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On November 7, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (RCO) travels to Russia for the last and longest part of its world tour. After Russia, chief conductor Mariss Jansons will take the ensemble to China, Japan and - for the first time in history — Australia. St. Petersburg and Moscow will be the starting points of a fitting finale of a musical journey through six continents on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the RCO.

The Concertgebouw Orchestra’s previous visit to Russia in the fall of 1974. The 2013 tour kicks off in St. Petersburg, where the orchestra plays Mahler’s Second Symphony on November 8. Then there will be two concerts in the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow. On November 9, Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima will be present at a concert that marks the closing of the Russia-Netherlands bilateral year. Pianist Yefim Bronfman is the soloist in Beethoven’s Third Piano Concerto. The next day, Mahler’s Second Symphony will again be performed, this time to a Muscovite audience.

The world tour will then take the orchestra to China, to give two concerts (Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky) in Beijing, before it heads to Japan (Tokyo and Kawasaki). The crossing to Australia is an absolute novelty; the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra visits the continent for the first time in its 125 years. There are performances planned in Perth, Brisbane, Melbourne and in the famous Sydney Opera House. In the early morning of December 3, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra will arrive back in Amsterdam.

“I work mainly in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. But St. Petersburg is my home. I wish that these countries could borrow the best from each other.” (Mariss Jansons, chief conductor RCO)

“Music brings people together and connects. This orchestra is an important cultural ambassador and is invited by all the major concert halls. We are proud of this international reputation and we like to share our music with everyone. The RCO consists of 120 musicians including about 70 from the Netherlands and 50 from the rest of the world. Together they represent more than 20 nationalities. It is a genuine reflection of the world.”

(Jan Raes, Director RCO)
Bilateral Year Confirms Broad and Strong Relations

INTERVIEW
WITH THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR TO RUSSIA,
RON VAN DARTEL
ON BUSINESS,
CULTURE AND
WHAT PEOPLE CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

You have been in Moscow since August 2013 as Ambassador of the Kingdom of The Netherlands. What are your impressions of Russia so far?

I drove by car from my previous posting, Vienna, to Moscow and I had the feeling of being on my way to a new challenge. I’ve been interested in Russian literature and music for years — Boris Grebenshikov is one of the Russian singers on my playlist. Now the time has come to experience Russian society from within. In just a couple of weeks I participated, with my wife, Brigitta, in many activities as part of the bilateral year, such as the Dutch Days of Culture, including the opening of the Mondrian exhibition and the Holland Village. Two trade exhibitions, the Neva maritime fair and most recently, the Golden Autumn agricultural fair were fascinating. Despite recent challenging issues that we have been facing in the relationship with Russia, I noticed that Russians have a positive and warm perception of our country. I experienced first hand on Red Square, where a woman tapped me on the shoulder and said what a nice country The Netherlands is. I’m confident that after the bilateral year positive impressions will prevail and both countries will have fruitful contacts and build upon our existing cooperation.

The bilateral Russian-Dutch year is drawing to a close. What is its legacy?

We noticed lots of interest in the more than 600 activities which have been organized so far. From cultural events to closer cooperation on legal matters. From the start we focused on sustainable activities that could be prolonged over the years to come. We’ve already seen results, such as the contracts signed at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum and the fact that performances by Dutch theaters at the Gavroche Festival of children’s theatre are all sold out. It’s great to see so many private organizations support Russian-Dutch collaboration. Artists like DJ Tiësto have hosted shows in Moscow, simply because the two countries have a dance music scene. In this respect, it is impressive to see how broad and strong are the ties between our two countries.

The Netherlands has been regarded as a progressive and tolerant country. In which people can follow their own values and be free. Perhaps it can be summarized as freedom with self-responsibility. This is also reflected in the political system where a large number of parties in parliament represent the Dutch citizens. Equality and just representation can also be found in our foreign policy. The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum which took place in The Hague in the beginning of October is a good example of how we try to facilitate initiatives that aim at creating mutual understanding.

Amsterdam has of all cities in the world the highest number of different nationalities. In the largest cities in The Netherlands about 25 percent of the population has a migrant background. Our country is adapting to this new reality and this takes time and energy, both from the Dutch people and from the government. Dutch society needs continuing “maintenance”. When our King read his first speech from the throne he mentioned that we are going to be a “participation society”. If you support the idea that everyone should participate in society, people are also expected to take responsibility for their own education, learn the language and get a job. Some say the polder model of building consensus is under pressure. Political parties and the church are not held in the same esteem as before, though human rights organizations rate very highly, especially among young adults. How would you explain to a Russian the way in which Dutch society is evolving?

The famous Dutch historian Geert Mak wrote a highly appreciated look at the end of the previous century which is called, My Father’s Century. We’ve seen big changes in our country, such as a shift from a “compartmentalized society”, in which politics, education and culture were divided along traditional lines, to a more inclusive society, where background matters less. The role of the Church as a moral institution has weakened due to widespread secularization. Yet, some elements remain the same. The idea of reaching consensus on important issues is in the genes of the Dutch. Although this model needs more time for decision making, it ensures that everyone feels heard in the political process and power remains shared. Other traditions play an important role. We’re still proud of our fine arts (currently on display in the Pushkin museum) and we’re still known abroad for our cheese, tulips and windmills. The Holland Village in VDNKh park is proof that these things are also valued in Russia. The organizers were impressed by the fact that in Moscow our Holland Village received five times more visitors compared to other cities worldwide.

One way in which Russians and Dutch people can come together more often is through a softening of the visa regime. Do you see any signs that rules will be resolved so that ordinary Europeans can visit Russia cheaply and easily?

By traveling we learn a lot about each other’s background. Seeing other cultures and peoples opens the mind and makes you a free person. Almost two percent of foreign students in The Netherlands come from Russia, that is almost as much as from Germany (three percent). Naturally, we try to improve this number, for example by offering an increasing number of English
Cooperation between Russia and The Netherlands is being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. We’re quite a success story, now having the OPCW initiative for the first Peace Conference to Russian tsar Nicholas II, who took the conduct of war? Why this focus on crime and justice and war crimes tribunals. It’s also the headquarters of Europol and the conduct of war? What barriers to trade could still be missionaries. More than 20 billion euros of imports will be present during the November mission. A performance of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra is, I think, the perfect way to close such a year. No matter what partnerships will be concluded in the next months, we hope to play the final against Russia. As our Prime Minister said, joking: ‘We were disappointed to lose the bid for organizing WC 2018 to Russia but it can be made up by giving us a share in the development of stadiums and infrastructure’. In November King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima will visit Russia to mark the closure of the Russian-Dutch year, repaying the visit of President Vladimir Putin to The Netherlands several months ago. What events will be held in Russia to celebrate the visit? The visit of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima in November marks the official closing of the bilateral year. President Putin’s visit to The Netherlands in April was in that sense the kick-off of a long string of activities concentrated on economic, cultural and civil society cooperation. A performance of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra is, I think, the perfect way to close such a year. This top orchestra currently enjoys the highest international rating and Queen Máxima is its patroness. The ROC is a football nation, but it can be made up by giving us a share in the development of stadiums and infrastructure’. In November King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima will visit Russia to mark the closure of the Russian-Dutch year, repaying the visit of President Vladimir Putin to The Netherlands several months ago. What events will be held in Russia to celebrate the visit? The visit of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima in November marks the official closing of the bilateral year. President Putin’s visit to The Netherlands in April was in that sense the kick-off of a long string of activities concentrated on economic, cultural and civil society cooperation. A performance of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra is, I think, the perfect way to close such a year. This top orchestra currently enjoys the highest international rating and Queen Máxima is its patroness. The ROC is a football nation, but it can be made up by giving us a share in the development of stadiums and infrastructure’.
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Trade Missions Seek Mutual Profit

FROM THE WEB AND INNOVATION, TO HEALTH AND SPORTS, COMPANIES SEEK TO COMMERCIALIZE IDEAS

The Netherlands aims to be an Internet gateway for Russia, providing a high-bandwidth route over which scientists and businesses can collaborate on data-heavy projects. It’s just one of the industrial sectors that Dutch delegations are promoting during their visits to Moscow and Kazan.

About 80 companies are joining the delegations, mostly from the sectors of aviation, energy, healthcare, innovation and sports infrastructure. Already in this bilateral year business people have used key events, such as the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum to meet their counterparts and Russian ministers. These, so-called ‘peak moments’ also included the Golden Autumn agricultural exhibition at VDNH in Moscow. And this November sees another attempt to cement business ties, coinciding with the official closure of the bilateral year.

Russia and The Netherlands established a Joint Economic Commission, consisting of working groups for the different sectors, which is the frame for future contacts and exchanges at government level. The latest working group, on innovation, was established at the SPIEF in June 2013. Another vehicle of Dutch economic diplomacy is Partners for International Business or PIB. Jointly financed by government and industry, it brings together groups of companies in the top sectors such as agriculture, chemicals, creative industries, energy, technology, life sciences and health, and logistics.

In aviation, for example, Dutch companies want to help modernize and maintain aviation equipment, contributing to better safety. In the area of innovation, they want to link with innovative regional clusters in Russia, as well as Russian organizations such as Skolkovo Innovation Center, The Russian Venture Company and Rusnano. On the Dutch side, parties include the Association for Applied Science (TIKW) and the Association of Dutch Universities. One aim is to help Russia profit from the knowledge of its researchers in ICT, chemistry, mathematics and physics; turning knowledge into applied science, and to commercialize it using different financing mechanisms, from grants to public private partnership.

Amsterdam has launched itself as the Dutch Gateway To Europe and the hub of the country’s IET sector. Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology and SURFnet are working on establishing a high-bandwidth connection from Skolkovo and Moscow to the Netherlands.

INTERVIEW WITH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE & DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, LILLIANE PLOUemen

What proportion of total Dutch trade is with Russia?

Russia is our third largest trading partner outside the EU, after the US and China. In 2012, our imports from the Russian Federation amounted to 20.3 billion euros, 5.2 percent of our total import volume. In the same year, our exports to Russia were worth 7.3 billion euros, 1.7 percent of our export volume.

Which new sectors are most promising and offer scope for developing trade?

Traditionally, sectors like energy, agriculture and logistics have been the backbone of our bilateral trade relationship. While I see plentiful opportunities for increase trade and investment in these sectors, they can hardly be called new. Of course, developments in research and health sector are very interesting. Both Russia and The Netherlands invest a great deal in health care, creating ample opportunities for the business and knowledge communities to get involved.

With numerous major international events on the horizon, infrastructure is firmly on the agenda in Russia, with many Dutch businesses getting involved in activities ranging from dredging and water management, to stadium architecture and engineering. In this regard, Dutch companies are eager to contribute to the preparations for the World Cup 2018. Companies as diverse as Amsterdam ArenA in stadium advisory, Philips in lighting, and Alznobel in paint are already putting the experience gained in the run-up to the EURO 2000 championships to good use in Brazil, where the World Cup 2014 will be held.

