



Application Pack
Assistant Director of Music
September 2026

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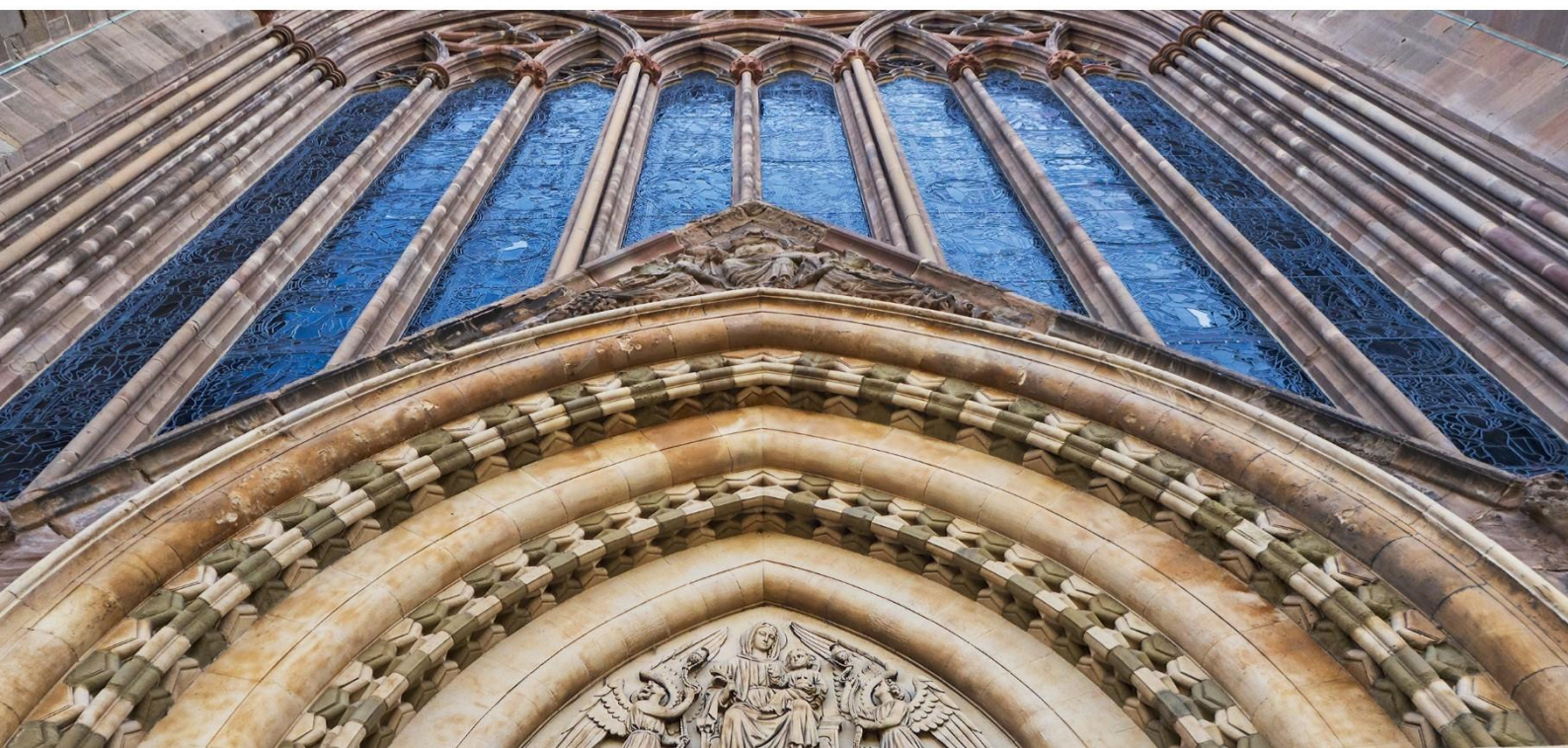
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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the role of Assistant Director of Music at Worcester Cathedral. We are looking to recruit an outstanding musician to this exciting role – someone who can play the organ to the highest standard, who can train and inspire the choristers of our Voluntary Choir, and who can work collaboratively to lead and develop the widely respected music team at Worcester Cathedral.

