



## French Scientific Researcher Awarded Nobel Prize for Medicine



▲ On Monday, October 3, **Jules Hoffmann** and **Bruce Beutler** jointly won the 2011 Nobel Prize in Medicine with cell biologist Ralph Steinmann. Mr. Hoffmann, a French biologist, and Mr. Beutler, an American immunologist, share the prize “for their discoveries concerning the activation of innate immunity.”

Mr. Hoffmann and Mr. Beutler are responsible for the discovery of key agents in the immune system’s activation, the “gatekeepers” of the human body’s natural defenses, according to an official press release from the Nobel website. The scientists’ discoveries may usher in sweeping changes in modern medicine, including the improvement of prevention and treatment of infections, cancer and other inflammatory illnesses.

Mr. Hoffmann expressed considerable surprise following the announcement. “I didn’t think our [research] would lead to a Nobel prize,” he told reporters. “We worked on this for 40 years.”

The researcher was made aware of the news from staff at the reception desk of his Shanghai hotel, where he was participating in a conference. They informed Mr. Hoffmann of his win after being bombarded with telephone calls from international press professionals, according to Bloomberg.

Now a French citizen, Mr. Hoffmann was born in Luxembourg in 1941. He studied at the University of Strasbourg in France, where he obtained his PhD in 1969. He received postdoctoral training at the University of Marburg, Germany, then returned to Strasbourg, where he headed a research laboratory from 1974 to 2009. He has also served as President of the French National Academy of Sciences. See page **4** for more on the rich history of France’s 58 Nobel prizes.



Jules Hoffmann performed groundbreaking research in immunology.

## Francophonie Chief Meets in Paris For Talks on Innovative Financing Before G20



Kamalesh Sharma and Abdou Diouf met with President Sarkozy at the Elysée on October 5 for meetings about development-based innovative financing.

▲ President Sarkozy received on October 5 the Secretary General of the International Organization of La Francophonie, Abdou Diouf, and Commonwealth Secretary-General, Kamalesh Sharma. In the run-up to the G20 Cannes Summit, Msrs. Diouf and Sharma submitted to Sarkozy the recommendations of the IOF and the Commonwealth concerning France’s policy of innovative financing, or a system of revenue from financial market transactions worldwide, and the role it could play in providing development aid to the world’s least advanced countries.

President Sarkozy also commended the Secretaries General for their joint work, which bears witness to the close ties between these two organizations which represent over 100 countries. The groups have a shared mission to bolster economic and cultural relations among the French-speaking nations of the world. In an official statement issued after the meetings, Mr. Sarkozy also expressed the wish that the annual IOF-Commonwealth meetings with the G20 leadership continue to take place after France, which currently holds the rotating presidency, passes the title to Mexico.

A follow-up meeting took place October 21 in Montreux, Switzerland, where Mr. Sarkozy met with Doris Leuthard, Swiss Minister of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications. The two joined Francophonie delegation heads for working sessions.

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**G20 Finance and Banking Heads Meet in Paris**

In preparation for the G20 Summit in Cannes set for November 3-4, the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors organized a preparatory meeting on October 14 and 15 in Paris. The discussion focused on the global economy, and leaders reiterated the commitments made during a prior conference in Washington, D.C., in September.

The goal of the gathering was to address the vulnerabilities of the current economic system and form action plans to achieve sustainable and balanced growth. The ministers welcomed reform of the European economic governance and intend to increase the role of the European Financial Stability Facility. Leaders also coordinated the policy agenda that would be discussed at the Cannes Summit. Following the conference, the group emphasized the necessity of a strong international financial system, as well as stable banking systems and financial markets. The ministers called for the promotion of enabling environments and different sources of funding for infrastructure investment projects. The Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors thanked France for hosting the meeting, and welcomed Mexico as chair next year.

**French Scientists Find New Protein Is Weapon Against AIDS**

Two French medical research teams have made big progress in the fight against AIDS. Professor Olivier Rohr and Dr. Christian Schwartz of the University of Strasbourg, and Professor Eric Didier Raoult Chabrière of the University of the Mediterranean found a new protein hidden in human phosphate binding protein (HPBP) that is effective against HIV replication.