Aviation is another promising sector. Many airports in Russia are in the process of being upgraded and expanded and attention to aviation safety issues seems to be increasing at a rapid pace. Last but not least, I would like to point out the huge potential for increased cooperation in knowledge and innovation.

What is special about this particular trade mission?

We have been able to bring together an extraordinarily strong business delegation of over 50 companies. Together they represent the best of what the Dutch economy has to offer. They are all entrepreneurs who see opportunities in Russia and who want to invest in even better trade relations. To me, the most interesting element of this particular economic mission is that we visit the Russian Federation with four strong clusters of companies and knowledge institutions.

In all four focus sectors (energy, aviation, science and health, and information infrastructure) of this mission, companies and knowledge institutions have decided to approach the Russian market as a cluster, with support of the Dutch government. In our experience, arrangements in which businesses, knowledge and government work together — referred to in the Netherlands as the ‘trioplex helix’ model — often yield excellent results.

INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, WELFARE & SPORT, EDITH SCHIPPERS

How extensive is the health business between The Netherlands and Russia, do you have figures?

There is an intense relationship between partners at government level and also between knowledge institutions and businesses; exact figures are yet not available. Depending on the definition it is between hundreds of millions euros and a couple of billion euros.

What makes the Russian health sector so promising for Dutch companies and why should Russian institutions be interested in working with them?

The Russian Federation is pursuing the universal health care 2020, lifetime science and health, and leading on data-heavy projects. This would allow Russian and Dutch scientists to collaborate on data-heavy projects, such as the genomics research between Skolkovo, Groningen University and the Vavilov Institute of General Genetics in Moscow.

In the health sector, medical equipment makers are looking for contracts. Dutch delegations are also focusing on financing of the conversion of research into manufacturing, in both Kazan and Moscow.

The search for profitable partnerships flows both ways. The Russian Software Developers Association, Russsoft, this year opened an office in The Hague. The Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency is the First port of call for Russian companies looking for Dutch opportunities.

The delegation of over 50 companies represents the best of what the Dutch economy has to offer.
Celebrating Values, Accepting Differences And Building Ties
INTERVIEW WITH ROMAN KOLODKIN, RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS

From your perspective, living and working in The Hague, how is the Russian-Dutch relationship developing?

Over the almost four years that I have been the Russian Ambassador to The Netherlands, I have seen Russian-Dutch contacts intensify greatly. This relates to almost all spheres: there is more business, more tourism, and there are more cultural exchanges.

A growing number of Russian companies is entering the Dutch market, expanding in The Netherlands, and teaming up with Dutch businesses in large projects — for instance, LUKOIL or Summa Group. Dutch companies are also broadening their activities in my country.

Contemporary music, dance, photography and literature from Russia and The Netherlands cross borders to reach out to the hearts of people living thousands of kilometers apart. The initiatives are legion. The initiatives are legion. The initiatives are legion. The initiatives are legion. The initiatives are legion.

Russian companies and industries are opening representative offices in The Netherlands. Can you give an example?

The Russian software industry is amongst the most advanced and competitive. In The Netherlands, there is a high demand for software and IT development outsourcing, and business always goes where there is a market for its product. Establishing an office in The Hague will allow Russoft, an association of more than 70 leading Russian IT companies with a staff of over 17,000 employees, to come closer to its Dutch and European clients in order to assist them in solving their highly complex ICT tasks.

Are there other examples of Russian business associations with representative offices in The Netherlands?

Almost exactly a year ago, the Association for Russian-Dutch Business Cooperation was established by the business communities of both countries with a view to provide real, practical assistance to its members in doing business in Russia and in The Netherlands. It has more than 20 members now, among them are some key players. The Dutch part of the association is coordinated by the Port of Rotterdam Authority.

RUSPRiX is awarded each year for contributions to bilateral relations. Can you say more about it?

RUSPRiX has not only been awarded to Dutch organizations and individuals, but recently also to Dutch-Russian teams and projects and to Russian companies and people who have contributed to bilateral relations — in the political, business, social and cultural spheres. The ceremony is held in June each year, on a Friday close to the National Day of Russia, which we celebrate on 12 June. I will not single out any laureate in particular, this would simply be unfair, but I will note a great diversity amongst the winners and, at the same time, one thing they have in common: their efforts have greatly contributed to shaping Russian-Dutch relations.

What were the highlights of the bilateral year from the perspective of the Russian embassy in The Netherlands?

The level and intensity of Russian cultural presence in The Netherlands was quite unique. Among the main highlights are: “Russia XXI”, Contemporary Russian Sculpture Exhibition at Beelden aan Zee Museum and Lange Voorhout street in The Hague; “Peter the Great, an Inspired Tsar” Exhibition at the Hermitage Amsterdam Museum; “The Big Change, Revolutions in Russian Painting 1895-1917” Exhibition at the Bonnefanten Museum (Maastricht); “Women of the Revolution. Russia 1907-1914” Exhibition at Groninger Museum (Groningen); the International Children’s Forum, “This world is ours!” in The Hague, Amsterdam and Utrecht; along with concerts of the Mariinskiy Theater orchestra and ballet groups in Rotterdam and The Hague.

The Russian Food Fair in Amsterdam was unprecedented, bringing some of the finest and most delicious products from Russian regions to Holland. We hope it will pave the way for Russian produce to the Dutch market.

Are there any other events or developments that the embassy would like to highlight?

We hope that the two countries will build upon the positive results the bilateral year has yielded. Russia and Holland have many common interests with regard to national, bilateral and international agendas, and these commonalities lie at the basis of our relations, they cement it. Quite naturally, we — as states and peoples — are different in a number of ways, we may see things differently. Acknowledging these differences, each other’s values, principles and positions will be essential for maintaining the open and fruitful dialogue our countries have had and in taking it forward.
Dutch shipbuilders may return to Russia more than 300 years after Peter the Great granted their forebears a yard on the left bank of the River Neva.

St. Petersburg is the maritime capital of Russia however the Caspian sea, with the nearby oil and gas industries, is the focus for shipyards.

Damen, which operates 50 yards around the globe, may establish its own production base in the Astrakhan special economic zone. The location is well placed for the Caspian market and the regional government is keen to revive water transport in the river delta. Other Dutch shipbuilders and suppliers are also reported to be considering the location.

Two large shipyards along with 14 marine equipment suppliers attended the biennial NEVA maritime exhibition in St. Petersburg in September. HME, the project organisation of the Holland Shipbuilding Association, hosted the Holland pavilion. Members supply not just marine equipment for shipyards but “everything you need to turn a steel hull into a ship,” said HME Export Promotion Manager CIS & MEA, Michael Roerade.

“We know more than two shipyards as well as equipment suppliers who are interested in the Astrakhan Economic Zone and in setting up production for the Russian market, as well as to take advantage of tax breaks. But it has to be clear who will be the customer buying the ships,” says Roerade.

Project Delta Group (PDG) was set up in 2009 to market the expertise of Dutch companies in the field of energy and related infrastructure. It aims specifically at doing business with Russian companies in the Yamal oil and gas project.

Some companies are already actively involved in Russian projects such as Shell in several regions of the Arctic including the Russian territories. Akzo Nobel is working with Rosneft. Van Oord and Royal Haskoning are working with Summa at Rotterdam port.

“We try to get as much exposure for members of PDG by using moments when governments meet,” said Bert Panman, executive director of the Project Delta Group.

President Vladimir Putin visited Amsterdam in April. Dutch delegations attended the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum and also at the Yamal Conference at the end of May where we gathered in the Arctic Circle.” Another meeting was due to have taken place in early November.

“My impression is that the activities in Yamal are going forward at high speed in infrastructure terms. The development of the Vankor field is also going ahead. The LNG project is at an advanced stage of decision making for airports and railroads.”

In total PDG represents about 50 companies and institutions: large players like Shell which are looking for partnerships in exploring and producing oil and gas and projects with a long lead time; Marine contractors like Mammoet, Boskalis, Van Oord of which some have joint ventures but which are largely looking for contracts; and knowledge institutions like the University of Delft and others involved in applied research and development.

FROM THE PORT OF ST. PETERSBURG TO THE FAR EAST, FROM YAMAL TO TAMAN

Interview with Mark Bakker, General Director of Boskalis

Does the Russian coastline look familiar to you as a Dutchman?

Russia is a big country, but when I look at the St. Petersburg region it is quite low and swampy. The flood protection barrier in St. Petersburg is very similar to the protection that we have built in Holland. The swamp leads to similar construction techniques and a lot of technology that we use, can be used here. The Far East and other regions in Russia have different characteristics.

What kind of services do you provide?

Traditionally Royal Boskalis Westminster is a dredging company, but through the acquisitions of SMIT and Dockwise the company has expanded into heavy transport, subsea installation and inspection, and repair and maintenance services, mainly for the offshore energy sector. It also performs harbour towage and terminal services through a strategic partner Smit Lamnalco in which Boskalis owns 50 percent. Through SMIT it also provides...
Ships of the Boskalis company were involved in raising the Kursk Submarine and the Costa Concordia.

Boskalis is dredging the port of Sochi, which is to be used for the Olympic games as a place for large floating hotels to be parked.

It is not often that you can influence the design. But this time they wanted to speed up the process so we offered alternative construction solutions and that meant we had to work with the Russian designers. That way we finished it within budget and one year before the construction deadline.

Many of Russia’s ports are not connected to the motorway or rail network. Can these be converted to commercial use?

Depending on location ports can be put to commercial use, but what we see now is that completely new ports are planned which best fit the existing infrastructure. An example is the Bronka Port which is located at the intersection of the St. Petersburg flood protection barrier where the highway and railroad infrastructure crosses. Other developments are the Taman port planned in the Black Sea and the Murmansk transport hub both of which involve a connection to the railway system.

We worked in 2006 and 2007 as the first western dredging company for the installation of pipelines in Varandey for Lukoil and in Baydaradskaya bay for Gazprom. These works are both on the west side of the Yana peninsula and included dredging and filling the pipeline trenches under arctic conditions.

The formation of ice is mainly a logistical problem since we need to plan our works with enough over-capacity to be able to deal with any surprises Mother Nature can throw at us.

Boskalis has won a contract to build and dredge six kilometers of shipping channels and berths for the Bronka port facility in St. Petersburg. How is that progressing?

In September we signed a contract to dredge the shipping channel for the port. Over the last few years the quay walls for the port were built and we are now creating the territory within these walls. We are reclaiming 85 hectares of land this year and in the next two years will dredge the shipping channel and construct the berth pockets, dredging 16 cubic meters in total.

It is a Russian design. We do however cooperate with our client to use our international construction methods to complete the project as economically and quickly as possible, while still working within Russian regulations.

