* (Kintskuroi: A Danced Opera), a production by the Dutch singer-songwriter Spinvis, and *De soldaatfacteur en Rachel* (The Soldier-Postman and Rachel), the new theatre piece by Johan Heldenbergh and Mieke Dobbels, the famed duo who created the stage play *The Broken Circle Breakdown*. For *De soldaat*, Primusz wrote choir arrangements and composed a pool of 150 pop-up choir singers, of whom 40 will join the actors on stage each day. \TP

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Borremans could show in Tel Aviv

Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp will decide this week if Flemish artist Michaël Borremans' exhibition *As Sweet as it Gets* will travel to Israel. The retrospective recently ended its five-month run at Bozar in Brussels, where it was visited by 144,000 people, breaking attendance records for the venue. The show is now scheduled to open at Tel Aviv's Museum of Art on 4 September, planned well before the latest round of bombings in Gaza. Aside from the safety of the paintings and sculptures, several prominent figures have asked Borremans to cancel the show, including author Kristien Hemmerechts and choreographer Alain Platel. Borremans told *De Standaard*: "Of course I absolutely condemn the Israeli army's actions in Gaza, but I don't believe a boycott will do anything to change that. I am more someone who wants to have a dialogue. I'm not someone who turns and runs."

Antwerp hosts Genée Competition

For the first time in its distinguished 83-year history, the Genée International Ballet Competition will be held in Belgium. The Royal Ballet Flanders will host the competition in Antwerp from 24 to 27 September. The Genée is organised annually by the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD), one of the world's largest and most influential dance education and training organisations. The competition is open to dancers studying the RAD syllabus. Candidates work with international choreographers and teachers for five days before performing in the semi-finals and then the finals to win one of the five medals. The head choreographer this year is Antwerp soloist Ricardo Amarante, tasked with creating solos for both male and female dancers. The semi-finals and finals are open to the public; tickets are available from the Royal Ballet Flanders.

www.balletvlaanderen.be

Flemish shorts at MoMA

The Museum of Modern Art in New York has chosen three Flemish short films to include in its four-film programme of shorts on 20 September. The screening is part of the museum's six-week programme *The Great War: A Cinematic Legacy*. Tom Van Avermaets' Oscar-nominated *Death of a Shadow*, starring Matthias Schoenaerts, will screen, as will Raf Reyntjes' 2008 film *Tunnel Rat* and Roman Korchakov's one-minute animation *Freedom*.

From the field to the public

Antwerp show documents the journeys of First World War photographs



Tom Peeters

More articles by Tom \ flanderstoday.eu

\ WWW.FOTOMUSEUM.BE

The curators of *Shooting Range: Photography in the Front Line?* at Antwerp's FotoMuseum, insist they did not want to simply relate the history of the First World War in images. Instead, they gave themselves one overriding mission: to compile the actual journey of the photographs through time and space, from the click of the shutter to the public. "We were interested in how the visuals of the war reached its audience," explains co-curator Inge Henneman, who put the exhibition together with Rein Deslé and Maureen Magerman.

A landscape photographer in her own right, Henneman typically takes a multidisciplinary approach. Her biggest challenge for the FoMu show was to make clear that the First World War was really the first large-scale event that used and abused photography in the sense that the medium did not necessarily tell the truth in an era in which most people still believed pictures offered undeniably factual evidence.

"There were three kinds of photographers during the Great War," Henneman says. "The ones working for the propaganda departments of the armies. The soldiers, who brought their own small cameras to the front, as those were heavily promoted by Kodak as 'the soldier's camera'. Compared to the third category, the press photographers, who hardly made it to the front, the soldiers gave a more intimate view of daily life in the trenches, and their images were not so heavily censored."

At the end of 1914, the authorities instituted a ban on photography. "Only at the very beginning of the war, when the Germans invaded Belgium, was there a lot of action. Later, it became a war of waiting, including at the front," says the curator.

Because of technical limitations such as a long shutter speed, very linear warfare and heavy censorship, the home front was never able to see the real battles.

