A century of jazz

New generation of Flemish musicians reinvent the genre for today’s audiences

The 100th anniversary of the first jazz recording coincides with the rise of talented and inventive Flemish musicians who continue to push the genre’s traditional boundaries. January is jazz month, as bands take to stages across the country.

"Livery Stable Blues" by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band is not likely to blow you away with its sound. Still, widely acknowledged as the first-ever commercial jazz recording, the lively tune made its mark on history when it was released in 1917 on a record made of shellac.

As the name jass morphed into jazz, the musical genre that originated in the African American clubs of New Orleans in the late 19th century found a name. Or rather an attitude, as many musicians prefer to think of it.

Part of the reason why jazz has survived for so long is that it’s always reincarnating into something new. Today, the expansiveness of the genre is illustrated in Flanders by myriad bands, headed by Stuff., TaxiWars and De Beren Gieren.

But the local jazz scene is grounded in a global movement. When announcing that Brussels concert halls Flagey and Ancienne Belgique would collaborate on the genre’s centenary celebrations, the latter’s artistic director asked: "Is jazz entering a new Golden Age?"

In response to his own question, Kurt Overbergh said that the public began to take serious note of the emerging contemporary jazz scene when musicians began to mingle with the world of pop music – from the collaboration between saxophonist Kamasi Washington, rapper Kendrick Lamar and the experimental-music producer Flying Lotus, to David Bowie’s final album, Blackstar, which featured a jazz ensemble. "Even Lady Gaga has teamed up with the crooner Tony Bennett," he said.

The need to pass on the heritage of the late jazz giants to a new generation of music fans is a concern for those programming the centenary celebrations. According to Maarten Van Rousselt, the production and planning manager at Flagey, contemporary jazz in Flanders fuses elements of R&B, hip-hop and electronic music, making it more familiar to younger listeners.

This openness and absence of genre borders is one of the strengths of our local scene.
Higher wages and water bills

New regulations for the new year include a return of indexation of wages

Alan Hope
Follow Alan on Twitter @ahopeFT

A number of changes came into force on 1 January, including wage indexation, increased fines for driving while using a mobile phone and quieter sirens for fire engines. Thousands of workers will receive more in their wage packet, as a result of the annual indexation of their salaries. The exact amounts differ from sector to sector, from 0.38% for workers in the cleaning industry to 1.14% for transport workers. The former amount is being replaced by the more environmentally friendly 95 €10. One in 10 cars is not suited to the new petrol, and drivers are advised to use 98. A list of cars that will not run on 95 €10 is available at e0.6ebic.be. Fire service vehicles must use quieter sirens between 22.00 and 6.00. The regulation already applies to newer vehicles ordered after 2014. The average family in Flanders can expect an increased water bill in 2017, according to the water regulator. The average household will pay about €20 more annually. A new law on flexible work has also come into force, allowing more flexibility in working times, such as when a technician is called out for work in the home. Newborn babies will receive the surnames of both parents in alphabetical order if the parents are unable to agree on a mutually acceptable combination. Parents of children born after June 2014 have until July to reach an agreement before the measure applies. Medical costs associated with giving up smoking will now be partially reimbursed by insurers and be free in the case of people under the age of 20.

Historic Ouderhoek boat sinks in Antwerp harbour

The Ouderhoek, a 10-metre-long boat that took part in the 1986 parade to mark the centenary of the Statue of Liberty in New York, sank last week at its mooring at the Bonaparte Dock in Antwerp. The dock is in front of the MAS museum in the city’s Eilandje district. It is believed that the ship took on water due to a burst pipe on board the vessel that caused the boat to flood. Nobody was injured in the incident, which was investigated by the city’s fire service. The vessel will be salvaged, the city said. The Ouderhoek (pictured) was built in Amsterdam in 1914 as a floating pontoon and was the property of an art collector attracted by its below-deck Art Nouveau décor by period Dutch artist Carel Adolph Lion Cachet. The exterior of the boat also features extensive wood carving and gold-leaf.

Drawing to allocate free tickets for massive Passchendaele commemoration in July

The British government is offering 4,000 free tickets to the commemoration of the Third Battle of Ypres via an online draw. The battle took place at Passchendaele in West Flanders from July to November 1917. The Third Battle of Ypres was launched by the Allies to take control of the ridges east and south of Ypres. It was only partially successful and remains extremely controversial to this day. The number of casualties is also contested, with anywhere from 200,000 to 450,000 fallen Allied soldiers and between 215,000 and 410,000 Germans. The commemoration begins at the Last Post ceremony in Ypres on 30 July, the eve of the start of the battle. Live performances will follow the ceremony on the adjacent square, and a film will be projected on the famous Cloth Hall. The following day, the commemoration will move to Tyne Cot cemetery in Passchendaele, home to 12,000 graves and 35,000 inscriptions of names of the dead whose remains have never been found. "The Belgian government is deeply committed to supporting the commemoration of this historical event of exceptional magnitude," said Paul Breyne, Belgium’s commissioner for the commemoration of the First World War. "It is of the utmost importance to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and peace. We look forward to welcoming those British citizens and visitors from other nations who will travel to Belgium to pay tribute to those who fought with dedication and bravery, 100 years ago, in this devastating battle."

Posters of hate speech against Istanbul victim may be prosecuted

People who post hate messages on social media risk being prosecuted, according to federal home affairs minister Jan Jambon. The announcement comes after it was confirmed that Kerim Akyil, the Limburg-born son of second-generation Turkish parents, was one of the victims of the New Year’s Eve terrorist attack in an Istanbul nightclub, leading to a flood of racist messages on Facebook. Akyil, born and brought up in Houthishem-Elchelteren, was remembered at a silent wake last week in the town, where he was buried last Wednesday. “My son and I are a part of this country,” his father, Ah, told VRT News. “That’s why I will bury him here. These racists are sorry people. They don’t even know what they’re doing.”

Last year, the federal police set up a service called the Internet Referral Unit, whose job is to track down hate speech on the internet. “Nearly 400 Facebook and Twitter accounts responsible for hate speech, incitement to violent extremism and paedophilia have been taken offline,” Jambon said in a statement. The unit will be reinforced shortly with 15 new appointments. The federal agency Unia, formerly the Centre for Equal Rights and the Fight Against Racism, said it had opened 365 dossier last year against hate speech, just under one a day on average and 10% more than in 2015. The centre called on social media sites to act more swiftly in removing hate messages. A spokesperson for Facebook told De Morgen the site had a set of clear guidelines intended to encourage users to share their opinions “in a responsible manner”. That includes zero tolerance for messages that incite violence or hatred based on nationality, ethnicity or religion. Meanwhile, the federal police said it would make a report whenever a case of hate speech was discovered, either reported by a member of the public or detected by police services. The report goes to the local prosecutor’s office, which decides whether to ask Facebook for the person’s details.

Brussels metro stations are equipped with free wi-fi – including Maalbeek, Troon and Weststation – with the whole network planned for coverage by September. Sign up at wifi.brussels.

