



"...an exceptional ensemble" MUSICAL OPINION

BIOGRAPHY

Ben Hancox and Hannah Dawson *violins*
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 sees the Quartet focusing on the works of Jonathan Dove and Graham Fitkin, culminating in CD recordings of both composers. Their commission with Mark Padmore of Jonathan Dove's new song cycle *In Damascus*, with words by Syrian poet Ali Safar, will be premiered in Folkestone, Aldeburgh and London. Other highlights of this season include 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 have 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

Now in its ninth 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, will shortly be released on Sacconi Records. The previous release, a disc of Czech quartets, was received with widespread critical acclaim, broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and tipped as a classical chart 'Hot Shot' by 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.

"...a fast rising British string quartet" THE TIMES

RECORDINGS



Beethoven String Quartets opus 18 Volume 1



BEETHOVEN String Quartets Op. 18 (No. 1, 4 & 6) *Volume 1*
Sacconi Records

"...these are a performance to treasure..."

CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE

"hearing the precision and vitality to these quartets makes its success easy to understand [...]this is an ensemble to keep an eye on, with hopefully more Beethoven quartets to follow"

ALLMUSIC.COM



Dvořák, Smetana and Suk String Quartets



DVORAK, SMETANA AND SUK String Quartets
Sacconi Records

"The Sacconi, a fast rising British string quartet ... bring something fresh and distinctive. Dvorak's American Quartet has a light touch and springy rhythms that suit the music perfectly."

THE TIMES, JULY 2012

"...a sensational and revealing new recording...a superlative disc...a treasure trove of top-drawer performances"

THE SCOTTISH HERALD, JULY 2011



Haydn String Quartets opus 54



HAYDN String Quartets Op. 54 (No. 1, 2 & 3)
Sacconi Records

"These are performances to treasure and one awaits eagerly the next release from the ensemble's new label."

CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE, 4* REVIEW JUNE 2010

"This young quartet is a revelation, playing with a mastery which is quite stunning. These three quartets are superbly performed and brilliantly recorded. They are amongst the best ever recordings of Haydn Quartets."

MUSICWEB INTERNATIONAL, RECORD OF THE MONTH



REVIEWS

"The overall impact of the work and its performance was profound... their fine balance and near flawless ensemble provided the bedrock for a graceful yet rhythmically vital interpretation." **THE GUARDIAN**

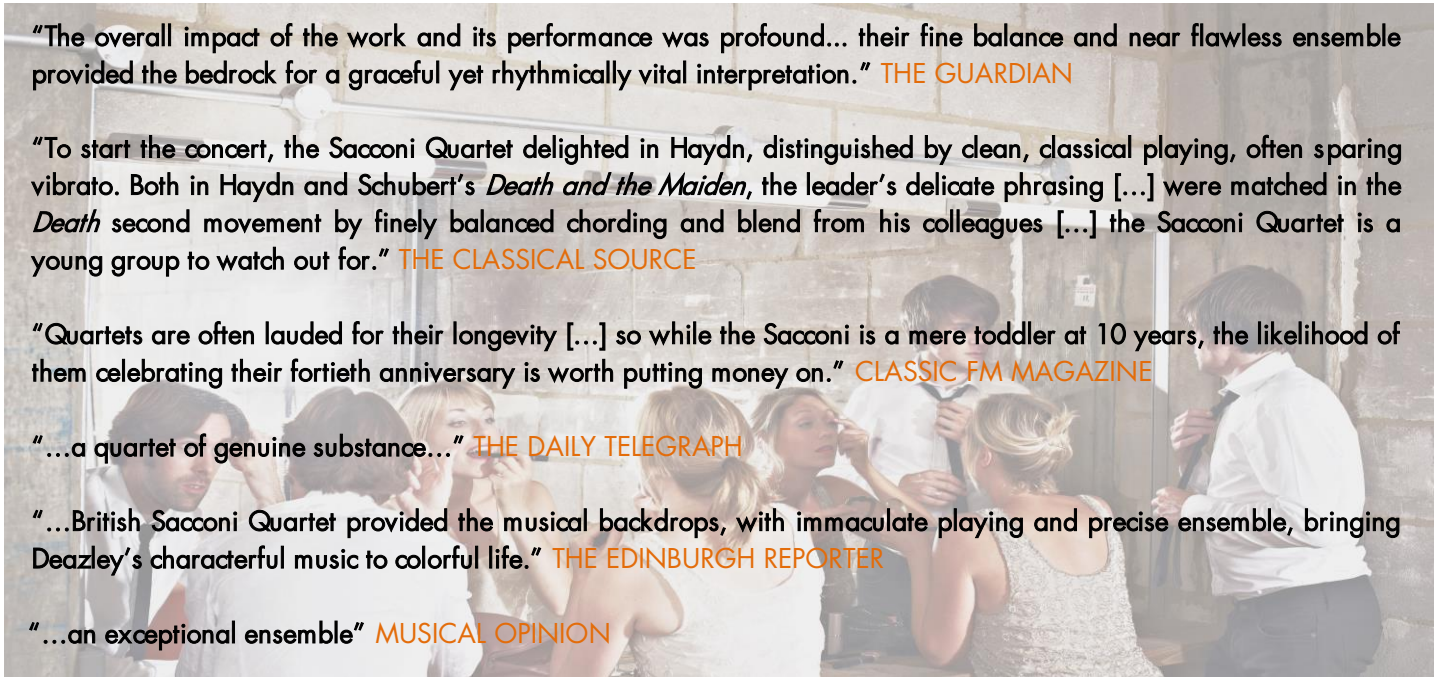
"To start the concert, the Sacconi Quartet delighted in Haydn, distinguished by clean, classical playing, often sparing vibrato. Both in Haydn and Schubert's *Death and the Maiden*, the leader's delicate phrasing [...] were matched in the *Death* second movement by finely balanced chording and blend from his colleagues [...] the Sacconi Quartet is a young group to watch out for." **THE CLASSICAL SOURCE**

