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SOUNDING OUT...

# AMSTERDAM

The insider's guide to the musical highlights of Europe's liberal party capital. **Stan Rijven** reports

Some call it a global village, others a mini metropolis. Indeed the slogan 'small is beautiful' sums up Amsterdam and its diverse musical life performed in hundreds of cafés, clubs and venues.

It is the result of a century long process during which the port of Amsterdam developed into an international city. Holland's temporary status as economic world power in the 17th century is symbolised by a statue at the back of Dam Palace: Atlas bearing the earth on his shoulders. From then on Amsterdam became an attractive free port for diverse religions (Huguenots, Jews) and cultures. In this world of painters, philosophers and composers, Sweelinck developed his pioneering church organ style; Locatelli and Vivaldi lived on its canals; even Mozart hit town in 1765. The Hemony family from France introduced the *carillon*, and to this day you will hear its music in the old city. The same goes for the barrel organ that arrived late in the 19th century from France. A few years later Gypsy, jazz, *musette* and tango tunes dominated the nightlife. From the 60s onwards Amsterdam became a multicultural city. Workers from the Mediterranean introduced *fado*, *rebetika* and Maghreb music.

Political refugees from South Africa and Latin America brought a cocktail of *kwela*, *andino*, samba, salsa and tango. After Surinam's independence (in 1975) a huge Surinamese population arrived with their exciting *kawina* and *kaseko*. In the 80s the city turned into a second Accra, with Ghanaian gospel and highlife alongside other African styles. When the Iron Curtain fell in 1989, Eastern European music flooded the city.

Today Bulgarian trios and Tuvan throat singers dominate streetlife. So, catch a streetcar; hop on a bike or use your own feet to get the maximum out of this global village.

## LISTINGS

**Amsterdam Weekly** (English, free).

**NL 20** (Dutch, free, weekly).

**Parool** local newspaper, go for Saturday issue with terrific guide.

**Uitkrant** The 'Time Out of Amsterdam' (Dutch, free, monthly).

Also check out flyers at fashion and record shops.

Or visit AUB – Amsterdams Uit Bureau – which offers complete info & ticket service (Leidseplein hoek Marnixstraat, [www.uitburo.nl](http://www.uitburo.nl)).

## CAFES & CLUBS

Amsterdam's nightlife mixes the advantage of a small-scale infrastructure with a wide and varied choice. So clubbing and pubbing go hand in hand at:

**Bermuda Cafe** *bachata*, *merengue*, salsa (Geldersekade 93, +31 20 427.5106).

**Bitterzoet** Brazilian, pop, jazz (Spuistraat 2, +31 20 521 3001).

**Cantinerero** salsa (Heinekenplein 4/6, +31 20 670 6921, [www.cantinerero.nl](http://www.cantinerero.nl)).

**Casablanca** jazz (Zeedijk 26, +31 20 625 5685, [www.casablanca-amsterdam.nl](http://www.casablanca-amsterdam.nl)).

**Cotton Club** jazz, salsa (Nieuwmarkt 5, +31 20 626 6192).

**De Badcuyp** Afro, salsa & world (1e Sweelinckstraat 10, +31 20 675 9669, [www.badcuyp.nl](http://www.badcuyp.nl)).

**De Kluis** Brazilian (Prins Hendrikkade 194, +31 20 622 4809, [www.cafedekluis.nl](http://www.cafedekluis.nl)).

**Café Duende** flamenco (Lindengracht 62, +31 20 420 6692).

**El Centro** Latin (Borgerstraat 112, +31 20 612 1950, [www.elcentro.nl](http://www.elcentro.nl)).

**Koffiehuis KHL** Gypsy, klezmer (Oostelijke Handelskade 44, +31 20 779 1575, [www.khl.nl](http://www.khl.nl)).



## VENUES

**Concertgebouw** Famous for its Symphony Orchestra, also fado, flamenco, Gypsy, klezmer and tango (Concertgebouwplein 2-6, +31 20 671 8345, [www.concertgebouw.nl](http://www.concertgebouw.nl)).

**Melkweg** Cradle of world music before the term was invented, today a hot spot for rock, dance, Afro and Latin. Check out ¿Que pasa? club night on Thursdays (Lijnbaansgracht 234a, +31 20 531 8181, [www.melkweg.nl](http://www.melkweg.nl)).



Inside the converted church that is Paradiso

**Paradiso** Former church transformed into an all-round venue: Pink Floyd (1968) and Sex Pistols (1977) paved the way for Fela Kuti (1983), Taraf de Haidouks (1994) and Oumou Sangaré (2004). Check out Istanbul Vibes and Marmoucha nights with the latest Maghreb mix (Weteringschans 6-8, +31 20 626 4521, [www.paradiso.nl](http://www.paradiso.nl)).

**Tropentheater** Started in the 70s with Indonesian *gamelan* and classical Indian music, now features sounds from all over the world. African and Latin gigs in its magnificent marble hall (Linnaeusstraat 2, +31 20 568 8500, [www.tropentheater.nl](http://www.tropentheater.nl)).