The discovery could open new possibilities for treatments, and goes beyond existing therapies. The protein has the ability to surround the HIV virus while also remaining resistant to antiretroviral AZT (the first drug used against HIV). The complexity of this protein bears promising new signs for further study of its capabilities to adapt and play a role in the development of new treatments. In the future, the three scientists hope to run more clinical tests to further ensure that use of the protein will have no side effects.

**France, Morocco Launch First High-Speed Railway in Africa and Arab World**

▲ Thirty years after opening its first high-speed track between Paris and Lyon, France has begun work on a new set of trains that will revolutionize transportation in Morocco. Slated to open in 2015, the *TGV* (train de grande vitesse, or high-speed train) will run parallel to Morocco's Atlantic coast, linking the port city of Tangier to its economic capital, Casablanca. The project will cut travel time between the cities by over two hours. A joint venture by France and Morocco, these bullet trains will be the first of their kind in Africa and the Arab world.

With red carpets, trumpets and lavishly dressed footmen, King Mohammed VI received President Sarkozy on September 29 in Tangier to celebrate the inauguration of work on the new project. The *TGV* project is expected to foster economic growth and new types of infrastructure to serve the region's increasingly



President Sarkozy met with King Mohammed VI to celebrate plans for a new high-speed train line.

mobile population. In the last eight years the number of Moroccans travelling by train has more than doubled, from 14 million in 2003 to 34 million in 2011. This figure is expected to climb to 50 million within four years. Regarding the new *TGV* line, Mr. Sarkozy noted that it will create scores of jobs for French citizens and bring 400 million euros in revenue to Alstom, a French engineering company.



**interview with the expert**

**Roland Celette, Cultural Attaché, Director of La Maison Française of Washington, D.C. at the Embassy of France**

▲ In addition to diplomatic departments, the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C. houses La Maison Française, a cultural center designed to promote the country's emerging and established art—and the artists who create it.

**Roland Celette**, the center's Director in D.C., sat down with *News From France* for a conversation about the facility's functions and *raison d'être*. Please visit [www.la-maison-francaise.org](http://www.la-maison-francaise.org) for more information.

**What are the main goals of La Maison Française ?**

We provide a window into French culture by presenting French artists to the American public here in Washington. The goal is also to cooperate with American cultural institutions, and to develop a network that is useful in promoting these artists. Performing at the Embassy of France can open many avenues to the American arts scene, because the artist's performances are reviewed by the media, our concerts are broadcast on the radio and booking agents often attend.

state embassies in Washington participate, as do more than 30 American cultural institutions, including the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery of Art, the Shakespeare Theatre and many others. It's been very interesting for us to watch the collaboration between the embassies and these American organizations, many of which had not worked together before. It was also an opportunity for the embassies and the American institutions to reach parts of the city where they had not had a presence. This is exactly what we hoped would happen!

**What role do the arts play in the French diplomatic mission?**

The arts are an expression of the best a culture has to offer. We want to present France, the best way to do it is by presenting French culture—allowing people to “travel without traveling,” if you will. So our mission is to share with Americans what's culturally current in France.

**What got you interested in the intersection between French and American culture?**

I think that it's really one of the areas where there is a true exchange of cultures, and this kind of exchange between countries is vital. Since antiquity, all nations have mutually influenced each other, creating an ongoing dialogue through the sharing of ideas, artistic styles and the like. It's profound and sometimes almost unconscious, but these exchanges create unity and facilitate communication.

**The Kids Euro Festival, a collaboration between the Embassies of the EU nations, takes place at the end of October through the beginning of November. What role has La Maison Française played?**

The Kids Euro Festival was launched during the French presidency of the European Union in 2008 — and it is now the largest children's performing arts festival in the United States. It showcases the best of European culture through professional performances for children, both in schools and in theaters around the Washington metro area.

**What advice do you have for Americans who are interested in French culture and wish to learn more ?**

They need to have direct contact, and today it's easy with the Internet providing fast access to musical clips, paintings, etc. Today we have an extraordinary ability to exchange culture. But no matter what area you are interested in, it's always best to study it in depth, rather than sampling various scraps of information. There is no large or small door into culture; each person has their door... Each area says something about France.

## 230 Years After Yorktown, French-American Ties Endure

▲ From the statue of Admiral Rochambeau that stands before the White House to the countless schools and towns named after the Marquis de Lafayette, the legacy of France's contribution to the United States' War of Independence is all around us. The importance of French assistance in the American victory was nowhere more evident than in the Battle of Yorktown, which took place 230 years ago this month.



