



CHANDOS

**BORYS
LYATOSHYNSKY**

**STRING QUARTETS
NOS 1 AND 2**

CHAMBER WORKS, VOLUME 1

**NOTABENE
CHAMBER GROUP**



Courtesy of the Lyatoshynsky Foundation

Borys Mykolayovych Lyatoshynsky, c. 1915

Borys Mykolayovych Lyatoshynsky [Liatoshynsky] (1895 – 1968)

Chamber Works, Volume 1

String Quartet No. 1, Op. 1 (1915)

32:28

in D minor • in d-Moll • en ré mineur

Dedicated to Reinhold Glière

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--|-------|
| 1 | I | Allegro – Un poco meno mosso – Allegro (poco agitato) –
Tempo I – Tranquillo – Lento | 10:50 |
| 2 | II | Allegro scherzando e leggiero – Meno mosso – Più mosso –
Tempo I – Meno mosso – Lento | 6:44 |
| 3 | III | Lento ma non troppo – Allegretto – Tempo I | 6:18 |
| 4 | IV | Allegro energico – Un poco meno mosso – Tempo I – Presto | 8:27 |

String Quartet No. 2, Op. 4 (1922, revised 1926)

27:10

in A major • in A-Dur • en la majeur

Dedicated to the Vuillaume Quartet, consisting of

Mykhailo Simkin, Oleksandr Staroselsky, Anselm Svisrsky, and Petro Kutin

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--|------|
| 5 | I | Allegro non troppo – Meno mosso – Più mosso –
Tempo I – Meno mosso – Più mosso –
Tempo I – Meno mosso – Più mosso –
Tranquillo (Un poco meno mosso) | 8:39 |
| 6 | II | Intermezzo. Molto lento – Più mosso –
Tempo I – Tranquillo (ma un poco più mosso) | 8:02 |
| 7 | III | Allegro vivace e leggiero – Meno mosso –
Tempo I – Meno mosso – Tempo I | 3:57 |
| 8 | IV | Allegro molto – Allegro energico – Meno mosso –
Tempo I – Più mosso – Maestoso (Meno mosso) | 6:24 |

TT 59:42

NotaBene Chamber Group

Andrii Pavlov violin • Maksym Grinchenko violin

Ihor Zavorodnii viola • Artem Poludennyi cello

Lyatoshynsky:

Chamber Works, Volume 1

Introduction

Borys Liatoshynsky (or Lyatoshynsky, or Lyatoshyns'ky) (1895 – 1968) is regarded as one of the leading Ukrainian composers of the twentieth century. He developed and established a distinctive musical style rooted in the traditions of nineteenth-century European romanticism and the modernism of the first third of the twentieth century. The compositional school which he founded became the most influential in Ukraine during the second half of the twentieth century and has continued to shape musical culture into the present century.

The composer was born in the Ukrainian city of Zhytomyr on 3 January 1895 (22 December 1894, Old Style). After graduating from the Second Zhytomyr Gymnasium, in 1913, he entered the Faculty of Law at the Imperial St Volodymyr University, in Kyiv, where he completed his studies in 1918. In 1914, he also enrolled at the Kyiv Conservatoire, where he studied composition in the class of Professor Reinhold Glière (1875 – 1956) until 1919. From 1920 until the end of his life, Liatoshynsky taught at the Kyiv Conservatoire, with the exception of the years 1941 – 44, during the Second World War, when he was evacuated first to Saratov, then later to Moscow, where he served as Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire.

In 1926, he became Chairman of the Association for Contemporary Music, established within the Mykola Leontovich Music Society. In 1928, he became a member of the central governing board of the All-Ukrainian Society of Revolutionary Musicians. From 1933 onwards, he served in the organisational bureau responsible for the establishment of the Union of Soviet Composers of Ukraine, and from 1939 to 1941 held the position of Chairman of its Board. In 1946, he was awarded the Stalin Prize, Second Class for the *Ukrainian Quintet* (Op. 42, 1942). In 1952, he received the Stalin Prize, First Class for his score to the film *Taras Shevchenko* (1951), directed by Ihor Savchenko (1906 – 1950).