"The last trench before reaching enemy lines was the furthest press and official photographers could go," says Henneman. "They could only show the preparations and aftermath of the war. That's why there is a question mark in the title. It also explains why amateur photography from the soldiers is such a big part of the exhibition." These pictures in the trenches, shot by soldiers, sometimes ended up in photo diaries, occasionally with captions. "A recurrent motive is the posing soldier," says Henneman. "Soldiers posed with rats, bombs, gas masks, ... Sure, it's a destructive background, but



© Collection FoMu
A studio portrait souvenir, circa 1916

for them it was just something new and unknown, something they wanted to save for later, as a heroic souvenir, as if they were on holiday."

Thanks to all this photographic activity and the arrival of smaller cameras and films, photography developed at an unprecedented speed. "We haven't arrived at Robert Capa yet, but we do see technical limitations leading to inventive solutions," she says, referring to the pioneering American photographer. "From a very static photography, we slowly move to a more vivid documentary photography."

It took the *Shooting Range* curators a while to arrive at a clear picture of the central story they wanted to tell. But everything fell into place when they discovered that the images of the war had migrated through different media and contexts. Henneman says the *gueules cassées*, medical photos of the healing process of mutilated soldiers, offer a good example of those shifts.

"First, they appeared only in the medical archives, to show how the face of wounded soldiers was reconstructed," she says. "Later they were used in propaganda to illustrate the atrocities of the enemy. And after the war, they even appeared in a book by Fritz Fydrich, a German pacifist, to proclaim a message of peace." Still, one taboo that persisted was to print photos of dead soldiers

contexts became the main focus of *Shooting Range*. The portraits of the soldiers, dressed in their neat uniforms and taken in the rapidly emerging commercial photo studios, offer other evidence of this approach. At first, these pictures merely considered souvenirs to take home. "Joining the army was a milestone in a man's life," says Henneman. "Just like a holy communion, a marriage or a funeral, it had to be recorded."

But some of these portraits subsequently also appeared on postcards and often also as a devotional picture when the soldier died. "Sometimes, after the death of a soldier, the family felt the need to take a family portrait with the deceased." Of course, the portrait of the soldier was added in to the photo afterwards.

"Here, it is very obvious we have an assembled picture," Henneman says, pointing to one example. "Look closely, and you see the legs of the deceased soldier are simply missing."

A hundred years ago, death was not necessarily considered macabre; it was simply part of life, the curator explains. "At times, family members of the deceased even went on a pilgrimage to take a souvenir shot by the grave."

Still, one taboo that persisted was to print photos of dead soldiers

in mainstream media. This was simply not done. "And, of course, when a picture of a corpse was printed, it was one of the enemy," says Henneman.

There was one major exception however – the French tabloid *Le Miroir*. Because taboo sells well, even in times of war, and to circumvent people's self-censorship, they offered good money to soldiers who were able to send their shots to the editors.

When you wander through the exhibition, it quickly becomes clear that the main purpose of the propaganda machine was a moral one. "The propaganda headquarters of all parties were eager to find strategies to emphasise the heroic behaviour of their own army and the loss of the enemy," Henneman says. "Photography turned out to be a powerful means for the propagandists."

The many pictures of prisoners of war, also on display here, were an easy way to remind viewers back home of the troops' successes.

The war was often dramatised, not only by the authorities, but also by photographers and editors to "make the images look more 'authentic,'" says Henneman. "Research almost always showed that it never was what it looked like."

A tank supposedly in the heat of the action was in reality not operational, but the addition of smoke to the image just increased credibility. In some photos, dark clouds suddenly appear, replacing a peaceful clear blue sky. And supposed battlefield action photos were often shot in training camps, far away from the front lines. "Call it photoshopping before the term was coined," Henneman says.

"There were two big manipulators at work," the curator says. "Frank Hurley, an Australian photographer, was honest about the compositions he made, but his Canadian colleague Ivor Castle really pictured himself as a war hero, claiming he visited the battlefields, while he had no opportunity to do this. To unmask his manipulations, we are also showing some of the original images."

Such curatorial interventions and demystifications are what make the exhibition's message relevant even today – photography does not represent reality. "Maybe not so much has changed in the 100 years between the start of the Great War and now," Henneman says. "Everyone is still trying to use photography to their own advantage."