Here, General Lord Cornwallis surrenders to the French and American troops (L and R). The engagement helped establish a French-American alliance now in its fourth century.

On this year's anniversary, as the Yorktown Victory Center in Yorktown, Virginia celebrates the joint success of Generals Washington and Rochambeau, we should all take another look at our history books. Less talked-about than the crippling defeats at Brooklyn Heights and Bunker Hill, the French-American victory at the Battle of Yorktown is recognized by historians as the most decisive battle of the American Revolution.

In a twenty-day siege that pitted a ragtag army of American regulars and militia against a professionally trained

force of British and Hessian soldiers, France saved the day by lending their army and navy to the American cause. With the help of a navy—which the American military effort had previously lacked—a French-American army was able to surround the British encampment and force its commanding officer, Lord Cornwallis, to capitulate. The surrender, which ended a five-year stalemate between the colonists and the British, marked the last major battle of the American Revolutionary War, which officially ended two years later with the Treaty of Paris.

## Transatlantic Commentator Joins D.C. Think Tank

▲ Former President of the French-American Foundation Nicholas Dungan has been appointed to the Atlantic Council, a prestigious international affairs think tank in Washington, D.C. Mr. Dungan, who led the New York City-based Foundation between 2005 and 2008, is American by birth but has spent much of his adult life in London and Paris. He is an alumnus of the *Institut d'études politiques* (also known as "Sciences Po"), one of the elite institutions of higher education in France.



Nicholas Dungan says to young people wishing to emulate his career, "learn French, learn France, learn Europe."

During his tenure as President, he worked to make the French-American Foundation better known to Americans. At the time of his arrival, Mr. Dungan said, the Foundation was "very high quality, very respectable, but not that visible."

To fix this, he focused on improving media outreach through newspaper op-eds, radio interviews and television appearances. Mr. Dungan also worked on expanding the foundation's programming to address hot topics for both countries, including immigration policy and equality of opportunity in education and employment. In these domains, Mr. Dungan said, there are "lessons to be learned for both sides."

At the Atlantic Council, he plans to work to improve the visibility of France in the American policymaking community, stressing the need for the two nations to "be strong together" in the face of "very, very hard times."

Mr. Dungan's path to international influence began when he travelled to France as a student and ended up staying there for two decades. He recalled the attraction that France had for him, calling it "an absolutely complete country. It has added immeasurably to my personality and perspective." For young Americans interested in following in his footsteps, Mr. Dungan advises developing a full perspective on not just France but also on its place within Europe. He described three steps to being successful there:

"Learn French. Learn France. Learn Europe."

## French "Clusters" Spark Innovation

▲ Following an American trend in business cooperation, French firms are coming together to create the next generation of tech and industrial innovators. A French government initiative offers funding to these collaborative groups, which are known as *pôles de compétitivité* (competitiveness clusters) and are centered around a particular theme and region. The groups combine the innovative power of diverse institutions of different sizes and with different areas of expertise, from research labs to educational establishments. The goal of the clusters is to "build on ... innovative, collaborative projects in order to give partner firms the chance to become first in their fields, both in France and abroad," according to the initiative's website.

Currently 7,200 firms are members of such clusters, employing 760,000 people throughout France. Areas in which clusters have helped fuel innovation include emerging fields like eco-technology as well as more established areas like the automotive industry.

## French Films Fêted in Manhattan

French artists were well-represented amid the glamour and glitz of the forty-ninth annual New York Film Festival, which ran from September 30 until October 16 in Manhattan. One French film as well as ten French co-productions premiered at the event, to wide acclaim.

*The Artist*, a silent romance set in the glamorous 1920s, follows a fading movie star's affair with a young dancer. Directed by Michel Hazanavicius, architect of the popular OSS117 series of spy thrillers, the film features NYFF best actor Jean Dujardin.

Roman Polanski's new film *Carnage*, which stars Jodie Foster, John C. Reilly and Kate Winslet as warring parents of elementary school students, is based on the Tony Award-winning play *God of Carnage* by French playwright Yasmina Reza. The festival's selections also included collaborations of French filmmakers with their German, Italian, Swiss and other European and American counterparts, creating a decidedly multicultural flavor at this year's festival.



