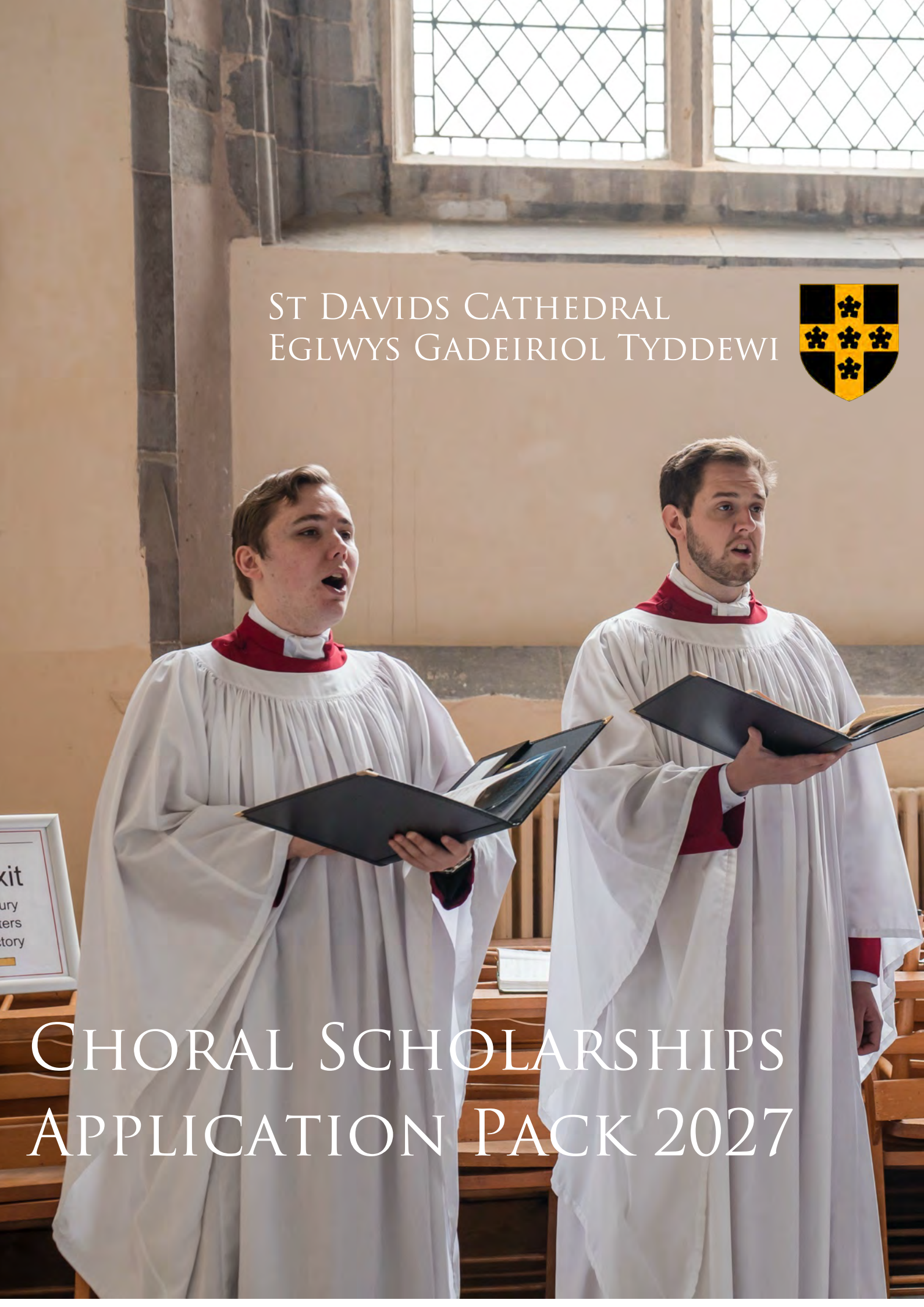

St Davids Cathedral
Eglwys Gadeiriol Tyddewi

Choral Scholarships Application Pack 2027

General Information

Thank you for your interest in the Choral Scholarships at St Davids Cathedral. The Dean and Chapter awards up to three scholarships per year: we currently have a vacancy for **one Alto, one Tenor and one Bass Choral Scholar** to begin in September 2027. These position is open to candidates of any gender. The scholarships are an outstanding opportunity for a gap-year or postgraduate singer to gain valuable training and experience as a church musician, and play a full part in the musical life of a busy Cathedral. The period of appointment is for one year.

