



CHORISTERS AND YOUTH CHORAL MUSIC AT ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

For more than fourteen hundred years, Rochester Cathedral has kept and cherished the tradition of sacred music in all its diversity. As custodians of this tradition, the Cathedral community does not merely ensure its survival, but look to encourage its development, so that it is re-imagined afresh for each generation. Rochester Cathedral and King's Rochester are announcing an exciting new phase in the future of choral music at Rochester Cathedral.

Choristers

Rochester Cathedral and King's Rochester are committed to equality and co-education. From September 2020, a single treble line of boys and girls will be introduced gradually to the Cathedral Choir, with all new choristers attending King's Preparatory School.

The new arrangements will be phased in over five years and all current choristers (both boys and girls) will remain on their existing financial arrangements and following their accustomed schedule throughout their remaining time as choristers. They will not be adversely affected or have their existing terms and conditions altered.

New choristers will receive a package of financial and educational support including fee remission and music tuition. Means-tested bursaries at the School are also available.

We believe that this represents the best long-term approach for the Cathedral Choir as we look to the future of music at Rochester Cathedral. There are clear benefits in relation to safeguarding practice, financial sustainability and advocating our co-educational ethos. Boys and girls already sing regularly together at Rochester and our experiences demonstrate that the blend of voices offers considerable musical advantages and flexibility. But ultimately, we are committed to treating boys and girls equally and therefore believe this is the right thing to do.

A 'Chorister Experience' (open day) is scheduled for Saturday 11th January 2020. Auditions for prospective choristers going into Years 4 and 5 in September 2020 will take place on Saturday 25th January. In each year, two boys and two girls will be recruited i.e. girls will be competing against other girls – and boys against other boys – for places.

Youth choral music

Rochester Cathedral is also announcing two new initiatives to encourage more young people to experience the Cathedral choral tradition and develop their choral singing, expanding the existing community music programme at the Cathedral.

Rochester Cathedral Youth Choral Course:

A whole day course for singers aged 13-18 (boys and girls), ending with Evensong sung by the course participants. To be held initially on a Saturday once per term, the first course will be held in October 2020. Participants would not audition but would be asked for a reference or commendation from their school or singing teacher. Cost: £30 per person (to be confirmed). Details and application forms will be available from February 2020.

(This initiative is being introduced with a view to developing a regular Rochester Cathedral Youth Choir in the future.)

Sixth Form Choral Scholarships:

The Choral Scholarship programme will provide opportunities for suitably skilled and enthusiastic young singers to deepen their experience of Cathedral music before perhaps going on to Choral Scholarships at university. Choral Scholars would be appointed from lower Sixth Form and hold the Scholarship for two years. The Choral Scholars would sing alongside the Cathedral Choir on Sundays and as a group on other occasions. The Cathedral will provide financial assistance with singing lessons. Details and application forms for September 2020 entry will be available from February 2020.

Comments:

The Reverend Canon Matthew Rushton, Canon Precentor:

“As we look to the future of music at Rochester Cathedral with hope, we are excited to take these steps to ensure that Rochester is a centre of excellence for sacred music – with boys and girls fully and equally involved in our choral foundation – and to expand our community music programme. These measures show our commitment to the musical and educational development of those who sing at the Cathedral and to ensuring the sustainability of music at Rochester, as we seek to grow in Christ in our worship and mission, as we have since AD604.”

Ben Charles, Principal, King’s Rochester:

“With our longstanding commitment to co-education at King’s Rochester we are delighted to play a vital part in this historic development in the life of Rochester Cathedral. The cathedral and school’s partnership extends back over 1400 years of mutual commitment and the standard of music-making in both institutions has always been of the highest calibre. This exciting and dynamic initiative will extend these opportunities still further”

For further details or comment, please contact:

Rochester Cathedral:

01634 843366 info@rochestercathedral.org

Canon Precentor: 01634 810063 matthew.rushton@rochestercathedral.org

Director of Music: 01634 810061 francesca.massey@rochestercathedral.org

Chapter Clerk: 01634 810060 simon.lace@rochestercathedral.org

King's Rochester:

01634 888555

Tom Morgan, Headmaster of King's Preparatory School:

01634 888577 prep@kings-rochester.co.uk

END