



Clifton Cathedral

Opportunities to Sing at Clifton Cathedral

We are currently seeking singers for the Cathedral Choir in all voices as Choral Scholars, Exhibitioners and Volunteers.

About the Cathedral Choir

The Choir is made up of mixed voices and we consider singers from the age of 16. You should be a good singer and sight-reader as the repertoire has the fastest turnover of the most eclectic material we think of any choir in the South West. From Plainsong to Macmillan and many compositions where the ink is still wet. We have sung premieres from Panufnik, Tavener and, within the past month, Malcolm Archer (a piece commissioned by Voces8) to our credit.

What we expect

The commitment is less than comparable scholarships or choral roles being principally for the 1115 Solemn Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, together with Diocesan events. There is a weekly Friday rehearsal.

“Without the opportunities and confidence that this choral scholarship has given me, I definitely would not be the musician I am now!”



Additional Opportunities

Scholars and Exhibitioners formed the eight singers for the BBC TV Midnight Mass in Christmas 2020 (available on iPlayer) as a Schola Cantorum. This is hailed as a model of what can be done at a time of crisis. The Mass setting was commissioned from Director of Music Richard Jeffrey-Gray. Recordings of the choir are a regular event, the acoustic at Clifton recently called “ideal” by Peter Phillips. We have most recently recorded for OUP in the US. We have more of these in the process of arranging.

Past scholars and choir members are now enjoying singing in the Tallis Scholars, The Sixteen and Genesis Sixteen, Tenebrae, BBC Singers as well as many other Cathedrals, and some are training for opera careers. Our Choral Director, John Gibbons, is well steeped in opera and is currently recording the complete Wordsworth Symphonies as well as gaining a BEM for services to British Music in the past few years. He looks forward to planning concerts again soon.

The Clifton Festival, which runs mostly as a week in June, is an opportunity to sing and be involved with many of the best artists globally. The Cathedral Choir sang Monteverdi Vespers with I Fagiolini and the Tallis Scholars at the Festival, for example.

“My choral scholarship at Clifton Cathedral was one of the highlights of my time studying in Bristol.”
“I’ve realised that a choir that covers so much, and has such a high standard is a very rare and precious thing...”



Organ Scholarship

There is also an Organ Scholarship available – please contact Stephen Bryant at juniorchoir@cliftondiocese.com. This is flexible regarding standard since we have different needs for organists through the variety of other liturgies we offer (Junior Choir Vespers and cantored Sunday Evening Mass). The Organ Scholarship has run concurrently with a Choral Scholarship before. The distinguished Rieger organ has, among other awards, a Gramophone winning recording to its credit and is currently the instrument for a landmark recording of the complete Organ Works of Bach taking some 18 months to complete.

The Process

Applications for all are by audition and, where an award is given, on a termly basis recurring in September. If you are successful, an Agreement is drawn up between you and us. Currently (2021) we are running a shorter model until the end of August as part of our recovery scheme following the national emergency.

You needn't be a Catholic to sing with us, indeed the proportion of non RC choir members has been a good mix of faiths and none for many years, but of course you must respect the ministry you will perform for the people we serve.

Please apply to:

Richard Jeffrey-Gray
music@cliftonms.com