The Choral Scholarship scheme was set up in 2008 and provides exceptional musical training, experience and opportunity in a stunning environment, within a friendly and supportive Cathedral community. Past scholars have gone to study music and singing at RWCMD, Cambridge, Bristol and London Universities, or been appointed to further scholarship or professional positions at Hereford, Gloucester, Southwell, Ely, Lincoln, Exeter, Truro and Edinburgh Cathedrals.

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St Davids

St Davids is situated in the beautiful Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, West Wales. It is surrounded by some of the finest coastline in Europe and offers an unrivalled range of outdoor activities including walking, rock climbing, surfing, swimming and hiking. St Davids is an extremely popular tourist destination and hosts around half a million visitors every year. It was given a Royal Charter by Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1995: this formally recognised St Davids' status as a city.

The Cathedral

The present building was begun in 1181-82 and is thought to be on the site of a monastery founded in the mid-6th century by David, Patron Saint of Wales. The Monarch is a Canon of the Cathedral Chapter and Royal Patron of St Davids Cathedral Festival. The Cathedral provides a stunning setting for worship which has been offered on the site for 1400 years. The famous Tudor composer Thomas Tomkins was born in St Davids in 1572. While his father was Organist and Master of the Choristers, Tomkins served as a chorister and lived in the cathedral close until his mid-teens. When his family moved to England in the 1580s, Tomkins began studying with William Byrd. As Organist of Worcester Cathedral and a Gentleman of H.M. Chapel Royal, Tomkins became one of the most famous composers of his age.

Remuneration

- Choral Scholars are paid **£4,000** per year in monthly instalments (September to July), plus a travel allowance to use for journeys to and from St Davids during choir termly holidays and at half-terms breaks.
- Shared accommodation is provided rent-free in Wayside, a comfortable and attractive house situated in the Cathedral Close. This is within walking distance of the Cathedral and the city.
- Electricity, heating, water, phone and Wi-Fi costs incurred at Wayside are paid for by the Cathedral.
- There are additional funds available to pay for singing lessons, with further financial assistance for associated travel if applicable.
- Extra fees are paid for radio and television broadcasts, festival concerts, weddings and funerals.

Responsibilities

The Choral Scholars are responsible for:

- Taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by this placement;
- Their own musical development, organisation and time planning;
- Behaving in a manner appropriate to the professional and pastoral nature of the role; Ensuring their actions and behaviour are in compliance with the staff handbook and the departmental code of conduct at all times.
- Familiarity and compliance with all Cathedral policies, in particular the Safeguarding and Health & Safety Policies.
- Ensuring their outward appearance is appropriate for a work setting, with formal office wear expected to be worn on Sundays and other service days.

Duties

Choral Scholar duties include:

- Being present and singing at all rehearsals, choral services, concerts, recordings and choir tours as directed.
- To assist with the running of the Choir Library and with some general music-related administration as required.
- To perform as part of the Cathedral Festival and assist with its smooth-running.

In addition to the regular musical duties, choral scholars are required to work up to a maximum of ten hours per week during choir terms, usually doing a combination of the following: Assisting the Cathedral's Education and Pilgrimage Department; Assisting in the Cathedral Library, Deanery Office or Cathedral Shops; Stewarding. Occasionally there may be opportunities to earn extra income by taking on further hours in some of these areas. During Festival week, choral scholars form a vital part of the front-of-house team, selling tickets at the box office and stewarding for evening concerts among other duties.

