

Press Release: 17 March 2026

## **BBT ANNOUNCES AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS 2026**

Singers, string players and pianists make up the roster of BBT's 2026 Awards and Fellowships which are announced on 17 March to mark the birthday of the Trust's co-founder, the late Franco Buitoni. A wide international reach includes cultural backgrounds that span the UK and Europe, and range west to Canada and east to India and Vietnam.

BBT Awards are £30,000, Fellowships £20,000 and the Special Commissioning Award £10,000.

### **BBT AWARDS**

#### **ELISABETH HETHERINGTON** *soprano*

Canadian singer Elisabeth Hetherington is based in the Netherlands and recognised for her ability to seamlessly combine early and contemporary music in performances of distinction and originality. With a background in modern dance, physicality and multi-disciplinary thinking are at the heart of all her work and she enjoys creative collaborations with choreographers, dance companies, instrumentalists, composers and poets. Elisabeth has a BA in Voice Performance from the University of Toronto and an MA in Historical Performance from the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. She is also a coach and mentor, most noted for her work in the field of the Original Pronunciation of Elizabethan English.

#### **OPUS13** *string quartet*

Formed in 2014, this Swedish-Norwegian quartet is named after Mendelssohn's String Quartet in A minor Op 13, the first work they played together. Opus13 won first prizes in 2025 at the Bordeaux International and Wigmore Hall International String Quartet competitions, as well as Norway's prestigious Equinor Classical Music Award in 2023. The ensemble appears at major festivals across Europe, North America and Asia and collaborates with leading artists including Janine Jansen, Alisa Weilerstein and Tabea Zimmermann. As well as core classical repertoire Opus13 is committed to Nordic and contemporary music and engages in genre-crossing collaborations with folk and popular musicians.

#### **SENJA RUMMUKAINEN** *cello*

Finnish cellist Senja Rummukainen has emerged as one of the most distinctive and emotionally direct voices of her generation. She began playing at the age of six and gained international attention after winning first prize at the Turku Cello Competition in 2014, followed by successes at the Suggia Prize and Tchaikovsky International Competition. Senja plays with the world's leading orchestras and is also part of the musical backbone of her country's most important festivals where she is an inspirational leader and collaborator. She has studied at the Sibelius Academy, Norwegian Academy of Music and Berlin University of the Arts.

## BBT FELLOWSHIPS

### **ROMAN FEDIURKO** *piano*

Ukrainian pianist Roman Fediurko is fast building an international career as a sought-after chamber musician and recitalist. He studied under the tutelage of Galina Kotsyuba from the age of five until 17, when he moved to Austria to study at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz. His portfolio of prizes includes the gold medal and five special prizes at the prestigious Vladimir Horowitz International Piano Competition in 2023 at just 18 and, most recently, two more prizes at the Takamatsu and Hastings International Piano Competitions in 2026. Roman has already recorded two solo albums for Naxos featuring works by Kullak and Litolff, to be released in 2026/27 in co-operation with the International Music Academy in Liechtenstein.

### **FIBONACCI QUARTET** *string quartet*

Formed at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2019, the Fibonacci Quartet has forged a reputation as one of Europe's brightest young string quartets and has an impressive portfolio of prizes, including both the first and audience prizes at Italy's Premio Paolo Borciani International String Quartet Competition. Alongside a busy performing schedule throughout the UK and Europe, the Quartet joined the Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) roster in 2024 and is currently Grand Résident Ensemble at ProQuartet in Paris. Praised for the expressive vitality of their ensemble playing, the Fibonacci embrace a wide range of repertoire, including their own arrangements of jazz to heavy metal.

### **KHANH NHI LUONG** *piano*

Born into a musical family, Vietnamese pianist Khanh Nhi Luong was cited "a rising star of exceptional sensitivity and imagination" at the 2024 Leeds International Piano Competition where she won third prize. She performs across three continents as a recitalist and soloist with leading symphony orchestras and, as co-founder of the Lunar New Year Piano Concert Series in Michigan USA, she is dedicated to presenting a fusion of East Asian music traditions. After graduation from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore she attained her MA at the University of Michigan, where she is now in the final stages of her PhD. Her debut recording on Signum Records will be released later this year.

### **SAMRAT MAJUMDER** *guitar*

Scottish-Indian classical guitarist Samrat Majumder is on the brink of a stellar professional career - he was recently announced as one of Classic FM's Rising Stars for 2026 - while still immersed in his music studies. He has an impressive portfolio of prizes and awards and, as an affiliate of Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT), he also had the honour of becoming the inaugural YCAT 40th Anniversary Artist in 2025. He studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland from junior level to graduation with First Class Honours, followed by his MA at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague, and is now in the final year of his PhD at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, USA. Samrat is committed to sharing his love of music not only as a performer, but also as a mentor to young classical guitarists in India.

### **NIAMH O'SULLIVAN** *mezzo-soprano*

Irish singer Niamh O'Sullivan is known for her warm, lyric mezzo voice and charismatic stage presence. She is rapidly establishing herself on the international stage at major opera houses on both sides of the Atlantic, including debuts in leading roles in English National Opera's *Carmen*, Detroit Opera's *The Handmaid's Tale* and her highly acclaimed Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Concert and recital work are central to her artistic life, with appearances at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and with Prague Philharmonia and National Symphony Orchestra of

Ireland among others, alongside regular recitals in Ireland. A BBC New Generation Artist (2023–25), she studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

## **BBT SPECIAL COMMISSIONING AWARD**

### **ALEKSEY SHADRIN** *cello*

Born in Kharkiv, Aleksey Shadrin is a passionate advocate of Ukrainian music and is steadfastly committed to bringing the works of his homeland's composers to international audiences. Currently based in Belgium, he performs in concert halls across Europe and regularly collaborates with renowned musicians - among them BBT alumni Quatuor Ébène and Nicolas Altstaedt - and orchestras such as National Philharmonic of Ukraine, Berlin Philharmonic and NDR Radiophilharmonie. Aleksey's studies began at Kharkiv National University of Arts for gifted children, followed by Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media and Kronberg Academy. Other international prizes include the Lysenko International Music Competition Kyiv, Prague Spring International Music Competition and Queen Elisabeth Competition Brussels.

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