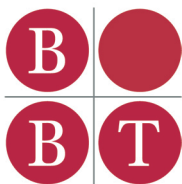


Press Release Date: 4 May 2017



**HEATH QUARTET'S LIVE
RECORDING OF COMPLETE
BARTÓK CYCLE RELEASED ON
HARMONIA MUNDI**



HMM907661.62 Release date 9 JUNE 2017

The Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) is proud to support a second CD on the Harmonia Mundi label for its award-winning ensemble, the Heath Quartet; a live recording of the complete quartets of Béla Bartók. This landmark contribution to the 20th century string quartet cycle comprises six compelling masterpieces that are both technically and spiritually demanding. From the meditative first quartet of 1909, to the elegiac last of 1939, they reinvented the genre and encapsulated the composer's exploration of folk music traditions and his search for new tonalities. The fact that the Heath Quartet was recorded live is testament to the virtuosity and dynamism of this highly regarded young ensemble.

The recorded concerts were performed in May 2016 at the Wigmore Hall and the positive reviews anticipate another highly rewarding addition to the Heath Quartet's CD repertoire; *"This is music both daunting and profoundly satisfying for listeners and players alike, yet the Heaths took all the difficulties in their stride, performing with fierce intelligence and feeling, passion and virtuosity."* (John Allison in The Daily Telegraph 14.05.16)

Oliver Heath comments: *"Bartok's quartets present one of the greatest and most rewarding challenges to us - they inhabit such a rich terrain, not only the re-imagined ruggedness of his beloved folk music, but the pouring out of the intimate emotions he kept so at bay in his daily life. Tenderness, anger, grief, joy and reconciliation sit side by side, jostling for dominance."*

"And in this quartet cycle we get a perfect encapsulation of the arching evolution of Bartok's style from the beginning to the end of his musical life - the lovesick outpourings of no 1, the uncompromising modernism of no 3, the more open but utterly mournful cry of no 6."

"To record these quartets is a mountain to overcome - to record them live over two concerts at Wigmore Hall seems unwise to say the least. But inhabiting Bartok's physical and emotional world in such a complete and intense way brought us closer to these scores than any other approach would have allowed. And of course the energy of the devoted Wigmore audience, there to join us on this extraordinary journey, played such an integral part in this project."

This second Harmonia Mundi album follows on from the Quartet's acclaimed CD of the Tchaikovsky Quartets 1 & 3 released last year, also supported by the Borletti-Buitoni Trust.

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Notes to Editors:

The Heath Quartet

- Founded 2002 at the Royal Northern College of Music : **Oliver Heath** *violin*, **Sara Wolstenholme** *violin* (joined December 2016, replacing Cerys Jones), **Gary Pomeroy** *viola*, **Chris Murray** *cello*.
- Awards include: RPS Young Artist Award 2013, Ensemble Prize at Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2012, BBT Special Ensemble Scholarship 2011
- Recordings include: Tippett's String Quartets (Wigmore Live) which won the Gramophone Award for chamber music disc of the year in 2016 and Tchaikovsky Quartets 1&3 (Harmonia Mundi) which was disc of the week in both the Sunday Times and BBC Radio 3 Record Review.
- Regular chamber music collaborators include James Baillieu, Ian Bostridge, Adrian Brendel, Colin Currie, Stephen Hough, Aleksander Madzar, Hannes Minnaar, Mark Padmore, Lawrence Power among others.
- Strong exponents of contemporary composers including Hans Abrahamsen, Louis Andriessen, Brett Dean, Anthony Gilbert, Sofia Gubaidulina, Steve Mackey.
- Premieres include works by John Tavener at the BBC Proms, Mackey's *Gaggle and Flock* for string octet and John Musto's *Another Place* with Carolyn Sampson at Wigmore Hall.
- Perform throughout the UK including Barbican, Bridgewater Hall, Sage Gateshead, Perth Concert Hall and Queen's Hall Edinburgh.
- Regular appearances in Europe at prestigious venues including Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Musée d'Orsay and Louvre Auditorium in Paris, Vara Konserthus in Sweden, Berlin Konzerthaus, Esterházy Palace, and the Musikverein and Konzerthaus in Vienna.
- Recent US debuts include New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Centre, plus ongoing residency at Middlebury College, Vermont.
- Numerous appearances at noted music festivals including Kilkenny, Mecklenburgh-Vorpommern, Kissingen Winterzauber, Schwetzingen and Beethovenfest Bonn.
- The Heath Quartet players teach at Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

Critical praise for HM Tchaikovsky Quartets 1&3 CD (2016):

"In the hymn-like introduction, *andante sostenuto*, and especially the *andante funebre e doloroso*, the Heath players pour out Tchaikovsky's grief for his friend with a depth of tone and virtuosity – in the allegros – that matches the finest Russians on disc. A notable debut."

Hugh Canning, *Sunday Times* 20 November 2016 (Album of the Week)

"The Heath Quartet brings to Tchaikovsky urgency and a willingness to engage with intensity."

Richard Fairman, *Financial Times* 25 November 2016

"... a radiant topping of optimism underpinned by bristling rhythmic energy."

Kenneth Walton, *The Scotsman* 30 November 2016

The **Borletti-Buitoni Trust** (BBT) was founded in 2002 and helps outstanding young musicians to develop and sustain international careers with awards that fund tailor-made projects. To date BBT has supported over 100 highly successful individual musicians and ensembles from 29 countries. www.bbtrust.com

