



Sacconi Quartet Biography String Quartet

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

Website	www.sacconi.com
Contact	Ellie Shouls
Email	eloise@ikonarts.com

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. Performing with style and commitment, the Quartet is known throughout the world for its creativity and integrity of interpretation. 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 Quartet have enjoyed a highly successful international career, performing regularly throughout Europe, at London's major venues, in recordings and on radio broadcasts. The Sacconi is Quartet in Association at the Royal College of Music.

2017 saw the release of three new CDs by the Sacconi Quartet. *In Damascus*, their CD 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". Their complete recording of Graham Fitkin's string quartets was given rave reviews on Radio 3's Record Review, in Gramophone Magazine and in The Strad. Their CD of three quintets by John McCabe featured the composer on piano in *The Woman by the Sea*, horn player David Pyatt in the Horn Quintet written for Pyatt and the Sacconis, and Roderick Williams in *Silver Nocturnes*.

2018-19 plans include a cruise up the Norwegian coastline to the Arctic circle, performing fifteen concerts with artists including Simon Rowland-Jones and Tim Horton; two Wigmore Hall concerts (the first with Daniel Hope and Freddy Kempf); the Irish premiere of *In Damascus* with tenor Robin Tritschler; a new commission by Roxanna Panufnik; a tour of the rarely heard John Ireland Sextet with Robert Plane and Alec Frank-Gemmill; the premiere of a new commission by Judith Bingham at Kings Place; and performances at festivals including Buxton International, Swaledale, Newbury, Salisbury, Halesworth and Gower.

2018 saw the eleventh year of the Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone, with Graham Fitkin as composer in residence and collaborations with the London Bridge Trio, Moray Welsh and African trio Chesaba. The Sacconi Festival is now firmly established among the UK's major chamber music festivals and attracts audiences from far and near for its vibrant atmosphere and dynamic programming.

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'. Developed in a unique collaboration with robotics designers Rusty Squid and lighting designer Ziggy Jacobs-Wyburn, and funded by Arts Council England, HEARTFELT received 4-star reviews from The Guardian and The Independent, and was described by the latter as "a powerful way to experience the visceral physicality of Beethoven's profound thanksgiving". 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. 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 & Cara have all been generously loaned these instruments by the Royal Society of Musicians, a charity which helps musicians in need, for which they are extremely grateful. Robin is indebted to Ellen Solomon for the use of his viola.

The Sacconi Quartet celebrates its 20th Anniversary in 2021.

November 2018

Please do not use this biography if it is more than three months old. If this biography is to be edited down, please retain the last paragraph.