Jean Dujardin stars in *The Artist*.

## New French Apps Allow Tourists to "See" Sights Before They Go

What if you could explore a projection of the Eiffel Tower, or stroll down a virtual Champs-Élysées before your plane even touches down in France? A new smartphone application developed by a group of French tech firms may soon allow tourists to "see" an area in three-dimensional, high-definition projection before they actually set off on their real-life adventure.

The group, called Terra Numerica, was formed as one of France's government-supported "innovation clusters." Creators say the app will also be useful in fields like urban planning.

## France & the Nobel Prizes: An Inspiring Tradition



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**A** little-known story in the annals of philanthropy history goes like this: When Alfred Nobel's brother Ludvig died in Cannes in 1888, French newspapers mis-

took one brother for the other and erroneously reported the death of the multi-millionaire inventor of dynamite. One paper announced Alfred's supposed end with the headline "Le Marchand de la Mort est Mort" ("The Merchant of Death Is Dead"). Mr. Nobel was shocked by his public image. When his actual death came eight years later, he left \$250 million to endow five Nobel Prizes, the fifth to be given "to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations ... and promotion of peace congresses."

Alfred Nobel's prizes have honored some of the most iconic French figures of the twentieth century, including Pierre and Marie Curie (1903, 1911), Albert Camus (1957) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1967). France has won prizes in each of the five categories and holds the record for most awards in literature of any country.

### France Strives for International Cooperation and Peace

The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Parisian economist Frédéric Passy in 1901. Mr. Passy was recognized for his monumental contributions to international cooperation, including his introduction of the arbitration method, which uses judicial methods to solve international disputes. Twenty years later, Léon Bourgeois, president of the League of Nations and former prime minister of France, was the first French political leader to be awarded the prize. Following his example, Prime Minister Aristide Briand won the Peace Prize in 1926 for his work on the Locarno Treaties, which ushered in a welcome but short-lived peace in Europe. A year later, Mr. Briand

and American Secretary of State Frank Kellogg jointly initiated the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which prohibited the use of war as "an instrument of national policy" except in matters of self-defense.

### Research Reaps Rewards

The Nobel prizes have also repeatedly honored another important domain of French culture: the public research sector. In 1903, when Marie Curie, Pierre Curie and Henri Becquerel won the Nobel Prize in Physics, it was a result of Mr. Curie's work at the public Municipal School of Industrial Physics and Chemistry in Paris. Since then, several French research institutes and universities have been affiliated with the prize. These include France's oldest university, the Sorbonne, and biggest research organization, the National Center of Scientific Research (CNRS), which was founded in 1939 "to evaluate and carry out all research capable of advancing knowledge." France has not only accumulated 32 prizes in chemistry, medicine and physics, but also a number of world-renowned laureates whose innovations have impacted science immensely. Though Louis Pasteur—a celebrated scientist who pre-dated the prizes—is not included, ten laureates have been affiliated with the famous *Institut Pasteur*, which he founded. These include Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and Luc Montagnier, who in 1983 isolated and identified the virus that causes AIDS.

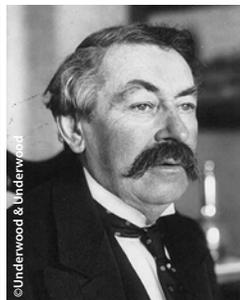
### Continuing the Legacy

On October 3, 2011, Jules Hoffmann became the fifty-eighth French person to win a Nobel Prize when he was recognized for his research on immunity. President Sarkozy stated that Mr. Hoffmann's award "honors the University of Strasbourg, the CNRS, the French scientific community and the entire country."

Carrying on his final wish to facilitate creation rather than destruction, Alfred Nobel's prize offers a globally influential nod to French contributions in human advancement and world peace, both past and present.



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Top: Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio earned the Nobel prize for literature in 2008. He joined the ranks of France's 14 laureates in the field, the most for any country. France's lineage of Nobel laureates includes (L-R): Marie Curie (1903, 1911), Aristide Briand (1926), Albert Camus (1957), Jean-Paul Sartre (awarded 1967, declined), Luc Montagnier and Françoise Barré-Sinoussi (1983).

