

Ronald CENTER

CHAMBER AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS

STRING QUARTET NO. 1
STRING QUARTET NO. 2
STRING QUARTET NO. 3

The Fejes Quartet

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

RONALD CENTER AND HIS STRING QUARTETS

by Alasdair Grant

Ronald Center (1913–73) was a Scottish pianist, organist, composer, conductor and teacher.¹ He spent the first half of his life in the ancient port city of Aberdeen and the second in the historic Aberdeenshire farming town of Huntly. Across the old county boundary in Banffshire is the equally historic village of Rothiemay, birthplace of Center's wife, the accomplished soprano Evelyn Morrison (d. 1997). Center's parents lacked the money to send him to university; instead, he learned his craft from local musicians. As a composer, he was self-taught. Although he travelled little and spent his career more or less cut off from Edinburgh and Glasgow, the cultural heartlands of Scotland, he belongs to the mainstream of European mid-century Modernism. Center's *œuvre* is varied and extensive, comprising works for piano, for solo voice, for choir, for orchestra and for string quartet. His music is original, distinctive, challenging and very appealing. The three quartets, while arguably his grittiest and sharpest compositions, also contain a good deal of lyricism and dancing, rhythmic vitality.

Center has sometimes been compared with Bartók. Indeed, Center's early (now lost) symphonic poem, *The Coming of Cuchullin*, championed by Warwick Braithwaite and the Scottish National Orchestra in Glasgow in 1944, prompted one reviewer to remark that Cuchullin, an Irish hero, was oddly depicted in an eastern

¹ The biographical sketch which follows is based (except where further stated) on the unpublished dissertation by Laura Miller, *The Music of Ronald Center*, B.Mus. Diss. (Aberdeen University, 1988) – which also contains an analysis of the quartets – and on three essays by James Reid Baxter, 'The Coronach, the Reel and the Sea-Grey Granite: The Music of Ronald Center (1913–1973)', *Cencrastus*, No. 5 (Summer 1981), pp. 34–35; 'One Foot in Eden' – Ronald Center's Centenary', *British Music*, Vol. 35 (2013), pp. 19–34; and 'Ronald Center and his Piano Music', booklet essay with the Christopher Guild album *Ronald Center: Instrumental and Chamber Music, Volume One – Music for Solo Piano*, Toccata Classics TOCC 0179 (London, 2013), pp. 2–9. I gratefully acknowledge the insights and guidance offered by Dr Reid Baxter during the drafting of this essay.

European idiom. This meeting of musical languages would prove paradigmatic. The eastern European influence on Center's works probably came in part from listening to works broadcast on the BBC Scottish Home Service and the Third Programme. But it also had a far more personal origin, since Center had studied piano with Julian Rosetti, a native of Piotrków, Poland (then Russian Poland). Rosetti, in turn, had learned from Paderewski. He arrived in Aberdeen in 1894 upon the initiative of M. des Claves, a Frenchman and school principal on Bon Accord Street. Rosetti was a central figure in Aberdonian musical life in the first half of the twentieth century, giving frequent performances and bringing European string quartets to his adopted city.²

Rosetti was only one of several Polish influences on Center. Out walking one day in 1945, Ronald and Evelyn heard the sound of a cellist practising one of Bach's cello suites in an outbuilding. The player was Kazimierz Łydzinski, a soldier in the Free Polish Army stationed in Huntly, along with the violinist Witold Nowacki. Center collaborated with both men, composing various works for them, including a *Romance* for violin and piano (also now lost) and the *Danse Rustique* for cello and piano. With these two men, Ronald and Evelyn gave charity recitals in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire to raise funds for the Free Polish Army, which gave Center an award in gratitude. Łydzinski embraced the opportunities offered by his Scottish sojourn, even learning the bagpipes. After the war, Nowacki returned to Poland and Łydzinski moved to the USA, where he enjoyed a successful career as an orchestral musician; thus ended what Evelyn would later describe as the happiest days of her husband's life.

