



## String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam

The world's largest string quartet festival

31 January–5 February 2022 (MI 243)

6 days • £2,780

Lecturer: Leo Samama

Sixteen concerts, world-class ensembles – the greatest string quartet gathering in the world.

All performances are at the excellent modern Muziekgebouw, which overlooks the River IJ.

The hotel is immediately adjacent – time spent travelling to the concerts is eliminated.

Talks by musicologist Leo Samama, writer, lecturer, composer and co-founder of the Netherlands String Quartet Academy.

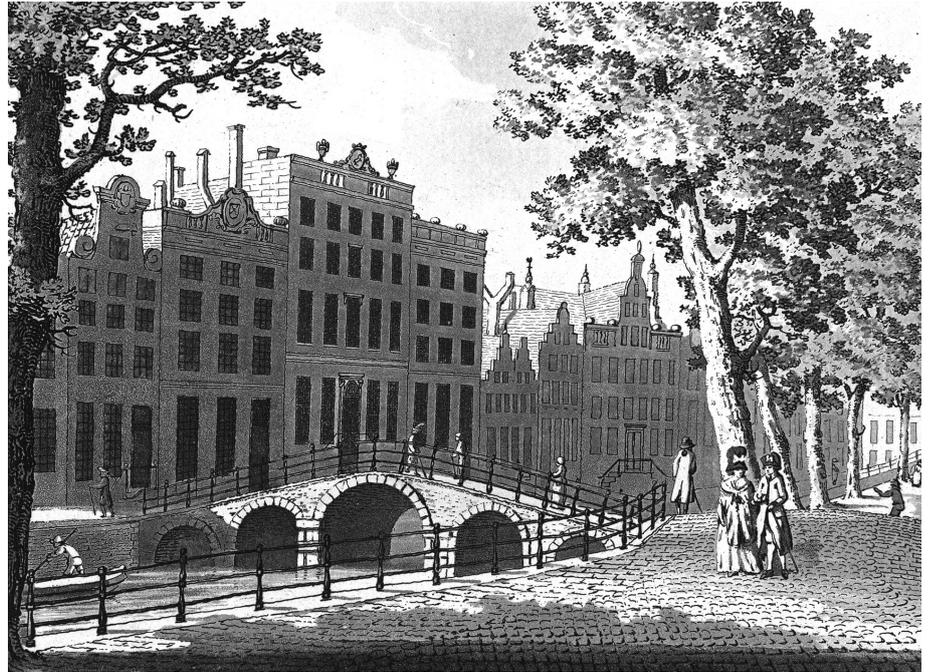
Walks and visits within Amsterdam with a local art historian, and an excursion outside the city.

The Strijkkwartet Biennale Amsterdam is the première festival of its kind, a gathering of world-class quartets and enthusiastic listeners in one of the loveliest cities in Europe. Immersive, intensive and inspiring, the festival embraces both tradition and innovation, and presents the familiar and the unknown. Mainly, however, it is a sublime sequence of some of the finest music ever composed.

From the week-long festival we have selected sixteen recitals of varying formats and durations, some starting at 9.30am (Haydn) and some at 10.30pm (Beethoven). If this sounds a formidably busy schedule, be comforted by the proximity of the hotel: you could be in your room within four or five minutes of the players leaving the stage.

The concerts take place in the three halls of the Muziekgebouw and BIMhuis, an adventurous building by Danish architects 3XN which opened in 2005, and is located in the docks just beyond the main railway station. A huge glass wall affords views across the River IJ, Europe's busiest port in the seventeenth century. We have three of the five dinners in the excellent restaurant here, and there are other cafés and bars for breaks at other times to supplement the facilities at the hotel.

An Amsterdam-based art historian leads guided visits to art galleries and historic buildings of the city. There is also a trip to the lovely little city of Edam where there is a specially arranged recital on the famous 1663 Father Smith organ.



Amsterdam, De Heere Gragt, aquatint c. 1790.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Depart c. 11.00am by train from London St Pancras (Eurostar, under four hours) and by taxi from Amsterdam Centraal to the hotel (walking is an option). Dinner is at the hotel before going next door to the Muziekgebouw. 8.15pm concert: *the Hagen Quartet* plays *Dvorak* (op.106) and *Shostakovich* (nos. 7 & 2).