Pattern of Services

The normal pattern of choral services is as follows:

Monday	Choral Evensong 6pm*	*St Andrew's Voices & Choral Scholars*
Tuesday	Choral Evening Prayer 6pm	*Choral Scholars*
Wednesday	Choral Evensong 6pm†	*Cathedral Choristers*
Thursday	Choral Evensong 6pm	*Cathedral Choir*
Friday	Pilgrim Prayers 12noon	*Choral & Organ Scholars*
	Choral Evensong 6pm	*Vicars Choral & Choral Scholars*
Sunday	Eucharist 11am	*Cathedral Choir*
	Choral Evensong 4pm	*Cathedral Choir*

* *Fortnightly*
† *Monthly*

The choirs are on duty during academic term-time, for services during Holy Week and on Easter Day, and up to and including a morning service on Christmas Day. Choir holidays take place during school half-terms, and following the major celebrations of Easter and Christmas. The choir year usually ends in mid-July. The annual St Davids Cathedral Festival takes place in the May/June half-term week, after which the choir takes the following week (including a weekend) off. Rehearsals take place before all services and after Evensong on Thursdays. The Cathedral Choir is occasionally required to sing on a Saturday. This occurs during the annual Friends' Festival and for Ordinations, of which there are usually two per year. Weddings sometimes take place for which a choir is occasionally requested.

The Music Department

Canon Leigh Richardson	*Sub-Dean; Precentor*
Simon Pearce	*Organist and Master of the Choristers*
Laurence John	*Assistant Director of Music*
Ben Richards	*Music Administrator & Concerts Manager*
Ann Thair, Jenny Kitchell, Abigail Blake, Bethan Goodson	*Chorister Chaperones*

The Cathedral Choirs

The cathedral enjoys a reputation throughout Wales and the United Kingdom for the very high standard of its music and liturgy. Through the commitment and dedication of its musicians, the amount and level of musical activity at the cathedral is out of all proportion to the modest size of the community. There are therefore many stimulating and challenging opportunities for a talented and passionate musician. St Davids Cathedral is unique in the UK in that the top line of the Cathedral Choir is sung by girls aged *8–18.* They are recruited from local primary and secondary schools. The 'back row' of the choir is made up of Vicars Choral (Lay

Clerks) who work locally in a variety of occupations, and up to three Choral Scholars who are appointed annually. In addition, there are several regular Deputy Singers, and a Junior Choral Scholar. St Davids Cathedral Young Voices sings Evensong with the adults of the Cathedral Choir twice a term. The Cathedral Singers is an adult voluntary choir, directed by the Assistant Director of Music, and sings Evensong once a fortnight.

St Davids Cathedral Festival

The Festival takes place annually at the end of May attracting audiences and artists from all over the world. The Cathedral Choir takes a leading role in the Festival and in recent years has performed with Fretwork, the King's Singers, Tenebrae, British Sinfonietta, The City Musick, The BBC Singers, and Onyx Brass. The Festival has commissioned music by Giles Swayne, David Briggs, Neil Cox, Francis Grier, Matthew Martin, Meirion Wynn Jones, Paul Mealor, Robert Walker, Geraint Lewis and Oliver Tarney. BBC Choral Evensong is often broadcast live from the Cathedral during the Festival. The Choral Scholars are given the opportunity to perform a recital during the Festival, and will be expected to attend all services throughout the Festival week.

Recordings, Broadcasts and Tours

The choir is regularly invited to broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Radio 4, Radio Wales and BBC television. The choir has toured extensively throughout Europe and has also toured Australia and the USA. The Cathedral Choir has made recordings with Priory Records, Regent Records and York Ambisonic, including a recent recording of music for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany with Priory.

Outreach and Schools

Ysgol Penrhyn Dewi is a new Church in Wales 3-16 School which opened in St Davids in 2018 when the existing primary and secondary schools combined. Many of the Cathedral choristers are recruited from this school. There are opportunities for the Choral Scholars to be involved in the school's musical life. During the Lent and Summer terms the organists and Choral Scholars take the Festival's Outreach Project to local schools from which the Children's Festival Chorus is formed.

Applications

To apply for a Choral Scholarship, please email the following to Ben Richards: ben@stdavidscathedral.org.uk

- A letter of application
- Curriculum Vitae
- The names and contact details of two referees

Please note, we are currently unable to accept applications from anyone who is not currently eligible for work in the UK.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 25th September** at **12noon.** Interviews and auditions will be arranged by appointment on Friday 2nd October. For further information or assistance, please contact Simon Pearce on 07932 420581, or email simon@stdavidscathedral.org.uk