



## Mahler in Amsterdam

Ten symphonies in Amsterdam for the first time in 30 years

**9–19 May 2025 (ML 682)**

11 days • £6,760

Lecturer: Dr Paul Max Edlin

A century after the first Mahler Festival in Amsterdam, all ten symphonies are performed in one of the finest concert halls in the world.

First-rate international orchestras, some of which Mahler himself conducted.

Some visits with a local guide and free time for Amsterdam's outstanding museums and canalside streetscape.

Daily talks on the music by composer, artistic director and lecturer, Dr Paul Max Edlin.

'The Symphony must be like the world', said Mahler, 'it must embrace everything'. Even as a child he was playing with extremes: his first composition, at the age of ten, was a funeral march followed by a polka. Dance music and dirges, tenderness and extreme violence, exquisite song-like melodies and brash military marches, evocations of the heartbreaking beauty of nature and nightmare visions of the abyss – it's all there.

The miracle is that these teeming musical collages somehow hang together, tell compelling stories, and for all the apparent self-dramatisation, they can seem to be addressed to us personally. With his ability to confront the fullness of life in all its joy and terror, Mahler can help us confront and endure stark reality. He can take us to the edge of despair, then sing us the sweetest songs of consolation. If we allow ourselves to make this journey with him, we may find that we too are the better for it.

In his own lifetime Mahler was revered as a conductor, but only a precious few understood his music. Most scratched their heads or sneered. But one crucial early champion was Willem Mengelberg, chief conductor of the Concertgebouw, who gave the world the first ever Mahler Festival in 1920, at a time when Mahler remained a minority interest even in his adopted home-city Vienna. After the Second World War, when his name was erased throughout Nazi-occupied or -Allied territories, the Concertgebouw spearheaded the Mahler revival, soon taken up throughout the world. There is no more fitting place to celebrate Mahler's enduring significance than this great concert hall, one of the first in the world to welcome him.



Amsterdam, De Heere Gragt, aquatint c. 1790.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Depart c. 11.00am by train from London St Pancras (Eurostar, c. 4 hours) and transfer from Amsterdam Centraal to the hotel. After a lecture and dinner, walk to the Concertgebouw. *Concert with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, Klaus Mäkelä (conductor): Mahler, Symphony No.1.*

**Day 2.** With its concentric canals and 17th-century mansions, Amsterdam is one of the loveliest capitals in the world. There is a morning walk to see some of the loveliest stretches of canalside houses, finishing with a tour of the Royal Palace, formerly the very grand town hall, decorated by the leading painters of the 17th century (subject to closure for royal functions). *Evening concert with the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Choir, Iván Fischer (conductor), Christiane Karg (soprano), Anna Lucia Richter (mezzo-soprano): Mahler, Symphony No.2 'Resurrection'.*

**Day 3.** Visit the Van Gogh Museum, which houses the largest collection (over 200) of the artist's works, and the nearby Stedelijk Museum of modern and contemporary art. *Evening concert with the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Women of the National Radio Choir, National Children's Choir, Fabio Luisi (conductor), Olesya*

*Petrova (mezzo-soprano): Mahler, Symphony No.3.*

**Day 4.** Our visit with an art historian to the brilliantly refurbished Rijksmuseum concentrates on the major works in its unrivalled collection of Golden Age paintings, Rembrandt's *Night Watch* and four Vermeers among them. *Evening concert with the NHK Symphony Orchestra, Fabio Luisi (conductor), Ying Fang (soprano), Matthias Goerne (baritone): Mahler, songs from 'Des Knaben Wunderhorn'; Symphony No.4.*

**Day 5.** The day is free apart from a lecture on the evening's performance. *Evening concert with the Budapest Festival Orchestra, Iván Fischer (conductor), Anna Lucia Richter (mezzo-soprano): Mahler, 'Kindertotenlieder'; Symphony No.5.*

**Day 6.** Day trip to Den Haag (The Hague), seat of the court and parliament. The Mauritshuis contains a superb collection of Dutch 17th-century paintings, while the Gemeentemuseum displays the 19th-century Hague School, the realist milieu from which Van Gogh emerged, and works by the pioneer abstractionist Mondriaan. Visit also the Mesdag Panorama. *Evening concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Jaap van Zweden (conductor): Mahler, Symphony No.6.*

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continued

**Day 7.** Morning visits of the Willet-Holthuysen Museum, a fully-furnished 17th-century canal-side merchant's house, and the Museum Van Loon, a private residence built in 1672. *Evening concert with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Jaap van Zweden (conductor): Mahler, Symphony No.7.*

**Day 8.** The day is free apart from a lecture on the evening's performance. *Evening concert with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, National Radio Choir, Laurens Symfonisch, Le Chœur de l'Orchestre de Paris, National Children's Choir, Klaus Mäkelä (conductor), Golda Schultz (soprano), Miriam Kutrowatz (soprano), Jennifer Johnston (alto), Okka von der Damerau (alto), Giorgio Berrugi (tenor), Baritone: Michael Nagy (baritone), Tareq Nazmi (bass): Mahler, Symphony No.8 'Symphony of a Thousand'.*

**Day 9.** Excursion to Haarlem, the chief artistic centre in the northern Netherlands in the 16th century and home to the first of the great masters of the Golden Age, Frans Hals, whose finest works are in the museum. *Evening concert with the Berlin Philharmonic, Kirill Petrenko (conductor): Mahler, Symphony No.9.*

**Day 10.** Visits to the magnificent 17th-century Portuguese Synagogue and to Rembrandt's House, recently and excellently refurbished. Evening lecture and dinner. *Final concert with the Berlin Philharmonic, Daniel Barenboim (conductor): Mahler, Adagio from Symphony No.10; 'Das Lied von der Erde'.*

**Day 11.** Free morning, then take the Eurostar to London St Pancras, arriving c. 5.45pm.

*Please note that train times are subject to change. Direct trains from Amsterdam to London are halted for six months from autumn 2024 to spring 2025. Works are due to be completed before May, but we may need to change trains in Brussels if the direct service does not resume in time.*

## Lecturer

**Dr Paul Max Edlin.** Paul Max Edlin's career encompasses academia, artistic direction, performance and composition. He has worked in universities for 39 years, most recently as a professor and then as Director of Music at Queen Mary University of London. He has been Artistic Director of both Sounds New Contemporary Music Festival and Deal Music and Arts, bringing some exceptional cultural opportunities to the UK. As a composer his

works encompass opera to ballet, orchestral to chamber and instrumental to electronic. In 2022 he and his Italian wife moved permanently to Tuscany in Italy so he could concentrate on his work as a composer.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £6,760 or £6,550 without Eurostar. **Single occupancy:** £7,950 or £7,740 without Eurostar.

**Included:** return train travel by Eurostar (Standard Premier); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 6 dinners with wine, soft drinks, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager and on some days a local guide.

**Music:** tickets (first category) for 10 symphony concerts are included, costing c. £1,400.

**Accommodation.** Amsterdam Marriott Hotel (marriott.com): comfortable 5-star hotel, 10-15 minutes' walk from the Concertgebouw and 500 metres from the Rijksmuseum. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** Visits require a fair amount of walking and standing around. Vehicular access is restricted in the city centre and participants are expected to walk to the opera house. There are some late nights but starts are leisurely.

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