



MAGDALENE COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

CHORAL & ORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS



Magdalene College Choir

Magdalene College Choir is at the heart of the College's musical and spiritual life, singing at two weekly services in the beautiful candlelit Chapel, as well as pursuing other activities including concerts, tours, and recordings.

The choir is directed by the Precentor, Mr James Potter, assisted by the Organ Scholars. Renowned for being an exceptionally friendly and sociable group, it comprises around 20-24 Members of the College and volunteers from other Colleges.

The Choir's central function is to sing for Choral Evensong twice a week during Term, on Thursdays and Sundays. Alongside their chapel commitments, the choir has an active programme of performances including tours, concerts, visiting services, recordings, and College dinners. In recent years, the Choir has undertaken successful concert tours to Spain, the USA, Germany, France, Italy, and Malta.

In 2022-3, the Choir's activities included: the premiere of a new commission by baritone and composer Roderick Williams, the composer performing with the choir; concerts and services in London including at All Saints', Margaret St, St Stephen Walbrook, and the Mercer's Hall; a tour to Italy, performing with the professional baroque ensemble Orfeo Futuro, with members of the choir taking the solo parts; and recording for the soundtrack of a documentary about Cambridge.



Life as a Choral or Organ Scholar or volunteer

Magdalene usually has two Organ Scholars at any one time, appointed through the University's Organ Award Scheme. They assist the Precentor in running the Choir, and develop their skills in solo playing, as well as accompanying and, on occasion, directing the Choir. In addition to receiving the Scholarship award, they are accommodated in some of the finest rooms in College, and receive free tuition from expert organ teachers.

The Choir comprises up to around 24 singers, who may be Choral Scholars (studying at Magdalene and appointed through the University's Choral Award Scheme) or Choral Volunteers (members of any other College or recent graduates).

Weekly schedule

WEDNESDAY

Rehearsal

5.15pm-6.45pm

(twice a term)

Compline 9pm

THURSDAY

Rehearsal

5pm-6pm

Choral Evensong

6.15pm

SUNDAY

Rehearsal

4.15pm-5.45pm

Choral Evensong

6pm



Benefits of choir membership include:

- free formal Hall after services
- free singing lessons with our expert teacher
- subsidised tours and trips
- exposure to a wide range of music, and choral training under the professional direction of the Precentor
- a ready-made social group and a friendly and supportive environment in which to develop your skills

How to apply



The Precentor, Mr James Potter, is always happy to meet or hear from prospective choral and organ award candidates informally at any time of year. This can involve an informal audition if desired. Email jp2025@cam.ac.uk.

ORGAN SCHOLARS are appointed through the Intercollegiate Organ Award Scheme. For more detail, see the dedicated University webpages. The live auditions are in September, in advance of the academic interviews, which take place in December.

CHORAL SCHOLARS are generally appointed through the University's Choral Award Scheme. For more detail, see the relevant webpages. Auditions take place in March, after you have received an academic offer from the College.

CHORAL VOLUNTEERS enjoy much the same benefits as Choral Scholars, but may be students at other Colleges, ARU, or recent graduates. Vacancies are often available at the beginning of the academic year as well as at other times. To discuss joining the Choir as a volunteer, email the Precentor (jp2025@cam.ac.uk).

What are we looking for?

Vocal potential will be the focus. Some familiarity with music notation is usual, but sight-reading experience will vary, and we take this into account. Applicants will usually have some singing experience, but not necessarily in choral or classical singing, and may or may not have had prior vocal training. If you're in doubt, feel free to contact the Precentor to discuss.

About Magdalene

The College has its origins in the year 1428 and has an eclectic mix of buildings. There has been a continuous tradition of academic study on the site for nearly 600 years,

Magdalene admits roughly 100 undergraduate students each year for all courses offered by the University of Cambridge, and roughly 80 postgraduate students. Our small annual intake helps to foster a family atmosphere and a close-knit community.

The College has an active, student-run Music Society, as well as dedicated practice rooms, a harpsichord, and recital hall.



Precentor & Director of Music

The Choir is directed by James Potter, who holds the historical title of 'Precentor'. James read Music at The Queen's College, University of Oxford, and spent time as a professional singer, touring and recording extensively. He is in demand as a conductor of chamber choirs, choral societies, and other ensembles, and enjoys a particular focus on new and under-explored repertoire.



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www.magd.cam.ac.uk/magdalene-college-choir