"Quartets are often lauded for their longevity [...] so while the Sacconi is a mere toddler at 10 years, the likelihood of them celebrating their fortieth anniversary is worth putting money on." **CLASSIC FM MAGAZINE**

"...a quartet of genuine substance..." **THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

"...British Sacconi Quartet provided the musical backdrops, with immaculate playing and precise ensemble, bringing Deazley's characterful music to colorful life." **THE EDINBURGH REPORTER**

"...an exceptional ensemble" **MUSICAL OPINION**



HEARTFELT: A SACCONI QUARTET DIGITAL PERFORMANCE



In Summer 2015 the quartet launched **HEARTFELT: A Sacconi Quartet Digital Performance**, 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



2017/18 SAMPLE PROGRAMMES

String Quartet Repertoire

Death and the Maiden

Haydn: String Quartet in C major, Op. 76 No. 3 'Emperor'

Mozart: String Quartet in G major, K. 387

Schubert: String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, 'Death and the Maiden'

Debussy 100th Anniversary

Suk: Meditation on the Old Czech Hymn 'St Wenceslas', Op. 35a

Debussy: String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10

Beethoven: String Quartet in C# minor, Op. 131

Glass @ 80 / Adams @ 70

Glass: String Quartet No. 2 'Company'

Reich: Triple Quartet (for quartet and tape)

Adams: John's Book of Alleged Dances (for quartet and tape)

Additional repertoire

Korngold: String Quartet No. 3 in D major, Op. 34

Dove: String Quartet 'Out of Time'

Huw Watkins: String Quartet

Dvořák: String Quartet TBC

Festival Programmes

These can be performed together as a concert or spread over the course of a festival.

Sample Programme 1: Jonathan Dove

With Mark Padmore (tenor) and Charles Owen (piano)

Dove: String Quartet 'Out of Time'

Dove: *In Damascus* for Tenor and String Quartet (a special commission by the Sacconi Quartet and Mark Padmore, set to the words of Syrian poet Ali Safar's 'A Black Cloud in a Leaden White Sky', which sensitively recounts the stories of everyday life in a war-torn city.)

Dove: Piano Quintet

Sample Programme 2: Graham Fitkin

The Sacconi Quartet honour some of the UK's most diverse composer's works for string quartet:

Fitkin: Servant

Fitkin: Inside

Fitkin: String

Fitkin: Pawn

Sample Programme 3: Gwilym Simcock

Simcock: String Quartet

Simcock: Piano Quintet (with Gwilym Simcock, piano)

Simcock: Solo piano repertoire

Alternative Programmes

Beethoven 131 in the Dark

Beethoven: String Quartet No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 131 *from memory and in the dark*

HEARTFELT

An immersive, personal performance combining robotics, lighting and music in a radical re-interpretation of this iconic Beethoven quartet.

Beethoven: String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

www.heartfelt.org.uk

Juliet Letters

A revival of the rarely performed Juliet Letters, composed and toured by the Brodsky Quartet, with folk singer Jon Boden (ex-frontman of Bellowhead).

Costello & Brodsky Quartet: The Juliet Letters

Death's Cabaret: A Love Story

A ground-breaking new kind of concerto - a cabaret concerto - commissioned for outstanding cellist, baritone and story-teller Matthew Sharp with the Sacconi Quartet from celebrated composer Stephen Deazley and award-winning writer Martin Riley.

Collaborations

String Quintets: Brahms, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert

Piano Quintets (with Charles Owen): Dvořák, Brahms, Schumann, Elgar, Franck, Shostakovich, Dove

Clarinet Quintets: Brahms, Mozart, Bliss, Weber, Glazunov, Bowen, Howells

Tenor and String Quartet (with Roderick Williams): Finzi *By Footpath and Stile* and John McCabe *Silver Nocturnes*

String Sextets (with Garfield Jackson & David Waterman): Brahms and Strauss

Octets (with Wihan Quartet): Shostakovich, Enescu and Mendelssohn

Schubert: Trout Quintet D. 667

Beethoven: Septet in E flat major, Op. 20

Schubert: Octet in F, D. 803

Masterclasses

The Sacconi Quartet offer a range of masterclasses, along with Education and outreach work, as part of festival residencies.

Recent masterclasses: Salisbury Festival (May 2015), Lichfield Festival (July 2015)