

RIPON
CONCERTS

Chamber music with passion

The Sacconi Quartet

Ben Hancox - violin
Hannah Dawson - violin
Robin Ashwell - viola
Cara Berridge - cello



© Alejandro Tamagno

Monday 9 October 2023, 7.30pm
Holy Trinity Church, Ripon

Programme

www.riponconcerts.co.uk

Patron: Julius Drake

Welcome

A very warm welcome to this new season of winter chamber concerts in Ripon.

We start with the Sacconi Quartet who are old friends of the society. In 2014 their concert included Beethoven's Op. 132 string quartet. It was a spellbinding performance which ended with an unforgettable silence, described in a review of the concert as being so profound, so intense and so visceral that time stood still.

We then have five concerts of great variety. Another welcome return is the Pelléas Ensemble in November, with music for harp, flute and viola. Our pre-Christmas celebration brings tango to Ripon. We will be entertained and energised by Tango Calor, a trio comprising bandoneon, jazz piano and vocals. In January we welcome a group of students from the Royal Northern College of Music (celebrating the 150th anniversary of its founding). They will perform an interesting Beethoven programme, designed by Brian Keely, of piano sonatas and string quartets. Wind players from the virtuoso Ensemble 360 will play a varied programme ranging from Scarlatti to Berio in February.

The last concert promises to be pure magic. With two performers at the very height of their international careers, mezzo-soprano Alice Coote will be accompanied by pianist Julius Drake in a programme to be decided. We wait with baited breath!

We hope you will enjoy these musical delights.

Roger Higson, Chairman

News from the AGM

copy

we get on with



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The Sacconi Quartet

BEN HANCOX - violin
HANNAH DAWSON - violin
ROBIN ASHWELL - viola
CARA BERRIDGE - cello

Programme

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

Allegro
Larghetto
Menuetto and Trio
Allegro assai

String Quartet No. 22
in B flat major K.589

Benjamin Britten
(1913–1976)

Duets. With moderate movement
Ostinato. Very fast
Solo. Very calm
Burlesque. Fast - con fuoco
Recitative and Passacaglia (La Serenissima). Slow

String Quartet No. 3

- interval (refreshments in the undercroft) -

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Andante espressivo - Allegro molto moderato
Assai agitato
Adagio molto
Finale: Allegro molto vivace

String Quartet in A Major,
Op. 41 No. 3

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(1859-1929)
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(plus buyer's premium)

About the music

Mozart (happily W. A. Mozart and not L. Mozart, as the posters were careful to remind us) was in desperate financial difficulties when in 1789 he visited Berlin to meet King Frederick William II, a keen amateur cellist. The result was a commission for six quartets and the hope was for a corresponding cash reward. He wrote the first quartet in no time at all but had to break off to write *Così fan tutte*. He then wrote a further two quartets of which tonight we hear the earlier. These three quartets, which could have been delivered together with another three in conformity with his Berlin commission, were in fact turned into immediate ready money by their sale to the publisher Artaria. But before they could be published Mozart was dead. They are his last string quartets. Although known as the *Prussian* Quartets today, there was no mention of their original Prussian connection on publication. But their intended destination is plain to be heard in the especially grateful writing for the cello.

The cello is placed under the spotlight as early as the introduction, high up on the instrument, of the first movement's second theme. The cello also leads off the slow movement, marked *sotto voce* and again high up in the register. After the *minuet and trio*, the fast finale marked *allegro assai* is a rondo romp in 6/8 time.

This, the last of **Britten's** three string quartets, was also his last completed instrumental work and his last major work of any kind, written during his last illness in the autumn of 1975. He finished it during

a visit to Venice and it is dedicated to the musicologist Hans Keller (the author of the functional analyses of Beethoven's late quartets).

All five movements are in ternary (A-B-A) form. The quartet is in arch form, with a slow lyrical central movement enclosed by two scherzos, themselves enclosed by two slow outer movements. In his book on the music of Britten, English musicologist Peter Evans has remarked that that structure invites comparison with Bartók's fourth and fifth string quartets; only to dismiss that comparison almost as soon as made.

In "Duets", Britten explores all six possible relationships between the four instruments in a quartet.

The "Recitative" which begins the last movement includes five musical quotations from Britten's 1973 final opera *Death in Venice*. The concluding "Passacaglia" (one of Britten's favourite musical forms) is based on a musical motif from that opera. Its title, *La Serenissima* (English: the most serene), derives from the historic status of the former Republic of Venice as a sovereign republic, and is sometimes still applied to the modern city of Venice.

In the words of Ben Hogwood, "The third quartet, then, is where Britten officially takes his leave. A handful of works would follow, but this is the moment where he gives up his soul, in music of affecting beauty. The last movement ensures he leaves with his head held high, innovating and captivating to the very end."

