St Davids Cathedral
Eglwys Gadeiriol Tyddewi

Organ Scholarship Application Pack 2027

Introduction

The Dean and Chapter of St Davids Cathedral wish to appoint an Organ Scholar for the academic year beginning in September 2027. The scholarship is an exciting opportunity for a postgraduate or 'gap-year' organist who wishes to pursue a career as a church musician. The Organ Scholar will be expected to play a full part in the musical life of the Cathedral.

The Organ Scholarship was set up in 2016. Previous holders of the scholarship have been appointed to organist's positions at Ely and Llandaff Cathedrals, Southwell Minster, Tewkesbury Abbey, Magdalen College, Oxford, Jesus College, Cambridge and St George's Chapel, Windsor. The scholarship is generously supported by the Cathedral Music Trust (CMT). It is also supported by an anonymous donor who wishes to support and encourage the performance of Tudor church music at the Cathedral. It is therefore important that the successful candidate has interest in this genre and is willing to spend an appropriate portion of time during their tenure studying, performing and promoting it.

The period of the appointment is usually for one year.

St Davids

St Davids is situated in the beautiful Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, West Wales. It was given a Royal Charter by Her Late Majesty the Queen in 1995 which formally recognised its status as a city. 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 attracting around half a million visitors every year.

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 this site for 1400 years, within which the musical tradition is an essential ingredient. The famous Tudor composer Thomas Tomkins was born in St Davids in 1572. Whilst his father was Organist and Master of the Choristers, Tomkins served as a chorister and lived in the cathedral close until his mid-teens. The Tomkins family then moved to England, when Thomas began studying with William Byrd.

The Cathedral Organs

The cathedral's main organ was built by Father Willis in 1883. In 2000 a major rebuild was completed by Harrison & Harrison and the instrument now has four manuals and 54 stops. It is widely acknowledged as an outstanding instrument of great character and versatility. There is also a three-stop chamber organ by Kenneth Tickell owned by St Davids Cathedral Festival. In 2026, a Peter Collins organ was installed in the Lady Chapel. organ, built in 1997 and commissioned by Richard Powell, is a fine example of an instrument in Collins's English Organ Series. The organ was constructed in Melton Mowbray and installed in Mr Powell's home on Godøy, Norway. In 2003, it was relocated to a second residence on Valderøy, where it remained until 2018, when Mr Powell left Norway. The instrument was subsequently installed in his home in Hamilton, Scotland in 2022. In 2025, Mr Powell generously donated the organ to the cathedral. It was transferred to the Lady Chapel in April 2026 by Gary Owens Organ Builders of Hereford. The organ was blessed and dedicated by the Bishop of St Davids during Evensong on 23 June 2026.The cathedral has care of a Steinway model D piano and a recently restored Bechstein grand piano built in 1925.

The Cathedral Choirs

The Cathedral enjoys a reputation throughout Wales and the United Kingdom for the 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 annually appointed Choral Scholars. 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. St Andrew's Voices, for which the Organ Scholar is the principal accompanist, is an adult voluntary choir, directed by the Assistant Director of Music, and sings Evensong once a fortnight.

The pattern of choral services is as follows:

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

* *Fortnightly*
† *Monthly*

Rehearsals take place before all services and after Evensong on Thursdays. The Cathedral Choir sings occasionally on a Saturday. This occurs during the annual Friends' Festival and for Ordinations of which there are usually two per year. Several weddings per year also take place on a Saturday. The choirs sing for the duration of the academic term, with choir holidays taking place during school half terms, and following the major celebrations of Easter and Christmas. The choir year usually ends in mid-July. The choirs are in residence during Holy Week to Easter Day, and until after the morning service on Christmas Day. The annual St Davids Cathedral Music Festival usually takes place in May half-term week, after which the choir takes a week off.

In addition to the services mentioned above, the Organ Scholar plays for the Welsh Communion and Parish Communion services in the Lady Chapel on Sundays at 9.30am. The Organ Scholar also accompanies the weekly Young Voices rehearsal on Fridays at 3.00pm

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.

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 given concerts with 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 Organ Scholar gives a recital as part of the Festival, and will also give a recital as part of our Summer Concert Series.