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The Ostend-Bruges International Airport closed 2016 with passenger traffic up by 9.8%, and one-third more cargo, CEO Marcel Reudens has announced. The airport picked up traffic following the terrorist attacks at Brussels Airport in March, ending the year with a total of nearly 435,000 passengers. Antwerp Airport also saw record passenger figures, with some 25% more passengers than the year before, for a total of 276,300.

The Association of Flemish Journalists (VVF) has complained for a second time in a matter of weeks about a breach of the federal law protecting journalists’ sources after a reporter for Het Laatste Nieuws had her telephone wiretapped in connection with a case concerning Ghent’s city council. The reporter had received leaked information about a disciplinary matter at the council — a leak that may not have been illegal, according to the VVF. The case followed a search warrant carried out in December at the home of a journalist for the VRT programme Jourrake in connection with an ongoing murder case.

Unions representing civil servants have protested against a plan by federal administrative affairs minister Steven Vandeput (N-VA) to induct a five-class-rail passes for government workers. At present, civil servants with university degrees are issued train passes for first-class. A number of other benefits would be scrapped, while others would be standardised for all classes of workers. Opposition leader John Crombez (SP.A) pointed out that members of parliament would continue to receive first-class passes.

The Asmat, a Flemish fishing boat that capsized off the coast of south-east England last week, has been salvaged and returned to the port of Ostend, according to the maritime salvage and co-ordination centre. Two crew members were lost. The body of a 36-year-old Ostend man has been recovered, while a Spanish crew member remains missing. The boat’s skipper, Johnny Ronsijn, survived after spending 11 hours clinging to the boat’s hull.

The number of births increased last year in four of Flanders’ five provinces by an average of 0.9% to 63,946, reversing the downward trend of the last seven years. According to the Free University of Brussels (VUB), East Flanders saw a decrease of nearly 2%, while Limburg stayed the same. But the other provinces went up by between 1.3% and 3.5%.

The port of Ghent has announced record figures, with a total of 51 million tonnes of goods handled, up nearly 10% on 2015. Sea traffic was up even higher, by 10.3% to more than 29 million tonnes. Ghent connects to the sea via the canal to the port of Terneuzen and the Scheldt estuary. The port recorded huge growth — some 46% — in liquid bulk, in particular hydrocarbons like methane and propane.

The government of Flanders has withdrawn private security firms from the car parks along the westbound E40 motorway, following the removal of the refugee camp at Calais, minister Ben Weyts announced last week. The car parks had become a pick-up point for human traffickers to transport refugees to Zeebrugge, and thereafter to the UK. With the disappearance of the Calais camp, the security presence is no longer necessary, Weyts said.

De Markten cultural centre and restaurant in the centre of Brus- sels is closed awaiting renovations and a take-over by a new operator, after Kixo Projects closed prior to the end of their contract in April.

Ryanair has cancelled its contract with baggage handler Swissport at Brussels Airport, putting 80 jobs at risk, the company said. Ryanair is one of Swissport’s main clients at the airport after Brussels Airlines. It said they had no idea why the low-cost airline, which has been operating out of Zaventem since 2014, took the decision. Last week a dispute between unions and management of Zurich-based Swissport led to delays and cancellations.

The year 2016 saw 70.5 million tonnes of freight being carried on Flanders’ waterways, the most in five years and close to the standing record of 72 million tonnes transported in 2011, waterways agency De Scheepvaart said. The largest area of growth was container traf- fic, which saw an increase of 9%.

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Security in main railway stations to get boost in 2017

Berlin terror suspect passed through North Station on way to Italy

Federal home affairs minister Jan Jambon has promised to look into heightened security at Brussels' railway stations, similar to that in place at airports.

The announcement follows the news that Anis Amri, the alleged perpetrator of the attack on Berlin’s Christmas market last month, spent two hours in transit at Brussels North Station.

Amri was travelling from Berlin to Milan following the attack on 19 December.

Long before the Berlin attack, national rail authority NMBS announced that it would outfit major stations like Brussels South and Antwerp Central with 750 new security cameras, while renewing 1,500 older cameras in stations across the network.

It is said to employ additional security personnel, up to 600 this year alone. Part of their job would be to monitor new security doors due to be installed at major stations.

The measures planned will not necessarily stop terror attacks, according to Beate De Ruyver of Ghent University’s criminal justice department.

"Perfect security doesn’t exist," he said. "If you secure some targets, there’s always the risk that the threat shifts to other targets."

He added, "I believe in additional security in public places. “The sensation of security is important. People can act strangely if they don’t feel safe in society. The feeling of security is what determines quality of life.”

A related topic of discussion is the collection of identity details of people travelling on international trains and buses. The idea was sparked in the summer of 2015 when an armed man planning a mass shooting was apprehended on a Thalys train in France. He had boarded the train at Brussels South. Passenger ID would only work, De Ruyver said, if all of Europe took part. "The measure would be useful not only in the fight against terrorism," he said, "but also in other areas like human trafficking and the drugs trade.

Jambon also plans to train police in what is known as behavioural detection - detecting suspicious activity according to the suspect’s behaviour. This would help with terrorism, he said, but also more common crimes like theft and smuggling. A pilot project currently under way at Brussels Airport will be evaluated before the government decides whether to extend the exercise to other traffic hubs.

Meanwhile, NMBS is looking into cameras with facial recognition, but there is no deadline for a decision, a spokesperson said.

Tributes paid to former National Bank governor Luc Coene

Politicians and others have been paying tribute to Luc Coene, the former governor of the National Bank who died last week. He was 69 and had been ill for some time.

Coene (pictured) was "my fellow traveller for more than 30 years," said former prime minister Guy Verhofstadt, whose chief of staff Coene had been. "In every function he filled, he acted as a role model for the generation that followed."

Coene, he said, had been a colleague in the Senate, a man who in the two terms he had served as Verhofstadt’s chief. "And above all an independent governor of the National Bank who was always ready and willing to give his opinion, even when it wasn’t asked for."

Jan Smets, who succeeded Coene as governor in 2015, described him as "an extraordinary man. He had a sharp power of analysis and a huge degree of insight, coupled with his willingness to take on responsibility. He led from the front like a general. He was also a loyal man, with whom I could work in perfect confidence."

Coene was known to support Open VLD. The party’s president, Gwenda Rutten, said he was “a man with a vision that combined knowledge and rigour. Luc’s advice was always clear and well-founded.”

Party colleague Alexander De Croo called him “an unusually wise, friendly man of great integrity.”

Prime minister Charles Michel also tweeted his thoughts for the family, describing Coene as “a professional bridge-builder who became a driven governor.”

Tommelein to stand for Open Vld in Ostend’s 2018 mayor race

Flemish energy minister Bart Tommelein has announced that he will challenge former socialist party chair Johan Vande Lanotte in Ostend’s mayoral race come 2018.

Tommelein (Open VLD) was the state secretary of social fraud and North Sea concerns before he accepted his current position as a replacement for party leader for the liberals in 2018, "he said. The news follows the announcement by Kris Peeters, federal minister and another Flemish minister-president, that he would lead the CD&V list in Antwerp at the municipal elections in 2018. That puts him head-to-head against current port city mayor Bart De Wever, who is also president of the Flemish nationalist party N-VA.