Following the end of the Stalinist totalitarian period, Liatoshynsky travelled abroad regularly. He served as a jury member at the International Competition for String Quartet Composition in Liège (Belgium), attended the Warsaw Autumn Festival, in Poland, the Berlin Arts Festival, in Germany, and other international events. In 1958 and 1962, he was also a member of the jury for the First and Second International Tchaikovsky Competitions, in Moscow.

His creative work was repeatedly subjected to ideological criticism from the Soviet authorities. In the second half of the 1930s

his works met with a particularly severe response, his compositions of the 1920s and the opera *The Golden Hoop* (Op. 23, 1929) condemned for alleged formalism. In 1948, within the framework of the anti-formalist ideological campaign headed by Andrei Zhdanov, Liatoshynsky was officially accused of formalism. Performances of his works were prohibited, and printed scores were withdrawn from circulation. His Second Symphony (Op. 26, 1936, revised 1940) and works of the 1940s, including the *Ukrainian Quintet*, were criticised.

Liatoshynsky premiered his Third Symphony (Op. 50, first version) on 25 October 1951, during the Sixth Plenum of the Board of the Union of Soviet Composers of Ukraine. The work encountered devastating criticism not only in Ukraine but throughout the Soviet Union. In 1954, the composer prepared a revision of the symphony, and this second version subsequently received official approval.

String Quartet No. 1, Op. 1

The First String Quartet is a student work, composed while Liatoshynsky was in his second year at the Kyiv Conservatoire. He wrote the greater part of the composition in December 1915, when visiting his parents in Okhtyrka, in the Slobozhanshchyna region. During the First World War, the Zhytomyr Commercial College, where the composer's father, Mykola Liatoshynsky, served as director, had been evacuated to this town.

The quartet is laid out in the traditional four

movements, the whole constructed according to the principle of contrasts in form, tempo, and character between movements: *Allegro; Allegro scherzando e leggiero; Lento ma non troppo; Allegro energico*. Liatoshynsky dedicated the work to his conservatoire professor, Reinhold Glière, whose stylistic influence is clearly discernible in the thematic material, as well as in the methods of harmonic and polyphonic development and in the manner of thematic presentation. One example is the presentation of the main theme through octave doubling across all instruments at the opening of the first movement. Within the principal themes of all four movements, one may also discern how Liatoshynsky incorporates melodic gestures derived from Ukrainian and Russian folk music. In terms of harmonic language, structural organisation, and timbral design, the work belongs firmly to the late romantic tradition. Nevertheless, one may already observe a feature that would later become characteristic of the composer's mature style: the thematic unity of the movements. At the conclusion of the finale, themes from different movements are combined contrapuntally.

One of the earliest performances of the quartet took place on 29 March 1919 at the first closed concert of works by students of Professors Reinhold Glière and Boleslav Yavorsky, held in the concert hall of the Kyiv Conservatoire. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the work formed part of the repertoire of the Leontovych Quartet.

String Quartet No. 2, Op. 4

Liatoshynsky composed his Second Quartet in 1922, at the age of twenty-seven. During the early 1920s, he was actively seeking his individual artistic style and an original musical language. The composition adheres to the classical structure of the string quartet genre, established in the late eighteenth century and preserved well into the twentieth century.

The Second Quartet is a four-movement cyclic work which, like the first, features the characteristic contrasts of tempo and character traditionally found among movements: *Allegro non troppo*; *Intermezzo. Molto lento*; *Allegro vivace e leggiero*; *Allegro molto*. The composer also retains the conventional internal structures of the classical quartet, all movements written either in sonata or ternary form. Nevertheless, the nature of the thematic material, its complex tonal-harmonic organisation, polyphonic layering within the development sections, and the simultaneous melodic affinity and contrast are already traits that announce Liatoshynsky's distinctive compositional voice.

The character of the quartet's musical language reveals a less well-known side of Liatoshynsky: a romantic deeply in love, who wrote to his wife,

My dear, I love you so much! I am even afraid
of my own love; it seems to me greater and
stronger than myself.