Along with frequent Slavonic and Hungarian inflections, the sounds of traditional Scottish music are also never far from Center's rhythms and harmonies, giving his music a rootedness and clear sense of place. He was simultaneously both a north-east Scottish and a truly international composer. One might compare his music with the concentrated, pared-down, essentialist but wide-ranging verse of the poet and BBC radio producer George Bruce (1909–2002), a product of Fraserburgh and Aberdeen

² This remarkable man appears to have been forgotten today, completely ignored after an outline of his life appeared on p. 3 of *The Aberdeen Weekly Journal* on 12 October 1944.

University.³ Center's concision and his often very abrupt conclusions (prominent in the Quartets) also call to mind the laconic, even sardonic, comic muse of John C. Milne (1897–1962), who wrote that the people of north-east Scotland are

Folk wha say their say and speir [ask] their speir [...]

And gang their ain gait wi' a lach or spit or a sweir.⁴

Center's three quartets are mature works that demonstrate fluency in counterpoint and a thorough knowledge of both tonal and dodecaphonic harmony. The First, written in the mid-1950s, belongs to a particularly productive period in Center's compositional career. The decade must have seemed to promise Center a breakthrough. The Czech-born conductor Walter Susskind directed the Scottish National Orchestra in three very well-received performances of the *Divertimento for Strings* in 1952, which was broadcast by the BBC Scottish Home Service in 1955. Broadcasts of piano and violin works followed later that same year, performed by Mary Firth and Joan Spencer respectively. In 1957, Evelyn herself performed Ronald's *Wullie Wastle* on air, accompanied by the pianist Andrew Bryson. His still unperformed four-movement Symphony dates to the middle of the same decade, its ambition reflecting the momentum Center built up during these years. In 1963, his First Quartet was broadcast by the Lyra Quartet, which rehearsed under Center's own supervision. The work was subsequently (1964) published by Novello, the only one of his compositions to appear in print in his own lifetime.

The composition of his Second Quartet followed soon after, in 1962–64. These years saw the death of the artist Joan Eardley (1921–63) at only 42 years of age. Eardley's remarkable artistic output includes haunting and humane evocations of children encountered on the streets of Glasgow, and dramatic visions of the land, sea and sky found around her studio in weather-beaten Catterline (south of Stonehaven). Evelyn would later recall how she and Ronald visited Catterline and met Eardley; he much admired Eardley's work, as evidenced by the now lost *Elegy* for string orchestra he wrote in her memory. The juxtaposition of rural north-east land- and seascapes and industrial

³ *Today Tomorrow: The Collected Poems of George Bruce 1933–2000*, ed. Lucina Prestige, Polygon, Edinburgh, 2001.

⁴ 'Fut [what] like folk?', in John C. Milne, *Poems*, ed. Nan Shepherd (the novelist and mountaineer who now appears on Royal Bank of Scotland five-pound notes), Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1963, p. 13.

city found in Eardley's work mirrors the tension between folk-dance and mechanistic drive heard in Center's string quartets.

In spite of the undeniable successes of the 1950s and early 1960s, Center's breakthrough never came. He was far too shy and too modest to impose his mark on the British musical scene of the day. The Scottish establishment, meanwhile, was too busy trying to appear sophisticatedly 'unparochial', and consequently looking further afield for its music. The final, Third, Quartet dates from 1967. Upon its completion, Center declared to Evelyn that he would never write any music again, though he would in fact compose a Requiem Mass in those last years, apparently without even Evelyn's knowledge.

The kinds of challenges that Center faced as a composer were incisively expressed by his almost exact contemporary, Benjamin Britten (1913–76). Center was an admirer of his music: he wrote not only a *Suite for Cello* but also a *Ceremony of Carols*, setting many of the texts also found in Britten's work. In his address 'On Receiving the First Aspen Award' (1964), Britten observed that

Finding one's place in society as a composer is not a straightforward job. It is not helped by the attitudes towards the composer in some societies. My own, for instance, semi-Socialist Britain, and Conservative Britain before it, has for years treated the musician as a curiosity to be barely tolerated. [...] The average Briton thought, and still thinks, of the Arts as suspect and expensive luxuries.⁵

If that was true for the internationally celebrated Britten, how much truer it was (and remains) for the unjustly neglected Center.