Didn’t you also work with Russian designers on the dam and flood barrier in St. Petersburg?

This involved dredging the seabed and then building the rock wall that forms the dam and we built a tunnel that goes underneath the shipping channel, between 2007 and 2011.

How difficult is it to work in regions like the Russian Arctic?

There is not much around Yamal and we rely on Arkhangelsk and Murmansk to get materials in. Plus you have only 75 days of good weather to do your job because of ice formation, with no time for repairs, so you really have to thoroughly plan your activities. We have the same challenge in remote places in Australia or Africa.

emergency response and salvage related services division. In the past Smit helped lift the Kursk submarine.

With Dockwise, we recently won the contract to transport the Costa Concordia cruise ship in Italy aboard its largest vessel, the Dockwise Vanguard. Dockwise operates 25 semi-submersible vessels that can transport entire oil platforms.

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The Moscow Times 11
Architects Look To High-Density Holland For Inspiration

By Mark Gay

Dutch architecture has become a force in the world over the past 20 years, not least in Russia, and that's led to a busy exchange of architects, students, teachers and ideas between the two countries.

The influence in Russia of architects from The Netherlands goes back centuries, to the draining and construction of St Petersburg. Many Dutch architects were invited for landscaping even at that time. Lefortovo Park in Russia was designed by a Dutch architect. In recent times Dutch architecture has been well represented on the Russian scene.

Evgeny Asse, Dean of the Moscow School of Architecture (MARCH), cites as an important figure, Bart Goldhoorn, the founder and chief editor of Project Russia, a magazine that supports the development of architecture and design in post-Soviet Russia and who is linked to two other magazines, including Project Classica.

"Over two decades the magazine played a radical role in the development of Russian architecture," said Asse. Goldhoorn also curates the Moscow Biennale of Architecture.

There are two main fields for Dutch architects working in Russia: urban planning and building design. The master plan for the city of Perm was by a Dutch company, KCAP. This was the first example of such intervention in Russian urban design planning and there are other master plans by Dutch architects in the new territory of Moscow.

"An important element is the well-developed methodology and the profound research into the political, social and economic context of buildings. They are very good in the field of analytical research and investigation," says Asse.

Another example is social housing and urban development for social use, said Asse: "High density social housing of high quality. Not the high-rise buildings but low rise and a kind of block system of low-rise buildings of four or five floors but still very dense with very good urban environment.

"This is a specific to Dutch architecture and that is where they are very good. There are no examples in Russia yet but this could appear in the new territories near Moscow."

Dutch companies are currently competing to offer designs for Zaryadye Park on the site of the former Rossiya Hotel near the Kremlin. West 8, from Amsterdam, is among the six finalists. The same company has already designed the landscape for the luxury village of Barvikha, near Moscow.

Two of Europe’s tallest towers, both in Moscow, Capital-City and Mercury-City were designed in part by Erick van Egeraat, who has his head office in Rotterdam.

Another firm, de Architekten Cie., won a tender for a new satellite city on the periphery of Moscow. The mixed-use development will cover 1 million square meters, with up to 30,000 units, from family villas to high-density apartments and social housing.

Pi de Bruijn, partner of de Architekten Cie., describes himself as an expert in brand new solutions that comply with areas of historic context and importance.

He visited Moscow several months ago to meet Alexander Kibovsky, Russia’s Minister of Cultural Heritage and he says the Russian government is eager for Dutch input because "they have this long tradition of sculpting..."
their countryside around historical fabric,” as de Bruijn puts it.

The two men share their concerns about the demolition of historical buildings. “You have to find concepts to tell developers that there are other ways to make their money. To stop thinking in square meters only.”

His response to developers is that by building around historical beauty, and making it part of an entity, you will earn more revenue in the long term. “They are blindfolded. Very close to the Manege, by the Kremlin, they demolished a fine hotel, the Moskva, which was considered a scandal in professional circles.

“Developers promised to be careful with historical issues but they are destroying a lot of elegance and historical substance. This is stupid because we all know cities like Paris, London, Amsterdam, Vienna and Rome are loved and magnificent precisely because they have been careful to protect their heritage. Once you destroy a thing of beauty, everything around becomes grey and mediocre.”

He says buildings of heritage need better protection and could benefit from case studies, such as the parliament structures in Berlin on which de Bruijn worked, and which preserved ancient buildings.

Television programs can help raise public awareness so that people can act as watchtowers and keep an eye on what happens.

On the other hand, developers are often ill equipped to deal with projects that cover large urban landscapes: not only is the cost greater; it is also about the mentality, says Asse. “In Holland it is cozy and nice and every square meter of land is very dear, especially since it was conquered from the sea. It is something in the mentality of the Dutch to make the most of it. Land is the most expensive and dear thing in their life. For Russians it is the opposite. For us land is endless and vast and all around and we used to pay it little attention. Only in the past few years have we started to think about this on a big scale.”

The Dutch do not always work on a small scale. Rem Koolhaas is one of the biggest influences, who is developing projects from The Netherlands and exporting huge-scale architecture, which would never be built on his native territory. “It’s not a matter of scale, but more of consciousness. And professional competence,” says Asse.

The earlier-mentioned satellite town, 30 kilometers from the center of Moscow, has involved one and a half years of preparation. The developer, whom de Bruijn prefers not to name, has confidence that a planned motorway will provide excellent links. However, de Bruijn thinks the district should be connected by metro at least.

Moscow city government created a wealth of opportunities for architects when it doubled its area by creating the Moscow Agglomeration to the southwest. However, it faces a challenge in the lack of infrastructure, from the quality of roads to the paucity of rail links. The city is in the midst of a survey to check the quality of infrastructure for the haphazard development that has already taken place.

A parallel is the development of Zuidas, a fast-developing business district between Amsterdam and the airport hub of Schiphol. It is expected to be the second center of Amsterdam, says de Bruijn. “Urban development should only happen in areas of urban mobility where you can enter by different routes: road, train or plane. We know this in the west but in Moscow there has to be a mission to overcome commercial forces.”

The Dutch design, engineering and management company Arcadis has been commissioned to report on the mobility of Moscow.

Perhaps, says de Bruijn, Moscow could benefit from a little Dutch complexity. “It is a very Dutch attitude, this thinking in complexities. You start the conversation by saying, you are absolutely right but there are one or two things we should solve along the way. In Russia it is seen as a battle: one opinion against the other. It needs an attitude or will to respect each others’ interests.”

Who is de Bruijn’s favorite Russian architect? “I’m an architect raised in the seventies. I love the constructivists extremely much, so I would say Konstantin Melnikov.”

Urban development should only happen in areas of urban mobility where you can enter by different routes: road, train or plane.
Sports Events Are A Lucrative Hunting Ground For Contractors

By Mark Gay

Dutch companies are lining up to provide advice and equipment to Russia in preparation for FIFA World Cup to be held in 2018. Russian companies are embarking on a massive project of upgrading and building sports stadiums. With a few exceptions, it is the first time since the Soviet era that sports stadiums have been built in the country. The lack of recent experience has created an opportunity for international consultancies, architects and management companies.

International contractors have had plenty of recent experience: in the FIFA World Cup in South Africa 2010, UEFA’s European Championships in Poland and Ukraine and the London Olympics in 2012. Ruben Dubelaar, program director, of Dutch Sports Infrastructure, representing a cluster of companies in the field of sports events, has the job of supporting Dutch companies when it comes to exports. “We put together a program for international consultancies, architects and management companies,” says Oschatz.

The legacy and how to develop a stadium are important. “We have seen that the arena is so special on its own but its integration with transport, an adjacent shopping, several music domes, as well as offices. “The whole area is used year round and is multi purpose so after the football season the grass goes out and it becomes a concert area.”

Amsterdam Arena advises on the construction phase, through to the technical operation of stadiums and the training of stewards. It manages three stadiums in the Netherlands. It played a similar role in Euro 2012 and is involved in the2018 World Cup as an adviser to the supreme committee.

Another solution is temporary or modular stadiums. Dutch company Ballast Nedam developed the Plug and Core System for Qatar 2022. It involves a concrete core structure that can be demounted after the tournament. The core of the stadium uses a limited number of standard components and can be removed and shipped elsewhere, making it reusable.

A cluster of companies we try to help you create a security system from the outset: talking to the construction companies, maybe even starting at the airport and with public transportation and seeing how you can develop a system that operates very well by working with the system suppliers and the operators.

FROM STADIUMS TO ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEXES; SECURITY TO CROWD CONTROL — SPECIALISTS ARE READY TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE

such project since the Soviet era, though Lokomotiv stadium was rebuilt in 2002. Kazan, which has already built its stadiums, also constructed a new airport, and aero train from the city center, and new roads in time for this summer’s Universiade. Kaliningrad has also built new transport infrastructure.

FIFA requires stadiums accommodate a minimum of 45,000 spectators. Those hosting semi-finals and finals require at least 60,000 seats according to FIFA’s regulations. This creates a conflict between a city’s needs and its obligations towards the World Cup, said Alf Oschatz, head of sports in EMECA for project managers Acema, who worked on World Cup projects for Germany 2006 and South Africa 2010. “There should be no development linked to these events that is not needed afterwards. If there is a need for an upgraded airport or train system and this can be accelerated or can be realized in preparation for an event then its great. But if there is no need, and it is just for the event, then it makes no sense. And if it is a stadium or any other facility it must be used afterwards to avoid a situation where the city ends up with an elephant.”

The Dutch delegation is keen to highlight the achievements of the Amsterdam Arena, one of the only stadiums in Europe that makes a profit. What makes the concept attractive to other countries is not that the arena is so special on its own but its integration with transport, an adjacent shopping, several music domes, as well as offices. “The whole area is used year round and is multi purpose so after the football season the grass goes out and it becomes a concert area.”

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See how we helped TNT Express streamline their payments and cash management in Central & Eastern Europe

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The Secret To Doing Business Is An MBA In Russian Life

THE RAPID EXPANSION OF SOME SECTORS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS ILLUSTRATES THE CHARACTERISTICS AND TENDENCIES OF RUSSIAN BUSINESS

By Mark Gay

Even with the best introductions, companies doing business in Russia will soon come up against incongruities — or cognitive dissonance in the words of Jeroen Ketting, head of a project management and consultancy group working in the region.

The managing director of Lighthouse BV, says Russia must be decided through its contradictions. As a western European, he says, "Russia looks like Europe. You might be nervous when you arrive here but when you sit in the restaurant, everything looks like home, unlike China where you feel distinctly foreign. We continue to see Russia through our own frame of reference. All the negative stimuli gets filtered out." The unwary will soon trip up, he says, especially if they take everything at face value. A statement made during negotiations may be remembered. "What is said now is relevant in a year’s time and your counterpart might pull it out of his pocket when he needs it."