Tommelein, 54, was born in Ostend and is taking on one of Belgium’s biggest political heavyweights. Vande Lanotte, 61, was born in Poperinge and was a professor of constitutional law at Ghent University before holding several federal posts, including home affairs, state enterprises and North Sea concerns. He has been mayor of Ostend since 2015.

Tommelein’s party currently runs Ostend in coalition with the socialists and CD&V. "The coalition will simply carry on," Tommelein said. "But Open VLD is now an established party in Ostend and capable of delivering a mayor. Ostend has a lot going for it, but also has a lot of challenges. I want to be a mayor that represents everyone in Ostend and take the lead of a project everyone can be involved in."

App to back up Brussels street harassment law

The federal government is preparing an app to make it easier to report sexual harassment on the street, state secretary for equal opportunities for women and youth Elke Sleurs has announced.

Some believe that PVDA should be put in caron sanitaire, comparable to that which keeps the far-right Vlaams Belang out of government coalitions. But that has not stopped SPA from flirting with the far-left.

First year RTM student Sofie Peeters as her final film and theatre school in Brussels.

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A century of jazz
Armed with experimental sounds, Flemish artists eye stages across border

“This openness and absence of borders is in fact one of the strengths of our local scene,” Van Rousselt says. “By promoting contemporary jazz artists, we hope that the music of the jazz icons of the past will also find its way to younger audiences.”

But hasn’t jazz always included elements from the entire musical landscape? “Indeed,” says Pieter Koten of Ostend arts centre Vrijstaat O. “Jazz has always been a very vivid style, easily adapting to the trends of the time.”

The biggest difference, he points out, is that the new generation of musicians presents itself differently. “They can’t stand parochialism and are very difficult to pigeonhole. For them, it’s all about cross-pollination. Sometimes, they consciously avoid the jazz label, and sometimes they want to vehemently stick to it.”

Take Lander Gyselinck (pictured on cover), the jazz drummer who recently won the Flemish Culture Prize for Music. “On the new Stuff album, which will be released in April, he will sound even more like Flying Lotus,” says Koten. But when collaborating with other bands and ensembles, including BeraadGeslagen, LABritio and Kris DeFoort Trio, “he can just as easily improvise or play jazz at chamber-music level.”

Another jazz chameleon is the saxophone player Robin Verheyen. “In TaxiWars, he collaborates with the rock singer Tom Barman, while his other projects are more jazz- or world-oriented. And he will soon present a classical Bach project in Bruges’ Concertgebouw.”

As a side note, both Verheyen and Gyselinck are based in New York. In the capital of jazz, says Koten, “you need to be open-minded to survive”.

The musical cross-over, typical of this new generation of musicians, often comes with an interdisciplinary approach. This month, the Brussels Jazz Orchestra play a New Year’s concert at deSingel arts centre in Antwerp with five Syrian refugees. At Flagey’s Brussels Jazz Festival, the orchestra will pair up with trumpeter and composer Bert Joris, while at KVS theatre, they will be joined on stage by four slam poets: Laryssa Bert Joris, while at KVS theatre, they will be taking over a new album.

Case in point: the widespread popularity of the Scandinavian jazz scene, or the rise of UK and Canadian groups, such as BadBadNotGood, GoGo Penguin and Portico. Musician Fulco Ottervanger has just been appointed Ghent’s city composer. His band, De Beren Gieren, has already enjoyed modest success in Europe and are working on a new album.

Jazz has always been a very vivid style, easily adapting to the trends of the time so much out there! We haven’t even talked about SCHINTZL, Steiger or the Granvat collective,” explains Koten. “The next logical step to the local success story would be a follow-up on the international stage.”

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We are more than ready for an international tour,” says the pianist. “Naturally, we’d like to play bigger venues, but it’s not that easy if you don’t have the backing of a major label. Or maybe the music of GoGo Penguin is just a bit simpler than ours. We need attentive listeners.”

A broad and idiosyncratic musical appetite does come with a few perks. Like many fellow jazz musicians of his generation, Ottervanger – who grew up listening to Jimi Hendrix, Chick Corea and Beethoven – sees being part of only one band as an artistic limitation.

At any given time, you can see him playing in a kids theatre, running the rock band Stadt or teaming up with drummer Gyselinck in the BeraadGeslagen improv band. “Everything I encounter in life, I put into my music,” he says. “Nothing equals that kind of freedom.”

“For a local venue like Vrijstraat O, such a broad musical spectrum is the biggest gift of all,” says Koten. “By being so open, this emerging scene exalts the real jazz attitude.”

And maybe, he adds, that’s more important than any international or mainstream acclaim.

TODAY’S JAZZ SCENE IN 12 SHOWS

Refugee New Year’s Concert by Brussels Jazz Orchestra and Syrian Soloists 11 January 2020, deSingel, Antwerp

Brussels Jazz Festival 12-23 January, Flagey, Brussels
Les Chronique de l’Inutile 14 January 2020, Werkplaats Walter, Brussels
De Beren Gieren 17 January 19:00, Hot Club de Gand, Ghent
SCHINTZL 18 January 20:00, CC De Schakel, Waregem
Sarahay Korwar and BeraadGeslagen 23 January 2020, Ancienne Belgique, Brussels
We Orchestrate Words featuring Brussels Jazz Orchestra and slam poets 28 January 20:30, KVS, Brussels

STAFF
Nordmann plays Dementia 9-11 March, across Flanders
Stuff, 27 April to 12 May, across Flanders and Brussels
Database for female experts

New platform will act as recruitment pool for boardroom quotas

The Brussels secretary of state for equal opportunities has begun developing an online database of female experts in a variety of areas. Bianca Debets has worked with the gender-equality non-profit Amazon to create the site experts.brussels, which brings together female experts for consultation by the press, government and other organisations and will act as a recruitment pool.

As of the start of this year, all business receiving government subsidies or quoted on the stock exchange must have at least one woman for every three board members. Many companies have yet to comply. “Companies often say they can’t find suitable women,” said Marleen Teugels of Amazon. “The new database will provide a response to that argument.”

When the law on the quota was passed in 2011, one in 10 members of company boards were female. After a transition period of five years, the number for Belgium as a whole should have gone up to one in three, but that legal minimum is far from being reached in the Brussels region, where many larger companies are based. “A balanced composition of men and women in company boardrooms is economically interesting for the companies involved, and for the many female experts to get the chance to show their abilities,” said Debaets (pictured).

The database, made possible by a subsidy of €34 million from the region, lists more than 100 female experts in 14 business sectors, including economics, religion, sport, media and ICT.

“We are focusing on company boards, but any organisation looking for a speaker, or a journalist looking for an expert, can also consult the list,” Teugels said. “We’d like to make it as easily accessible as possible.”

### Most new jobs created by large companies since 2014

Three out of four jobs created during the current federal government term of office were in large companies in the private sector, according to the state service for social security RSV. The figures cover 83,742 new jobs created between the third quarter of 2014 and the same period in 2016.

Belgian employment is usually considered as dependent on small and medium-sized enterprises, with companies of fewer than 200 employees making up 56% of employment. However, in the period concerned by the study, that sector accounted for only 20,600 new jobs, compared to 63,100 in large companies and corporations.