In addition to the 1963 broadcast of the First Quartet, all three works have also been performed since Center's death, though only separately and sometimes incompletely. In November 1979, the Cuarteto Arcos performed movements 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the Third Quartet at the Centro Colombo-americano in Bogotá, as part of a ten-concert festival organised by James Reid Baxter. In 1995, Hector Scott's Edinburgh-based Saltire

⁵ Benjamin Britten, *On Receiving the First Aspen Award*, Faber & Faber, London, 1964, pp. 14–15.

Quartet recorded the First Quartet on disc.⁶ At Haddo House in 1997, the Edinburgh Quartet played one of the works, described as featuring ‘tunes of children’s rhymes in its second movement’ and ‘warmth’ in the slow movement⁷ – obviously the Second Quartet. In 2008, the Isla Quartet performed the Second Quartet in Strathbogie Kirk, a venue familiar to the composer (Strathbogie being the earlier name of Huntly). Then, in 2013, Center’s centenary year, the Third Quartet was performed in the Tin Hut, Gartly, and Woodend Barn, Banchory. This album is the first time that all three have been brought together.⁸

While each quartet is eminently individual, there are certain features that recur, and which might be described as characteristic of Center’s approach to the genre. They include the use of canon, repeated quavers, rhythmic permutations that become increasingly frantic, recollections of folk-dancing (the Scottish ceilidh), the widespread use of open fifths and fourths (often as a sort of drone), and dramatic contrasts within and between movements. These traits invite comparison with a number of figures in the wider musical world of the time. Center’s ‘Bartókian’ leanings have already been mentioned; this relationship becomes especially clear when Center’s string-writing is compared with the opening *Allegro* and *Prestissimo* of Bartók’s Fourth Quartet (1928). *Radio Times* listings reveal that Bartók’s quartets were aired frequently on the Third Programme in Center’s lifetime, including complete runs in 1952 and 1955. Center’s predilection for melodies accompanied by repeated quavers is something he shared with Shostakovich. The music also bears certain similarities with Britten’s quartets: canon and melody with pulsing accompaniment are features of the First Quartet (1941), and the listener may also find certain ‘Centerian’ sounds in the opening movement

⁶ The Saltire Quartet, *Under the Hammer*, Mirabilis MRCD 961 (Leeds, 1995). Scott and pianist Anna Mavromatidi gave a centenary performance of Center’s Violin Sonata on 17 November 2013, and another in January 2014, at the Edinburgh Society of Musicians; the second programme also featured recitations of poetry from north-east Scotland to fiddle accompaniment.

⁷ *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 15 October 1997, p. 6, and *Aberdeen Press & Journal*, 17 October 1997, p. 3.

⁸ A substantial list of performances of Center’s works, including the Quartets, is given in Reid Baxter, ‘One Foot in Eden’. In addition, on 19 April 1971, the *Evening Express* (p. 7) announced that ‘A series of Modern Scottish Quartets composed by Mr Ronald Center, Old Manse, Prince’s Street, Huntly, will be heard on Radio 4 on April 25. The quartets will be performed by the Buchanan Ensemble in the programme “The Musician in Scotland”’. It has not yet been possible to verify or clarify this last listing.

(‘Duets’) of Britten’s Third (and, as with Center, his final) String Quartet (1975), a work that postdates Center’s death. Center certainly knew Barber’s famous *Adagio for Strings*, which was often broadcast on radio and to which Center paid direct tribute in his Second Quartet. Although usually heard in isolation, the *Adagio* was originally the central slow movement of Barber’s Quartet in B minor, Op. 11 (1935–36; final version, 1943). Similarities between Center’s quartets and the first and third movements of Barber’s work may also be discerned; whether they are significant or simply coincidental is unclear.