Another aspect is the way people think. Russians have become used to living with upheaval and that can mean a flexible concept of how things should be done. Legislation or political imperatives may change quickly in Russia. As a result, says Ketting, Russian business people can be like chess players who play on three or four boards at the same time.

As Bert Panner of Project Delta Group, who was involved in the Nord Stream negotiations, says, "The pressures they feel are not always the same as us. They do their business based on the same business language as ours, but they have to act in a different environment, with different influences."

As the head of a major construction project management company who has been in Russia for 20 years, put it: "The problem with Russia is not what your risk is today but knowing what it could be tomorrow. Things can change rapidly."

This means business people can learn a lot from Russians and from doing business in the country. Where in western Europe you would have to function in only one reality, for a Russian reality is shifting, says Ketting. "There is a lot we can take back to our own countries. The only way to be successful is to stay focused and critical, but also look at the things you can learn."

This is what Ketting calls the MBA in Russian life. "No matter what you say about Russia the opposite is always true as well."

Dennis Groesbeek, general director of Meyn Moscow, has been in Russia for three years and before that working in China and Thailand. Meyn sells food processing equipment for the poultry industry.

The industry has expanded rapidly because of subsidies from the Russian government, which is striving for self-sufficiency in some food sectors. This has largely succeeded: 80 percent of Russian poultry demand is met from domestic production.

If you look at our industry, the subsidies have helped but they also work against the business. It becomes like a drug. People don't move any more if they don't get subsidies," Groesbeek says.

"At the end of the day if the government does not support, the banks don't move and nor does the customer. You always see this triangle. They’re caught in a trap but it’s changing," Groesbeek says. The government is expected to sharply reduce subsidies over the next two years.

"Everywhere in the world subsidies mess things up; they promote one thing and demotivate another. But the business mentality of Russian owners is somewhat different to the west. It is far more focused on making a quick profit rather than slowly building up the business and growing from cash flow. The Russian mentality is, 'we’ll do it tomorrow, and we’ll do it big,'" says Groesbeek.

The result is the poultry processing industry is set for a dramatic consolidation. Some of the 200 producers are likely to go bankrupt. The UK, in comparison, has only five poultry producers.

On the positive side, Russian business people are straightforward, clear and direct in the way they speak and don’t hide their emotions, says Groesbeek. Though he cautions that, "Strategy is a different issue."

The Russian economy offers many positives, says Ketting. He has been in Russia since 1994. As well as helping companies enter the Russian market, his consultancy assists in finding new opportunities and solving problems, from conflicts with management to the tax authorities.

Russia remains a market driven by rising personal consumption, with low unemployment, and opportunities at all stages of the value chain, he says. The Customs Union with Kazakhstan and Belarus offers further opportunities. He highlights the creation of regional business empires centered on places like the Caucasus, the North-West and Far East.

Asked what are the macro business risks, Ketting says the stagnation that could result from a power struggle between political interest groups, a global fall in oil prices, or unrest if the government fails to meet rising social costs.

On the local level, Ketting highlights the importance of informal networks, trust and personal relationships, along with a corporate and political tendency to concentrate authority in one person, and emphasize it with external appearances and status symbols. As always these features contain a contradiction: the focus on authority, for example, goes hand-in-hand with a tendency to test the rules.
Developing An Efficient Financial Market Step By Step

INTERVIEW WITH LUC TRUYENS, CEO OF ING COMMERCIAL BANKING IN RUSSIA

What is your forecast for growth?
I think the world is becoming much more interlinked. We saw this when the U.S. started talking about tapering its funding for the economy and immediately the effect spread across the world. More and more events are correlated and this is why the slowdown affected Russia. The main thing is that there is still growth. You can argue about whether it will be one-and-a-half or two percent but in much of Europe it’s negative. Eighty percent of exports are still correlated to oil, gas and commodities. GDP is more balanced, at 25 percent. But that helps the Russian economy now, because oil prices stayed at around $110 a barrel, commodity prices came down but if you start to compare the Russian producers of commodities they still have a natural advantage over other countries.

In the steel sector, the big producers like Evraz are well integrated: they have iron ore, coke and cheap energy. Still I am quite positive on the outlook. The challenges I see are about doing business. There is an index on the ease of doing business and Russia positions itself around Honduras. A lot of companies are struggling to do simple things like getting access to electricity and gas. Customs is still difficult. Secondly there is a lot of work to do on efficiency. Then there is bureaucracy and I think it’s fair to say corruption is still an issue here. If you look at the infrastructure, that’s also among the challenges.

What steps should the Russian government take to revive and diversify the economy?
Russia is developing and we have to follow that. It’s not just oil and gas. There are major plans for infrastructure and ports. We have to be able to supply answers to the new local champions of Russia.

It is still, however, an economy that is dominated by big companies. It is one of the challenges for the government to make sure that small companies can grow. It’s hard for these companies to get access to funding and that is linked to transparency.

There is not so much talk now about turning Moscow into an international financial center, but can you see any progress?
Things are happening by small steps but moving in the right direction. Alrosa will be floated here on the Micex. There has been new legislation on the securities industry. In the financial markets they are working on developing the bond market to make it open and easy to deal for international investors. I see people are pleased that Euroclear and Clearstream are moving here. Continuous linked settlement (CLS) is also in the plan. We expect a central counter-party for over-the-counter derivatives to start operating soon which will help to develop the derivatives business in Russia. The local regulator is improving the ruble settlement system to make it easier to operate. It’s about giving international investors confidence that it is progressing in the right way.

It’s also about demand and supply. In a market in which we are active, Eurobonds, there are some investors who will only buy Eurobonds and not local ruble bonds. Russia needs to make sure the supply and the systems come into place, that the legal framework is there and that Russian courts have enough expertise in financial products. I see that increasingly law is enforceable. That gives us more confidence as a bank.

What other issues should companies be aware of?
Close-out netting is still not enforceable. You cannot net here, which creates additional risk exposure. More and more today in the financial markets if we lend money, we have to give or receive collateral so that the total amount of our exposure comes down and we just exchange the difference. But that requires legislation and organizing, and this is part of what I call hampering development. Sometimes this creates big pricing differences.

Currency control is also very strict. We have so many people working in currency control, acting as advisers for clients. It is one of our key strengths although it has a direct affect on our costs.

How would you summarize ING’s strengths in Russia?
We know Russia: we have spent 20 years here and never backed off during a crisis. At all levels of the organization we have a deep understanding. The staff is 98 percent Russian, backed up and supported by central teams in London and Amsterdam. So it is a combination of sector knowledge and commitment. If you have a good understanding of businesses here, how things work, the different steps in a process, then you can succeed.
The Hague Peace Palace Keeps Tsar’s Vision Alive

This year is the centenary of the Peace Palace in The Hague, the home of the World Court. One of the six main organs of the United Nations, it owes its origins to the initiative of the last Russian tsar.

The tsar and the jurist and diplomat Fyodor Martens were worried about the growing arms race between the colonial powers. They wanted to hold an international peace conference in a small, neutral country. The Netherlands was neutral, home to several of the Tsar’s relatives, and had already hosted several international meetings.

Tsar Nicholas II convened the first international peace conference of 1899, which proposed a Permanent Court of Arbitration. It would seek “the most objective means of ensuring to all peoples the benefits of a real and lasting peace.” The two Hague peace conferences and the Geneva Conventions were some of the earliest legalized rules of war and laws against war crimes.

Martens suggested the court should have a special building, a peace temple, as he called it, and set about trying to raise funds to build it. Eventually the U.S.-Scottish philanthropist Andrew Carnegie agreed to finance a library of international law along with the palace, at a cost of $1.5 million. An architect from Lille, Louis Cordonnier, produced the winning design from 200 architects. Construction began in 1907 and on 28th August 1913, the Peace Palace was inaugurated. The opening coincided with the centenary of Dutch independence from French rule.

Monarchs and heads of state lavished the Peace Palace with gifts. Tsar Nicholas sent a vase of jasper, with two-headed eagles in gilded bronze. It weighs about 3,000 kilograms and required the floors to be strengthened. It stands under the palace tower. In the next room is one of the last portraits to be painted of Nicholas II.

Although the Second Hague Conference failed to stop the build up of arms and tensions that led to the First World War, it developed the idea of international arbitration to settle disputes between countries.

In 1922, the Permanent Court of International Justice was established, under the Covenant of the League of Nations, and between the two World Wars it heard 29 contentious cases between States, and delivered 27 advisory opinions. When Germany invaded The Netherlands, German troops withdrew from the Peace Palace, which was the only territory of The Netherlands that they did not occupy.

After the League of Nations failed to stop the Second World War, the United Nations was established to replace it. In turn, the UN charter created the International Court of Justice on the shoulders of the PCIJ in 1945.

One of the first tasks of the ICJ was to legitimize the UN itself. The UN sought an advisory opinion from the ICJ on whether the UN had “the capacity to bring an international claim against a government regarding injuries that the organization alleged had been caused by that state”. The ICJ concluded that while the UN is not a state, it is an international person, and has the capacity to maintain its rights by bringing international claims.
Today The Hague is the home of several judicial institutions, including the International Criminal Court and the several ad hoc UN tribunals investigating war crimes. Although it is one of the six main organs of the UN, the ICJ is relatively small, with an annual budget of about $23 million and fewer than 200 staff. In comparison, the ICC has more than 800 staff.

The court hears legal disputes between states, which can only be imitated by a state. Companies or international organisations must use the PCA. Nor does the court hear political issues, which are thrashed out in the UN Security Council. The court also gives advisory opinion on legal issues to the main organs of the UN and specific UN agencies.

All 193 states can be party to a case, though they must give their consent. More than 300 conventions and treaties have a clause that refers disputes or interpretation to the ICJ, which means that states have effectively already given their consent. However, they might still object on the grounds that a case is political. Since 1946, the ICJ has heard more than 150 cases and given 113 judgments on contentious cases. Sometimes states settle cases between themselves. The president of the court, Petar Tomka of the Slovak Republic, holds a casting vote.

The court has 15 judges who, according to its charter, must represent the main forms of civilisation and the most important political systems. At the moment there are three African, two Latin American, three Asian and two eastern European judges, including Leonid Skotnikov from Russia. There are also five judges from western Europe and other countries (including the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Oceania). Once elected, judges do not represent their countries but are independent. With the status of diplomats, they usually live in The Hague so that they are available to hear disputes at short notice.

Borders are often the flashpoint between countries, where their interests touch, physically. Half of all cases before the ICJ concern borders: from crop spraying to mining rights. Other cases include diplomatic protection, human rights, genocide (excluding individual war crimes), the environment and the use of force.

