

Busch Quartet

Beethoven Quartets, Germany 1951



In 1946 Adolf Busch started a new Busch Quartet, with Ernest Drucker (2nd violin) and Hugo Gottesmann (viola). After one year Ernest Drucker dropped out and was replaced by Bruno Straumann, a former pupil of Gösta Andreasson, the long-standing 2nd violinist of the quartet. The newly-formed ensemble first performed in December 1947, and in March 1948 they travelled to Europe for a concert tour of England, Switzerland and France. The year 1949 took them to Scotland only, Busch otherwise mainly performing as a soloist or with Rudolf Serkin and/or brother Hermann. The 1950 concert tour took the Quartet to Ecuador and Colombia, and Adolf, and his new-founded family with his second wife Hedwig and the little sons Nicholas and Thomas, postponed the trip to Europe until autumn. In January 1951 another European Quartet tour started, covering Switzerland, Germany and, after Busch had recovered from a minor accident to one of his fingers, Switzerland again, Italy, and England.

During this 1951 tour, the Busch Quartet was three times taped for broadcasting, each time in Germany: on 25 January at the old Frankfurt Funkhaus in the Eschersheimer Landstrasse, on 10 February live in an all-Beethoven programme at Schloss Ludwigsburg, not far from Stuttgart, and on 15 February in a live studio broadcast from the Munich Funkhaus. The programmes contained music by Brahms (Op. 51, No. 1), Reger (Op. 109 – both these items have been published elsewhere), Haydn (Op. 74, No. 2 – tape now apparently lost), and all the items presented here.

Although Adolf Busch, having suffered two heart attacks previously and not in the best of health in his last years anyway, may no longer be in the prime of his earlier years, the intensity of the Busch Quartet's performances remains impressive. The *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, acknowledging the sophistication of the all-Beethoven concert, reported that "the listeners were united into a single Beethoven congregation, and the performance took place in such a perfection rarely experienced by the lover of art."

Compared to the gramophone recordings made from 1933 to 1941 in London and New York respectively, the live renderings profit hugely from not having to stop every four to five minutes as was necessary due to the 78s technique. Thus these late radio recordings offer an altogether more spontaneous approach to performing especially relating to the overall structure of the music. The dynamic developments of the music in almost every respect can be (and are) played out much more fully, building a kind of pull incorporating both the musicians and their audience. The Busch Quartet had performed cycles of all sixteen string quartets of Beethoven numerous times, both in Europe and the United States, and their deep understanding of the music was not only well-founded, but also frequently practised in public. Also the Mendelssohn Capriccio had become a well-loved piece of the Busch Quartet particularly in later years, and three renderings have survived from 1949 and 1951. The spirited and attractive piece proved an excellent foil to the demanding Reger work that had opened the Bavarian Radio concert, and its performance displays the Busch Quartet's high-profile abilities in their last recording close to perfection.

Jürgen Schaarwächter
Max-Reger-Institut with BuschBrothersArchive, Karlsruhe



busch quartet

plays beethoven



disc one

BEETHOVEN Quartet No. 13 in B flat, Op. 130

1. 1st mvt. - Adagio ma non troppo (9:32)
2. 2nd mvt. - Presto (2:06)
3. 3rd mvt. - Andante con moto ma non troppo (5:52)
4. 4th mvt. - Alla danza tedesca. Allegro assai (2:47)
5. 5th mvt. - Cavatina. Adagio molto espressivo (8:00)
6. 6th mvt. - Finale. Allegro (9:07)

Schloss Ludwigsburg 10 February 1951

BEETHOVEN Quartet No. 9 in C, Op. 59, No. 3

7. 1st mvt. - Introduzione. Andante con moto - Allegro vivace (10:22)
8. 2nd mvt. - Andante con moto quasi Allegretto (11:27)
9. 3rd mvt. - Minuet. Grazioso - Trio (4:54)
10. 4th mvt. - Allegro molto (6:24)

Schloss Ludwigsburg 10 February 1951

Busch Quartett:

Adolf Busch, Bruno Straumann (violin),
Hugo Gottesmann (viola), Hermann Busch (violoncello)

XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**

Cover artwork based on a photograph of the Busch Quartet, 1951

Special thanks to Dr. Jürgen Schaarwächter

Produced in co-operation with the **Max-Reger-Institut/BuschBrothersArchive**, Karlsruhe, Germany

Total duration: 2hr 22:10 CD1: 70:32 CD2: 71:38

disc two

BEETHOVEN Quartet No. 1 in F, Op. 18, No. 1

1. 1st mvt. - Allegro con brio (7:13)
2. 2nd mvt. - Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato (8:56)
3. 3rd mvt. - Scherzo. Allegro molto (3:40)
4. 4th mvt. - Allegro (5:59)

Schloss Ludwigsburg 10 February 1951

BEETHOVEN Quartet No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 131

5. 1st mvt. - Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo (7:02)
6. 2nd mvt. - Allegro molto vivace (3:14)
7. 3rd mvt. - Allegro moderato (recitative) (0:52)
8. 4th mvt. - Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile (14:50)
9. 5th mvt. - Presto (5:25)
10. 6th mvt. - Adagio quasi un poco andante (2:05)
11. 7th mvt. - Allegro (6:28)

Funkhaus Frankfurt 25 January 1951

12. **MENDELSSOHN** Capriccio in E minor, Op. 81, No. 3 (5:54)

Funkhaus München 15 February 1951