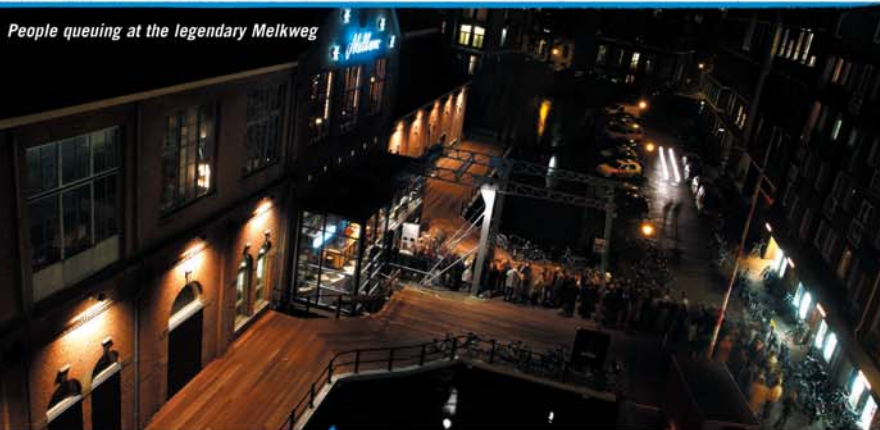
## FESTIVALS

**Koninginnedag** The queen's birthday (April 30). Open-air fleamarket and music covering the whole inner city.



Maracatu Leao Coroado from Brazil at Amsterdam Roots (Amsterdam Roots Archives)

**Amsterdam Roots** (June) Founding father of world music festivals ([www.amsterdamroots.nl](http://www.amsterdamroots.nl)).



People queuing at the legendary Melkweg

**Kwakoe** (July-August) Surinamese and Antillian food & music on six Sundays in a row ([www.kwakoe.nl](http://www.kwakoe.nl)).

**Jewish Music Festival** (November) Revives the Jewish culture that once flourished.

**Tango Magia** (December) Underlines Amsterdam's role as a new tango mecca ([www.tangomagia.com](http://www.tangomagia.com)).

## TANGO

In the early 80s tango's second youth started in Amsterdam and Paris. Legendary concerts by Piazzolla, Pugliese and Sexteto Mayor encouraged a new tango craze. Today you can dance tango almost every night:

**Academia de Tango** (Korte Leidsedwardsstraat 12, +31 20 684 3707, [www.academiadetango.nl](http://www.academiadetango.nl)).

**Boksschool Albert Cuyp** (A.Cuypstraat 241, +31 20 626 1863).

**East of Eden** (Linnaeusstraat 11a, +31 20 465 6994).

**Moeders Mooiste** (Heinekenplein 5-8, +31 20 379 0888, [www.moedersmooiste.com](http://www.moedersmooiste.com)). Also check out:

**Cadena Monthly** magazine for tango aficionados ([www.lacadena.nl](http://www.lacadena.nl)).

**Torito** The latest updates for your tango agenda ([www.torito.nl](http://www.torito.nl)).

## RECORDS

**Backbeat** Superb range of black music (Egelantiersstraat 19, +31 20 627 1657).

**Boudisque** Started in the 70s as a rock boutique, today also famous for its world section – ask for Bas. (Haringpakkerssteeg 10/18, +31 20 623 2603, [www.boudisque.nl](http://www.boudisque.nl)).

**Concerto** Five connected stores create a record nirvana ranging from Afro to *zydeco*. Open seven days a week. (Utrechtsestraat 52/60, +31 20 623 5228, [www.concerto.nu](http://www.concerto.nu)).

**El Mundo Latino** For the real Latin touch (Nassaukade 334, +31 20 685 0927).

**Fesch** A collector's heaven (Noorderkerkstraat 16, +31 20 622 8185).

**Het Griekse Eiland** Biggest collection outside Greece on *laika* and *rebetika* (Westerstraat 96, +31 20 626 8509, [www.griekseiland.nl](http://www.griekseiland.nl)).

**Most Wanted** The pulse of Surinam and the Caribbean (Ceintuurbaan 81, +31 20 673 8888).

**Pico** After 30 years, this is still the place for soul, Latin & Caribbean (Bijlmerplein 520, +31 20 691 2385).

## RADIO

Broadcasting only Anglo-US mainstream, Dutch national radio doesn't reflect its multicultural audience at all. So go global on local FM and stay tuned to Radio 100 (99.3FM) and Salto Radio (various stations, see [www.salto.nl](http://www.salto.nl)).

## MUSEUMS

**Pianola Museum** One hundred years ago when CD still meant '*corps diplomatique*' the pianola became an overnight success. Go back to the stone age of sound recording with 15,000 music rolls (Westerstraat 106, +31 20 627 9624, [www.pianola.nl](http://www.pianola.nl)).

**Tropenmuseum** Permanent exhibitions on musical cultures from all over the world, also a concert venue and ethnic music shop (Linnaeusstraat 2, +31 20 568 8215, [www.tropenmuseum.nl](http://www.tropenmuseum.nl)).

## EXTRAS

**Atheneum** Global newspaper centre, superb collection of music mags and books on blues, jazz, pop, world (Spui 14-16, +31 20 622 6248, [www.atheneum.nl](http://www.atheneum.nl)).

**Kulsan Foundation** Promoter of broad spectrum of Turkish music (WG-plein 126, +31 20 618 2164, [www.kulsan.org](http://www.kulsan.org)).

**Otrabanda Records** This exquisite label introduced the Dutch to the rich musical heritage from their ex-colonies Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao and Ghana (Donker Curtiusstraat 16-1, +31 20 776 3980, [www.otrabandarecords.com](http://www.otrabandarecords.com)).