Examples include the long-running pulp mill dispute, in which Argentina alleges that a pulp mill on the Uruguay River causes pollution and damages tourism. The ICJ called expert witnesses and has already made one ruling on the dispute. In the case of Romania versus Ukraine, the ICJ drew the limits of the continental shelf around Serpent Island on the Black Sea in 2009, settling the areas in which the two countries could exploit natural resources. Belgium versus Senegal led to a ruling that Senegal must begin proceedings to try Chad’s former leader Hisseine Habre “without delay”. Guinea versus Congo involved the compensation of a Guinean citizen after the government of the Congo seized his assets.

Even where states have not followed the ICJ’s rulings, the court has influenced events. When the ICJ ruled that South Africa should withdraw its forces from Namibia it paved the way for the independence in 1990 of that country. Nicaragua complained the U.S. was arming paramilitaries against the Sandinista government. The ICJ ruled against the U.S. in 1986, and although the U.S. rejected the decision, the case was finally resolved in 1991.

The ICJ broadcasts its hearings live on the Internet, except for deliberations which are conducted in private. The Peace Palace also hosts an Academy of International Law, which attracts 700 students and academics each summer.

When a case is settled, both states win. Simply by using the court, states show they are willing to use measures other than force to settle their disputes. And that is the strongest testament to the vision of Nicholas II.
Graduates Embrace The Brain Train As They Study Abroad

Russian students from cities big and small are opting to study in The Netherlands. And while the numbers are still a fraction of the total of Russians studying abroad, it is growing despite the global financial crisis. About 600 Russians are on short courses or traineeships compared to 290 Dutch students traveling in the opposite direction.

Half of these are business studies students, the rest split between social sciences and humanities, engineering and research. That’s according to Nuffic Neso, an independent non-profit organization based in The Hague that aims to internationalize Dutch education and training, and increase access to higher education abroad. The organization took part in the Dutch Days Of Higher Education exhibition in Moscow and St. Petersburg on the first weekend of October. Despite a fall in the number of scholarships due to the crisis, the number of Russians gaining first degrees, Masters’ or PhDs abroad has risen. According to the Open Doors survey by the International Institute of Education, more than 4,800 Russians studied abroad in the last academic year, an increase of about 100 on the year before.

On their return to Russia, many join the The Netherlands Alumni Network in Russia (NANR), which has about 1,000 members, most of them under the age of 40. NANR aims to stimulate cooperation between Russian and Dutch universities and it currently supports 100 joint programs, study exchanges and research projects. Dutch universities exchange not only students, but also course materials. For example, Duke Meija, lecturer in Russian Studies and Culture at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, gives lectures around Russia on the cultural relations with The Netherlands, tailoring her presentation to different oblasts, like Yaroslavl, Leningrad and Pskov.

Under another program, Dutch students learn Russian and visit Russia for six months. Later they continue their studies in The Netherlands but with an internship with a Russian or an international firm. Many of these former students now work in Russia. Jacqueline van Marie, senior advisor marketing and communications at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, says the university is looking for Russian partners. The university offers Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees entirely in English but van Marie says an international education is about more than languages.

“Internationalization must be built into the curriculum and not just soft skills, which can be superficial and counterproductive if you bring different nationalities together without understanding the cultural differences and skill sets. We bring students together with courses such as robotics. It is not just about how the robot works but how you are going to sell this product internationally.”

The Netherlands has 39 universities of applied science and 34 research universities. Dutch students do exchange the compliment: studying at Russian universities and taking internships with Russian companies. But the numbers is smaller by approximately two thirds.

The Russian government has since 2009 been discussing a plan to educate up to 10,000 Russian students abroad each year. But the program has been delayed by worries about how to force graduates to return to Russia. Charles Hoedt, director of Nuffic Neso Russia, says the Russian government should not worry about students remaining abroad. Most of them will return eventually and the longer they stay abroad, the richer their experience.

Hoedt dismisses talk of a brain drain and instead calls it a brain train: “Dutch people leave and work abroad but they are ambassadors for The Netherlands.” In the process, his organization Nuffic, which was a niche of the education sector, is now seen as valuable part of trade and economic development, even at government level. The plan to send students to study abroad, at a cost of $165,000 for the first three years, has been delayed by wrangling over how to compel students to return to Russia to work for a minimum of three years after graduation or pay back grants, travel, and living costs.

As for foreign students studying in Russia, under government education reforms the best universities will also get more federal money for incoming international students. In the Russian Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan has allocated $1,000,000 in grants to foreign I.T. specialists who conduct research in Tatarstan. The number of Dutch studying in Russia is a third of the traffic in the other direction, and is limited mainly by the small proportion of licenses in English.

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Ilg, Lukyanova graduated from the Russian State Agricultural University in Moscow and, through the Erasmus Mundus program, won a grant to study in one of several European countries. She chose The Netherlands.

“Our university has good relations with European ones and I had heard about Wageningen University and Research Centre. Not only is it a prestigious university but it also has good social and sports activities and an international environment.” She studied a Ph.D in agricultural economics in The Netherlands in 2009-2010.

“I found a very supportive environment, in which people were willing to provide any information or help with housing, living conditions and letters of reference when I left.” The university was integrated into the business environment, holding meetings with Dutch companies and farmers. The teaching process demanded that students support their opinions with evidence but it was not about being right or wrong. There was also a strong focus on teamwork. Once graduates move into the workplace, they are often paid to continue their research, or given time and support to complete their thesis. This culture of support extends to corporate customers, who are provided with information, training and advice.

When she returned to Russia, Lukyanova joined the Netherlands Alumni Network in Russia (NANR) that brings together current, former and prospective students. They have the chance to meet educational institutions and Russian and Dutch companies and take part in charitable activities.

There was no such organization when Olga had left for The Netherlands but she soon got involved upon her return and later took the post of chairlady. She makes speeches and represents the organization. All of these are skills that she polished in The Netherlands. NANR even organizes welcome back events for students and alumni who are returning to Russia.

NANR keeps a database of resumes of its alumni and posts jobs on its website www.nanr.ru. Most alumni work in communications, management or finance but other opportunities include medicine, architecture, research or teaching. It also helps companies find people with particular technical skills and languages. Most Russian alumni of The Netherlands speak English but some also learn Dutch and Lukyanova is continuing her Ph.D and Dutch language studies in Moscow.

She began working for a Russian-Dutch joint venture and later joined Peja International, which supplies machinery for animal feed and the livestock industry, and which is a representative of several Dutch manufacturers.

Asked what she had learned from working for a Dutch company, she noted that there is no big difference, socially or in status, between an employee and the head of a company, or between a student and a professor. “They are almost on an equal level: you can always ask for help. If you ask questions it means you are interested and involved.”

She is passionate about The Netherlands but Lukyanova always knew that she would return home. She advises Russian students to broaden their horizons, learn in a multicultural environment but then to return and contribute to Russian society.
Online Booking And Social Media Change The Face Of Air Travel

INTERVIEW WITH SIMON SCHOLTE COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR AF KLM IN RUSSIA AND CIS

We saw that it worked well so we decided to roll it out everywhere, including in Russian on Russian social media sites.

Where are passengers flying to from Russia, and what’s the proportion between Russian travelers and foreigners visiting Russia?

Of course, we do not offer only Amsterdam as a destination, but we offer our whole network including more than 70 destinations in Europe and more than 25 destinations in the Americas. People traveling from Moscow can fly to all these destinations with one stop in Amsterdam. We will add a new destination, Santiago de Chile from February 2014. This year we added Manston in Kent, in the south of England.

When we created the new World Business Class cabin we used carpets made partly from the recycled uniforms of hostesses.

Is business more important than leisure, as a reason for travel?

I don’t see a big change there but people are becoming more independent. Before they often travelled in groups with all-inclusive packages. Now people are more confident about making their own bookings. We find Russian customers like to use the option of combining KLM and Air France hubs so for example they will go by KLM to Rome and return from Milan, using the Charles de Gaulle hub so you can visit several cities.

In 2013 KLM celebrated the 55th anniversary of its first flight from Amsterdam to Moscow.

Sustainability is pushed a lot on the KLM website: how does it work in practice?

In Moscow we apply everything which is available on Amsterdam. As for a businessperson, they can use our codeshare flights from Vladivostok and Sakhalin, for example, to go to Moscow and from there to Amsterdam. We are very satisfied with our cooperation with partners Sheremetyevo airport and Aeroflot with whom together we offer this product. We moved to the new Terminal E in 2010 as Air France-KLM and we are very satisfied with it as well.

What about unbundling, which is a big trend with budget airlines. Do you borrow some of those techniques?

We have no plan to become a low cost carrier. People always think there is a secret; is it all down to the KLM algorithm? The only secret is there is no secret. If you wait a long time the flight will normally be fuller, and you will pay more. Most of the time it is better to book early.

What’s the secret to being the first to the Olympic venue?

In 2013 KLM celebrated the 55th anniversary of its first flight from Amsterdam to Moscow.

The social media project started during the Icelandic ash cloud crisis in 2010 when so many passengers had issues that we could not handle all these questions in our call center. So we put a big team of volunteers together in one of the hangars and staff answered queries using social media.

We also have the Holland Alliance with whom we offer nine codeshare destinations beyond Moscow within Russia. For the Olympics next year, for example, you could buy a KLM ticket and travel through Amsterdam, Sheremetyevo and then on to Sochi.

KLM is marking its own anniversary this year; 55 years of flights from Amsterdam to Moscow. How has the flying experience changed over those decades?

When KLM started to fly to Moscow 55 years ago it was with a DC-6B and with a stop in Warsaw and only once a week. Now we fly directly with a Boeing 737 twice daily and from April 2014 that will increase to three times a day. Also the experience has been digitalized, from booking on a website to checking-in online.

The share of customers booking online is growing. We also have 24 hours-a-day support on social media, not just on Facebook but on VK (VKontakte). You can ask any question, or make a complaint or exchange experiences. The interaction with customers is increasing. If you ask a question, we will try to find a solution within 24 hours, not just to exchange information but to be proactive.

We have no plan to become a low cost carrier. People always think there is a secret; is it all down to the KLM algorithm? The only secret is there is no secret. If you wait a long time the flight will normally be fuller, and you will pay more. Most of the time it is better to book early.

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The social media project started during the Icelandic ash cloud crisis in 2010 when so many passengers had issues that we could not handle all these questions in our call center. So we put a big team of volunteers together in one of the hangars and staff answered queries using social media.

Commercial Director Simon Scholte is responsible for KLM’s activities in Russia and CIS. He is based in Moscow.

In Moscow we apply everything which is available on Amsterdam. As for a businessperson, they can use our codeshare flights from Vladivostok and Sakhalin, for example, to go to Moscow and from there to Amsterdam. We are very satisfied with our cooperation with partners Sheremetyevo airport and Aeroflot with whom together we offer this product. We moved to the new Terminal E in 2010 as Air France-KLM and we are very satisfied with it as well.

Sustainability is pushed a lot on the KLM website: how does it work in practice?

