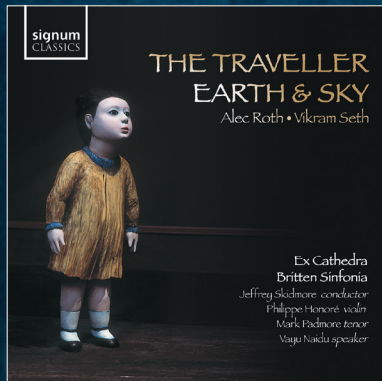


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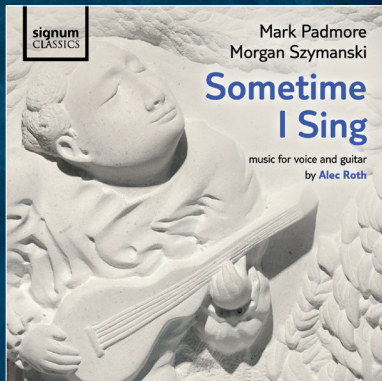
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SIGCD753

“Engineer Mike Hatch, working with producer Adrian Peacock, has achieved excellent results. All the various elements in each score – singers, soloists, instrumentalists – have been captured clearly and realistically by the microphones and a convincing balance has been achieved...This disc, featuring excellent performances, is a welcome addition to the representation on disc of Alec Roth’s music.”

Musicweb International



SIGCD332

“With the elegant guitarist Morgan Szymanski, one of Britain’s finest tenors explores song settings by Alec Roth. Poems by Vikram Seth are treated mysteriously: slow-moving harmonies, evocative lyrical lines. The 16th-century poet Thomas Wyatt is set more playfully, as befits his wry epigrams on love, lust and mortality. And a bonus: English folksongs, arranged as artfully as Britten did.”

The Times

ALEC ROTH

A Road Less Travelled

The Garden Path - Other Earths and Skies

MARK PADMORE, MORGAN SZYMANSKI,
MARTHA MCLORINAN, SACCONI QUARTET,
HUGO HYMAS, NICHOLAS DANIEL

A Road Less Travelled

(words by Edward Thomas)

01	1. Introduction (Rain)	0.42
02	2. Away	2.56
03	3. The Signpost	2.29
04	4. Roads 1	2.38
05	5. Bird Song	3.19
06	6. Peace	1.49
07	7. Interlude (instrumental)	1.59
08	8. The Bridge	1.18
09	9. Roads 2	2.35
10	10. Midnight Rain	1.37
11	11. The Gallows	2.48
12	12. Out in the Dark	2.11
13	13. The Child in the Snow	1.11
14	14. Home	1.44
15	15. Lights Out	4.16

Mark Padmore *tenor*

Morgan Szymanski *guitar*

The Garden Path

(words by Amy Lowell)

16	1. Moonlit Path	3.57
17	2. Through the Trees	2.57
18	3. Withered Leaves	4.13
19	4. Late September	5.05

Martha McLorinan *mezzo-soprano*

Sacconi Quartet

Other Earths and Skies

(words by Vikram Seth after Li Bai)

20	1. In the Quiet Night	1.44
21	2. A Song of Qiu-pu	1.57
22	3. Question and Answer in the Mountains	2.21
23	4. The Waterfall at Lu Shan	2.04
24	5. Seeing Meng Haoran off to Yangzhou	3.21

Hugo Hymas *tenor*

Nicholas Daniel *oboe*

Total 1.01.12

MARK PADMORE TENOR · **MORGAN SZYMANSKI** GUITAR
MARTHA MCLORINAN MEZZO SOPRANO · **SACCONI QUARTET**
HUGO HYMAS TENOR · **NICHOLAS DANIEL** OBOE

A Road Less Travelled - The Garden Path - Other Earths and Skies

The natural world and mankind's relationship to it are favourite themes for many poets. The three represented here (or rather, four, since Li Bai's Chinese miniatures are heard in Vikram Seth's brilliant English translations) all use metaphor in widely differing ways, responding to the times and places in which they find themselves: Edward Thomas's love of the bright open road, yet always returning to lone path of the dark forest; Amy Lowell's garden, cultivated and contained, yet unable to prevent influence from outside - bright star, stormy wind, absent friend; Li Bai's wonderfully intense response to whatever he sees, from the moonlight entering his room to a ship's sail disappearing into the horizon. Yet, for all their differences, their common humanity and sensitivity to nature can still move our hearts and minds in the here and now.

A ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Solo cantata for tenor with guitar and/or string quartet

The title *A Road Less Travelled* refers to the well-known poem by Robert Frost, 'The Road Not Taken'. Less well known is that the poem is about Edward Thomas. As Frost explained, Thomas was "a person who, whichever road he went, would be sorry he didn't go the other". Its gentle mocking of indecision has been misunderstood and taken for something more serious, not least by Thomas himself (it has been suggested that it was influential in his decision to enlist in the army).

When the two first met in 1913, Thomas was known as a nature writer and book reviewer. Frost heard something distinctive in Thomas's style, and during their walks together through the countryside around Dymock and the Malvern Hills in the summer of 1914, he encouraged his friend to turn to poetry.

Thomas produced some 140 poems in little more than two years before his death at the battle of Arras in 1917. Roads are a favourite theme. He refers to the war, but it is never centre-stage in his verse, which is focussed on the natural world and our existential relationship to it. In Andrew Motion's words, Thomas's poems "brilliantly prove that you can speak softly and yet let your voice carry a long way".

A Road Less Travelled was commissioned by the Autumn in Malvern Festival. The first performance was given by Mark Padmore (tenor), Morgan Szymanski (guitar), and the Sacconi String Quartet, Great Malvern Priory, 24 September 2017.

THE GARDEN PATH

Song cycle for mezzo-soprano and string quartet or piano

The American poet Amy Lowell (1874-1925) was born into a prominent New England family. The house in Brookline near Boston, where she lived all her life, was set in a large and luxuriant garden which features in many of her poems. She was inspired by the possibilities it offered her to exercise a gift for colourful and sensuous description of the natural world, but, like many poets, she was also drawn to the garden as a rich and fertile source of metaphor when her thoughts ran deeper into considerations of the human condition.

The first version of *The Garden Path* (then titled “Four Garden Songs”) was commissioned by the Leeds Lieder Festival with funds provided by Martin Staniforth. The first performance was given by Anna Huntley (mezzo-soprano) and James Baillieu (piano) at the Howard Assembly Room, Grand Theatre, Leeds, 12 October 2013. Although it may still be performed with piano accompaniment, the work was substantially re-written for the mezzo Martha McLorinan and the Sacconi String Quartet, who gave the first performance for this recording.

OTHER EARTHS AND SKIES

Five miniatures after Li Bai for tenor and oboe

Li Bai (701-762) is recognised as one of China’s finest poets. He lived at a time of great cultural achievement, but also experienced the upheaval and misery of a terrible civil war. Although his writing can be vivid and exuberant, with an especially intense feeling for nature, it is often coloured by an underlying melancholy.

The five short poems presented here cover a wide range of subject matter: homesickness; young apes playing in the moonlight; the consolations of solitude; a spectacular waterfall; parting from an old friend. The translations from the Chinese were made by Vikram Seth and appear in his collection *Three Chinese Poets* (1992).

I was introduced to the idea of a work for voice and oboe when I heard Mark Padmore sing Vaughan Williams’ last completed work, *Ten Blake Songs*. I remember Mark saying that the songs didn’t get many performances simply because there’s nothing else to programme with them. So I thought maybe I could do something about that!

Other Earths and Skies was commissioned by the Brinkburn Music Festival. The first performance was given by Mark Padmore and Nicholas Daniel at Brinkburn Priory, Northumberland, 4 July 2010. My thanks go to Nicholas Daniel, from whom I learned much about composing for oboe. The revised version was made for Hugo Hymas, who records it here with Nicholas.

5. Bird Song

The green roads that end in the forest
Are strewn with white goose feathers this June,
Like marks left behind by some one gone to the forest
To show his track. But he has never come back.

Down each green road a cottage looks at the forest.
Round one the nettle towers; two are bathed in flowers.
An old man along the green road to the forest
Strays from one, from another a child alone.
In the thicket bordering the forest,
All day long a thrush twiddles his song.