**Day 2.** Concert at 9.30am: *Schumann Quartet*, *Haydn* op.33/3 and *Helena Winkelmann's Papa Haydn's Parrot* (2016). A break before going to another hall for the 11.00am event: *Attacca Quartet*, masterclass on *Haydn's Seven Last Words*. In the afternoon there is the first of Leo Samama's three talks, and this is followed by: 5.00pm concert, *Ruysdael Quartet*, *Scott Dickinson* (viola), *Mozart String Quintets* K.593, K.406. Dinner at the 4'33 Grand Café at the Muziekgebouw. 8.15pm: *Attacca Quartet*, *Haydn's Seven Last Words*. Short break before: *Late Beethoven* at 10.30pm: *Borodin Quartet*, op.127.

**Day 3.** Our visit to the Rijksmuseum concentrates on the major works in its unrivalled collection of 17th-century paintings, Rembrandt's *Night Watch* and four Vermeers among them. As alternatives (or additions)

you could choose the Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art or the Van Gogh Museum, both nearby. Afternoon lecture followed by: 5.00pm, *Schumann Quartet*, *Adrien La Marca* (viola), *Mozart's K.174* and *K.614*, and works by *Caroline Shaw*. Dinner at the Muziekgebouw. 8.15pm: *Borodin Quartet*, *Mark Schmann* (cello), *Shostakovich* (No.1), *Arenski* (op.35), *Tchaikovsky* (arrangement of *Children's Album*). 10.30pm *Late Beethoven: Calder Quartet*, op.130 (arrangement), op.133.

**Day 4.** *Haydn* at 9.30am: *Chiaroscuro Quartet*, op.33/5, *Beethoven* op.18/4. Pause. 11.30am: *Cuarteto Casals* and composer *Francisco Coll* talk about his *Concerto Grosso*. Afternoon visits to the magnificent 17th-century Portuguese Synagogue and to Rembrandt's House, recently and excellently refurbished. Dinner is independent today. 8.15pm: *Cuarteto Casals*, *Quatuor Danel* and *Amsterdam Sinfonietta* perform *Kurtág*, *Coll*, *Haas*, *Hartman* and *Bartók*. Pause. 10.30pm concert, *Chiaroscuro Quartet*, *Antoine Hunter & Zahna Simon* (*Urban Jazz Dance Company*): *Beethoven Reimagined*, op.130 & op.133 with dance.

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continued

**Day 5.** Excursion to Edam, a delightful little town with an outside church in which we hear a specially arranged recital on the 1663 organ by Barend Smidt ('Father Smith').  
*5.00pm concert: St. Lawrence String Quartet plays Mozart (K.421) and Korngold (op.34).*  
Dinner at the Muziekgebouw. *8.15pm: concert with the Calder Quartet and Davóne Tines (baritone) performing music by Julius Eastman (Prelude for solo voice), Schubert (Death and the Maiden, quartet and song), Arvo Pärt (Ein Wallfahrtslied), Peter Maxwell Davies (Blake Dreaming), Samuel Smallwood and Caroline Shaw.*

**Day 6.** *Haydn at 9.30am: Marmen Quartet, op.33/6, and Salina Fisher' string quartet 'Heal'.*  
Visit the Willet-Holthuysen Museum, a fully-furnished 17th-century canal-side merchant's house, before boarding the afternoon Eurostar. Arrive at London St Pancras International at c. 5.00pm.

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## Lecturer

**Leo Samama.** Writer, composer, and co-founder of the Netherlands String Quartet Academy, he has worked with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Residentie Orchestra in The Hague and the Netherlands Chamber Choir. Between 1977 and 1992 he taught at the Utrecht Conservatory, the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and Utrecht University, and today teaches music philosophy. Among his publications are *Nederlandse muziek in de 20-ste eeuw* (Dutch Music in the 20th Century), *The Meaning of Music* and *Het strijkkwartet* (The String Quartet) in 2018. In 2010 he was created an Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau for his contribution to Dutch musical life.

*The lecturer joins the tour for three lectures, the concerts and most dinners. Walks and most visits are led by a local guide.*

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## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £2,780 or £2,590 without Eurostar, **single occupancy:** £3,110 or £2,920 without Eurostar.

**Upgrade to room with a view. Two sharing:** £50 per person, **single occupancy:** £100

**Included:** tickets for sixteen concerts and the organ recital; rail travel by Eurostar (standard premier); travel within Amsterdam by taxi, to Edam by coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and four dinners, with wine; admission charges to places visited on the guided tours; tips for restaurant staff, drivers, guides etc; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guide.

**Accommodation. Mövenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre** ([movenpick.com](http://movenpick.com)): a modern, comfortable hotel located directly next door to the the Muziekgebouw.

**How strenuous?** Participation in the walks and visits requires the fitness to be expected of everyday walking and stair climbing, and to be able to walk at least a couple of miles unaided.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.