Robert Schumann was a pianist and his string writing, while effective, is not always idiomatic. He tended to compose in short, concentrated bursts, intensively focused on one genre at a time and 1842 became his “year of chamber music” when he wrote the three string quartets, the glorious piano quintet and the equally superb piano quartet. Schumann wrote his three string quartets, Op. 41, in a space of five weeks, this third dashed off in only a few days. In preparation he had studied the quartets of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven including the latter’s “late quartets” as well as Mendelssohn to whom Schumann dedicated the Op. 41 quartets.

The opening movement of this A major quartet in sonata form is full of detailed tempo and character directions like “*espressivo*” and “*molto moderato*”. Schumann supplies a theme and variations for the second movement, as an alternative to the usual scherzo. The first three variations are terse, agitated and dark, leading to the fourth variation, somewhat Schubertian, a more lyrical canon between the violin and viola. After the turbulent fifth variation the coda changes the mood entirely with a shift to the major key and a serene conclusion. The third movement *Adagio* is the longest and most profound movement of the quartet, revealing Schumann’s characteristic lyricism and rhapsodic romanticism. A heart-warming, song-like theme is quickly confounded by a second, fragmentary and angst-ridden idea threatening to drown the song in the dramatic chaos of a plodding march. The intermittent surges and swells settle back into warm lyricism as the insistent

march softens and fades into the third mild conclusion of the quartet. Typically for Schumann, the finale sweeps away all that has gone before in a surge of vitality with a grand conclusion. Structurally it is a “sort of rondo”.

With grateful thanks to the following members for their generous support:

The Armitage Trust
Jim Dalton
G Fieldhouse
Roger Higson
Scilla and Brian Kealy
Janet Mellor
Carla McCowan
Elizabeth Price
Ros and Bill Swaney
Kate Whelan

and others who wish to remain anonymous or who have donated since this programme went to press.

About the performers



“An exceptional ensemble... a unanimous sense of musical breath and a meticulous attention to detail.” Musical Opinion

For twenty-one years, the Sacconi Quartet has been captivating audiences with its unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. Performing with style and commitment, the quartet is known throughout the world for its creativity and integrity of interpretation. It was formed in 2001, and the four founder members continue to demonstrate a shared passion for string quartet repertoire, infectiously reaching out to audiences with their energy and enthusiasm. The Sacconi enjoys a busy international career, performing regularly across the world, at Europe’s major venues, in recordings and on radio broadcasts. The Sacconi is Quartet in Association at the

Royal College of Music and Quartet in Residence for the town of Folkestone.

The Sacconi’s prolific recording career covers a broad swathe of repertoire from Haydn to the present day. The quartet’s latest album, featuring world premiere recordings of works by Roxanna Panufnik, includes the Sacconi’s commission *Heartfelt*. Releases of recent years include premiere recordings of works by Panufnik, Jonathan Dove, Graham Fitkin and John McCabe. *In Damascus*, their album of music by Jonathan Dove including *In Damascus*, commissioned by the quartet, and featuring Mark Padmore and Charles Owen, hit the Classical Top Ten, and was chosen as one of Gramophone Magazine’s Recordings of the Year: “This important release cannot be recommended too highly.”

For its twentieth birthday, the quartet commissioned its latest piece from Jonathan



Dove, *On the Streets and In the Sky*, shortly to be released on Signum Records. Their film of Dove's first quartet *Out of Time* was released on Amazon in 2021. This season they will premiere Robin Holloway's Horn Quintet with Ben Goldscheider, and record two new albums of music by Fitkin and Dove. They also continue to tour with *Beethoven in the Dark*, their immersive performance of Beethoven's op. 131 quartet entirely from memory, in almost complete darkness.

As the result of a generous grant, the Sacconi Quartet is Quartet in Residence for the town of Folkestone and its surrounding areas. This is enabling creative collaborations with local artists and projects, and includes an embedded outreach programme, engaging with young string players in the town, and taking creative projects into harder-to-reach communities in the east side of Folkestone in particular. Recent performances of *Beethoven on the Beach* and *Glass on the Warren seafront* have attracted large audiences, many of them experiencing

the energy of chamber music for the very first time. The Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone is firmly established among the UK's major chamber music festivals and attracts audiences from far and near for its vibrant atmosphere and dynamic programming.

The name 'Sacconi Quartet' comes from the outstanding twentieth-century Italian luthier and restorer Simone Sacconi, whose book *The Secrets of Stradivari* is considered an indispensable reference for violin makers. Ben Hancox plays a 1932 Sacconi violin and Robin Ashwell a 1934 Sacconi viola, both made in New York. Hannah Dawson plays a 1927 Sacconi violin made in Rome, and Cara Berridge plays a Nicolaus Gagliano cello from 1781. Ben, Hannah and Cara have all been generously loaned these instruments by the Royal Society of Musicians, Britain's oldest music charity helping musicians in need, for which they are extremely grateful. Robin is indebted to Ellen Solomon for the use of his viola.