It is old, but the trees are young in the forest,
All but one, in the middle deep.
That oak saw the ages pass in the forest:
They were a host, but their memories are lost,
For the tree is dead: all things forget the forest
Excepting perhaps me, when now I see
The old man, the child, the goose feathers,
And hear all day long the thrush repeat his song.

6. Peace

Gone the wild day.
A wilder night
Coming makes way
For brief twilight.

The beeches keep
A stormy rest,
Breathing deep
Of wind from the west.

But the woodman's cot
By the ivied trees

Awakens not
To light or breeze.

It has no care
For gleam or gloom:
It stays there
While I shall roam,

Die and forget
The hill of trees,
The gleam, the wet,
This roaring peace.

7. Interlude (Instrumental)

8. The Bridge

I have come a long way today:
On a strange bridge alone,
Remembering friends, old friends,
I rest . . .
All are behind, the kind
And the unkind too, no more
Tonight than a dream. The stream
Runs softly yet drowns the Past,
The dark-lit stream has drowned the Future and the Past.

9. Roads 2

Roads go on
While we forget, and are
Forgotten like a star
That shoots and is gone.
Often footsore, never
Yet of the road I weary,
Though long and steep and dreary
As it winds on for ever.
Now all roads lead to France
And heavy is the tread
Of the living; but the dead
Returning lightly dance:
Whatever the road bring
To me or take from me,
They keep me company
With their pattering.

10. Midnight Rain

Rain, midnight rain, nothing but the wild rain
On this bleak hut, and solitude, and me
Remembering again that I shall die . . .
Blessed are the dead that the rain rains upon.
But here I pray that none whom once I loved
Is dying tonight or lying still awake
Solitary, listening to the rain,
Like a cold water among broken reeds,
Myriads of broken reeds all still and stiff.

11. The Gallows

There was a weasel lived in the sun
With all his family,
Till a keeper shot him with his gun
And hung him up on a tree,
Where he swings in the wind and the rain,
In the sun and in the snow,
Without pleasure, without pain,
On the dead oak tree bough.
There was a crow who was no sleeper,
But a thief and a murderer
Till a very late hour; and this keeper
Made him one of the things that were,
To hang and flap in the rain and wind,
In the sun and in the snow.
There are no more sins to be sinned
On the dead oak tree bough.
There was a magpie, too,
Had a long tongue and a long tail;
He could both talk and do -
But what did that avail?

He, too, flaps in the wind and rain
Alongside weasel and crow,
Without pleasure, without pain,
On the dead oak tree bough.
And many other beasts
And birds, skin, bone and feather,
Have been taken from their feasts
And hung up there together,
To swing and have endless leisure
In the sun and in the snow,
Without pain, without pleasure,
On the dead oak tree bough.

12. Out in the Dark

Out in the dark over the snow
The fallow fawns invisible go
With the fallow doe;
And the winds blow
Fast as the stars are slow.
And I and star and wind and deer
Are in the dark together, - near,
Yet far, - and fear
Drums on my ear.
How weak and little is the light,
All the universe of sight,
Love and delight,
Before the might,
If you love it not, of night.

13. The Child in the Snow

In the gloom of whiteness,
In the great silence of snow,
A child was sighing
And bitterly saying: 'Oh,
They have killed a white bird up there on her nest,
The down is fluttering from her breast.'
And still it fell through that dusky brightness
On the child crying for the bird of the snow.

14. Home

Not the end: but there's nothing more.
Sweet summer and winter rude
I have loved, and friendship and love,
The crowd and solitude:
But I know them . . .
I would go back again home
Now. Yet how should I go?

This is my grief. That land,
My home, I have never seen;
No traveller tells of it,
However far he has been . . .
No: I cannot go back,
And would not if I could.

15. Lights Out

I have come to the borders of sleep,
The unfathomable deep
Forest where all must lose
Their way, however straight,
Or winding, soon or late;
They cannot choose.
Many a road and track
That, since the dawn's first crack,
Up to the forest brink,
Deceived the travellers,
Suddenly now blurs,
And in they sink.
Here love ends,
Despair, ambition ends;
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter,
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.
There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter, and leave, alone,
I know not how.
The tall forest towers;
Its cloudy foliage lowers
Ahead, shelf above shelf;
Its silence I hear and obey
That I may lose my way
And myself.