### French, U.S. Innovators Convene for Atlanta Conference

▲ After a successful inaugural event in 2010, the second conference called "France-Atlanta: Together Towards Innovation" took place October 26-November 12. The weeklong activity series will feature panels of experts on foreign relations, culture, business and humanitarian issues.

This year's program included four scientific symposia, two economic workshops, five cultural performances and two humanitarian events. The scientific symposia discussed French-American higher education and programs of joint research in a variety of fields. In the economic forums, opportunities in the nuclear and green industry sectors were under discussion. The humanitarian events focused on coordination of international responses to emergency situations such as natural disasters. The cultural events showcased dance, cinema, photography and architecture. These included performances, photography exhibitions and discussions on cultural diversity in France and the United States.

Last year's conference hosted 3,500 attendees, and organizers at the Consulate of France in Atlanta expected an equally high turnout this year. French Ambassador to the U.S. François Delattre was among the dignitaries addressing the attendees, as was the Atlanta's Mayor Kasim Reed and Nobel Prize-winner Albert Fert, a French physicist.



The 2011 conference brought French and American innovators together in Atlanta, shown here.

### Areva, Public Energy Co., To Install Wind Turbine Factory in Le Havre

▲ Best known for its work in nuclear power, French public industrial conglomerate Areva has selected Le Havre as the site of its first French wind turbine plant. The planned facility will be Areva's second such project: the first one is located in Bremerhaven, Germany. By building its new plant in Le Havre, Areva will be able to take advantage of the northwestern French city's strategically placed ports, through which they can supply projects throughout Northern Europe.



Areva hopes its M5000 wind turbines will soon be generating power all along the French coast.

Areva, which is 90 percent government-owned, predicts that the Le Havre project will create 1,000 local jobs, a number that the company hopes will grow to 10,000 in the next decade.

The company has plans to continue expanding in the field of wind power, and will be a major contender for several projects announced this year by the French government as part of its resolution to make 23 percent of French energy renewable by 2020.

Earlier this year the government announced projects in five zones along the northwestern French coast: Le Tréport, Fécamp, Courseulles-sur-mer, Saint-Brieuc and Saint-Nazaire. Areva plans to bid for all five of these. The company with the winning bid will supply turbines for the projects' launch in July 2012.

### A World First: Successfully Reproduced Red Blood Cells

At the Pierre and Marie Curie-Inserm University in Paris on October 4, a team led by Dr. Luc Douay completed a world first. Dr. Douay and his team successfully reproduced red blood cells and were able to transfuse them back into their donor. This discovery is very good news for the team's partners at the French National Blood Service (EFS), which oversees blood donation in France.

Dr. Douay's goal was to produce red blood cells that could function and be recognized by the body as natural blood cells. Because the need for blood transfusions is growing rapidly in France and across the world, they hope their discovery will bring an end to the shortage.

The average blood pack contains roughly two trillion cells. Dr. Douay's laboratory has already produced several billion cells, and by 2015 he hopes to increase the production of red blood cells from the laboratory level to the industrial level, thus diminishing the need for blood donations by making blood transfusions easier. This would also make it easier to accommodate all patients with their correct blood type.

### Car Sharing in Paris Goes Electric

Everyday errands in Paris are about to get a lot greener, more efficient and more stylish, thanks to a new car-sharing initiative. The program, which began with a trial run in early October, aims to clear up traffic congestion in downtown areas by offering cutting-edge electric rental cars for short trips.

The scheme, known as Autolib, aims to build on the success of Parisian bicycle-sharing program Vélib. The new program provides battery-powered Bluecars to residents at affordable rates. Designed by Peninfarina, the Italian car design firm known for producing sleek Maseratis and Ferraris, the bubble-shaped Bluecar can travel up to 250 kilometers before it needs a recharge, which takes about four hours. To use the car for one half-hour will cost between four and eight euros, according to BBC News.

By making shared electric cars easily accessible, Parisian officials hope to reduce car ownership in the city, thereby mitigating traffic problems as well as air and noise pollution. Organizers at the Parisian industrial holdings group Bolloré, which is running the project, hope to have between 3,000 and 5,000 cars available at 1,000 stations around Paris by 2013, and a cleaner, more efficient city for all to enjoy.

## La Fête de la Science Opens Eyes to Chemistry

The annual science festival known as *La Fête de la Science* celebrated its twentieth anniversary this year, taking place October 12-16.

