

# Ask the Expert

Ulster Bride's Lara Salmon talks to Clare Hadwen from Arco String Quartet.

## with Arco String Quartet

### Tell us a little about the history of Arco String Quartet?

I formed Arco String Quartet in London where I had a residency in the famous Claridges Hotel. Since moving back home to Northern Ireland seven years ago, Arco String Quartet was reformed as a husband and wife team after I met Richard in The Ulster Orchestra.

With a lot of hard work and dedication over the years, the quartet has gone from strength to strength. We love what we do and it is an absolute honour for us to be an integral part of a couple's special day

### Describe the Arco String Quartet experience?

Our aim at Arco String Quartet is to change people's perceptions of a classical string quartet with a fresh, accessible approach to the world of classical music.

Whilst maintaining the highest standard of playing, our vast and ever expanding repertoire allows us to capture the perfect ambience for your day. We have the finest, most elegant music to set the scene for your perfect wedding ceremony through to our lively, funky interpretations of chart hits, rock classics, jazz and film themes for your drinks reception, meal or after dinner entertainment.

We love interacting with the audience and very often find ourselves taking requests

and guests having a dance to our music!

### Why should I hire a live band for my wedding?

Live music will set your day apart and make it special not just for yourselves but also for your guests. As well as sounding fabulous, having live music provides great visual entertainment for your guests.

We love collaborating with other musicians, for example, if you have a friend or family member who sings or plays an instrument, it would be a perfect way of involving them in your ceremony by asking them to play or sing accompanied by their own live string quartet.

Having a live act is also a great way of keeping your guests entertained whilst you are busy having photographs taken or catching up with relatives and friends.

### What should I be looking for when I enquire about a prospective act?

The old saying 'first impressions count' is extremely important. Providing a friendly service, where nothing is too much trouble is a good indication of how an act will work on your day. Word of mouth counts for a great deal, so getting recommendations from your venue and other wedding suppliers is a very good way of finding the act for you. And finally ask to hear them! There are always opportunities to hear the best acts either live, or from a recording.



Photography by Matt Symons

### What type of packages does Arco String Quartet offer and what do these include?

Our most popular packages are our ceremony or ceremony and drinks reception. For the ceremony package we provide a half hour of music before the ceremony begins to entertain guests as they are arriving and then any music during the ceremony. The quartet can accompany any hymns, singers or musicians and we will happily arrange any of your favourite pieces that might not be on the repertoire list on our website.

We have a ceremony and drinks reception package where we play through the ceremony and then head over to the reception venue where we turn things around and entertain guests with our more lively pop, rock, jazz and easy listening tunes. With this package there is no time limit and we are available for as long as the couple needs us up until the time the meal is due to be called.

We also have reception only and meal only packages available.

### What are your top five most popular requested songs?

Canon in D by Pachelbel  
Love is All You Need by The Beatles  
Viva La Vida by Coldplay  
The PM's Love Theme from Love Actually  
Greatest Day by Take That

