



Sacconi Quartet 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*

For twenty-one years, the Sacconi Quartet have been captivating audiences with their unanimous and compelling ensemble, consistently communicating with a fresh and imaginative approach. Performing with style and commitment, the quartet are known throughout the world for their creativity and integrity of interpretation. Formed in 2001, the 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 enjoy a busy international career, performing regularly across the world, at Europe's major venues, in recordings and on radio broadcasts. The Sacconi are Quartet in Association at the Royal College of Music and Quartet in Residence for the town of Folkestone.

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

For their twentieth birthday, the Quartet commissioned their latest piece from Jonathan Dove, *On the Streets and In the Sky*, shortly to be released on Signum Records. Their film of Dove's first quartet *Out of Time* was released on Amazon in 2021. This season they will premiere Robin Holloway's Horn Quintet with Ben Goldscheider, and record two new albums of music by Fitkin and Dove. They also continue to tour with *Beethoven in the Dark*, their immersive performance of Beethoven's op.131 quartet entirely from memory, in almost complete darkness.

As the result of a generous grant, the Sacconi Quartet are Quartet in Residence for the town of Folkestone and its surrounding areas. This is enabling creative collaborations with local artists and projects, and includes an embedded outreach programme, engaging with young string players in the town, and taking creative projects into harder to reach communities in the east side of Folkestone in particular. Recent performances of Beethoven on the Beach and Glass on the Warren seafront have attracted large audiences, many of them experiencing the energy of chamber music for the very first time. Their Sacconi Chamber Music Festival in Folkestone is firmly established among the UK's major chamber music festivals and attracts audiences from far and near for its vibrant atmosphere and dynamic programming.

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, Britain's oldest music charity helping musicians in need, for which they are extremely grateful. Robin is indebted to Ellen Solomon for the use of his viola.

February 2023

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