According to Edward Roossens, chief economist at the Federation of Belgian Enterprise in Brussels, government measures are responsible for the change: the decision to skip a year in indexing wages, changes to taxation and lowering the costs of employment. “Large companies benefited the most,” Roossens told Trends magazine. Belgium’s competitive disadvantage compared to neighbouring countries like the Netherlands, France and Germany, measured at 14% in previous years, now stands at 9%, the RSV said. The hourly cost of employment is now five percentage points cheaper. However, all of the new jobs are not full-time; 70% are at least half-time, with 24,000 being full-time.

### Local airline seeks hundreds of new staff for summer season

Belgian airline TUI Fly – previously Jetairfly – intends to take on 330 new airline crew to prepare for the summer season. The airline is looking for 70 pilots and 260 cabin crew.

The staff are needed because the airline intends to add new destinations and more cycle days, as well as increasing the frequency of flights to cities it currently serves. Cabin crew will be hired on temporary contracts running until the end of October. “We don’t need as many people in the winter. ‘That’s typical for the sector,’ a company spokesperson said. “But we hope to be able to keep on board those who make an impression.” The new cabin staff will undergo eight weeks’ training, with the possibility of a language course.

TUI Fly, part of the Hanover-based tourism group TUI, operates out of all five Belgian airports – Brussels, Ostend, Antwerp, Liège and Charleroi – with a fleet of 25 planes and, after the new appointments, a staff of 1,150.

### Anti-terror and major crimes police take most sick leave

Officers in the anti-terrorism and major crimes divisions of the federal police take considerably more sick leave than the average police officer, according to figures from the medical service. Figures from January to November 2016 obtained by Le Soir show that across the whole police service, the average number of days an officer is absent through illness (excluding accidents and maternity leave) was 8.06 days in the federal police and 8.17 in the local police.

In the anti-terrorism division, however, the average was 13 days in the course of 2016. According to the paper’s own estimate, 30 members of the department were sick at one time or another in December, out of a total force of 200.

In the major crimes division, which also investigates organised crime, 247 out of 292 personnel had taken at least one day off sick in the year to December, with a total of 6,313 days – the equivalent of 21 days’ leave for every full-time equivalent.

Last week, 30 officers from the Zone West in Brussels – covering Molenbeek, Koekelberg, Jette, Ganshoren and Sint-Agatha-Berchem – reported sick collectively in protest at increased workloads and the zones’ inability to provide more manpower. Work has since resumed and talks with unions continue.

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### MediaMarkt takes over Makro’s electronics business

The multimedia chain MediaMarkt is to take over the electronics business of supermarketer Makro, which has six branches in Belgium. Makro announced last year that it would scrap 565 of its 3,000 jobs in Belgium. Some of those jobs may now be rescued by MediaMarkt.

The announcement followed a reported loss by Makro of €33 million, and involved the company restructuring to concentrate on fresh food, building materials and party accessories such as balloons and barbecues. MediaMarkt expressed an interest in the electronics activities in the six stores and negotiations are now complete.

“We will start work in mid-January to convert the electronics departments of Makro stores into MediaMarkt branches,” said Sven Degezel, director general of MediaMarkt Belgium. “The process should be completed by mid-May.”

Makro still plans to get rid of 565 jobs, according to a company spokesperson. “But that includes employees currently working in our electronics departments,” she said. “They may be able to find places elsewhere in Makro, but they can also apply for jobs with MediaMarkt.”

Makro’s Flemish stores are in Antwerp, Sint-Pieters-Leeuw and Mechelen near Brussels and Nazareth near Ghent. The company has assured customers that products bought from Makro will continue to be guaranteed by MediaMarkt.
Innovation

Many of us confuse the Geographic South Pole — the point where the axis of the Earth pierces through the southern hemisphere — with the South Pole, used as a casual synonym for Antarctica. But Gwenhaël de Wasseige is actually the South Pole, used as a casual synonym for Antarctica. But Gwenhaël de Wasseige is actually synonym for Antarctica. But the South Pole, used as a casual synonym for Antarctica. But

It may seem like a poor harvest every day, right? Finally, de Wasseige will post photos of her four-week stay at the South Pole every day on social media, including Instagram and Twitter. “My day starts at 6.00, when the satellite internet is up. I read my e-mails, chat a bit and do my work on social media, before heading to breakfast. Our working day starts around nine and lasts until 16:00. Then we’re free until the evening, when we have a good satellite connection again.”

When de Wasseige arrived in December, the weather in Antarctica was unusually warm. “The air outside is about minus 20 degrees, which is quite warm actually,” she says. “But it’s the wind that makes it feel so cold, with a wind chill of -40.” De Wasseige celebrated New Year’s Eve under a sunny blue sky, a complete change in weather from what she had just arrived. “During my first days here, the sky was white, and it was hard to distinguish it from the icy landscape.” Her southern adventure ends this week, as she heads home to Flan-

VUB researcher develops innovative measuring system at South Pole

The outside environment "are the constant darkness, the extremely dry air and the high altitude." The South Pole is located more than three kilometres above sea level. When Flemish astronauts Dirk Frimout and Frank De Winne went into space, they carried a whole list of things to do there to promote space exploration and science among the general public, including schoolchildren. When de Wasseige looks at her own to-do list, she probably feels a bit like an astronaut who has been sent to a distant planet.

In collaboration with Witschuy, an organisation that promotes science in Brussels, they’re taking part in three initiatives. At the Amundsen-Scott base, she will run experiments given to her by secondary students, including two magnetic sensors to measure the daily thickness of the snow here very much, “she says referring to the Antarctic, "but because the wind never stops blowing, the snow is constantly moving. Until now, someone had to go out every day and stick a pole into the snow to determine how thick it is. I developed a system based on sound sensors to measure the daily thickness automatically.”

So how is life in the least habitable place on Earth? “Once you’re inside the base, it’s very easy to forget that you’re actually in the middle of Antarctica, at the end of the world,” she says. “The rooms are small, but comfortable, with running hot water. There’s a nice restaurant serving delicious meals, and even a greenhouse, recreation rooms, a gym and an arts-and-crafts room, I can’t complain.”

The only things that remind her of home to important scientific research. The Flemish student is part of an international team that runs the Icecube Neutrino Observatory, a network of more than 5,000 optical sensors melted into a cubic kilometre of Antarctic ice. With this Ice cube telescope, physicists are trying to catch the most mysterious and intangible particles in the universe: neutrinos. Neutrinos barely interact with matter – they literally fly through the universe of light and dust. When they collide with an icy atom and produce a blue flash of light, since it was put into operation in 2010, the Icecube detector has caught 28 neutrinos.

It may seem like a poor harvest until you realise that these neutrinos carry information about some of the most distant and powerful phenomena in the universe – including pulsars, black holes, supernovas or even the big bang – including pulsars, black holes, supernovas or even the big bang – including pulsars, black holes, supernovas or even the big bang – until you realise that these neutrinos carry information about some of the most distant and powerful phenomena in the universe – including pulsars, black holes, supernovas or even the big bang –

De Wasseige didn’t go to the South Pole just for sightseeing. The Amundsen-Scott base, which belongs to the United States, is home to important scientific research. The Flemish student is part of an international team that runs the Icecube Neutrino Observatory, a network of more than 5,000 optical sensors melted into a cubic kilometre of Antarctic ice. With this Ice cube telescope, physicists are trying to catch the most mysterious and intangible particles in the universe: neutrinos. Neutrinos barely interact with matter – they literally fly through the universe of light and dust. When they collide with an icy atom and produce a blue flash of light, since it was put into operation in 2010, the Icecube detector has caught 28 neutrinos.