The Garden Path

words by Amy Lowell, music by Alec Roth
(N.B. The song titles are the composer's)

1. Moonlit Path (poem title: 'The Fruit Garden')

The path runs straight between the flowering rows,
A moonlit path, hemmed in by beds of bloom,
Where phlox and marigolds dispute for room
With tall, red dahlias and the briar rose.
'Tis reckless prodigality which throws
Into the night these wafts of rich perfume
Which sweep across the garden like a plume.
Over the trees a single bright star glows.
Dear garden of my childhood, here my years
Have run away like little grains of sand;
The moments of my life, its hopes and fears
Have all found utterance here, where now I stand;
My eyes ache with the weight of unshed tears,
You are my home, do you not understand?

2. Through the Trees (poem title: 'At Night')

The wind is singing through the trees tonight,
A deep-voiced song of rushing cadences
And crashing intervals. No summer breeze
Is this, though hot July is at its height,
Gone is her gentler music; with delight
She listens to this booming like the seas,
These elemental, loud necessities
Which call to her to answer their swift might.
Above the tossing trees shines down a star,
Quietly bright; this wild, tumultuous joy
Quickens nor dims its splendour. And my mind,
O Star! is filled with your white light, from far,
So suffer me this one night to enjoy
The freedom of the onward sweeping wind.

3. Withered Leaves (poem title: 'Left Behind')

White phlox and white hydrangeas,
High, thin clouds,
A low, warm sun.
So it is this afternoon,
But the phlox will be a drift of petals,
And the hydrangeas stained and fallen
Before you come again.
I cannot look at the flowers,
Nor the lifting leaves of the trees.
Without you, there is no garden,
No bright colours,
No shining leaves.
There is only space,
Stretching endlessly forward –
And I walk, bent, unseeing,
Waiting to catch the first faint scuffle
Of withered leaves.

4. Late September

Tang of fruitage in the air;
Red boughs bursting everywhere;
Shimmering of seeded grass;
Hooded gentians all amass.

Warmth of earth, and cloudless wind
Tearing off the husky rind,
Blowing feathered seeds to fall
By the sun-baked, sheltering wall.

Beech trees in a golden haze;
Hardy sumachs all ablaze,
Glowing through the silver birches.
How that pine tree shouts and lurches!

From the sunny door-jamb high,
Swings the shell of a butterfly.
Scrape of insect violins
Through the stubble shrilly dins.

Every blade's a minaret
Where a small muezzin's set,
Loudly calling us to pray
At the miracle of day.

Then the purple-lidded night
Westering comes, her footsteps light
Guided by the radiant boon
Of a sickle-shaped new moon.

Other Earths and Skies

words by Vikram Seth, translated from
the Chinese of Li Bai (701-762)

1. In the Quiet Night

The floor before my bed is bright:
Moonlight – like hoarfrost – in my room.
I lift my head and watch the moon.
I drop my head and think of home.

2. A Song of Qiu-pu

The Qiu-pu shore teems with white gibbons.
They leap and bounce like flying snow.
They tug their young down from the branches
To drink and play with the moonglow.

3. Question and Answer in the Mountains

They ask me why I live in the green mountains.
I smile and don't reply; my heart's at ease.
Peach blossoms flow downstream, leaving no trace –
And there are other earths and skies than these.

4. The Waterfall at Lu Shan

In sunshine, Censer Peak breathes purple mist.
A jutting stream, the cataract hangs in spray
Far off, then plunges down three thousand feet –
As if the sky had dropped the Milky Way.

5. Seeing Meng Haoran off to Yangzhou

Yellow Crane Terrace: my old friend bids me goodbye.
To Yangzhou in the mists and flowers of Spring he goes.
His single sail's far shadow melts in the blue void.
All I see is the sky to which the Yangtze flows.

Born near Manchester in 1948 of German/Irish descent, **ALEC ROTH**'s formal studies in music were undertaken at the University of Durham, and at the Academy of Indonesian Performing Arts (ASKI) in Surakarta, Central Java.