Originally created in 1991 by Hubert Curien, Minister of Research and Space, the goal of the festival is to create a better future by helping the public understand the environment and better publicize science- and research-related careers through films, conferences and expert panels.

This year's theme was chemistry and its role in the world. The festival explored everything from the molecules in food to medicine, the cosmos and the importance of protecting the environment. The second theme was *L'Outre-Mer* (French overseas departments), an examination of the cultures of the overseas departments, and the way in which an ocean can create cultural differences. With over 2,000 events this year, *La Fête de la Science* inspired the inner scientists in youth and adults alike.

## Montmartre Celebrates 78th Annual Harvest Fest



The Sacré-Cœur blazed with fireworks during Montmartre's annual festivities.

To Parisians, the hill neighborhood of Montmartre, with its white-domed Basilica of the Sacred Heart soaring over a famous skyline, is among the most beloved districts of their city.

Much more obscure, however, is a small vineyard by the name of Le Clos-Montmartre, which sits at the corner of the neighborhood, on Rue Saint-Vincent. Normally a sleepy spot, the vineyard becomes an oasis of creativity and cultural events through the annual Montmartre Harvest Festival.

Drawing an average of 300,000 visitors, the Montmartre Harvest Festival is a five-day event held each October that features cultural events of all kinds and, of course, wine tastings. This year, the seventy-eighth annual festival embraced the theme of France's overseas *départements*. Highlights included a tribute concert to Henri Salvador, a rock 'n' roll pioneer and native of French Guiana.

## New Law Promotes Healthier Eating in French School Cafeterias



The new regulation will reduce portion sizes, diversify healthy offerings and more strictly enforce food rules.

▲ This fall, new French legislation will be serving up better nutrition to millions of schoolchildren around the country.

Several new rules concerning the nutritional quality and the quantity of school food will take effect in cafeterias serving more than 80 people. Four to five different main dishes will be available each lunch period, accompanied by a garnish and dairy product. Additionally, the government has released a range of portion sizes appropriate for each age group. So that no student will be left hungry, however, the new law also allows students to serve themselves as much bread as they want. These new regulations will affect 6 million students. Nutritional rules already exist, but according to French Minister of Food and Agriculture, Bruno Le Maire, they have been neither applied nor monitored. From now on, cafeteria managers will report to a registry, providing documents to certify that they are respecting the new health codes.

## French Car, World's Oldest, Sells for Record Bid

▲ The world's oldest functioning car, a French creation once intended for competitive racing, was sold on October 7 at auction for \$4.6 million, more than twice its anticipated price.

Constructed in 1884 by the auto manufacturer De Dion-Bouton & Trépardoux, the four-wheeled Dos-à-Dos Steam Runabout is nicknamed "La Marquise." It was built for Count Jules-Albert de Dion, the wealthy French industrialist who founded the company in collaboration with engineers Georges Bouton and Charles Trépardoux. At its height of success in the late 1800s, De Dion-Bouton & Trépardoux was the largest auto manufacturer in the world. De Dion, a native of the Loire-Atlantique department who was also notable for his rakish moustache and penchant for dueling, drove the car in an early automobile race in 1887.

"La Marquise," thought to have been named in honor of de Dion's mother, runs by burning wood, coal and



Built by an eccentric Count, the 127-year old "Marquise" competed in the world's first auto race.

paper. Once it has generated enough steam to move—which usually takes about 30 minutes—it can carry four people at speeds up to 38 miles per hour.

## Government Aims for "French Ivy League"

▲ The Sarkozy administration has begun implementing an ambitious new plan to create a "French Ivy League," an elite group of universities that rank highly among other world institutions. Known as the *Initiative d'Excellence* (Idex), the plan aims to establish between five and seven highly competitive institutions in hopes of drawing to France the best professors and top students from around

the globe. The group will be known as the "Sorbonne League," and will be financed by the 7.7 billion euros (over \$10 billion) the French government has pledged to invest in the project.

The Idex plan requires inter-institutional collaboration in order for universities to qualify for government money. Particularly, the plan facilitates cooperation between the elite *grandes écoles*, the nonselective regional universities and independent research groups. By pooling talent and resources into collectives, the groups can rank more favorably in world lists as well as make themselves more attractive to government investment under the new plan. For example, *Paris Sciences et Lettres* (PSL), a cluster of 13 institutions including the storied *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, received a 1 billion-euro endowment in June as part of the new initiative.

