



STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL SUNDAY 21ST MARCH 10.30AM

Worcester Cathedral and The King's School, Worcester Announce Exciting Changes to Chorister Offering

Today, Worcester Cathedral, in conjunction with The King's School, Worcester, are thrilled to announce a significant change to the chorister programme that presents equal opportunities to boy and girl choristers. In a historic first, the change will not only see boys and girls taking an equal share in choristership, but also see girls join from a younger age and, like the boys, have access to scholarships at King's Worcester.

Worcester Cathedral has long been a place where choral singing of the highest standards has thrived. Choristers have been educated exclusively at The King's School since the Refoundation by Henry VIII in 1541, with each chorister receiving a choral scholarship towards their fees.

The girl choristers were established in 2006 and play an important part in cathedral worship, singing weekly at Evensong and contributing to other services throughout the year. Today's announcement seeks to build on the inclusion of girls by opening up the choristership opportunity to younger girls from September 2021. This significant step presents an equal opportunity for boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds to have access to the outstanding music department and cathedral, alongside a first-class education at The King's School.

To achieve this greater parity, the cathedral is expanding its scheme of scholarships for choristers, in partnership with King's St Alban's, in order to offer the same opportunities for boys and girls who wish to be a cathedral chorister.

Further to the inclusion of younger girls in the Cathedral Choir, other significant steps include changes to the Cathedral Voluntary Choir, which will become open to all boys and girls from the local area from September 2021. Worcester Cathedral is also creating a brand new Youth Choir, the first of its kind at the cathedral which caters specifically for singers between school years 9 and 13, again open to youngsters from across the local area. These two choirs provide exciting opportunities for children across the Midlands to experience and develop their passion for singing and music.

Worcester Cathedral's Precentor, Canon Dr Michael Brierley said: "The choral arrangements at Worcester Cathedral work extremely well, with the one exception that we don't offer girls the same opportunities for singing as we offer boys. These changes make good that exception, and open up three choirs to boys and girls on an entirely equal basis. I'm absolutely delighted about this, and greatly look forward to implementing the new format with colleagues at both the cathedral and local schools."

Richard Chapman, Head of King's St Alban's, commented: "We are delighted and welcome this exciting change in that choristership now reflects the equality that King's St Alban's is passionate about. I am thrilled that our Cathedral Choir is already open to both boys and girls and that from September, children of all ages will benefit from both world-class choral training and a first-rate education at our school. It's a significant commitment to be a chorister and a wonderful opportunity. Choristers enjoy a stimulating and nurturing experience, develop a whole raft of skills, often go on to successful careers in many fields and develop a life-long passion for music."

END

Editors Notes

If you are interested in becoming a chorister, then please contact Samuel Hudson, Organist & Director of Music, for an informal conversation on 01905 732916, or email samuelhudson@worcestercathedral.org.uk.

For further information about the education of Choristers at King's St Alban's, please contact our Registrar, Mrs Louise Robins on 01905 363592 or lrobins@ksw.org.uk.

For images, statements, please contact the Marketing Department at King's St Alban's, contact Director of Marketing, Emily Ward on 01905 721715 or eward@ksw.org.uk.

Additional Quotes

Worcester Cathedral's Director of Music, Samuel Hudson, said: "This is an exciting time for music at Worcester Cathedral. We have set out to achieve some bold objectives – developing the opportunities we offer to singers of all ages and from all over the local area, while continuing to engage and support the many people who already contribute so wonderfully to music at the cathedral. We have worked extremely hard to come up with a plan which sustains the particular qualities of our musical history here in Worcester, and that will also be fit for the future. I'm looking forward very much indeed to being part of this new chapter in the life of the music department and cathedral."

The Dean, the Very Rev'd Dr Peter Atkinson said: "I am delighted that we are now able to make this very significant step forward, giving the girls of the Cathedral Choir the same opportunity as the boys, and at the same time opening up fresh opportunities for children and young people right across the local community. The Cathedral Chapter is very grateful to the Governors and Headmaster of The King's School for their support for this, which will benefit the Cathedral, King's, and the City."

Summary of changes

There are two key objectives behind the changes being made:

- Ensuring that being a chorister in the cathedral choir affords equal opportunities to boy and girl choristers.
- Having a wide reach across Worcester and the surrounding area, presenting opportunities for as many people as possible, of all ages and from all backgrounds, to have access to the music department and cathedral.

To achieve this, the cathedral is:

- expanding its scheme of scholarships for choristers, in partnership with King's School, Worcester and King's St Alban's, in order to offer the same opportunities for boys and girls who wish to be a cathedral chorister;
- developing the role played by the Cathedral Voluntary Choir, which will become open to all boys and girls from the local area;
- setting up a new Youth Choir – the first of its kind at the cathedral catering specifically for singers between school years 9 and 13.