

BORODIN QUARTET

Ruben Aharonian (1st violin) Andrei Abramenkov (2nd violin)
Igor Naidin (viola) Vladimir Balshin (cello)

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'I know of no other quartet in which the players efface themselves as selflessly as in the Borodin, as if each player were actively engaged in playing all the parts, not just the one under his fingers.'

The Globe and Mail, Toronto

For more than 60 years, the Borodin Quartet has been celebrated for its insight and authority in the chamber music repertoire. Revered for its searching performances of Beethoven and Shostakovich, the Quartet is equally at home in music ranging from Mozart to Stravinsky.

The Borodin Quartet's particular affinity with Russian repertoire was stimulated by a close relationship with Shostakovich, who personally supervised its study of each of his quartets. Widely regarded as definitive interpretations, the Quartet's cycles of the complete Shostakovich quartets have been performed all over the world, including Vienna, Zurich, Frankfurt, Madrid, Lisbon, Seville, London, Paris and New York. In recent seasons the ensemble has returned to a broader repertoire, including works by Schubert, Prokofiev, Borodin and Tchaikovsky, while continuing to be welcomed and acclaimed at major venues throughout the world.

The Borodin Quartet was formed in 1945 by four students from the Moscow Conservatoire. Ten years later, it changed its name from the Moscow Philharmonic Quartet to the Borodin Quartet. Andrey Abramenkov became a member in 1975; Ruben Aharonian and Igor Naidin joined in 1996; Vladimir Balshin joined the Quartet in August 2007. Valentin Berlinsky, one of the founding members, retired from the Quartet in the summer of 2007.

In addition to performing quartets, the members of the Borodin Quartet regularly join forces with other distinguished musicians to further explore the chamber music repertoire. Their partners have included Yuri Bashmet, Elisabeth Leonskaja and Christoph Eschenbach. The Quartet also regularly gives masterclasses.

For its 60th Anniversary Season, the Borodin Quartet performed cycles of the complete Beethoven quartets at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and Vienna Musikverein. Gala concerts honouring the Quartet's contribution to musical history were performed in Moscow and at London's Wigmore Hall and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. The ensemble was also heard in recital in Madrid, Rotterdam, Brussels, Geneva, Munich, Lisbon, Barcelona, Athens, Cologne, Istanbul, Zurich, Berlin, Moscow, New York and London, playing the music of Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Shostakovich – and of course Borodin.

The CD label Chandos recorded and released the complete Beethoven quartets as part of the 60th anniversary celebration. The Quartet's first release on the Onyx label, featuring Borodin, Schubert, Webern and Rachmaninov, was nominated for a Grammy in the 2005 Best Chamber Performance category. The Borodin Quartet has produced a rich heritage of recordings over several decades, for labels including EMI, RCA and Teldec. Among its Teldec recordings, those of Tchaikovsky's Quartets and *Souvenir de Florence*, Schubert's String Quintet, Haydn's *Seven Last Words* and a disc of Russian Miniatures all received acclaim. The Tchaikovsky disc was honoured with a Gramophone Award in 1994.