Until 11 November

Shooting Range

FotoMuseum, Waalsekaai 47, Antwerp

Antidote to rowdy rock fests

Feeërieën

25-29 August

Warande Park, Brussels
WWW.ABCONCERTS.BE

Mercurial guitarist Mauro Pawlowski opens this year's Feeërieën, a week of open-air concerts around the bandstand in Brussels' Warande Park. Pawlowski is best known as a long-serving member of Flemish supergroup dEUS, although his recent activity has been divided between abrasive noise-rock in Gruppo di Pawlowski and guitar-pop in Hitsville Drunks. For the Feeërieën, however, he will be gently strumming and singing in Dutch as leader of the Maurits Pauwels Groep.

Each evening in the week of concerts has a loose theme, with Pawlowski followed by Sun Kil Moon, aka singer-songwriter Mark Kozelek of Red House Painters fame. Both have a melancholy sound, which will suit the intimate feel of the location.

The acoustic theme continues the next evening, with a bill comprising three modern troubadours. Astronaute's Myrthe Luyten, from Leuven, has a rich, mellow voice that flows smoothly over a simply strummed guitar. She is followed by Iceland's Ölöf Arnalds, and then by Frank Fairfield playing old-time American folk music on fiddle, banjo and guitar. Wednesday brings angsty, earnest power ballads from Perfume Genius and Douglas Dare. Hailing



from Seattle and London respectively, both have strong voices and know how to punish a piano. But the highlight of the series falls on Thursday. The evening begins with synth minimalism from Miaux (aka Antwerp resident Mia Price, originally from Sarajevo) and ends with dream pop from Leuven duo Float Fall (pictured). In between there is Lonnie Holley,

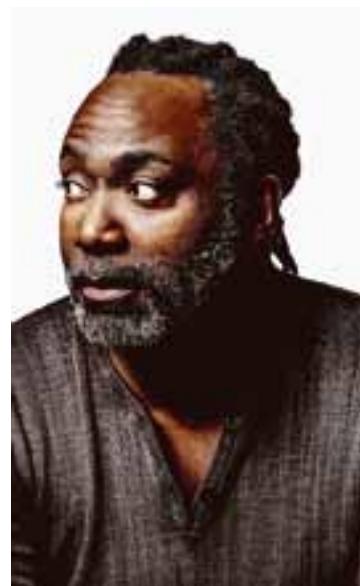
an outsider artist from Alabama who only turned to music in his sixties, singing with a cracked soul voice and a piano style like a West African kora. Expect strong atmosphere. Feeërieën closes on Friday night with dub, courtesy of Copeland and Killing Sound, both from the UK. \ Ian Mundell

PERFORMANCE

Reginald D Hunter

25-27 September

Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp
WWW.REGINALDDHUNTER.COM



Fresh off his recent tours of Australia, New Zealand and the US, London-based American comedian Reginald D Hunter brings his new show *A Nigga Runs Through It* to the Continent. His 15-date tour sees the stand-up sensation performing across Europe from Amsterdam to Zagreb, with three stops in Belgium. Although Hunter's frank and irreverent attitude towards race relations has caused controversy in the UK, critics insist that he is no shock jock but rather a shrewd, provocative commentator on modern life. Along with shows in Ghent and Brussels, Hunter is a headliner at Antwerp's new international Live Comedy Festival.

\ Georgio Valentino

FAMILY

Sand Magic

Until 31 August

Zeeheldenplein, Ostend
WWW.SANDSCULPTURE.BE



Every summer, bathers flock to the Flemish coast for sand and sun. The latter may be in short supply this year, but Ostend's Sand Magic is your family's consolation prize. An 8,000-square-metre plot of waterfront real estate has been transformed into a mini Magic Kingdom, brought to you by some of the world's best sand sculptors. Here you'll find finely crafted, life-sized sculptures of your favourite Walt Disney characters and, yes, even a miniature version of the iconic castle from *Sleeping Beauty*. Since its inauguration in 1997, the popular annual event has showcased 5,000 sand statues and welcomed millions of wide-eyed visitors. This year's theme

is Disney's hit animated feature *Ratatouille*. \ GV

VISUAL ARTS

Maison Stella

Until 28 September

Maison Stella isn't a fashion imprint or a publishing house; she's a contemporary London-based artist showing at Ostend's edgy cultural centre Vrijstaat O. The product of a multidisciplinary background, Stella's art is thoroughly hybrid; she combines collage, photography and illustration – often in the same piece. Her cut-and-paste compositions describe a stylised world swarming with bizarre, disproportionate human figures who nonetheless suggest a kind of elegance. Stella affords us an opportunity that some of us will never have: to attend a high-fashion runway show on LSD. \ GV



