

Assistant Master of the Music, St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh

The full-time post of Assistant Master of the Music offers the successful candidate the opportunity to work in an exciting and creative music department. He / She will be responsible for assisting in the development of a choir that enjoys a unique place in Scottish cultural and spiritual life and an international reputation through its critically acclaimed recordings, tours, and broadcasts, as it moves forward from the impact of Covid-19 on singing in Scotland.

The Cathedral seeks to appoint an outstanding organist with proven abilities as an accompanist and a growing career as a soloist. He / She should be comfortable with the demands of a rapidly evolving repertoire of choral music, from sensitive accompaniments of the staple Anglican repertoire to demanding contemporary scores and continuo playing. The candidate should also be able to demonstrate the highest levels of sight-reading and general musicianship, and adaptability as circumstances demand. They should have existing experience working with choristers and adult singers. Their high standards should also extend to conducting, which they will wish to further develop, and to working well with a range of colleagues including other musicians, clergy, and teachers. The successful candidate will be a good communicator who supports other members of staff and wishes to pursue his or her career development.

The Cathedral Choir

The Choir of St Mary's Cathedral is unique in Scotland in offering daily choral services in the Anglican tradition. The Cathedral was the first in the United Kingdom with a tradition of daily services to encourage girls to join boys as trebles in 1978 and then, in 2006, to welcome female altos to sing alongside countertenors in the choir. The choristers (aged 9-13) are educated at St Mary's Music School, Scotland's specialist music school and only choir school. The choristers rehearse each morning in the Cathedral Song School before going to school, with evening services at 5.30pm.

Described by *Gramophone* as 'one of Scotland's, indeed Britain's, musical jewels', the choir's recent recordings have gained outstanding international reviews. Successive CD recordings of music by Anton Bruckner, Gabriel Jackson, and John Sheppard all earned Gramophone Editor's Choice, while other recent recordings have included John Tavener, Igor Stravinsky (with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra), and William Mundy. Over the years the choir has worked closely with leading contemporary composers, commissioning, performing, and recording works by (for instance) Kenneth Leighton, Arvo Pärt, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, James MacMillan, Howard Skempton, Gabriel Jackson, and (more recently) Cecilia McDowall and Daniel Saleeb. The choir recorded a disc of Kenneth Leighton's music in 2019 to celebrate the ninetieth anniversary of the composer's birth, about which BBC Music Magazine commented on the 'sharply communicative singing' and labelled the disc 'an easy recommendation'. The choir works with orchestras and ensembles such as the BBC SSO, SCO, and Dunedin Consort and regularly features on BBC Radio Three, Radio Four, and Radio Scotland, including live broadcasts of Choral Evensong. Tours have included singing at the 2011 Taipei International Choral Festival in Taiwan and with the Little Singers of Tokyo at

their sixtieth anniversary concert in Suntory Hall. The choir toured Germany performing to sell-out audiences in summer 2015, France 2017, and Slovakia, Czech Republic and Austria in 2018. While choir tours are unlikely in the immediate future because of Covid-19, we are seeking to further develop and enhance our links with other music organisations in the UK and abroad, and the Assistant Master of the Music will be part of that planning and implementation.

The Cathedral

St Mary's Cathedral is the mother church of the Scottish Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Edinburgh, part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Cathedral's three spires dominate Edinburgh's western skyline. The liturgy follows a broadly liberal catholic tradition. The Cathedral is friendly and welcoming with choral music a vital part of its identity. It seeks to be a place where all are nurtured in faith and hope and love: through transforming encounter with God in word, music and beauty, and with one another in the warmth of welcome, the depth of theological engagement and in generous action for our community and city.

The Cathedral is situated in the west end of Edinburgh, renowned as one of Europe's great cities in which to live and work. Edinburgh International Airport is around twenty-five minutes away, and within five minutes' walk from the Cathedral is Haymarket station providing direct trains along the East Coast to London (approximately 4h30mins) and the north of Scotland. Though a major tourist city, most of Edinburgh is walkable and public transport is exceptionally good. During August Edinburgh is home to the world's biggest festivals of the arts.

Duties of the Assistant Master of the Music

The precise day-to-day pattern of rehearsals and services is currently under review as a result of the Covid-19 curtailment of singing in Scotland. The Cathedral's vision for the restoration of choral services will be discussed with candidates at interview. The Cathedral is committed to the choir resuming a regular pattern of singing as soon as safely possible, with Choral Evensong at the heart of that. In addition to weekday services most days during term time, there will likely be two post-Evensong rehearsals or equivalent for lay clerks/full choir. There is normally no commitment on Saturdays; on Sundays there is a Choral Eucharist in the morning and Choral Evensong in the afternoon. There are a few other Cathedral/Diocesan services and concerts each year that are part of the music department's regular duties, including (but not restricted to) the Holy Week services, Advent, Christmas, and during the Edinburgh Festival. Weddings, funerals, broadcasts, and external concerts attract extra fees. The Master of the Music and Assistant Master of the Music share the duty of holiday cover along with an approved external organist, playing for Sunday morning services when there is no visiting choir.

The chief duty of the Assistant Master of the Music is to accompany the services at which the choir is singing and to conduct the choir once a week. He/she takes a lead in

probationer training with weekly rehearsal(s) during the school day and probationer rehearsals during morning chorister practice, plus two short afternoon rehearsals for pre-probationers. The Assistant Master of the Music also takes one morning chorister rehearsal his/herself during the week and deputises as required in the absence of the Master of the Music. The Assistant Master of the Music contributes to music administration as required. They will be required to work with the Master of the Music, alongside the clergy and the Music School, to promote the choir within the city, to build partnerships with appropriate external agencies and to find creative ways to recruit both choristers and the back row.

The successful candidate will be subject to a PVG check, be expected to attend regular child protection training, and be familiar with the Cathedral's safeguarding and child protection policy.

Within reason and with the agreement of the Organist and Master of the Music, the Assistant Master of the Music may use the Cathedral Song School for some private piano / organ tuition outwith usual cathedral work times. The successful candidate will be encouraged to be an active member of the Assistant Organists' Association, the Edinburgh Society of Organists, and to develop and maintain an active programme of organ recitals away from the Cathedral, as well as having ideas for career development which the Cathedral will wholeheartedly support.

Remuneration

The salary is £23000 per annum, reviewed annually. In addition, the Cathedral will contribute up to £1000 towards career development each year, to attend (for example) a series of masterclasses, work with an organist abroad etc. Accommodation is not offered but there is affordable housing available within walking distance of the Cathedral.