This emotional world appears to permeate all the themes of the work: the lyrical main theme of the first movement, the ascending

contour of which affirms the triumphant power of love; the shimmering opening theme of the 'Intermezzo', its refined rhythmic profile evoking the atmosphere of Eastern fairy tales; the mystical theme of the third movement, in which the rustling sonorities of the strings suggest nocturnal phantoms and shadows whispering to lovers; and, finally, the declamatory theme of the fourth movement, saturated with interrogative melodic gestures. The musical language which Liatoshynsky employed in the Second Quartet would continue to develop, growing increasingly sophisticated in his works of the later 1920s.

The première of the quartet in its first version took place on 29 January 1923 at a concert devoted to the works of Borys Liatoshynsky at the Kyiv Conservatoire. In 1926, Liatoshynsky revised the quartet. Such revision of already completed works was characteristic of the composer's creative process, as Liatoshynsky sought to refine the structure of his compositions and improve his methods of thematic development. The composition was later dedicated to the Ukrainian Vuillaume Quartet, who included the work in its repertoire from the late 1920s onwards.

Iryna Tukova

PhD Music, Dr Habil,
associate professor,

National Music Academy of Ukraine,
co-founder of NGO Liatoshynsky Foundation

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Founded in 2016, today the **NotaBene Chamber Group** is an integral part of Ukraine's artistic landscape, bringing together leading Ukrainian musicians – soloists of the National House of Music, in Kyiv, and laureates of major national and international competitions. The ensemble includes Maksym Grinchenko and Andrii Pavlov (violins), Ihor Zavhorodnii (viola), Artem Poludennyi (cello), Roman Lopatynskyi (piano), and Yurii Nemyrovskyi (clarinet). Known for its versatile programming and refined ensemble playing, it performs a broad repertoire ranging from Viennese classicism to contemporary music, having made a particular commitment to Ukrainian chamber repertoire of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Alongside standard chamber formations, the ensemble regularly appears in diverse instrumental combinations and collaborates with distinguished international artists and composers. It has appeared at festivals and academies across Europe, including Sofia Music Weeks International Festival, Landesakademie für die musizierende Jugend in Baden-Württemberg,

in Ochsenhausen, Bouquet Kyiv Stage, the Thirteenth International M.K. Čiurlionis Music Festival, in Palanga (Lithuania), in 2025, and the Nederlandse StrijkKwartet Academie, in Utrecht, where its members worked with Gerhard Schulz, Mark Danel, Stefan Metz, and Simone Gramaglia. A significant part of the artistic activity of the Group is devoted to the rediscovery and promotion of Ukrainian music. The musicians see their mission as contributing to the development of academic instrumental performance and promoting Ukraine's integration into the global cultural context. One of the ensemble's primary goals is to cultivate audience interest in elite-level chamber music and to strengthen the international reputation of the Ukrainian school of instrumental chamber music. In recent seasons, the NotaBene Chamber Group has undertaken an extensive recording project dedicated to the complete chamber works of Borys Liatoshynsky (or Lyatoshynsky), in collaboration with the Liatoshynsky Foundation and the National House of Music.

Miha Haikin



Andrii Pavlov

Miha Haikin



Maksym Grinchenko

Miha Haikin



Ihor Zavhorodnii

Miha Haikin



Artem Poludennyi

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Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, UK.

E-mail: enquiries@chandos.net Telephone: + 44 (0)1206 225 200 Fax: + 44 (0)1206 225 201

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LIATOSHYNsky

FOUNDATION

Executive producer Ralph Couzens

Recording producer Olga Kononenko, National House of Music

Sound engineer Maksym Hladetsky

Editor Maksym Hladetsky

Chandos mastering Alexander James

A & R administrator Karen Marchlik

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Andrii Pavlov violin

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**NATIONAL
HOUSE OF MUSIC****LIATOSHYNsky**
FOUNDATION

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© 2026 Chandos Records Ltd
Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House,
1 Commerce Park, Colchester,
Essex CO2 8HX, UK.
enquiries@chandos.net
Contact:
Naxos Deutschland Musik & Video
Vertriebs-GmbH, Gruber Str. 46b,
DE-85586 Poling, Germany.
info@naxos.de