



Sacconi Quartet **Biography**  
**String Quartet**

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

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

The award-winning Sacconi Quartet is recognised for its unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. Formed in 2001, its 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 is Quartet in Association at the Royal College of Music and Associate Artist at the Bristol Old Vic.

The 2015/16 season saw the Quartet focusing on the works of Jonathan Dove, Graham Fitkin and John McCabe, culminating in CD recordings of all three composers. Their commission with Mark Padmore of Jonathan Dove's new song cycle *In Damascus*, with words by Syrian poet Ali Safar, was premiered in Folkestone, Aldeburgh and London. Other highlights of last season included return performances at William Walton's house in Ischia, Italy, and collaborations with Freddy Kempf, Charles Owen, Roger Chase, Pierre Doumenge, Miloš Karadaglić, Tim Boulton, Simon Rowland-Jones, Garfield Jackson and David Waterman. They also recorded John McCabe's *Horn Quintet*, written for them and David Pyatt in 2011.

In Summer 2015 the quartet launched HEARTFELT, their most innovative project to date. A radical re-interpretation of Beethoven's iconic String Quartet in A minor opus 132, HEARTFELT pushed the boundaries of chamber music through combining sound, light and touch, for a truly unique performance in which audience members connected with each performer's heartbeat through holding robotic 'hearts'. [www.heartfelt.org.uk](http://www.heartfelt.org.uk)

Now in its tenth year, the Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone, Kent is an established event in the cultural calendar and is expanding year on year with challenging programming and exciting collaborations. The Quartet's recording of Beethoven Op. 132 and Mendelssohn Op. 13, the first commercial pairing of these closely related works, was recently released on Sacconi Records, receiving a 5-star review in *Classical Music*. The previous release, a disc of Czech quartets, was received with widespread critical acclaim and is regularly broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM.

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. Robin is indebted to Ellen Solomon for the use of his viola. Ben, Hannah & Cara have all been generously loaned their instruments by the Royal Society of Musicians, a charity which helps musicians in need, for which they are extremely grateful.

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*Please do not use this biography if it is more than three months old*