



String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam

The world's largest string quartet festival

29 January–3 February 2024 (MK 168)

6 days • £3,120

Lecturer: Leo Samama

15 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.

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.

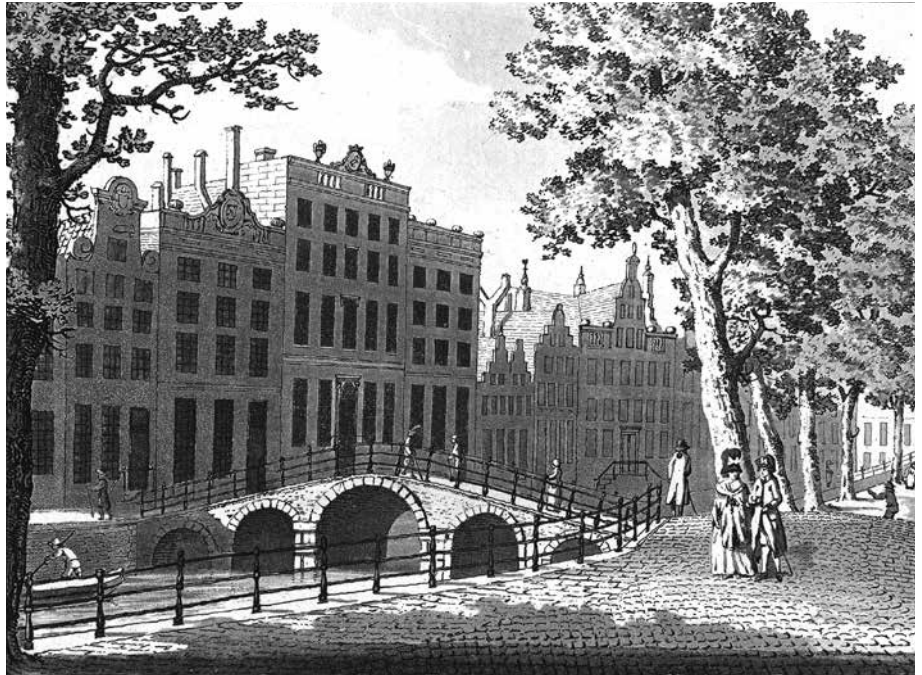
From the week-long festival we have selected 15 recitals of varying formats and durations, some starting at 9.30am (Haydn) and some at 10.30pm (Beethoven). If this sounds a formidably busy schedule, be comforted by the proximity of the hotel: you could be in your room within four or five minutes of the 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 17th century. We have two 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.

Itinerary

Day 1. Depart c. 11.00am by train from London St Pancras (Eurostar, under four hours) and transfer from Amsterdam Centraal to the hotel. Dinner is at the hotel before going next



Amsterdam, De Heere Gragt, aquatint c. 1790.

door to the Muziekgebouw. 8.15pm concert: *the Jerusalem Quartet* plays Smetana (No.1), Shostakovich (No.11) and Beethoven (Op.59 No.2).

Day 2. Concert at 9.30am: *Leonkoro Quartet*, Haydn Op.33 No.3 and Wolfgang Rihm's *String Quartet No.9*. 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. The first of Leo Samama's three talks is followed by: 5.00pm concert, *Ragazze Quartet*, Mendelssohn Op.80 and world première of *String Quartet* by Seung-Won Oh. Dinner at the 4'33 Grand Café at the Muziekgebouw. 8.15pm: *Orchestra of the 18th Century*, *Kitgut Quartet*, *Amandine Beyer* (violin), works by Spohr, Sirmen, Fanny Mendelssohn and Pleyel. Short break before: *Late Beethoven* at 10.30pm: *Brentano Quartet*, Op.130.

Day 3. Concert at 9.30am: *Kitgut Quartet*, Haydn Op.33 No.5, Schubert D94 and Albrechtsberger Op.4. Pause. 11.30am: 'Masterclass' with *Amandine Beyer* (*Kitgut Quartet*). Afternoon lecture followed by: 2.15pm, *Australian String Quartet*, *Lou*

Bennett (voice), works by Peter Sculthorpe, Moya Henderson, Lou Bennett, Jack Symonds and Beethoven (Op.59). Dinner is independent today. 8.15pm: *Brentano Quartet*, *Hsin-Yun Huang* (viola), Mozart (K.499), *String Quintet* by James MacMillan (European première), *Brahms Op.111*.

Day 4. Concert at 9.30am: *Simply Quartet*, Haydn Op.33 No.4, 'Lucid Dreams' by Thomas Larcher. Visits to the magnificent 17th-century Portuguese Synagogue and to Rembrandt's House, recently and excellently refurbished. Afternoon lecture followed by: 5.00pm, *Doric String Quartet*, *Jelmer de Moed* (clarinet), Beethoven (Op.18 No.5), 'Alchymia' by Thomas Adès. Dinner at the Muziekgebouw. 8.15pm: *Australian String Quartet*, *Lou Bennett* (voice), *String Quartet* by Paul Stanhope and *Lou Bennett* (European première), Mozart K.421, Britten (No.2). Pause. 10.30pm concert, *Simply Quartet*, Beethoven Op.135.

Day 5. Concert at 9.30am: *Australian String Quartet*, Haydn Op.33 No.1, 'Sacred Sky' by Nigel Westlake. Pause. 11.30am: 'Masterclass' with *Tabea Zimmermann* (viola). Break for lunch. 2.15pm, *Solem Quartet*, *Ayanna Witter-Johnson* (cello), 'Island Suite' by Ayanna Witter-Johnson, Beethoven Op.133, Bartók No.3. Some free time before our final dinner.

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continued

Day 6. Concert at 9.30am: Tetzlaff Quartet, Haydn Op.33 No.2, Berg Op.3. 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. 8.00pm.

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.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,120 or £2,910 without Eurostar. **Single occupancy:** £3,600 or £3,390 without Eurostar.

Included: tickets for 15 concerts; rail travel by Eurostar (Standard Premier); travel within Amsterdam by coach or taxi; 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): 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.