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Antwerp University (UAntwerp) is participating in the Time Machine FET Flagship project, which will visualise the past of cities in 3D. The project is one of the EU’s FET Flagships, described as “visionary, science-driven, large-scale research initiatives addressing grand scientific and technological challenges”.

Time Machine, which is set to receive between €500,000 and €1 million in funding, brings together some 70 institutions from 20 countries to build a simulator that will map up to 2,000 years of European history. Information about people and places will be retrieved from billions of photographs, paintings, manuscripts and books, connected by computers and placed on a digital map. Eventually, 3D simulations will show us what cities – including Venice and Antwerp – looked like hundreds of years ago.

"The purpose is to create virtual, historic cities that people can move around in," said UAntwerp historian Tim Sorens. "Like Google Street View works today, but with the time dimension as an extra layer." The project offers various scientific applications, including helping urban historians examine how certain areas have developed throughout the centuries. The project also offers tourism opportunities, allowing visitors to experience life in Bruges in the middle ages, for instance. The "construction" of the Time Machine is scheduled to start in 2021. Leuven University Library is one of the Flemish organisations that has agreed to provide access to its materials.

Music makes chocolate taste sweeter

The music you hear while you eat has an influence on how the meal tastes, says UAntwerp researcher Felipe Reinoso Carvalho of the University of Leuven and Free University of Brussels. Together with a professor from Oxford University and Bruges chocolatier Dominique Persoone, he created four pralines and two soundtracks. One of the soundtracks was labelled "soft" and the other "sharp", referring to the emotions or taste the music should trigger. The people who ate the chocolate when listening to the "soft" music described the praline as creamier and sweeter, while those who listened to the "sharp" music described the same chocolate as rougher and more bitter.

European Time Machine project to visualise past
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The world’s a classroom

Hasselt teacher connects refugees in Kenya with the rest of the world

Koen Timmers is in the running for the Global Teacher Prize in recognition of his work supporting for the Global Teacher Prize in
Koen Timmers is one of 50 educators from around the world in contention for the Global Teacher Prize, and the only Belgian in the running. He has been selected because of his project that allows teachers to connect with children in a Kenyan refugee camp, but this is just one of the innovative initiatives under his belt.

Timmers’ day job is teaching computer science at an adult education college in Heusden-Zolder, north of Hasselt. He specialises in web design, and his pupils are a mix of people studying for pleasure and those in ‘second-chance’ education, looking to get back in to the job market.

Timmers teaches not only about computers, but with computers. “I’m part of a distance-learning project, so my students attend half of the classes at home,” he explains. “I use Skype, I use digital textbooks, and I encourage my students to learn from each other. I try to learn from them as well.”

Timmers’ Kenya project is also distance learning, but under quite different circumstances. It began with a chance conversation, via Skype, with a charity worker in the Kakuma refugee camp in the north-west of the country. Nearly 180,000 people who have fled violence in the region live in the camp, more than half of them children. But with few resources and class sizes running to 150-200 pupils, the camp’s 30 schools struggle to meet demand.

“She asked me to help him increase the level of education in the camp, not just on my own but by bringing in other educators from around the world,” Timmers recalls. “I know these people because I’m in Microsoft’s expert educator community, so I have lots of contacts around the world who are doing great things in their own classrooms.”

The first problem was how to connect these global teachers with the camp, which has unreliable internet service and very few computers.

Timmers responded by sending one of his own laptops for a school to use, but its modest speakers were hardly up to the job. “When I had a Skype call with the students, there were 150 of them looking at my little laptop screen. It was really cool, but also a bit frustrating.”

One of the teachers in the camp had to repeat what Timmers said to the rest of the class, and pass back the children’s comments. Language also proved problematic, with the different varieties of English being used often slowing things down or leading to misunderstandings.

Undaunted, Timmers launched a crowdfunding campaign to buy extra computers, a video projector and a sound system. This has improved things, although lessons remain unconventional. “Once you get used to the concept of chaos, it works pretty well,” he says. Subjects, such as science and maths, are chosen to fit in with the Kenyan national curriculum. Timmers started out teaching geography and biology, but preparing lessons outside his expertise proved time-consuming, and now he concentrates on co-ordinating the network.

“I managed to find about 100 teachers willing to teach the refugees, so I have lots of contacts around the world because I’m in Micro-

While the teaching is important, the empathy created by the lessons is just as valuable. “The refugees are not allowed to leave the camp, so by having a Skype call with them – one day with New Zealand, the next with Brazil – we’re unlocking their world.”

The same goes for students outside Kenya who get involved through their teachers and sometimes prepare lessons for their peers in the camp. “They get another perspective on what it is like to be a refugee and how people in Africa live,” Timmers explains.

Despite its success, the project’s future is uncertain. “The internet connection in the camp was maintained by a non-profit organisation, which now has other priorities, so Timmers has been looking for alternatives.

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The organisation that runs the schools is supportive, but has no resources to spare. “They really need computers and funding to pay the energy bills, and we are working very hard to raise that money.”

His lower target is €2,000 to €3,000, while his upper target is $1 million (€963,000), which would take the project to a completely different level. “I don’t think I’m going to win the prize,” Timmers says, “but if I did, the money would make it possible to involve all the schools in Kakuma in the project.”

The winner of the annual prize will be announced on 19 March. Meanwhile, Timmers has been busy with other online teaching projects, such as Wai Water, which last year connected nine schools on six continents.

“The students had to find out about clean water, spoilage, insufficient water and so on, and we covered a lot of subjects, like geography, biology, history and maths,” he explains.

The students collected information in small groups and presented their results first to others in their classroom and then to others in the network. “I think it’s better for students to learn from each other, from their peers from around the world, than just from a book or a teacher instructing them.”

The solutions the students came up with also surprised Timmers. “I thought they would just use PowerPoint to present their outcomes, but they began to use Minecraft to construct waterfalls and so on. They used Lego, they created stop-motion videos and green-screen movies. It was really interesting to see which technologies they were using.”

This, he thinks, is the key to teaching technology. “Don’t take a textbook and teach students how to use Word. Give them Word or PowerPoint or Minecraft, and they will find out themselves while working on important things like water.”

When I had a Skype call with the students, there were 150 of them looking at my little laptop screen...