Center’s First Quartet begins with a slow, unison call to attention [1], followed by a series of close-clustered dissonances. Then, to an accompaniment of repeated quavers, Center introduces the short, arc-shaped figure that forms the main theme of the movement, which then progresses through a series of rhythmically contrasting sections, a structure employed widely throughout all three quartets. Towards the end of the movement, a diminished triad on D and a series of double parallel fourths begin the coda, which finishes by recapitulating the central melody and the opening passages.

The second movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, marked *scherzando* [2], is one of Center’s most instantly appealing creations. It employs repetitive melodies that sound over block-chord accompaniments, often comprising double open fifths and later built on fourths. The technique makes for a traditionally Scottish sound, though with modernist, dissonant inflections. A passage of five-beat bars destabilises the six-beat structure of the movement, suggesting dancers losing their footing as the music continues relentlessly. Did Center have Burns’ ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ in mind?

And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance,
Nae cotillon brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys and reels
Put life and mettle in their heels.⁹

⁹ Robert Burns, ‘Tam o’ Shanter. A Tale’, in *Selected Poems and Songs*, ed. Robert P. Irvine, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, p. 206.

Nowhere in the Quartets is a single texture so consistently sustained as in the tortured and hauntingly beautiful *Adagio* [3] of the First Quartet. Intense, discordant harmonies are moved inexorably onwards by wandering crotchets; occasionally, the four parts coalesce in transient moments of almost post-Romantic passion. The full, choral-like texture with which the movement starts eventually subsides and is replaced by a canon. At the close, repeated triplets in the viola and cello seem to anticipate the knocking motif of Shostakovich's devastating Eighth String Quartet, written several years later, in 1960.

The finale, *Moderato – Allegro* [4], with its parallel fourths and fifths, dancing rhythms, harsh dissonances and relentless repeating quavers, mixes the sounds of traditional Scottish music with the noise of modern machinery. It is like a picture of the industrialisation of the Aberdeenshire landscape, as motors joined men to create the new world that Center witnessed appearing during his own lifetime, between and after the two World Wars.

The Second Quartet begins [5] with a slow introduction that creates shifting harmonies through long, held notes, heralded by Scotch snaps. The effect recalls the start of a French Baroque overture with its double-dotted rhythms, only here squarer and fiercer, with accented short notes falling on the beat. After this brief introduction, Center thrusts the listener immediately *in medias res*: all four parts move relentlessly in a thick texture where canon passes figures between instruments. The movement develops in a long cycle of permutating phrases, mixing canon with melody and accompaniment. Open fifths and fourths and pulsing rhythms plunge the music at times into ceilidh dancing. Finally, with the reintroduction of the Scotch snap, Center signals the coda. It is an enormous movement, the longest of any among the Quartets, extending to over 250 bars.

The following *Vivace* [6] is a kind of scherzo. It begins with a repeated ground-bass figure, above which a drunken tune meanders. Center then augments this melody and places it in canon between the first violin and the second violin a tone lower; the viola and cello accompany with repeated quavers. Passages of sunny major tonality are interrupted by contrary motion scales as Center introduces with gradual snatches the melody at the

core of the movement: the navy song 'Jack the Lad', also known as the 'College Hornpipe'. The melody and its repeating-quaver accompaniment switch between treble and bass in a manner that recalls the musical textures woven by Shostakovich. Eventually the music comes full circle, returning to the descending bass figuration with which it began.

The lone viola begins the *Mesto* slow movement [7] by addressing the listener with a soft recitative. The point of arrival bears an unexpectedly clear resemblance to Barber's *Adagio*. The melody rises and rises, apparently closely following the Barber until a surprisingly sharpened climb just before the violin begins to fall. That small change makes Center's melody somehow more wistfully yearning and less tragic than Barber's. The movement then leaves behind the melody entirely, introducing a contrasting section that suggests tolling bells, its persistent and repetitious bass notes falling in triple time while the upper parts seem to wail above the chiming. The bells then yield to a brighter and lighter interlude. When the lyrical first section is repeated, it is rendered more desolate and lonesome by what has come between – a kind of transfiguration that Center achieves in many of his ternary-form compositions.