EVENT

Antwerp Street Kicks

22 & 23 August

There are no Olympics for extreme sports. Nor, for that matter, are extreme athletes motivated by gold. These adrenaline hogs are rather inspired by the thrill of a risky manoeuvre and the camaraderie to be found in their small, tight-knit communities. International competitors converge on Antwerp's MAS museum for the fourth edition



MAS, Antwerp

WWW.ANTWERPSTREETKICKS.BE

of this event dedicated to urban and extreme sports in all their forms: motocross, skateboarding, wakeboarding, breakdancing, free-running and more. These athletes work hard and play even harder, so the weekend programme includes plenty of parties and concerts in addition to sport workshops and demonstrations. \ GV

VISUAL ARTS

Ghent

Verschijning & Textuur (Form & Texture): Open-air installation by Ghent artist Philippe Gouwy, an ode to nature in a garden in the middle of the city, featuring statues and sculptures made from tree trunks and other organic materials. Until 31 August, De Wereld van Kina, Berouw 55

WWW.DEWERELDVANKINA.BE

FESTIVAL

De Panne

Lichtprocessie (Light Procession): Annual candle-light procession through the "English cottage-style" Dumont neighbourhood of the coastal town, in honour of Our Lady of Fátima. 22 August, 21.00-22.00, from the crypt of Our Lady of Fátima Church, Bortierlaan 8b

WWW.TINYURL.COM/LJX082X

Ghent

Ajuinmarktfesten (Onion Market Festival): Annual festival featuring a torch-light parade, concerts, flea market, art, food stands, carnival rides, street theatre and activities for kids. 22-24 August, Ledeburg (Ghent)

WWW.AJUINMARKT.BE

BENEFIT

Maldegem (East Flanders)

Big Bad Dirty Deeds Rock & Car Weekend: Rock'n'roll and heavy metal combine in this benefit to raise money for children with cancer, featuring American and old-timer cars and motorcycles, free camping, a market, food stands and concerts. 22-24 August, Celieplas 9

WWW.TINYURL.COM/LSYP45M

FOOD&DRINK

Antwerp

Rubenspicnick: Enjoy a picnic in the Rubenshuis garden before every concert of the Laus Polyphoniae classical music festival – featuring music by Claudio Monteverdi – with a picnic basket for two filled with Italian delicacies and a bottle of wine. 24-26 August, 18.00-22.15, Rubenshuis, Wapper 9-11

WWW.RUBENSHUIS.BE

Sint-Truiden

Binkfeesten: Annual beer and music festival hosted by the artisanal Kerkom Brewery, featuring tours of the brewery, concerts, Sunday brunch, activities for kids and dance and choir performances. 22-24 August, Kerkom Brewery, Naamsesteenweg 469

WWW.BROUWERIJKERKOM.BE

Talking Dutch

Eat your words



Derek Blyth

More articles by Derek \ flanderstoday.eu

You have to be very careful what you say about restaurants these days. *De Standaard* reports that *de horeca-uitbaters aan de kust zijn het beu dat topchefs... op 'zomertest' gaan aan zee* – restaurant owners at the coast are fed up with star chefs who have set off to the coast to do a “summer test”.

What's a summer test? you might rightly ask. Well, that would be *een streng oordeel vellen over wat ze op hun bord krijgen* – a critical review whipped out on the food they are served.

One of the chefs complained about *ijsjes die smaken als goedkope industriële shit* – ice creams that taste like cheap industrial shit. Another chef complained about white wine *waar ze beter een doosje Rennie bij serveren* – with which they should really serve a pack of Rennies.

Newspapers love to run these stories during the summer months when many of their readers are at the coast. *Maar de kusthoreca heeft zijn buik vol van de vaak vernietigende recensies* – but restaurants are fed up with the negative reviews.

Luc Bellings of Hasselt's Aan Tafel is a particular thorn in the side of a local horeca organisation because of his scathing reviews. *We roepen daarom onze leden op om hem te weigeren, zodat hij niets meer publiceert* – We are calling on our members to turn him away so that he can't publish any more stories, said the head of the organisation.

But what about freedom of speech? Doesn't a customer have the right to express an opinion about the food on the plate? *De Standaard* put the question to a Flemish lawyer who specialises in libel cases. *Ja en nee* – yes and no, he replied.