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What about unbundling, which is a big trend with budget airlines. Do you borrow some of those techniques?

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Training And Maintenance Are As Important As Sales

Your businesses such as healthcare can involve a lot of work with government and ministries. How is this different from traditional marketing and salesmanship?

The government is the main partner for Philips in Russia. It’s not only procurement and supply issues, it’s also about working with the government to take healthcare to the next level. The government is talking about a local footprint and setting up a medical equipment industry that is less dependent on imports. We are positive about the upcoming improvements to allow for more effect in tendering in terms of cost of ownership, the quality of the goods delivered and let’s say pre-classification of companies being able to perform the offer they are going to make in a tender.

At the moment, at least 90 percent of the healthcare is provided by regional and federal government and municipalities. I expect the private hospital sector to grow but there is still a long way to go before private becomes 50 percent of the market. There is no fully functioning reimbursement system, there is no policy on tariffs, and so not all of the requirements for private entrepreneurs to enter the market are in place yet. Now that might come. Every private entrepreneur will understand cost of ownership and will look at running costs. From that point of view it is much easier to work with private business and work towards the optimal solution.

Is the private sector restricted to elite hospitals?

I would not call it high end. In Russia, in the area of children’s care, for example, timely care and quality is close to the heart of any parent. If they can get it tomorrow they will pay an affordable premium. I call it the pyramid of demand.

I think private is good because you will see some examples of how things can be done differently but it is crucial that it does not stay in the high end of the market where people can afford access, quality or speed of availability. If you look at India, the hospitals are mostly private but at a level that people can afford.

How do you segment the market, between those requiring expensive equipment and more day-to-day hospital equipment?

If you have a general-purpose hospital they do not need the equipment that is used in the three or four top institutes in the country. Our proposal is targeted, ranging from value-for-money products to very advanced innovations but it is not only about equipment. You need to understand what you can do with the equipment, to be more effective and get more patients through, using less attention from doctors. The hospital will be more efficient and that investment will pay back.

That means we are keen to give the right education to people so they know how to use it most effectively. We also want to offer service contracts so that machines are up and running. Rather than having to go through all kinds of tender procedures to organize a repair that might mean a machine being out of use for months.

What about other sectors such as personal healthcare?

We opened the first office in St. Petersburg in 1934. Over all these years Philips continued to innovate: from lamps to X-ray tubes, radios, televisions, audio cassette, CDs; and in the meantime our healthcare division developed 3D ultrasound, angiography systems for minimally invasive heart surgeries, CT and other kinds of scanners. They all found their way into Russia. Now we have just short of 1,000 people at 11 Philips offices across Russia and the CIS, and a wide network of distributors and service partners. We have seen dedicated products for the Russian market like the Cube Cutter to make Olivier salad, or the Philips Multi-Cooker especially for the Russian home.

You mentioned that the Russian government is keen to develop industries such as medical equipment. Who are you working with?

We cooperate with Eletcon, a leading Russian medical equipment manufacturer, in computed tomography scanners. We produce the products of that partnership locally. In the healthcare sector there is legislation on localizing medical equipment, similar to that in the automotive and pharmaceutical industries.

We support that as part of the bigger picture on how to get more efficient industry here in Russia with a bigger supply base.

We have a joint venture with Optogon, a leading Russian manufacturer of LED products, to produce energy efficient street lighting. The main advantage of producing locally is you are close to the customer, with the benefit of better logistics, shorter cycle times and there is a better understanding of the customer and that feeds back into the product.

It is not necessarily the basis for a hub. It makes sense to do it for Russia and if useful products come out of it that have a global application, we would think about it but it is not for the global market at the moment. However, we see the Customs Union (of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan) and the other CIS countries as a relatively homogeneous market from a trade region point of view.

What about the decision to localize the company, as opposed to simply selling into the Russian market. What are the trade-offs there?

This year Philips has moved fully onshore. And having a footprint as a localized company is a benefit. That includes providing support to customers and understanding Russian legislation, rather than just importing, which is still done by a lot of the other companies.

You can only participate in healthcare by being a full subsidiary as a legal entity, and doing everything from Russia.

If you later want to produce locally, do research and development, or educate the customer you need that local footprint because you need to be part and parcel of Russian society to fully participate in the Russian market and deliver the level of innovation that makes a difference to local people.
Quest For Energy Ranges From Arctic Oil and Gas To Western Siberian Shale

INTERVIEW WITH OLIVIER LAZARE, SHELL RUSSIA COUNTRY CHAIRMAN

The Arctic is increasingly the focus of the search for new reserves. How do you balance the diplomatic and business skills among so many competing interests? Views differ on how, or indeed whether, to develop the Arctic, but the Circumpolar nations have made clear that developing the region’s oil and gas is in their best interests. Arctic states including Russia, the United States, Canada, Denmark (Greenland) and Norway have decided to proceed with oil and gas exploration programmed, inviting industry through exploration licensing rounds to help them test the potential of new hydrocarbon resources to achieve energy security and spark economic development opportunities for their populations. Shell can play a role in unlocking the next wave of exploration opportunities for these nations and believes the Arctic, which is widely predicted to hold nearly a quarter (22 percent) of the yet-to-be-discovered global oil and gas resources can provide a major component of the looming global demand.

In the arctic we are targeting conventional fields. Our shale oil activity is in Western Siberia. In April 2013, Shell and Gazprom signed a memorandum that sets the principles of co-operation in offshore projects in the Russian Arctic and in Western Siberia. In April 2013, Shell and Gazprom partners have the equipment and processes ready, to withstand Arctic conditions? Shell has been researching and exploring in the Arctic for almost 100 years. But the Arctic’s great opportunities come with great obligations: to protect the unique environment and its inhabitants, to manage the risks and ensure safe and responsible development. We have learned a great deal about operating in Arctic and sub-Arctic conditions over the past several years and are committed to applying lessons learned. Carefully managing industry impact on the Arctic environment and its people means industry, regulators and communities must set high standards, and ensure they are met and enforced.

The Sakhalin-2 project Involved rerouting pipelines away from the feeding zones of western grey whales. How do you handle environmental responsibilities? Since its establishment in 1994, Sakhalin Energy, an operating company of Sakhalin-2 in which Shell holds 25 percent, has paid more than 11 billion roubles to the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources. How important is this for Shell? We see an increasing appetite for natural gas in Asia, particularly to tackle air quality issues, but also to benefit from its versatility and reliability. According to the Energy Information Administration forecast, gas consumption in Asia-Pacific region will increase from 747.5 billion cubic meters in 2007 up to more than 1 trillion in 2035.

Russia is a challenging market, even for big players in the energy sector. Is it also a market in which smaller companies can find opportunities, and can you give examples of smaller partners? Russia is a country is of strategic importance for Shell both in upstream and downstream, as it is a major resource holder and growing market for consumer products. We believe that some of our recently announced projects, like partnership with Gazprom Neft in developing Bzhnovskoye suite, lay a solid foundation for our growth in Russia Five to seven years from now and beyond. We would welcome further growth based on our existing partnership with major Russian companies like Gazprom and Gazprom Neft. As for the smaller partners, like suppliers of goods and services, we definitely cooperate with them in our joint projects, as well, like Salym Petroleum Development. In 2007 Shell created the Russia Souring Office to promote the use of Russian enterprises, that were involved in our projects in Russia and in Shell projects worldwide. For example, the Russian drilling company Burentah after several years of successful work in Salym Petroleum Development got contracts for working at Shell projects in other countries.

Shell wants to accelerate the shipment of liquefied natural gas from the island of Sakhalin. How important is this for Russia's plans to diversify the markets for its gas? We estimate that LNG demand is going to grow by about 5 percent within the next decade — more than half of this growth is expected to come from emerging Asia Pacific and Middle East markets. Russia, through Sakhalin, is well-positioned geographically and is already a major supply source for Asia Pacific. It has the potential to grow further and we think that the most cost effective, credible and fastest way to increase Russian LNG in the world markets is the extension of Sakhalin-2, coupled with integrated development of additional Sakhalin resources, namely Sakhalin-3.

Russian gas resources are sufficient to meet domestic, pipeline and LNG opportunities and so could successfully compete with other projects in the pre and post 2020 LNG market window, given the decisions to implement LNG projects in Russia are taken quickly. Otherwise, Russia runs the risk of being left behind despite its advantages.

Sakhalin Energy has invested over 36 million roubles into various external social programmes in Sakhalin, that include such areas as education, safety, environmental protection and biodiversity, health, arts and culture.

Shell would welcome the introduction of new LNG contracts for working at Shell projects in other countries.
AkzoNobel is a Dutch Multinational, leading in global paints and coatings and a major producer of specialty chemicals. To deliver its full potential, AkzoNobel has identified the following strategic focus areas: care for the customer, reduction of product and process complexity, cash and return on investment, embedded safety and sustainability, and diverse and inclusive talent development.

Our company has company-wide core processes that will support and drive the strategic focus areas. These processes include: a more rigorous operational control cycle to drive and monitor delivery of its targets, behavior-based and process safety, talent management, innovation and procurement. Another integral part of our company’s strategy foundation can be seen in the field of sustainability; this year, AkzoNobel has again been ranked in the number one position on the influential Dow Jones Sustainability Indices (DJSI), heading the Materials Industry Group.

AkzoNobel has four key end-user segments that it sells into: Buildings and Infrastructure, Transportation, Industrial and Consumer Goods. Our focus on these segments will also allow for further growth in both mature and high-growth markets. The company will build on its leadership in high-growth markets, which already account for 44 percent of revenue — a percentage that is expected to grow further in the years ahead.

A good example of such a high-growth market is Russia, where the four key end-user segments are successfully represented. Great examples can be witnessed in each one of the sectors.

The Russky Bridge — a bridge built across the Eastern Bosphorus strait to serve the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation that took place in Vladivostok in 2012, as well as the coastal infrastructure of the sea port of Sochi — an international center of maritime passenger and cruise ships, are both outstanding examples of our involvement in the sector of Buildings and Infrastructure.

Transportation is successfully represented by International® — the leading brand of AkzoNobel’s Marine & Protective Coatings business unit, which encompasses our Marine, Protective Coatings and Yacht businesses. Moreover, within the framework of the year, International® participated in the NEVA International Exhibition 2013, during which it successfully promoted the massive development of our work in the Russian maritime industries.

Industrial goods are embodied in our company in many forms, one of which is our Packaging Coatings business, which supplies paints, varnishes, primers and enamels used as internal and external protective coatings for food and technical metal packaging.

Finally, the consumer goods market, in its majority, is represented by our Decorative Paints business, which supplies paints, varnishes, primers and enamels used as internal and external protective coatings for food and technical metal packaging.