Three long-term working relationships lie at the heart of his creative development: His reputation as a choral composer stems from a long and fruitful association with conductor Jeffrey Skidmore and Ex Cathedra in such works as *Earthrise* and *A Time to Dance*.

His vocal music in song-cycles such as *My Lute and I* and *A Road Less Travelled* has been inspired by tenor Mark Padmore and guitarist Morgan Szymanski (for whom he has also composed a concerto and many solo pieces).

His collaborations with the writer Vikram Seth include *Earth and Sky*, commissioned by the BBC for the Proms in 2000; and a four-year sequence of works co-commissioned by the Salisbury, Chelsea and Lichfield Festivals (2006-9) featuring the solo violin of Philippe Honoré, including the oratorio *The Traveller*. Seth's book *The Rivered Earth* (2011) describes their creative partnership, including an account of "the pleasures and pains of working with a composer".

Notable performers of Roth's music have included the Academy of St Martin in the Fields (four commissions including *Departure of the Queen of Sheba*), London Sinfonietta, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Allegri String Quartet, Voces8, The Sixteen, and the Choir of St Paul's Cathedral.

The award of a Finzi Scholarship in 2015 enabled an extended stay in Leipzig to study the cantatas of J S Bach as an inspiration for his own work. In 2020 he moved to Germany at the invitation of choral conductor Nikolai Ott, initially to attend a performance of *Earthrise* by the Mössinger Kantorei, then staying on during the Covid pandemic. Subsequent highlights included a commission for their 75th Jubilee season from the RIAS Chamber Choir, Berlin; and a motet commemorating the 80th anniversary of the death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, premiered in Weimar by the Leipzig Gewandhaus Choir and Ensemble Nobiles. He returned to the UK in 2025.



© Sally Corrick

MARK PADMORE was born in London and studied at King's College, Cambridge. He has established an international career in opera, concert and recital.

Recent highlights included Judith Weir's *In the Land of Uz* at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival; recitals, including performances in Barcelona and Madrid with Julius Drake; Alicante with the Elias String Quartet; the Muziekgebouw Amsterdam with Till Fellner; the Théâtre de l'Athénée Paris with Julius Drake and Schubert *Winterreise* with Mitsuko Uchida at Carnegie Hall New York, the Kimmel Center Philadelphia and the University of California at Berkeley.

Following a residency at Wigmore Hall in the 2021/22 season where he celebrated his relationship with pianists Till Fellner, Imogen Cooper, Mitsuko Uchida and Paul Lewis he recently returned to sing Vaughan Williams and Fauré with the Elias Quartet and James Baillieu.

Mark's most recent opera appearance was at the Grand Théâtre de Genève, singing the title role in a new production of Monteverdi *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* conducted by Fabio Biondi. Another highlight was a new production of Britten's *Death in Venice* at the Royal Ballet and Opera, Covent Garden where his performance was described as a "tour de force" and "exquisite of voice, [presenting] Aschenbach's physical and spiritual breakdown with extraordinary detail and insight".

In concert Mark performs with the world's leading orchestras. He was Artist in Residence for the 2017/18 season with the Berlin Philharmonic and held a similar position with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in 2016/17. His work with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has involved projects exploring both the Bach St John and St Matthew Passion without conductor which attracted worldwide acclaim.

His extensive and award-winning discography includes Schumann *Dichterliebe* with Kristian Bezuidenhout and Schubert song cycles with Paul Lewis, both for Harmonia Mundi. Described by the New York Times as "Schubert Masters" Mark Padmore and Mitsuko Uchida recently embarked on a series of highly acclaimed, worldwide recitals and this partnership has culminated in a recording on Decca Classics of Schubert *Schwanengesang* and Beethoven *An die ferne Geliebte*.



© Marco Bergreave

Described as ‘a player destined for future glories’ (Classical Guitar Magazine) **MORGAN SZYMANSKI** has been highlighted as ‘One to Watch’ by both Gramophone Magazine and the BBC Music Magazine.