The piece ends [8] in the stramash of the ceilidh, marked *Allegro molto*. Repeated notes outline relentless, often irregular rhythms. The sound of the music is unmistakably Scottish, with frequent fragments of drones and ornamented melodies. There is no affirmation, no grand finale, not even a recognisable coda as the music drunkenly peters out in a mad canonic rush. It is characteristic of Center to leave his music emotionally unresolved, with good and evil, joy and sadness, existing side by side.

The Third Quartet combines atonality with tonality to create an intense musical journey built from seven separate movements. The work is woven around the tone-row given in Ex. 1. The opening chorale of the first movement [9] allows Center to state this row – first in the viola – and to invert and reverse it. Center then introduces a question-and-answer passage, which he subjects to increasing torsion in a series of rhythmic permutations until a new musical thought breaks the tension. This structure establishes the pattern of the Quartet as a whole, which comprises a set of variations on the row, punctuated with independent musical ideas.

Ex. 1



Perhaps nowhere in this music is Center's training as an organist and choral conductor so evident as in the *Espressivo* second movement [10]. The shape of the melody, with its distinctive rising minor sixth and *siciliano* rhythm, recalls the aria 'Erbarme dich' from Bach's *St Matthew Passion*; perhaps the influence of the *Fantasia* for organ, bwv 537, is also present. The first violin introduces the line, and the second violin and viola respond together in canon a fifth lower. But the melody is not new: it is the figure with which the second violin began the opening chorale. Being centred on the key of G minor, it gives this movement an overall tonal feel, despite occasional dissonances caused by the canon. In the contrasting section, where Center introduces a canon an octave lower, the music begins by following the same melodic structure; rhythmically, though, the passage is very different, now divided into repeated quavers – a typically Centerian texture. The final bars of the contrasting section sound and feel like Bach's organ music, with their contrapuntal texture and sense of dramatic and emphatic harmonic resolution.

The polyphonic texture then continues as Center weaves a canon upon the retrograde inversion of the tone-row [11]. A sunlit and softly dissonant melodic passage ensues, where the second violin largely shadows the first violin a seventh and then a ninth below; the music resolves in a bright chord of F sharp. The fourth of the seven movements, marked *Andante* [12], employs a mixture of *pizzicato* with a few longer, bowed notes to articulate brief repetitions, sped up and compressed in a minimalistic manner. Again, the intensity subsides, giving way to a lyrical passage. All parts then frantically state the tone-row in unison, *Allegro* [13], with *pizzicato* strumming between iterations. Center then follows his well-established pattern of increasing rhythmic tension with repetitions, this time culminating in a frenzied, mechanical-sounding superimposition of various statements of the row in multiple inversions simultaneously. Breaking with the binary pattern of the

previous movements, he finally introduces a third idea, with the row sounding in pairs of plucked quavers distributed across all four parts in a disorienting manner.

The frenzy gives way to a delicate beauty. The figuration of the *Andantino* sixth movement [14] comprises another typically Centerian motif: rocking quavers, always clipped by the alternation of three- and two-beat bars, which create the impression of a slightly uneven *berceuse* or cradle-song. Once again, the quavers continue with such rhythmic repetitiveness as to be almost minimalistic, except that the lilting, lyrical melody played by the viola weaves an organic golden thread through the texture.

The finale [15] begins with a sharp and biting figuration that justifies the tempo indication, *Allegro feroce*. Center once more cycles through a series of rhythmic variations in which the tone-row is variously heard. But, all of a sudden, the harshness of his harmonies relents: the violins and violas herald a change of mood with a series of four minims that ring out like the tolling of a bell; beneath them, the cello begins a consolatory song. As the melody subsides, it becomes clear that the bells were a death knell: the extensive, anguished coda reminds the listener that there is a tragic humanity behind the apparent mechanistic formalism of the twelve-tone writing that dominates the work.