**WEEK IN ACTIVITIES**

**Putteke Winter**

This weekend’s event is the last in a series of night-time walks through the woods, all across Flanders, with entertainment by fire performers, musicians and street artists. The path leads you past the most romantic places in the park, with lanterns and fire pits lighting the way. Hot drinks and food are available to buy. 13 January, enter between 18:00 and 20:45, Huizingen Provincial Park, Henry Torelylaan 100, Beerse; free / puttekwinter.be

**Algerian Culture Night**

Bring your family and friends for an evening of Algerian music, food and dance, plus a presentation about the country. Learn about another culture in a fun, relaxed setting. Register via info@inspirationvzw.be. 13 January 19:00-23.00, Inspiration, Berendrechtstraat 92, Antwerp; €5 (includes food) / facebook.com/inspirationvzw

**Costumes of Venice**

If you can’t make it to Venice for Carnival this year, come to Bruges instead. Fifty guest performers will parade through the streets, wearing their most beautiful and colourful Carnival costumes and masks. They will follow two routes through the historic city centre, starting at 10.00 and 14.00 each day: 14-15 January, Bruges; free / facebook.com/discoverbruges

**Arboretum Walk**

Have you ever wondered how trees get their names? During a family-friendly guided walk, learn the (Latin and Dutch) names of various trees, along with the stories of Indian tribes and intrepid explorers behind them. 15 January 14.00-16.00, Vlakteplein. Tickets: €1 / visitvuren.be

**Karibu Karimu**

This international family festival offers something for everyone: world music by Ritmo Latino and other bands; salsa, tango and street dance workshops; belly dance for kids; a djembe (drum) workshop; hula hoop and face-painting games and more. Plus food from Armenia, Mexico, Peru and Turkey. 15 January 11.30-18.00, Donnedorff Provincial Park, Tochomlaan 5, Neerpelt; free / wereldfeestondersteboven.eu

**OUTCOME**

**You are not alone**

Outreach team offers mental health support to troubled youngsters

Sarah Crew
More articles by Sarah / flanderstoday.eu

The mental health-care landscape in Belgium is changing. As part of the expansion of community care provision – redirecting funding from institutional psychiatric care – a series of outreach teams for adults has been established across the country in the past five years. Similar multidisciplinary networks were launched for children and adolescents in 2015, with one in each province. The capital’s network is known as Bru-Stars. Launched in 2015, Bru-Stars unites francophones, Dutch-speaking and bi-community institutions in the capital, with a mobile psychiatric service set up last year. It follows two successful projects for adults in Brussels; a third service, specialising in senior mental health care, is due in the coming years.

Bru-Stars will eventually number more than 50 health professionals, treating children and young people who are referred to the service. “Our patients are mainly youngsters who have dropped out of society,” explains Dr Anne François, a child psychiatrist at UMC Brussel’s Saint-Pierre and former head of child psychiatry at Queen Fabiola Children’s Hospital. “They may have already had a difficult and chaotic life, experiencing separation, abandonment and discontinuity. It can start at an early age.” Mental disorders are more likely to be found among youngsters who can’t leave the house for a diverse number of reasons, she explains. These may be biological problems such as schizophrenia and depression, or relational problems linked to the family and their environment. Early intervention is crucial, François adds. “From experience, we see that as soon as a child drops out, in general they drop out of sight of traditional systems. I am currently working with an 11-year-old who dropped out of school two years ago. What is his future? You can’t wait too long with a case like this.”

What is the satisfaction of working with young people? François: “The possibilities are almost infinite. When they are older, possibilities still exist, but they’re more limited. When you see a young person reconstruct their life, recreating a social network and improving relations with their family, that is enormously satisfying.”

Dr Laurent Servais is a psychiatrist with a private practice in Brussels who previously headed a project introducing new French- and Italian-inspired dishes. Among his more adventurous creations is duck breast with spiced coconuts and poached Asian pear. It’s not all so exotic, though. There’s still down-home brasserie fare like smoked salmon, steak tartare and croquettes.

The bar has been brought up to date as well. Not only will the connoisseur find the timeless trappist beers on which Belgium’s brewing reputation rightfully rests, Café Metropole also stocks top-quality craft products made by local upstarts. (Explore Zinnebir, made by Brussels’ own Brasserie de la Senne.) Then there’s a carefully selected wine list and a full range of liquors and cocktails. Metropole’s Parisian-style terrace, meanwhile, has been a prime spot for coffee, ice cream and people-watching since the days of the horse-drawn carriage. Even in winter, warmed by heat lamps, the place remains a worthwhile pit stop on a city-centre stroll. ❘ George Valentino

The path leads you past the city’s new car-free zone, a one-way channel down the Wolvengracht, between the bustling Nieuwstraat and Muntpunt and right up to the hotel lobby, facing De Bruckère!
The line of beauty

Exhibition studies ideals of female beauty – but avoids the tough questions

Diana Goodwin
Articles by Diana, flanderstoday.eu

Tongeren’s Gallo-Roman Museum looks at notions of female beauty through the ages via modern photography and ancient artefacts, and suggests that very little has changed.

A new exhibition in Tongeren combines contemporary photography, ancient objects and classical texts to explore the theme of timeless beauty. The combination of modern art with archaeological finds presents a new kind of exhibition for the Gallo-Roman Museum, previously associated with popular shows such as Gladiators and Vikings, which focused on ancient peoples and cultures. Throughout Timeless Beauty, large-scale photographs of beautiful women – usually young and mostly nude – are juxtaposed with beauty implements from the ancient world, statues of Venus and quotes from classical authors that address aspects of feminine beauty. Both the photographs and classical texts describe a similar ideal of female beauty that spans the centuries. The poster for the exhibition depicts the face of a model, cheek-to-cheek with a stone bust of Venus, their faces representing two versions of the same ideal: young, symmetrical, unblemished, expressionless. It’s an image that could have been created especially for the exhibition, as it perfectly encapsulates the theme.

In the first room, oversized photographs of women accompany classical texts praising this or that aspect of a woman’s beauty, alongside related archaeological finds. Whilst the photographs are visually arresting and dominate the space, the objects are both delicate and intimate. Video screens next to the displays show how the implements were used, in short films recreating beauty rituals as practised by Roman women.

In another section, ancient objects related to themes such as makeup and jewellery are displayed. The emphasis is on the habits and fashions of the Roman world, with photographs and videos sporadically placed. In the next section, however, the photographs again take centre stage, as oversized images that dominate the darkened space. They cover the exterior walls of three free-standing cubes, inside which are objects and videos relating to physical exercise, skin care and aging in the ancient world.

Perhaps recognising that the nude photographs might be at odds with the museum’s family-friendly image, Igor Philtjens, Limburg’s deputy minister for tourism and culture, says: “The Gallo-Roman Museum has a strong tradition of child-friendly exhibitions. This event, too, is suitable for visits with children, provided some guidance is given.”

The photographs are the work of Antwerp-based photographer Marc Lagrange, who died unexpectedly in December 2015. At the time of his death, he was in the middle of working with the museum on a project that would have seen him creating original works as part of an exhibition about feast ing in Roman times. That project ended with his death, but the museum later decided to create a new exhibition incorporating his work, which straddles the line between fashion photography and fine art. His models are young, slender and conventionally beautiful, and he portrays them in sensuous poses amid baroque settings. Many of the images have an explicitly erotic character. This visual eroticism marries seamlessly with the classical texts, which are primarily concerned with the sexual allure and attractiveness of women. A text by Apuleius, paired with a nude by Lagrange, reads: She transformed herself into the picture of Venus / rising from the ocean waves. / For a time she even held one rosy little hand / in front of her smooth-shaven pubes. / purposely shadowing it rather than modestly hiding it. “Consciously or otherwise, many women today seek to emulate actresses or models,” Philtjens says. “In Roman times, the goddess Venus was the ideal. Her image was everywhere.” And just like modern women, women in Roman times strived to live up to that ideal.

