

The string quartets of Béla Bartók occupy a central position in the classical repertoire of the twentieth century. Not only are they a milestone in the evolution of the quartet literature, but – along with those by Haydn and Beethoven – they provide an overview of their composer's output at all the main junctures of his career. The *First Quartet* is a convincing amalgam of influences, notably Strauss and Debussy, the *Second Quartet* more introspective, while the *Third* and *Fourth Quartets* contain the most 'difficult' music of the six. The *Fifth* is the most approachable, while the *Sixth* is permeated by a sense of dread and resignation at the approach of World War Two. These masterpieces truly offer the range and depth of a lifetime's creative experience.

Béla  
**BARTÓK**  
(1881-1945)

**The Complete String Quartets**

**CD 1**

<b>1-3</b>	<b>String Quartet No. 1, Op. 7 (1908-1909)</b>	<b>75:49</b>
<b>4-6</b>	<b>String Quartet No. 3 (1927)</b>	<b>29:24</b>
<b>7-11</b>	<b>String Quartet No. 5 (1934)</b>	<b>15:17</b>

**CD 2**

<b>1-3</b>	<b>String Quartet No. 2, Op. 17 (1915-1917)</b>	<b>26:19</b>
<b>4-8</b>	<b>String Quartet No. 4 (1928)</b>	<b>23:08</b>
<b>9-12</b>	<b>String Quartet No. 6 (1939)</b>	<b>29:06</b>

**Vermeer Quartet**

**Shmuel Ashkenasi, Violin 1 • Mathias Tacke, Violin 2  
Richard Young, Viola • Marc Johnson, Cello**

Recorded at St John Chrysostom Church, Newmarket, Ontario, Canada,  
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(Museum of Art, Tula, Russia / [www.bridgeman.co.uk](http://www.bridgeman.co.uk))



**DDD**

8.557543-44

Playing Time  
2:34:23



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