



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 are recognised for their unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. Formed in 2001, their 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.

The Sacconis' prolific recording career has covered an extremely broad selection of repertoire. In 2020 they will record a new disc of works by Roxanna Panufnik for Signum Classics, featuring a brand new commission. 2017 saw the release of three highly praised new CDs by the Sacconi Quartet: *In Damascus*, their CD of music by Jonathan Dove; Graham Fitkin's complete string quartets; and three of John McCabe's quintets. *In Damascus* hit the Classical Top Ten, and was chosen as one of Gramophone Magazine's 2018 Recordings of the Year.

The 2019-20 season sees the quartet make their debuts in Russia (with Peter Donohoe), Mexico (with Freddy Kempf) and Lebanon (Al Bustan Festival). They return to the Wigmore Hall for three concerts, perform two northern UK tours, perform at festivals including Swaledale, Canterbury, Monkstown, Egerton, Lakeside Chamber Music and Nailsworth, and tour with pianist Freddy Kempf. Firm advocates of new music, the Sacconi will also give the world premieres of new quartets by Judith Bingham, Roxanna Panufnik and John Woolrich. 2019 saw the twelfth year of the Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone, and featured collaborations with pianist Tom Poster and violist Philip Dukes.

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

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.

The Sacconi Quartet celebrates its 20th Anniversary in 2021.

June 2019

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