The exhibition is most successful in illuminating the various ways in which Roman women tried to achieve an ideal of beauty: It’s fascinating to see the combs, makeup containers, perfume bottles and jewellery used by these women thousands of years ago, and to see their beauty routines recreated in the accompanying videos. If anything, it shows that women today are not so different in their daily rituals from their ancient ancestors.

Where the exhibition fails, however, is in deconstructing or questioning either the ancient or modern ideals of beauty. As the title of the exhibition suggests, the ideal of beauty presented in both the photographs and ancient texts is seen as timeless. In other words, as a standard, that is both enduring and unchanging.

There is a hint that the exhibition designers sensed the inherent problem with presenting a societal ideal of feminine beauty as “timeless”. The last section is a room full of video screens showing real, contemporary women talking about themselves, their appearance and their bodies. Finally, a larger screen shows an interview with University of Utrecht professor Liesbeth Voertman, author of The Psychology of Appearance. She discusses the harms that unrealistic images in the media can have on girls and women. However, the interviews lack the power to challenge or criticise the images and words that precede them. The videos are literally segregated from the rest of the exhibition, and seem included almost as an afterthought.

Because the viewer must sit down and listen to each interview for several minutes, the videos are much less accessible and immediate than the photos or objects, and even the classical texts. At the end of the exhibition there is an homage to the photographer. The “last word”, as it were, is a quote from Lagrange: “The women in my photos should evoke a feeling of beauty. Beauty itself isn’t the most important thing – women should have character.” Unfortunately, the photographs themselves belie his words: All we know of these women is what we can see. The message is that beauty is character – and a woman’s inner worth is based on her external appearance.

Yet as the women in the photographs are seen through the eyes of a male photographer, the classical texts are exclusively by male writers. The ideal of female beauty celebrated in the exhibition is one created by men. Absent is the perspective of the women depicted in the photos and described in the texts. We know very little, if anything, from them aside from what we are shown and told by their male admires.

On the other hand, the ancient objects tell another story – one that contemporary women can certainly relate to. The curling irons, skin scrapers, cosmetic vials, mirrors and tiny tweezers belonging to Roman women attest to the time and care lavished on trying to live up to ideals of beauty, then as now. How little has changed for women, even after 2,000 years.
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In her latest film, *Home*, Flemish director Fien Troch looks at the internal and external struggles faced by teenagers in their transition to adulthood.

*The kids aren’t all right*

A new coming-of-age film portrays the disconnect between generations

In her 2005 debut, Fien Troch set in train a process that radically changes our understanding of getting the emotions wrong – I think those are quite similar in every generation – but more their internal and external struggles.

*When Fien Troch set out to make a movie about teenagers, she knew that there were some blanks she needed to fill in. ‘I had a script, of course, and I knew what I wanted to do, but I also realised that I’m not 16 anymore,’ she says. ‘I wasn’t afraid of getting the emotions wrong – I think those are quite similar in every generation – but more their internal and external struggles. ’*

Now in her late 30s, the Flemish director has built a career on films that explore tensions in families. In her 2005 debut, *Somebody Else’s Happiness*, it was a community dealing with the death of a child, while *Utopia* (2008) a marriage is split in two by a daughter’s disappearance.

In 2012, *Kid*, a small boy must come to terms with losing his mother’s love. *Home*, which is out this week, is a marriage is split in two by a daughter’s disappearance. In 2012, *Kid*, a small boy must come to terms with losing his mother’s love. *Home*, which is out this week, is a marriage is split in two by a daughter’s disappearance.

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As the legendary Flemish rock band The Scabs go on tour, Guy Swinnen and Willy Willy reflect on the ups and downs of their careers, including musical mishaps and the passing of one of their members.

"We might not be rocking, but we will certainly be grooving," says Swinnen, 56. "This led to a lot of friction. It was also the moment when dEUS became popular. Our classic rock fell out of vogue."

Their 1995 album, Sunset over Wasteland, was a shot at connecting to a younger generation, but it was, Swinnen admits, too contrived. "Some good songs were ruined by some far-fetched arrangements. That's easy to say in hindsight, of course."

After a 12-year hiatus, The Scabs finally gave in to the numerous attempts to get them back on stage. With Willy back in the band, they played their most cherished album, Royalty in Exile, at the Ancienne Belgique in Brussels. Not once, not twice, but three sold-out nights in a row.

In the following years, they appeared sporadically at festivals, but it wasn't until 2015 that they released a new album, Ways of a Wild Heart. "We never thought that our reunion would be a success," Swinnen says. "When we got asked to play live more often, I found that we had to come up with new songs instead of living on nostalgia."

Still, it's too early to tell what the future might bring. For the moment, a follow-up is not in the making. "We take it year by year," says Willy. "The biggest challenge in recording their latest album was the untimely death of bass player Fons Sijmons, in 2013. "I remember we still had some shows to play after he passed away," Swinnen recalls. "The hardest day Suikerrock, in Tienen, two days after his funeral."

According to Swinnen, music was everything to Sijmons. "You could spend the whole day rehearsing, and he would call at three in the morning to tell you about a new idea. He was the peacemaker in the band."

Willy Willy, who was born as Willy Lambregt, joined the band in 1985. "I remember when Arno played The Scabs' first mini album, Here's to You, Gang! for me. He said: 'This is the Belgian Clash.'"

And with every release, Willy continues, "they got better. When they were in need of a new guitar player, I certainly didn't hesitate."

His second show with the band was at the iconic EBU festival, which took place in 1985 in Helsinki. Organised by the EuropeanBroadcasting Union, it promised a lot of airplay all over Europe. "We played a bell of a show," says Willy. "We outclassed the Fine Young Cannibals.

By 1990, The Scabs had become one of Belgium's most popular bands, but the international breakthrough - with the exception of the Netherlands - never happened. "We tried France and Germany, though never big."

The biggest challenge in recording their latest album was the untimely death of bass player Fons Sijmons, in 2013. "I remember we still had some shows to play after he passed away," Swinnen recalls. "The hardest was Suikerrock, in Tienen, two days after his funeral."

"He was a great musician," says Willy, "and he always meant fun." According to Swinnen, music was everything to Sijmons. "You could spend the whole day rehearsing, and he would call at three in the morning to tell you about a new idea. He was the peacemaker in the band."

Willy Willy. "I still miss him every day." Swinnen: "Me, too."

MORE NEW MUSIC THIS MONTH

**Various Artists**

**Belpop Classics + Sony**

With "Time", The Scabs are one of the 36 musicians and bands on this double CD offering an overview of 50 years of Belgian pop music, the vast majority of which is Flemish. It's a very broad compilation, ranging from Kleinkunst (Zef Vanuytsel) and new wave (Bertlhuizer) to dance (Technotronic) and world-infused funk (Allez Allez), plus Madou, dEUS, Gabriel Bios and more. In an accompanying book, Gust De Coster, who coined the term 'belpop' in the 1980s, writes about the tracks. A great introduction for newbies.