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Celebration Of Dutch Culture Spans Genres, From Street To Concert Hall

By Marina Marshenkulova

A five-day festival of Dutch culture in Moscow was the centerpiece of the Russia-The Netherlands Bilateral Year. It covered the whole spectrum of contemporary culture from art exhibitions in major museums to theater, concerts and street performances. Visitors can still attend some events.

The exhibition of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian at the Tretyakov State Gallery was among the highlights of the bilateral year. Mondrian was a significant contributor to the De Stijl art movement, also known as neoplasticism. According to Mondrian’s theory, the artist should abide by the following principles: a strict geometrical order, a restrained palette variety, and a localized, non-representational coloring method. His unique collection under the name, “A road to abstraction,” will be exhibited at the museum until the 24th November.

Presented in this exhibition are approximately 40 of his greatest pieces, from his early 20th century stages as a rising artist through his maturity into abstractionism by the 1930’s, all in all a truly stunning collection obtained from the Gemeente Museum in The Hague.

A separate exhibition of Dutch and Russian painters was shown at the Artplay exhibition center. Another exhibition, “Dutch Golden Age group portrait from the collection of the Amsterdam Museum,” was opened in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. The most famous painting of this type, “Night Watch” by Rembrandt, shows troop chasseurs of Captain Frans Banning Coca of Batavia who perhaps did not participate in the battle for the harbor of Batavia. The portrait of the male and female regents by Bartholomeus van der Helst, whose paintings at the time were even more expensive than those of Rembrandt. These paintings leave Amsterdam very rarely, and viewers will have a chance to see them until 19th of January.

Without any doubt, one of the main events of the Dutch Days, in early September, was the performance of Kyteman Orchestra in the open air of Gorky Park in Moscow. Despite the poor weather and rain, a large audience greeted Colin Benders, his musicians and singers with great enthusiasm. Kyteman used to dedicate its music solely to hip-hop but that word vanished from the album covers when the repertoire broadened. The orchestra currently consists of 18 musicians, opera singers and a choir. As Benders himself puts it, “the sound ranges from hip-hop, opera, drum and bass, electro, minimalism and all kinds of other genred that I can’t even begin to describe for I don’t have the words for them.” Among other things, Benders and his friends improvised an on-the-spot composition in front of the audience.

Gorky Park hosted several events of the Dutch Days. Summer theater “Pioneer” of gorky Park brought pleasure to the fans of the Dutch film director and living legend Paul Verhoeven. The program consisted of his earlier works from the 1970’s better known to true cinema fans ("Turkish delight," "Soldier of Orange") as well as 1990’s cult movie “Basic Instinct” which featured a young Sharon Stone, and the more recent military saga, “Black Book.” As a part of his visit to Moscow the director gave a masterclass and answered the questions of festival visitors.

A colorful, theatrical show was possible thanks to Close-Act Theater, an international street theater that was founded in the Netherlands in 1991. The group of designers, actors, dancers, choreographers and musicians performed a march-dance, “White wings”, that has been performed at international theater festivals all over the world.

As a part of the theatrical show there was an exhibition of one of the most famous European Costume Designers Rene Beckers at the A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theater Museum. There were 25 costumes and about 40 sketches that represented his work on “Kamile,” “King Lear,” “Othello,” and other plays that were staged in the past 30 years in the theaters of The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

Most of the events during the Dutch Days were interactive or participatory. Street artists Hayes Frieling and Job Wouters created a 100-meter wall, at the center of which was a quote from Maxim Gorky, and another from the Dutch poet Jan Borkus and Benders: “only the harbor is loyal to us.” Surprisingly they covered the wall with sturgeon on a rich, brown back...

The sturgeon are not random. We drew them because they are beautiful. You have to find meaning in the contemplation of art.
The sound ranges from hip-hop to opera and drum and bass... and all kinds of other genres that I can’t even begin to describe.

ground. "The sturgeon are not random," explained Frieling. "We drew them simply because they are beautiful. Goethe said, "Every thought or theory in comparison with perception is nonsense." You have to find meaning in the contemplation of art, and I totally agree with that so when I see fish, I don’t see a symbol: it’s a mirror."

Frieling is an experienced and highly respected Netherlands artist, and an advisor to the chief architect of the country. It was not his first visit to Russia; he is connected with Russia through the images of slavic iconography that he uses in his work.

Job Wouters, also known as Letman, is best known for works that are at the intersection of typography, calligraphy and illustration. The Dutchman inherited the alias and love for letters from his youthful passion for graffiti. During that time he was struck by people who could write their names perfectly, in different styles. Wouters studied design and typography at the Royal Academy in The Hague and the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. He worked with many well-known brands such as Audi, Eastpak, Tommy Hilfiger, Universal and others. Most of the Letman’s works are handmade because, in his own words, this technique connects him more with his works and brings more pleasure.

Photographer duo, Ari Fersluis and Ellie Uyttenbroek, introduced a project that they called “Exactitudes.” Since 1994 they have been documenting the dress codes of various social groups in the city streets around the world showing how people try to define their affiliation with some particular group through their clothes.

Children had their share of fun too. The “Soundwave” installation transformed sound into a physical wave. The project was an initiative on the part of the Dutch Film Fund Children, Cinekid, to demonstrate to the little ones what sounds look like. The installation transformed sounds into a visual spectacle: the louder a child screamed into a microphone, the stronger the wave began to move, created from wooden crossbeams suspended at the length of six meters. The project was developed by artists and specialists of the Social Interactive Installation Collective, SIIC.
INTERVIEW WITH PAUL VERHOEVEN, DUTCH FILM DIRECTOR

You gave a masterclass in Gorky Park as part of the Dutch Days. What was the reaction?
I met interesting people, a lot of them seemed open-minded. I had a great time. It was a lovely atmosphere, people were respectful, and it was well-organized. Maybe it was raining too much.

The movie you were going to shoot with Milla Jovovich, in Russia, was delayed and then canceled. What happened?
I read this book of Boris Akunin, “Azael.” My daughter had read it in Russian and she was saying that it was such a wonderful funny book. Of course I couldn’t read it in Russian. Shortly after it was translated into French, I read it, and then I approached Mr. Akunin and we got the rights. We were supposed to start the shooting. We had done the location work, which was mostly in St. Petersburg and London. And then two things happened that killed the project. Milla decided that the movie was not so important to her and got pregnant. And since she was an international star, it had to be based on her, and that fell apart. So then one of the producers, I will not name him because I am very angry with him, slashed the budget in half and that made it impossible to make a good movie. The idea was to make a real statement about Russian architecture at the same time as about the characters. I wanted to make it so that people would see the real beauty of St. Petersburg and be seduced by a great story that Akunin wrote. But it should have been an international movie with power, not on the cheap, you know.

Did you like the Russian version of the story for television?
No, I didn’t like it. I thought that they didn’t acknowledge the beauty and the strength of the story.

What are you working on now?
I just got back from Europe. There are couple of projects that I am trying to set up for television which is now a bit more interesting than film, because clearly television is more about people. One of the projects really looks promising: it will be two-hour television program, a sexy thriller. We got it only three weeks ago, so we don’t know anything about the cast right now. I just got the list of actors and actresses who might be starring there.

Why did the critics hate Showgirls when the viewers liked it?
I think, because of too much nudity. Naked women are a part of the Dutch theater and the contrast between the Russian child’s theater and the Dutch theater is as radical as naked women are among us. The viewers were very professional, without exception. Some left me out exception. Some left me because they basically had to throw up in the bathrooms (laughing). I think it was so blatantly in your face, so audacious and never done and will never be done anymore, not in the United States, so I think they couldn’t stand it, so they tried to kill it.

But the critics loved Basic Instinct?
Yeah! The story in Basic Instinct was much better than the story in Showgirls. There was more perfection there. The nudity in the Basic Instinct was not so much in your face, whereas in Showgirls it was right there, there was no distraction from it. In the sex scene between Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone, for example, there was always hanging this Sword of Damocles, the possibility of killing, a certain threat. Because of that I think it was easier for people to accept it. They were partially distracted by the suspense, and the nudity was easier to absorb.

I have become more interested in people’s behaviour, in relationships and real life: the life we live in; the politics we live in.

The Movie You were going to shoot was not about showgirls, it was a sexy thriller.
It was a lovely atmosphere, people were respectful, and it was well-organized.

Why did you write about Jesus?
I wrote it because I was really interested in Jesus. I wanted to make a movie about Jesus and I saw that nobody would take the time to do the research, so I thought that if I want to make an interesting movie out of it, I should do the research and write it all down. But I didn’t make a movie. The book was based on 40 hours of interviews and it was done with Rob Van Scherf. He is my courier, but in fact, he is more writer than I am. I talk and he writes.

The contrast between the highly individualistic approach of the Dutch theater and the power of the Russian tradition will no doubt be etched in memories for a long time.

“The range of children’s theatre in Moscow impressed visitors, along with the contrast between the Russian tradition and the Dutch one”.

Almost every Saturday over the past years, I went with my daughter to one of the children’s theaters of Moscow, of which there are a lot. I am convinced that there is no city in the world has such an incredible variety of shows for children as Moscow. Of course, not all performances are equally ingenious, but all of them were very professional, without exception. Some left me deeply touched…

ROYAL NETHERLANDS EMBASSY
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Dutch Military Creates A Replica Of The Former Home Of Peter The Great

MUSEUMS INITIATE PROJECT TO BRING HISTORY ALIVE, PIECE BY PIECE

By Yelena Minenko

The replica was assembled at Kolomenskoye Park, where Peter the Great spent his childhood. It stands near to this log cabin, another of his temporary homes.

The Dutch navy has transported to Russia the replica of a house in which tsar Peter the Great lived while studying shipbuilding in The Netherlands. The original stands in the town of Zaandam. The wooden copy now forms part of an exhibition at Kolomenskoye Park in Moscow.

In September, the Dutch vessel Friesland brought containers with parts of the future house to St. Petersburg, the city tsar Peter founded, five years returning from his grand tour of Europe.

The small cottage was built long before the visit of Peter the Great from the wood of old ships and, dating from 1632, is one of the oldest wooden houses in The Netherlands. In 1697 when Peter arrived,
the original, the plan specifies white walls. “It will be like a modern house inside, but for the exposition space it will be perfect”, said Sgt. Maj. Pot.

The engineer carried images of the future house on his mobile phone, digital animated pictures created by the Dutch with the help of special drawing software on a computer, to assist with the assembly on site in Moscow. “Now it is like a big LEGO with many pieces sorted in the containers”, said the commander of the Friesland, Commander Arjen Warnaar.

According to Warnaar the crew of the ship faced no obstacles while transporting in disguise, at Zaandam he stayed in the cottage, which belonged to his old acquaintance, craftsman Gerrit Kist.

Although the tsar stayed there for only eight days, before leaving for the Dutch East India Company shipyards in Amsterdam, he visited the house several more times, the last occasion being in 1717. The house was later forgotten, until Voltaire mentioned it in his 1761 biography of Peter. It soon attracted a stream of noble visitors, including future tsar Paul I.