York Guildhall Orchestra
conducted by Simon Wright
York Barbican
14 Oct 2023, 7.30pm

Harrogate Philharmonic Orchestra
Holst, Mendelssohn & Grieg
St Mark's Church, Harrogate
14 Oct 2023, 7.30pm

Paulinus Singers
William Byrd's influence over the last 400 years
St John's Church, Sharow
14 Oct 2023, 7.30pm

The Schola Cantorum of Ampleforth College
with Ensemble Pro Victoria
Ampleforth College
16 Oct 2023, 7pm

Leyburn Jazz Festival - leyburnjazz.co.uk
19 Oct 2023
St Matthew's Church, Leyburn
6.30pm - **The Edison Herbert Quartet**
8pm - **The Legendary Hot Club de France revisited**

20 Oct 2023
St Matthew's Church, Leyburn
1.30pm - **Vocalist Natalie Wildgoose and her Trio**
8pm - **Alligator Gumbo - playing all things old and New Orleans**

21 Oct 2023
St Matthew's Church, Leyburn
6pm - **Toni Kofi (sax) joins the Paul Edis Trio**

Tennant's Garden Rooms, Leyburn
2pm - **The Ben Shankland Trio**
4pm - **The Music of Bill Evans**
7.30pm - **An evening with the Jacqui Dankworth Trio**

22 Oct 2023
St Matthew's Church, Leyburn
12.45pm - **The Colin Bailey Band**
2.15pm - **Paul Edis (piano) & the Neos Quartet**
4.30pm **Climax Jazz and Blues Band**

Chapter House Choir, York
A concert of a capella choral music
York Minster
21 Oct 2023, 7.30pm

Come & Sing with Vocalis chamber choir
St Peter's Church, Harrogate
Join Vocalis to sing pieces by Vivaldi, J. S. Bach, Purcell, Handel and Peruchona
21 Oct 2023, 1pm rehearsal / 6pm evening performance showcase - audience welcome

Richmondshire Concerts
Masterpieces and curiosities for clarinet, viola and piano
Richmond School
21 Oct 2023, 7.30pm

Harrogate Choral Society
Voices and Organ - Sounds of Britain and France
St Wilfrid's Church, Harrogate
28 Oct 2023, 3pm

York Musical Society
Popular choruses, duets and arias from the world of opera
Memorial Hall, St. Peter's School, York
4 Nov 2023, 7.30pm

St Cecilia Orchestra
Virtuoso Strings
Holy Trinity Church, Ripon
11 Nov 2023, 7.30pm

Ripon Concerts
The Pelléas Ensemble - music for harp, flute and viola
Holy Trinity Church, Ripon
13 Nov 2023, 7.30pm

Richmondshire Concerts
Bach, Mozart, Schubert, trad. Danish, Thea Musgrave
Richmond School
18 Nov 2023, 7.30pm

Jervaulx Singers
Carols by Candlelight
St John's Church, Sharow
2 Dec 2023, 7.30pm

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ORCHESTRA
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Virtuoso Strings

GRIEG

Holberg Suite

BRITTEN

Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings

TCHAIKOVSKY

Souvenir de Florence

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Oratorio**
Parts 1, 2, 3 & 6

John Dunford - conductor
Louise Wayman - soprano
Chloë Latchmore - mezzo-soprano
Nick Watts - tenor
Conrad Chatterton - bass
Orchestra D'Amici

Saturday 9 December 2023, 7.30pm

Handel
Solomon

John Dunford - conductor
Jane Burnell & Julianne Coates - sopranos
William Towers - countertenor
Nick Watts - tenor
Adam Green - bass
Orchestra D'Amici

Saturday 16 March 2024, 7.30pm

Mozart
Requiem
Rutter
**Feel the
Spirit**

John Dunford - conductor
Jane Burnell - soprano
Rachel Gilmore - mezzo
James Micklethwaite - tenor
Phil Wilcox - bass
Orchestra D'Amici

Saturday 15 June 2024, 7.30pm

Tickets: £25 reserved; £22 unreserved (student concessions £10)

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The Pelléas Ensemble

13 November 2023

Music for harp, flute & viola by Berio, Debussy, Rameau, Prokofiev & more



The Pelléas Ensemble
© Matilda Hill-Jenkins

Tango Calor Trio

11 December 2023

A trio comprising bandoneon, jazz piano & vocals performs Tango with a difference, combining tradition with Nuevo flavours

*“Chamber music
- a conversation
between friends”*



Tango Calor Trio

Students from the Royal Northern College of Music

8 January 2024

Piano sonatas & string quartets by Beethoven



Students from the RNCM

Wind Players from Ensemble 360

12 February 2024

Music by Scarlatti, Barber, Berio, Danzi, Valerie Coleman & Nielsen



Wind Players from
Ensemble 360
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Music in the Round

Alice Coote – Mezzo-soprano & Julius Drake – Piano

11 March 2024

A recital by two of the world's leading artists. Programme to be confirmed.



Alice Coote
© Jiyang Chen



Julius Drake
© Marco Borggreve

Programme: Helen Tabor, helentaborcreative.com