A top prize-winner at international competitions, Morgan won first prize at the National Guitar Competition in Mexico. Performances as a soloist and with orchestras have taken him to concert halls and festivals in Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bermuda, China, Chile, France, Germany, Guatemala, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Macedonia, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Scotland, USA, South Africa and Zimbabwe. He is included in the Mexican Foreign Office publication “El Mundo en las Manos” for his contribution as an ambassador of music and Mexican culture overseas.

In recent years Morgan has given recitals at major UK venues and festivals including Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Purcell Room, Queen Elizabeth Hall, King’s Place, The Sage Gateshead, Royal Opera House, and London International Guitar Festival. He has appeared as a soloist with orchestras such as the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Hallé, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México, Orchestra of the Swan, Southbank Sinfonia, Welsh Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Sinfonia, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the Cervantes Choir and the Coro de Madrigalistas de Bellas Artes in Mexico’s Palacio de Bellas Artes.

Morgan continues to build his international reputation with performances around the world, most recently including performances at the Shanghai Oriental Arts Centre, Queens Hall (Edinburgh), Luxembourg Philharmonie, National Concert Hall (Dublin), Vienna Konzerthaus, Festival de México and Festival Cervantino. In 2018 he toured South Africa with guitarist James Grace.

Morgan is much in demand as a teacher and has given masterclasses at top conservatoires worldwide including the Royal College of Music, Royal Welsh College of Music (Cardiff) and Trinity College of Music as well as conservatoires in China and Mexico.



© Tania Esquivel

Morgan Szymanski plays on a guitar by the Italian luthier Luciano Lovadina.

British mezzo-soprano **MARTHA MCLORINAN** trained at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where she held a scholarship with the BBC and won numerous prizes.

Gaining recognition for her interpretation of Bach and her “warm expressivity” (The Guardian), Martha has appeared as a soloist at venues from Zaryadye Concert Hall, Moscow to The Tabernacle, Salt Lake City. She has worked as a soloist under the batons of conductors including Andrew Parrot, Harry Christophers, Francois Xavier-Roth, and Trevor Pinnock.

On the concert platform, recent highlights include singing Mary Magdalene (Elgar’s *The Apostles*) at Gloucester Cathedral for the Three Choirs Festival (Philharmonia/Adrian Partington), Bach’s B Minor Mass at KKL Luzern Concert Hall (Gabrieli Consort and players/Paul McCreech), Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* at Birmingham Symphony Hall (Ex Cathedra/Jeffrey Skidmore), Handel’s *Messiah* at the Elbphilharmonie (Tenebrae and the Academy of Ancient Music/Nigel Short), and she has given recitals with the Rose Consort.

Equally comfortable on the operatic stage, she recently sang Sorceress/Second Witch/Spirit in Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* for Den Ny Opera with Barokksolistene and made her BBC Proms debut at the Royal Albert Hall in 2022 singing Second Witch with La Nuova Musica. Other roles include First Witch *Dido and Aeneas* at Royal Festival Hall (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Sir Roger Norrington), Proserpina and La Messaggera in Monteverdi’s *Orfeo* at the Cheltenham and Swidnica festivals (I fagiolini/Robert Hollingworth), The Notary’s Wife, Strauss’ *Intermezzo* and Lotinka, Dvorak’s *The Jacobin* (Buxton Festival Opera/Stephen Barlow) and Mrs. Noye, Britten’s *Noye’s Fludde* for various community projects across the UK.

Her growing discography includes two Grammy-nominated recordings; Judith Bingham’s *The Drowned Lovers* (Music of the Spheres, Tenebrae/Nigel Short) and Byrd 1588: *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs of sadness and piety* (Fretwork/David Skinner).



© Kirsten McLorinan

For over two decades, the **SACCONI QUARTET** have been captivating audiences with their unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. Formed in 2001, the four founder members share an unwavering passion for the string quartet repertoire, infectiously reaching out to audiences with their energy and enthusiasm. The Sacconis enjoy 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. Unchanged since its inception, Sacconi is Britain's longest-established string quartet.



© Nathan Eaton-Baudains

The Sacconi's prolific recording career covers a broad swathe of repertoire from Haydn to present day. Releases of recent years include six premiere album recordings of works by Jonathan Dove, Graham Fitkin, John McCabe and Roxanna Panufnik. *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".

