



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

Italian Postcards Avie AV2436

Release date 20 November 2020

Hugo Wolf (1860-1903)	Italian Serenade in G
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)	String Quartet No.1 in G, K.80, Lodi
Nimrod Borenstein (1969 -)	Cieli d'Italia, Op.88 for string quartet
Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)	String Sextet in D minor, Op.70, Souvenir de Florence

An album of chamber works inspired by the beauty of Italy, including a work specially commissioned for the recording, celebrates the 20th birthday of the renowned Italian ensemble **Quartetto di Cremona**. It is also, in part, a tribute to the late Italian philanthropist and music lover Franco Buitoni, co-founder with his wife, Ilaria, of the Borletti-Buitoni Trust. A special award was created in his name, which was designated in 2019 for Italian musicians who promote and encourage chamber music at home and throughout the world. The **Franco Buitoni Award** made this recording possible for the Quartet, which also won a BBT Fellowship award in 2005.

With its Italian heritage to the fore, the Quartet chose works by composers who travelled to Italy and were inspired by its breathtaking scenery, rich culture and profound sense of history. The country's splendours undoubtedly fed the creative spirit of **Hugo Wolf**, best known as one of the finest exponents of the art song, including his celebrated *Italienisches Liederbuch*. The *Italian Serenade* is his most famous instrumental work, originally written for string quartet, but never performed publicly in Wolf's lifetime and only published shortly after his death.

Italy formed a vital part of **Mozart's** touring years and cultural education in his boyhood. His first string quartet, with its original three-movements, was composed when he was 14 in the Lombardy city of Lodi where he was staying with his father. The unconventional opening is an *adagio* with the usual *allegro* placed second, while the *Rondeau* finale was written several years later, probably in Vienna sometime between 1773-75.

Cieli d'Italia was specially commissioned for this collection from acclaimed composer **Nimrod Borenstein** and is due to be premiered live by the Quartet on 21 October in Turin. Full of

contrasting moods – from magical peacefulness to great despair – this seven-minute work was inspired by the iridescent colours of an Italian sky.

For **Tchaikovsky's** *Souvenir de Florence* for sextet, the Cremonas are joined by Jerusalem Quartet violist **Ori Kam** and cellist **Eckart Runge**, original founder of the Artemis Quartet. A work of blistering intensity and symphonic élan, Tchaikovsky wrote it during an extended stay in the Tuscan capital (where he also composed his opera *The Queen of Spades*).

While firmly rooted in Italy, Quartetto di Cremona is in demand throughout the world for both performance and teaching. As part of an ongoing Italian Institute of Culture initiative at the University of Arts in Tirana, Albania, the Cremonas have also utilised their Franco Buitoni Award to establish a fund to send Italian luthiers to Albania to provide free assessments, repairs and adjustments to instruments and bows for the young music students there.

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Notes to editors:

Italian Postcards was recorded in December 2019 at Palazzina Banna, Tenuta Banna, Poirino (Torino, Italy)

Quartetto di Cremona

Cristiano Gualco violin (Nicola Amati, Cremona 1640)

Paolo Andreoli violin (Paolo Antonio Testore, Milano c.1758 – Kulturfonds Peter Eckes)

Simone Gramiglia viola (Gioachino Torazzi c.1680 – Kulturfonds Peter Eckes)

Giovanni Scaglione cello (Dom Nicola Amati, Bologna 1712 – Kulturfonds Peter Eckes)

Recent and current biographical highlights: (full biography <http://www.quartettodicremona.com>)

- 2020-21 season highlights include concerts in Geneva, Istanbul, Milan, Rome, London, Kuhmo, Taipei, and debuts at Carnegie Hall in New York and the Rudolfinum in Prague
- Recent noteworthy recording - a double CD dedicated to Schubert, recorded with the Stradivarius set of instruments named 'Paganini Quartet' on loan from the Nippon Music Foundation (Tokyo).
- The members of the Quartet have been professors at the Walter Stauffer Academy in Cremona since 2011.
- The Quartet is Ambassador for the international project 'Friends of Stradivari'.

Photo credit: Nikolaj Lund

Ori Kam viola (Hiroshi Iizuka, Philadelphia 2006) <https://www.ori-kam.com>

Eckhart Runge cello (Hieronymus and Antonio Amati, Cremona 1595 – Merito String Instrument Trust Vienna)

<https://www.eckhart-runge.com/index.php/en/>

The Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) has been supporting outstanding young musicians since 2003 when the first awards were presented. Since then, the roster of BBT Artists has increased to more than 100 musicians and ensembles all over the world. In 2019 BBT Communities was inaugurated to support charitable organisations that help the underprivileged and disadvantaged through music.