\tinyurl{https://belpop-classics}

**Various Artists**

**Eigen Makelij Vol 8 + Eigen Makelij**

The Antwerp label Eigen Makelij has been supporting local rap talent since 2009, with the hugely popular Tourist LeMC being its most famous discovery. Every year, the label releases a compilation with (relatively) new names. Volume eight confirms the talent of Pepe, Cloos and Tiewai. The latter is muscle-bound, the most daring of the nine names on this compilation. Some others have seemingly invested more time in their fluent rhymes (all in Dutch) and less in their rhythms. Still, it's a record that offers a glimpse of the future.

\tinyurl{https://eigenmakelij.com}
William Klein: 5 Cities

Born in Harlem, New York, into an impoverished Jewish family, William Klein dropped out of university and moved to Paris in 1948, where he pursued work as a photographer and graphic designer. Though the City of Light would become his adopted home, his daring artistic approach soon caught the eye of Alexander Liberman, the legendary art director at the American fashion magazine Vogue, who took the young Klein under his wing. And so by 1954, Klein was back in New York, this time as a photographer on assignment. The resultant collection of images, Life is Good, is considered one of the most influential books in the history of street photography.

Until Klein came along, the wide-angle lens聚焦 on everyday life. Wymeersch’s illustration shines a new light on the cult figures of the 1960s, an era of information overload and contemporary theatre, acrobatics, video and jazz music. Combines contemporary theatre, Chinese and Japanese philosophy and dance, and the construction work that went on in Brussels, says Rochette. “School is where they work and the content of the course is where they are.”

William Klein: 5 Cities

Until 5 February

Botanique, Brussels

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FILM

Grands travaux

17-19 January

Across Flanders & Brussels

After their lauded student film Because We Are Visual and dance documentary Rain, Flemish filmmaking duo Gerard-Jan Claes and Olivia Rochette present Grands travaux (Major Works), shot at the Dutch-language vocational school Anneessens-Funk in Brussels. “We really liked the link between the work the boys do at school and the construction work that goes on in Brussels,” says Rochette. “School is where they work on their futures, according to a set plan, similar to the grands travaux, which were intended to shape the future of Brussels.” The excellent Grands travaux ponders the youngsters’ vision of their own futures. Bjørn Gabriels

CLASSICAL

Nigel Kennedy

7 April, 20:00

Stadsschouwburg, Antwerp

Award-winning British violinist Nigel Kennedy is known for his breadth as much as for his skill. Recognized as a virtuoso from an early age, he quickly burned through the jazz and classical songbooks before crossing over into the worlds of rock and electronic. His latest work, The New Four Seasons, fuses all of them in a new Vivaldi-composed package. This isn’t the first time Kennedy has tackled the Baroque master. It was his 1989 recording of Four Seasons that put Kennedy on the map and announced that classical music needn’t remain stuck in the 18th century. Georgio Valentin

OPERA

Daral Shaga

11-15 January

Celebrated stage director Fabrice Murgia and Flemish jazz giant Kris Deloor join forces to tell an epic tale of migration. Written by French playwright Laurent Gaudé, Daral Shaga explores the drama of the immigrant experience with all its utopian dreams and harsh realities. The subject is familiar to

VISUAL ARTS

Seeing Zen

Until 29 January

Villa Empain, Brussels

Zen is notoriously hard to pin down, which is part of its charm. The tradition reflects millennia of Chinese and Japanese philosophy centred on harmony and humility. It has recently spread around the world as a new-age antidote to the stress of modern life. This exhibition showcases a little-known visual aspect of Zen culture. The works on display, known as Zenza, aren’t really “art” as we know it but rather visual aphorisms illustrating Zen principles – often in irreverent ways. There are lanting Buddhas and Zen masters in compromising positions. The message: relax and don’t take yourself too seriously. Go

CONCERT

Ghent

Lady Lin Duo: Intimate matinee concert by hometown luminary Lady Linn, accompanied only by bassist Filip Vandebriel. They perform acoustic versions of songs from her four albums. 15 January, 18:00, Handelbeurs, Kouter 29

THEATRE

Antwerp


VISUAL ARTS

Brussels

Faro Wymeersch: In Between: Young Flemish illustrator shines a new light on everyday life. Wymeersch’s prints combine field and line in innovative ways even when depicting the most mundane street scenes. 13 January to 9 March, Vesfoos Art Wine Design Gallery, Belstadstraat 200

FILM

Brussels

Adolphe Menjou: Cinematek celebrates the golden-age Hollywood star – a contemporary of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton – with a series of screenings. Films include Frank Capra’s Forbidden (1932) and Victor Schertzinger’s Friends and Lovers (1931). Until 28 February, Cinematek, Baron Hortastraat 9
Talking Dutch

Who's been sleeping in my bed?

Derek Blyth
More articles by Derek flanderstoday.eu

It’s a global trend that started in Ghent. But Ikea has finally put its foot down. Stop met in onze winkels te overnachten – Stop spending the night in our stores, the Swedish company pleaded, after it found that dozens of young people were bedding down on its premises for the night.

The sleepover craze began last summer with Florian Van Hecke and Bram Geinaert of Ghent. We’re in juni van de humaniora afgestudeerd – We graduated from secondary school in June, they explained. Zoals wel meer jongeren – Like a lot of young people wilden we eens losbreken uit de maatschappij – we just wanted to do something crazy.

So they came up with a plan. De jongens aten eerst Zweedse balletjes in het Ikea-restaurant – The teenagers began by eating Swedish meatballs in the Ikea restaurant – The teenagers began by eating Swedish meatballs in the Ikea restaurant for their night in the store – before hiding in two cupboards just before closing time. De Standard reported.

Pas na drie uur durfden ze daar uit te komen, – Three hours passed before they dared to come out, – so that they could test which was the best bed for jumping on, en het meest comfortabel lagen – and which one was most comfortable. De Vallavik is ongetwijfeld ons favoriete bed – The Vallavik is without a doubt our favourite bed. De Vallavik is ongetwijfeld ons favoriete bed, the teenagers – The Vallavik is without a doubt our favourite bed, the teenagers finally decided.

Of course, it wouldn’t be a prank without a YouTube video. Het filmpje dat de Gentse jongens over hun nachtje draaiden – The movie that the Ghent teenagers made about their night in the store went into two million keer bekeken – has been viewed almost two million times en kreg ook heel wat naveling – and inspired a multitude of copycats. Ze richten zich tot de kijker in het Engels – They addressed the viewer in English, maar hun accent verraa dt dat ze twee Vlaamse jongens zijn – but their accent gave away that they were Flemish youngsters, Gaze et Antwerpen notet.

This isn’t the first time Ikea has lost patience with teenagers having fun in its stores. Back in 2015, the company took a tough line when 32,000 people signed up on Facebook for a game of hide-and-seek in one of its Dutch branches.

Now the company is having to deal with the sleepover craze. Bij de Zweedse meubelgigaint kunnen ze niet meer kamer en kamer – The Swedish furniture giant is sick and tired of copycats. - The Swedish furniture giant is sick and tired of copycats.

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