Edouard Husson, Vice-Chancellor of the Universities of Paris, noted that though regional universities—which most French students attend—will remain integral to the education system, the elite "Sorbonne League" will be a vital step toward boosting and maintaining French academic competitiveness vis-à-vis other nations.



The Collège de France is among the funding recipients in a new education competitiveness program.

## Wine Online: Burgundy Launches Web Tool for Sellers and Enthusiasts

▲ Wine lovers rejoice! The Burgundy Wine Board has created a new way to learn about the region's legendary wine industry without leaving home. A new online learning module features interactive maps and a quiz covering everything from the legacy of viticulture in the region to the best food pairings with Burgundy wine.

"You wish to become a Burgundy wines ambassador?" the tutorial inquires, and the user embarks on a journey through the vibrant 2,000-year history of Burgundy wines, guided by a French wine grower named Antoine. Dispersed throughout the tutorial are videos of the "Men of Burgundy," wine growers and merchants who offer their own personal stories of what the industry has meant in their lives. There is also a guide to the technical terms surrounding viticulture in the area, from *caves coopératives* (a wine-growers' collective) to *œnologist* (a scientific expert on vinification techniques) and even a list of the proper words to describe a white Burgundy's taste ("mineral," "fresh" and "elegant" are among the appropriate choices).



Burgundy's online module features 360-degree vineyard views and tutorials in half a dozen languages.

The module is intended mainly for merchants around the world who wish to learn more about this distinctive region. The tutorial is available in French, English, Japanese, Chinese and Korean. Yet even the most casual viewer cannot help but be dazzled by the 360-degree views of the lush Burgundy vineyards, carefully laid out to maximize exposure to sunlight and minimize frost and wind damage to the verdant vines.

For more, please see [www.burgundy-wines.fr](http://www.burgundy-wines.fr).

## French Oscar Submission Depicts Struggle, Celebrates Life



In *La Guerre est déclarée*, actress and director Valérie Donzelli tells her own story.

▲ An intensely personal tragicomedy about a couple's struggle in the face of their child's illness has been selected as the French entry for the 2012 Academy Awards.

Entitled *La Guerre est déclarée* (Declaration of War), the film stars Valérie Donzelli and her former partner, actor Jérémie Elkaim, as carefree Parisian lovers—their characters' names are Roméo and Juliette—who find themselves suddenly plunged into an emotional battle to preserve hope and their own relationship during their infant son's illness.

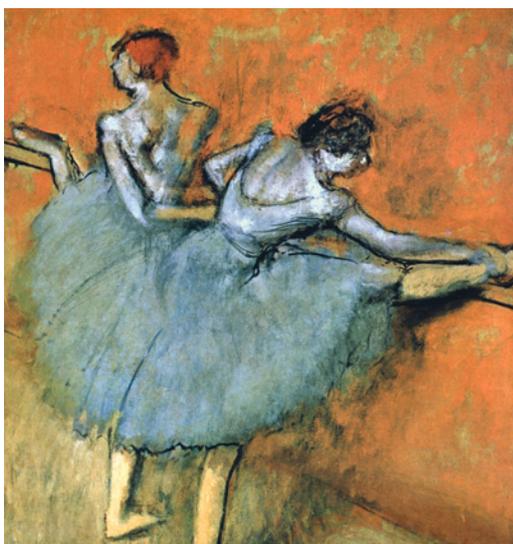
Ms. Donzelli, who also directed the film, based the story on her and Mr. Elkaim's real-life experiences after their son was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor.

The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival as the Critics' Week Opening Night film, and received wide acclaim for its vibrant celebration of life in the face of hardship as well as its frank portrayal of emotion and suffering.

*La Guerre est déclarée* will join 63 other films from around the globe as it competes for recognition in the category of Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards Ceremony, which will take place on February 26, 2012 in Hollywood.