The composer-pianist Ronald Stevenson believed that Center's Piano Sonata was the finest written by any Scottish composer. Center's three quartets are equally exceptional: they are like no other Scottish chamber music of the 1950s and 1960s. In the obscurity of mid-century rural Aberdeenshire, a self-taught composer was writing challenging and yet immediately accessible music that matched the ambition and scale of the cutting-edge composers of his day. This recording should help to establish the quartets in their rightful place alongside comparable works by the likes of Barber, Bartók, Britten and Shostakovich.

Dr Alasdair Grant is a historian and musician raised in rural Aberdeenshire. He has held organ scholarships at the University of St Andrews, Trinity College, Oxford, and Morningside Parish Church, Edinburgh, and has written music for choir and organ.

The members of the **Fejes Quartet**, originally formed in 2006, first came to know one another as members of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. A chance opportunity to work together as a quartet established a musical collaboration of the highest quality. Following its first concerts, the Quartet quickly gained a reputation for its lively performances and engaging approach, resulting in invitations to perform at many music societies throughout the UK. The Quartet made a highly successful tour of northern Scotland in January 2011, when it promoted its debut CD (works by Bartók, Glazunov and Haydn, released by the Quartet itself), and in the summers of 2011 to 2015 it was quartet-in-residence at the festival 'Les Heures Musicales' in the south of France, giving a number of concerts collaborating with eminent musicians, the cellist Raphael Wallfisch among others. The Quartet has toured in Hungary and Italy, resulting in invitations to return to both countries.

The Fejes Quartet has been involved in a number of educational projects, working together with Enterprise Music Scotland, providing workshops in schools on quartet-playing. They also collaborated on concerts and workshops with the percussion duo Owen and Ollly.

A major recording project was based on the four string quartets of the English composer Christopher Wright, the fourth of which was commissioned by and written for the Fejes. The recording was released by Nimbus in 2015, to enthusiastic reviews. William Hedley wrote in *International Record Review* that "These four works must be as taxing to play as any in the repertoire, and they project them with all the necessary virtuosity and with total conviction".

After a period of inactivity, the Quartet has now reformed and begins its new life with this pioneering album of the complete string quartets of Ronald Center.

Tamás Fejes was born into a family of musicians in Szeged, Hungary. At the age of ten, he won second prize in the János Koncz national violin competition. He studied at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest; there he gave numerous recitals and made several appearances on radio and television. After his graduation, a scholarship enabled him to continue his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. He has led and co-led various orchestras in Germany, continuing to perform recitals, concertos and chamber music concerts in the UK, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, the USA and Hungary. Formerly a member of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, he is currently the assistant leader of the Royal Scottish National



Orchestra, and also part-time tutor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. His repertoire includes all the major violin concertos, from Baroque to modern, and at the end of 2016, he recorded Bach's complete Sonatas and Partitas for unaccompanied violin, released on the Discovery Music and Vision label, and launched the recording in two performances at the RSNO Centre.

Yoan Hlebarov started playing the violin at the age of four. He graduated from the Lyubomir Pipkov Music School in his home town of Sofia, Bulgaria. In 2012 he continued his studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 2016 and Postgraduate Diploma in 2017. During his studies at the RCS, Yoan worked closely with Tamás Fejes and Chris George, the leader of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and a tutor at the RCS. He has also had a number of master-classes with Ilya Gringolts and Leland Chen. Since his graduation, he has been working with orchestras and ensembles across Scotland, including the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Opera, Broen Ensemble and Glasgow Barons.