© Courtesy Het Nieuwsblad

Iedereen mag op internet een recensie geven over een hotel of restaurant – anyone can post a review of a hotel or restaurant on the internet, he said. *Alleen moet je opletten dat je niet nutteloos schade toebrengt aan de zaak* – but you have to be careful you don't cause any unnecessary damage to the business.

De info in de recensie moet kloppen en de perceptie moet correct zijn – the information in the review has to be accurate and the perception has to be correct.

In France, a blogger was recently hauled before a judge because of a negative review. *Daar veroordeelde een rechter een populaire foodblogger tot een schadevergoeding van 1.500 euro omdat ze een restaurantje in Cap-Ferret 'oneerlijke schade had berokkend'* – a judge fined a popular food blogger €1,500 because she had “caused unfair damage” to a restaurant in Cap-Ferret. *Eet smakelijk* – Enjoy your meal, as they say in Flanders. (But don't dare to complain.)

VOICES OF FLANDERS TODAY

The Art Fund @artfund

Just 3 days left to help @TheBowesMuseum conserve & redisplay a rare Flemish altarpiece. Make it happen! <http://po.st/PfbWTE> #arthappens

Mapei @Mapei

Last festival show! @pukkelpop show me a good time! I hit the dancehall stage in 10min!!! #mapeibaby #pkp14

Sydney Williams @sydneynicolew

Bruges, Belgium. The most beautiful place I've ever been to in my entire life pic.twitter.com/TfyaaNjuL

T Magazine @tmagazine

8 reasons why Antwerp is Belgium's capital of cool (Photo: E. Kleinberg) <http://nyti.ms/1vEgqQR> pic.twitter.com/FwgZWv6t1G

Zoe Jones @ZoeJones2

Got beat in the semi-final yesterday to @anastasiadarts really happy with the way I played Well done Anna :) #darts #Antwerp

Les TWINS Organization Official A LAST MINUTE SURPRISE FOR US AND #ANTWERP! #LesTwins will be hosting a live show at NOXX club tonight! Don't miss out on this night. FULL MADNESS awaits you

BrusselsLife Last week to enjoy the Brussels beach... go for it!

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Poll

Should residents of social housing have contracts for life?

a. No. Social housing should only be available to those who really need it, not those who can now afford average market prices

33%

b. Yes. You can't throw people out of their homes just because they earn more. And some of these people are disabled

0%

c. It depends. A majority could be short-term contracts, but there could be life-long contracts for the permanently disabled, say

67%

Currently, Flanders' system of social housing allows residents who qualify to remain in their homes for life, even if their incomes increase. New Flemish housing minister Liesbeth Homans wants to change the regulation to limit social housing to those who qual-

ify financially, meaning those who earn a certain wage would have to move. This, she says, would be fair and offer some relief to the long waiting lists.

It appears that our readers agree; not a single person who voted agrees with the opposition's

support for the status quo. Encouraging news for the government there. Although two of our options are slightly different, Homans supports the idea of offering some residents, such as the disabled, social housing for life.

\ Next week's question:

Next week's question: The former rector of the University of Leuven has called for the introduction of student loans to help students pay for their educations (see p9). What do you think?

Log on to the Flanders Today website at www.flanderstoday.eu and click on VOTE

THE LAST WORD

Off-the-peg

“We quite simply didn't have enough time to make the new Red Devils shirts.”

A spokesperson for Adidas explains why the new Red Devils shirts, at €85 each, turned out to be existing (and much cheaper) red jerseys from the spring line with a badge sewn on them

Creating a stink

“My nickname in the lab is Dr Armpit, hence the name of the website. We started it to bring our research closer to the public, because after all, information on body odour is interesting not only to scientists.”

Chris Callewaert of Ghent University launched www.drarmpit.com in celebration of his life's work

Toots sweet

“Right from the first note, he sat there enjoying it enormously, with a big smile on his face. At the end of the performance I saw him waving with his harmonica. And then it happened.”

Jazz Middelheim organiser Bertrand Flamang was as surprised as anyone when Toots Thielemans jumped on stage, just five months after retiring from live performances at the age of 92

So there

“We know perfectly well that it's not a good way to resolve problems. But they started it.” Disputes in Aalst over noisy children at play have come to blows, admits resident Cindy Van Goethem