## D.C. Gallery Sheds New Light on Edgar Degas's Dancers

▲ On October 1 Washington D.C.'s Phillips Collection opened "Degas's Dancers at the Barre: Point and Counterpoint," an exhibit celebrating French impressionist painter Edgar Degas' vibrant depictions of French ballet students, a study he sustained for over 40 years. One of the Phillips Collection's greatest treasures, *Dancers at the Barre*, is the centerpiece of the exhibition. The oil-on-canvas version of *Dancers at the Barre* will be displayed alongside other Degas works gathered from collections around the world. The exhibition runs through January 8, 2012.



A new show at the Phillips Collection displays Edgar Degas' work in vibrant pastel, dark charcoal and gleaming bronze.

## La Maison Française Hosts Baroque Virtuosi

On October 19, the embassy's cultural events center, La Maison Française, brought three world-class musicians to Washington, D.C. for an evening of Baroque music. The concert featured Italian violinist Riccardo Minasi, who has performed around the globe to wide acclaim. He has appeared on stage at such celebrated venues as Carnegie Hall in New York, the Barbican in London, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées and the Salle Pleyel in Paris, and Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. Minasi was joined by Beilang Zhu, a doctoral student and principal cellist of the Mercury Baroque Orchestra in Houston, TX. She is widely hailed by critics as a rising musical star.

Also performing was Kenneth Weiss, an accomplished American harpsichordist and conductor. Mr. Weiss is known worldwide for his work with orchestras such as The English Concert and Concerto Copenhagen, and has ties particularly to the French classical scene. He has appeared with the Orchestre de Rouen and is currently a faculty member at the Paris Conservatory.



Kenneth Weiss

## French Jazz Classic Heralds Arrival of Fall

No other song captures the fall season better than the popular jazz tune "Autumn Leaves." The song was first written in 1945, with music by Hungarian-French composer Joseph Kosma and lyrics by French poet Jacques Prévert. Originally entitled "Les Feuilles Mortes," it has been embraced by numerous English-speaking musicians and has been a jazz standard right from the start.

The tune was an immediate hit with both Francophone and Anglophone audiences. Filmmaker Yves Montand incorporated the song into his dark Parisian drama *Les Portes de la Nuit* in 1946, and the following year American musician Johnny Mercer wrote lyrics in English. Celebrated chanteuse Edith Piaf performed both the French and English versions of the song on a radio program in 1950, and famous artists such as Frank Sinatra, Cannonball Adderley and Nat King Cole have since offered their own interpretations of the classic.



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### Nantes Brass Band Brings Bling to New Orleans



"Making you groove" is the WestCostars' mantra.

French brass band WestCostars landed in the United States on October 23 to launch their debut album, *Everyone Dances in the Car (Tout le monde danse dans la voiture)*. These 11 French musicians, who go by stage names such as DaFlo (who plays alto saxophone) and Monsieur T (a trombonist), embarked on a journey to New Orleans, LA, captivating audiences with their zany humor, off-the-wall choreography and explosive blend of swing, funk and reggae music—all the while sporting their unmistakable “bling-bling suits.” Hailing from the western French city of Nantes, the West-Costars are known for their powerful and dynamic sound, which they call “bring-it-on music.” Their ethos is to play as loud as possible and to create wild rhythms that engage the entire audience. While in New Orleans, the WestCostars held four concerts in different venues, including celebrated contemporary jazz club Snug Harbor. In addition to their shows, the WestCostars conducted a music workshop at the *Ecole Bilingue de la Nouvelle Orléans* (The Bilingual School of New Orleans), giving students a chance to meet the artists and learn about their unique musical style. The WestCostars' American stint ran through October 31.

### National Gallery Embraces Films of the “Fantastique”

The mystery and glamour of the French *cinéma fantastique* has captivated Washington, D.C. In honor of the 100-year anniversary of Fantômas—a sinister master-of-disguise character first created in 1911 by French writers Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre—the National Gallery of Art has organized a fall film series celebrating this innovative and refreshingly bizarre artistic tradition.

The Gallery defines the style as “the occurrence of the uncanny in cinema,” a trait which encompasses a diverse range of works ranging from fairy tales to murder mysteries, from 1920s surrealist works to today's science fiction.



The *cinéma fantastique* series runs October 23 through December 31 at the National Gallery.

Screened films include *Testament du Docteur Corde-lier*, the chilling tale of a Parisian physician's descent into madness; *Les Yeux Sans Visage (Eyes Without a Face)*, which explores the brutal cost of beauty; and *Black Moon*, a futuristic dreamscape.