Champions of new music, the Sacconis have given over thirty world premieres. In 2025 they gave the first UK performance in twenty years of Terry Riley's *Sun Rings* - his seminal work for string quartet, choir and pre-recorded space sounds - becoming the first quartet to perform it since the Kronos Quartet.

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. Their gratitude extends to the Royal Society of Musicians and Ellen Solomon for generously providing them with these exceptional instruments.

British tenor **HUGO HYMAS** is in much demand for his interpretations of classical, baroque and renaissance repertoire and enjoys collaborations with the foremost practitioners of the genre.

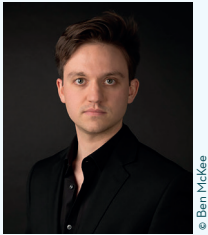
He regularly performs with specialist groups such as Arcangelo, Capella Mediterranea, Le Concert d'Astrée, Collegium Vocale Gent, the Dunedin Consort, English Concert, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Les Violons du Roy. He is also engaged for baroque and classical repertoire with the Bergen Philharmonic, Sinfonieorchester Basel, Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich, English Chamber Orchestra and Nord Nederlands Orkest.

Hymas counts amongst his musical partners conductors Kristian Bezuidenhout, Ivor Bolton, William Christie, Jonathan Cohen, John Eliot Gardiner, Leonardo Garcia Alarcón, Emanuelle Haïm, Philippe Herrweghe, Vaclav Luks, Dinis Sousa and Peter Whelan.

His opera engagements include *Jove Semele* for Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Eurimaco *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Lucius in the premiere of Georgio Battistelli *Julius Caesar* at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Septimius *Theodora* and Clotaroc in Haydn *Armida* at Potsdam Winteroper and Alessandro in Handel *Porro* for concert performances in Halle, Dortmund and Vienna. He is regularly engaged throughout Europe to sing *Acis Acis and Galatea* and returns to Glyndebourne in 2026 for roles in *L'Orfeo*.

He has recorded Handel's sacred oratorio *La Resurrezione* with The English Concert and Harry Bicket and Purcell with Arcangelo under Cohen. Engaging with more recent repertoire he has recorded Stravinsky *Cantata* with The Façade Ensemble under Benedict Collins Rice

Hugo Hymas is a former Britten-Pears Young Artist and Rising Star of the Enlightenment. He grew up in Cambridge where he sang as a chorister in Great St Mary's Church Choir and studied the clarinet after which he joined the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge as a tenor. He holds an honours degree in Music from the University of Durham.



© Ben McKee

NICHOLAS DANIEL OBE has long been acknowledged as one of the world's great oboists and is one of Britain's best-known musicians. He has significantly expanded the repertoire for his instrument through the commissioning of hundreds of new works. Alongside his performing career, he has developed a varied and exciting conducting profile, and both aspects are equally important to him.



He made his BBC Proms conducting debut in 2004 and works with many distinguished ensembles in wide-ranging repertoire, from Baroque to contemporary, from chamber groups to opera. In recognition of his achievements, he was honoured in 2012 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with the prestigious Queen's Medal for Music, cited as having made "an outstanding contribution to the musical life of the nation." In October 2020, he was awarded an OBE, and in 2022, received the Cobbett Medal for Chamber Music from the Musicians' Company.

As a concerto soloist, Nicholas has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors. His repertoire spans from Bach to Xenakis and beyond, and he has premiered works written for him by hundreds of composers, including Eleanor Alberga, Harrison Birtwistle, Henri Dutilleux, James MacMillan, Thea Musgrave, Outi Tarkiainen, John Tavener, and Michael Tippett. He also champions younger composers writing for the oboe.

A dedicated chamber musician, he is a founding member of Britten Sinfonia, the Haffner Wind Ensemble, Orsino, and the Britten Oboe Quartet, whose debut album on Harmonia Mundi was widely acclaimed. He collaborates regularly with pianists Huw Watkins and Julius Drake and leading string quartets including the Carducci, Doric, and Vogler. He is principal oboist of Camerata Pacifica in California and a frequent guest at festivals worldwide.

Nicholas plays F. Lorée Étoile Oboes and Royal English Horns, made by Alain de Gourdon in Paris.

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