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*
Ann Thair, Jenny Kitchell, Abigail Blake, Bethan Goodson	*Chorister Chaperones*

The Dean of St Davids assisted by the Sub-Dean leads the work and ministry of the Cathedral as a centre of worship and pilgrimage, and is responsible for the work of all the Cathedral Departments. The Organ Scholar answers to the Organist and Master of the Choristers although some of their work will be directed and overseen by the Assistant Director of Music.

Remuneration

The Organ Scholar receives £4,500 per annum, payable monthly through the payroll. This is offered on the basis of a fixed term contract of one year. Up to a further £1,000 is available to pay for organ lessons and the associated travel expenses incurred. Some organ lessons should include the study of Tudor organ music with a teacher who has expertise in that area. Additional fees are payable for non-statutory duties, including weddings, funerals and some concerts. The Organ Scholar is entitled to at least one day per week when they are free of any cathedral duties.

Accommodation

Shared accommodation is provided rent-free in a comfortable house in the Cathedral Close. This is within walking distance of the Cathedral and the city. Electricity, heating, water, phone and WIFI services are paid for by the cathedral.

Responsibilities

The Organ Scholar is 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.

Experience, Training and Opportunities

- The Organ Scholarship is an opportunity to work alongside dedicated professionals in a supportive, stimulating and beautiful working environment.
- Through practical experience, observation and discussion, they will receive training in liturgical organ accompaniment, solo organ playing, improvisation, choir training and conducting.
- They will be encouraged to seek tuition from external tutors.
- They will have the opportunity where appropriate to conduct services and rehearsals which may include working with the full choir, the Cathedral Singers, the choristers and the probationers.
- They will become familiar with the musical and liturgical life of a busy cathedral and have opportunities to contribute to the planning of services and music.
- They will have performing opportunities at the cathedral, as part of the renowned St Davids Cathedral Festival and elsewhere. The Organ Scholar is encouraged to show initiative in curating programmes for informal recitals throughout the year, which will be used as fundraiser opportunities for the Music Department.
- They will develop team working and pastoral skills through interaction with colleagues within the Music Department and the Cathedral, and with adult and child choristers.
- The Organ Scholar will be expected to play for non-statutory services from time to time for which extra fees will be paid.

Duties

- Being present and assisting at all rehearsals, services, meetings as directed by the Organist & Master of the Choristers.
- Playing the organ regularly for choral services as required.
- The Organ Scholar is expected to continue the development of their musical expertise and will have access to the Cathedral's organs subject to the Cathedral diary.
- The organ scholar will act as Choir Librarian. They are assisted in this by the choral scholars.
- Playing the organ for the (non-choral) Parish Eucharist on Sundays (During term time only).
- Regularly assisting and observing the other cathedral organists at the organ console.
- Giving an organ recital as part of St Davids Cathedral Festival and as part of the Summer Concerts Series. *(One of these would feature Tudor organ music as part of the programme.)*
- Choosing and playing appropriate organ music (voluntaries) before and after some services.
- Assisting with the training of probationary choristers and with choristers' music theory tuition.
- The Organ Scholar will be expected to sing in the Cathedral Choir from time to time as required.
- Taking a share in the administrative workload of the Music Department, including the copying and typesetting of music, publicity, drafting and planning.
- Assisting with the preparation and running of the Cathedral Festival.
- Greeting visiting organists and assisting them as required.
- Assisting with RSCM exam preparation.
- The Organ Scholar will be required to assist the Cathedral's Education & Pilgrimage department with various projects from time to time.

Other work

There may be opportunities for the Organ Scholar to earn extra income by undertaking freelance work outside the cathedral during their free-time, and also by assisting in the Cathedral office or Cathedral shops from time to time.

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 Organ Scholar 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

Letters of application, together with curriculum vitae and the names and contact details of two referees should be emailed to Ben Richards:
ben@stdavidscathedral.org.uk

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 11th September** at **12noon.** Interviews and auditions will be arranged by appointment. For further information or assistance, please contact Simon Pearce on 07932 420581, or email simon@stdavidscathedral.org.uk