Born in Singapore, **Theodore Chung Lei** started learning the violin at the age of four. He was introduced to the viola at thirteen upon entering the Singapore National Youth Orchestra and eventually switched to being a full-time violist, studying most notably under Leslie Tan of the T'ang Quartet and Zhang Manchin, principal violist of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. In 2012, he completed his high-school education at the School of the Arts, Singapore, and took a two-year hiatus from music to complete his National Service. Thereafter, he obtained a full scholarship to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the tutelage of Jane Atkins. During his undergraduate years, he was a founding member of the chamber group the Broen Ensemble. In 2019 he won the Concordia Foundation Artists' Fund at the Musician's Company Concerts series. He has now been awarded



a full scholarship to pursue postgraduate studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he will be under the tutelage of David Takeno.

Balázs Renczés was born in Budapest in 1994 and started to play the cello at five. He studied for five years with György Déri at the Preparatory Course of the Exceptionally Talented Students of the Liszt Academy of Music, and then with Robert Irvine at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for four further years. He has performed as concerto soloist with a number of professional orchestras. His competition credits include first prizes in the Agimus competition in Padua, in the RCS Classical Concerto Competition in Glasgow and in the Suggia Award of Help Musicians UK. At the age of 21, he was offered a trial for Principal Cello of Scottish Opera. He also won the Scottish Ensemble Young Artist Scheme, which led to performances in several venues throughout the UK, including the Wigmore Hall in London. He has performed for His Royal Highness, the Duke of Rothesay (Prince Charles), on numerous occasions. He has been Co-Artistic Director of the Broen Ensemble since 2017.



Also available from Toccata Classics



‘a superb performance from start to finish’
—John France, MusicWeb International

‘hats off to the superb young Scottish pianist Christopher Guild for taking this on. Kudos as well, as usual, to Toccata Classics’
—Peter Burwasser, *Fanfare*

TOCC 0179



Recorded on 29 June–2 July 2019 in the RSNO Centre, Glasgow
Producer-engineer: Michael Ponder
Editor: Adaq Khan

This recording was made possible through the generous support of Dr James Reid Baxter.

Booklet text: Alasdair Grant
Cover design: David M. Baker (david@notneverknow.com)
Typesetting and lay-out: Kerry Press, St Albans

Executive Producer: Martin Anderson

© Toccata Classics, London, 2021

® Toccata Classics, London, 2021

Toccata Classics CDs are available in the shops and can also be ordered from our distributors around the world, a list of whom can be found at www.toccataclassics.com. If we have no representation in your country, please contact:

Toccata Classics, 16 Dalkeith Court, Vincent Street, London SW1P 4HH, UK
Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020 E-mail: info@toccataclassics.com

RONALD CENTER Chamber and Instrumental Music, Volume Two

String Quartet No. 1 (c. 1955)

23:07

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------|------|
| 1 I | <i>Lento – Allegro</i> | 7:09 |
| 2 II | <i>Allegro ma non troppo</i> | 3:19 |
| 3 III | <i>Adagio</i> | 7:20 |
| 4 IV | <i>Moderato – Allegro</i> | 5:19 |

String Quartet No. 2 (1962–64)*

26:12

- | | | |
|-------|-------------------------|------|
| 5 I | <i>Adagio – Allegro</i> | 8:44 |
| 6 II | <i>Vivace</i> | 4:01 |
| 7 III | <i>Mesto</i> | 6:23 |
| 8 IV | <i>Allegro molto</i> | 7:04 |

String Quartet No. 3 (1967)*

21:23

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|------|
| 9 I | <i>Lento – Andante</i> | 3:55 |
| 10 II | <i>Espressivo</i> | 2:39 |
| 11 III | <i>Molto moderato e sostenuto</i> | 1:45 |
| 12 IV | <i>Andante</i> | 3:06 |
| 13 V | <i>Allegro</i> | 1:49 |
| 14 VI | <i>Andantino</i> | 2:44 |
| 15 VII | <i>Allegro feroce</i> | 5:25 |

The Fejes Quartet

TT 70:44

Tamás Fejes, violin

*FIRST RECORDINGS

Yoan Hlebarov, violin

Theodore Chung Lei, viola

Balázs Renczés, cello