His daughter Anna Pavlovna, a queen consort of The Netherlands, built a protective brick pavilion around it and Nicholas II commissioned a new stone roof in 1895 to cover the museum, which is a national monument in its own right.

With the help of the Russian company Summa Group the original house was restored earlier this year. Then the creation of a copy began as a joint project for the Russia-Dutch year. A sergeant major in the Royal Netherlands Army Corps of Engineers designed the replica. “It started with the director of the museum in Holland. There was an idea to make a replica to be exhibited for two weeks in Gorky Park in Moscow. Then they said they might have a better place for it but that it would have to last longer and that’s when I came in”, said sergeant major Rutger Pot.

The completed structure is four-and-a-half meters by nine around the outside and five-and-a-half meters high. “I haven’t done anything similar to this project before: our work usually includes building camps or repairing houses, so it was a very nice opportunity for me to get from my commander,” he added.

The original structure is 381 years old and made from the wood of old ships. The inside walls are covered with the autographs of other Russian tsars, commanders, princes and writers. There is even an inscription made by Napoleon, who when he visited the house exclaimed: “For great men nothing is too small”.

Sgt. Maj. Pot originally feared that a true replica was not possible. Even though they used the same type of wood, it was new and lacked the patina of time. “It will look new because we didn’t have secondhand wood but I really hope it will also last for 400 years,” he said. He also decided not to replicate the warp of the old wood.

Inside, in place of the autographs on a computer, to assist with the assembly on site in Moscow, “How it is like a big LEGO with many pieces sorted in the containers”, said the commander of the Friesland, Commander Arjen Warnaar. According to Warnaar the crew of the ship faced no obstacles while transporting the containers. “This ship was built especially for this kind of operation. We’ve got a lot of space on board, so a couple of containers was not really a problem. We put some of them on the helicopter deck, and then we joined the training group which was going out to sea to train anyway and came together to St. Petersburg.”

The elements of the building comprise different types of wood, clay and concrete, which was prepared on site in Moscow. The mission of the Dutch navy ended in St. Petersburg and the house continued its journey to Moscow by truck. Dutch military engineers worked with Russian counterparts on the final assembly.

“The result of this joint project goes to the people of Russia, but the process itself is as important as the result,” said the defense attaché of the Netherlands in Russia Colonel Sybren van Klaarbergen. The people of the Netherlands and the people of Russia worked together on the construction of Peter’s house like they worked together on the construction of the first Russian naval ships.

“It will look new because we didn’t have secondhand wood but I really hope it will also last for 400 years.”
Navies Evolve But Trade And Technology Are Part Of The DNA

DUTCH AND RUSSIAN NAVIES SHARE KNOW HOW IN THE QUEST TO BE ACTIVE, ADAPTABLE AND AFFORDABLE

By Yelena Minenko

Trade, technology and the sea have always been closely linked. And so it was appropriate that the Commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy, Vice Admiral Matthieu Borsboom, should have opened the Russian maritime equipment exhibition, Neya-2013.

The Commander was leading one of several Dutch naval visits to St. Petersburg this year, in the context of navy-to-navy talks and the Russian-Dutch year.

The exhibition brings together Russian and international technology, with the aim of renewing Russia’s sea-based and inland waterway industries — from shipbuilding and shipyards, equipping fleets and ports, to expanding the marine support services for both trade and offshore energy sectors.

Vice Admiral Borsboom said the Dutch admirals and their successor, the Royal Netherlands Navy, had been central to the development of trade and technology.

“The Dutch people did three things: used the soils along the river delta to develop agriculture; used the rivers as the means of transportation; and went overseas,” said admiral Borsboom.

“The navy has been a part of that triple connection of security, trade and diplomacy is still in the genes of the navy, so to speak. It does same things that it did 500 years ago,” said admiral Borsboom.

Today security, diplomacy and trade are once again intertwined. Nations have a common interest in securing the seas and what ships they used and how they built and operated them.

“It was the basis of a long relationship, which the Cold War may have cooled but failed to interrupt: Dutch ships continued to make regular naval visits to St. Petersburg, or Leningrad as it was during Soviet times.

“This has always been a very special relationship even though some generations didn’t pay much attention to it but now it has been revived. What we are doing now is operationalizing these relations.”

On behalf of their ministers of defense, admiral Borsboom and the Russian Admiral Victor Chirkov signed a letter of intent in March, which formalized the relationship. This created an agenda for regular joint naval activities and staff-to-staff discussions, said Borsboom.

“Besides our current collaboration in counter piracy, we are looking at broadening our future collaboration in the fields like submarine rescue exercises and hydrographic surveys. Also the Russian navy has shown interest in our maintenance and logistics programs,” he explained.

Six months ago the admiral visited the Russian port of Murmansk and, further north, the closed city of Severomorsk. This was evidence of greater transparency, he said. “In Severomorsk I was able to visit the nuclear cruiser, Peter the Great, and one of the nuclear submarines. This kind of transparency is very important for partnership.”

The Russian navy discussed developments in the Arctic, which are important to The Netherlands as a maritime trade nation. “The development of the Arctic is not a matter of choice because it is already happening. The route is already clearing out and the ice is melting. It’s up to the Arctic countries to find ways how to cope with this new opportunity and the responsibility of securing safe transit,” said Borsboom.

A Chinese Freighter was the first cargo ship to use the Northeastern Passage, or Northern Sea Route, in September, as melting ice opened a shorter trade connection between Europe and Asia.

The first Russian ships were based on the best English and Dutch plans, so it could be said that the Royal Netherlands Navy is somewhat of a father to the Russian navy.

Nowadays this paternal instinct can provoke some insights into the development of the Russian fleet, which went through some changes after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The challenge for navies is that fleets are shrinking due to financial issues but the demands are not. There are more demands than navies can deliver, and there is lack of capacity, resources and assets, Borsboom said.

“Another collective issue is that it is becomes harder and harder, even in countries with a large population, to convince people to go to sea. Because of the high-tech, innovative surroundings we need
highly skilled people, but then you have to convince them to be away from home for 250 days per year.”

Some of Russia’s problems are connected with its geographic outlines. “St. Petersburg is very oriented to the sea but there are also lands in Russia which are not, so you have to make clear to the population how important it is to have this maritime orientation because it’s bringing you prosperity. The complexity of logistics in your country is beyond our imagination, because we can fly from one side to the other in 30 minutes,” said the admiral.

The Royal Netherlands Navy is not directly advising the Russian navy. But the maritime sector (which consists of the navy, the maritime industry and the maritime expertise centers) is sharing its expertise. “The main idea is that you can’t improve a port without improving the infrastructure and logistics. That’s why Rotterdam is such a success,” said Borsboom.

He said the navy could only be successful if it is ready to interact with all other players. “I always say it is a triple ‘A’: we have to be active, adaptive, and affordable,” he said. Activity has to do with relevance, adaptability with acting on the challenges of a changing world, and affordability with the reasonable spending of tax money. And the Russian navy faces the same challenge. “The only reason why we can celebrate our 525th anniversary proudly is because we’ve been adaptive all the time.”

Borsboom has been in the navy for 35 years and Commander since 2010. He worked in Afghanistan where he was responsible for the operations concerning governance, development and elections in the country. It’s a far cry from his plan as a youngster to become a biochemist, which he gave up to join the navy. He is married and has two daughters and a son; all three are in the Royal Netherlands Navy.

“When I asked my children what was their motivation to enter the navy, they said: good education, high responsibility at very young age and, of course, adventures and sporty side of life. I had the same motivation 35 years ago.”

While in St. Petersburg, Borsboom opened another exhibition, Willem II and Anna Pavlovna, at the Hermitage. He also met veterans of the Great War.

In this bilateral year, the commemorations flowed both ways. A celebration of waterborne ties took a Don Cossack choir all the way “from the Volga to the Maas”. The choir sang aboard HNLMS Friesland, in Rotterdam, as part of the World Port Days 2013 exhibition in September.
A small Dutch innovator is helping Russian Railways to harness the power of its customers. The project would make it the first train company to harvest energy from passenger footfall in its busiest stations.

The technology uses a dynamo mounted in floor panels to create enough electricity to help power wall lighting and walkways. Russian Railways Research Institute, founded in 1918, and Energy Floors, established in 2007, aim to produce a durable, low profile floor panel for locations that carry the heaviest traffic.

Sustainable Dance Club built the first sustainable dance floor in 2008. The patented technology, which contributes to the electricity consumed by floor and wall lighting, soon grabbed the attention of promoters and event organisers. It now organises events and permanent installations around the globe. Many of its customers are big brands that want to focus on sustainability but also to involve the public.

Michel Smit, CEO of Energy Floors, says the Russian Railways product will be different. “You do not need a shiny disco floor that lights up when you walk on it. The panels will be on a larger scale, more durable with a lower cost: something that can withstand the weather in Moscow when one hundred thousand people are walking over it. That’s the physical design but the technology inside is the same.”

Energy Floors signed a five-year development cooperation contract in July 2013 with RRRI, which is part of RZhD, the Russian rail operator. Based in Rotterdam’s RDM Campus Innovation Dock, Energy Floors has built an annual turnover of a million euros in just six year from launch.

Next year it will do a test installation in Russian Railways’ facilities, where people buy tickets, check in and walk over the floor. The floor will become part of a smart grid,” says Smit. The installation will also use solar and wind power. If the test works, then it will be rolled out in real live situations.

Energy Floors invented the technology, filed for the patents and was awarded them. Now it aims to expand outside of the niche market of entertainment. “There are a lot more places where people are walking than dancing: public spaces, squares but also trains, airports and commercial real estate.”

The company ships its dance floors to events, and keeps some floors permanently abroad to reach distant locations more cheaply and quickly. Installations range from two square meters to two thousand.

The electro mechanical charge produced by the dynamo is 50 percent efficient at converting energy from movement into usable electricity. “Our goal is also to educate people about what energy is and how we can use it,” says Smit.

The company also makes sustainable lighting, and a bar system called DrinkWaterBar, which encourages club goers to drink water instead of cola. The company says each half liter of cola, requires 167 liters of water to produce and transport. If you must have flavourings, DrinkWaterBar can add a little syrup. “It is good for the environment but the public can participate.”

Smit is careful not to raise expectations too high: “Lighting up the environment around the people or powering low power systems like a cell telephone is possible. If clients think that you can power your whole office that is just not possible. Our goal is to bring those perceptions closer together. That’s design, the other way around.”

RRRI is also investigating technologies that would use the motion of trains and cars to create electricity. Smit says such projects are viable, though would use a different technology to the Energy Floor.

Smit says the products are as much about changing attitudes as creating electricity: “If you want to change the world, you must activate the public and make them part of your activity.”
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