We do hope the following information will help you discern whether this is the right opportunity for you. If so, we look forward to receiving your application.



Music plays such an important role in the life of the cathedral, in worship, in our commitment to education, and in our relationships in the community. We value those moments when a plainsong psalm suddenly reminds us of our Benedictine heritage, or when a chorister first sings Tomkins' Responses, and realises they are carrying on a tradition handed down for centuries. We are grateful too for moments of innovation: a new piece, a new arrangement, which delight and surprise. We rejoice in the grand occasions when the Cathedral is filled with music and praise. Our music and worship are deeply rooted in the past but always moving us towards the future.

The Very Reverend Dr Stephen Edwards
Dean of Worcester





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About Worcester Cathedral

Worcester as a place to live and work

Worcester is a beautiful city, with the River Severn flowing through its heart, and a wealth of history and heritage that attracts visitors from all over the world. It has a good range of schools, cultural facilities and is in easy reach of the larger conurbations of the West Midlands. The city itself is well-served with shops, restaurants, and bars, and is easily accessible by train and road. Two significant projects have had a substantial impact on the environs of the cathedral – the development of Cathedral Square (where Elgar’s statue stands proudly), and the relandscaping of College Yard.



The city and wider region are home to a number of choral societies, orchestras, and other musical ensembles, and a vibrant festival scene, including the Three Choirs Festival (see more information below), The Elgar Festival, and the Worcester Festival.



The Cathedral

The Diocese of Worcester was created in 680. Bishop Oswald (961) founded a Benedictine monastic community attached to its Cathedral. Bishop Wulfstan (1062) survived the Norman conquest and began rebuilding the Cathedral in 1084. King John was among its later benefactors and asked to be buried within it. Prince Arthur, eldest son of Henry VII, is also buried in the Cathedral.

However, when his brother, Henry VIII, dissolved the monasteries, the shrines of Oswald and Wulfstan were destroyed and the Cathedral was refounded with the constitution of a Dean and Chapter. The King’s School was also founded at this time and continues to educate the boy choristers. The Cathedral suffered further damage during the Civil War and its organist Thomas Tomkins, like many of his contemporaries, was summarily removed from office by the Puritans.

The Cathedral was extensively restored during Victoria’s reign and a major project of restoration started in 1988 was completed in 2015. The Gerontius window celebrates the life and work of Edward Elgar, who both played and conducted in the Cathedral and was a lifelong friend of its organist Ivor Atkins, himself the longest-serving organist in its history.



Music at Worcester Cathedral

The Cathedral's music is widely known and appreciated both in the City of Worcester and wider across the County and Area. At the heart of Worcester Cathedral's worship is the monastic tradition of singing the *Opus Dei*. During term time, Evensong is sung every day except Tuesday, and there are three choral services on a Sunday. The Music Department forms an integral part of the structure and life of the worshipping community of the Cathedral.

The earliest recorded organist of Worcester Cathedral was Thomas the Organist (1240). Distinguished organists who have served the Cathedral more recently include Hugh Blair, David Willcocks, Douglas Guest, Christopher Robinson, Donald Hunt, Adrian Lucas, and Peter Nardone. Assistant organists who have gone on to work in other cathedrals include Harry Brama, Paul Trepte and Adrian Partington. A large number of former choristers have won choral scholarships at university and have continued into successful musical careers in many disciplines.

The Organs

The Kenneth Tickell Quire Organ (Op.65 instrument, completed in 2008) is a large, colourful and versatile instrument. The four manuals and pedals are contained within the two beautiful, gilded cases in the North and South Quire triforia and the console is located in a stylish loft in the South Quire Aisle. The pipework is entirely new except for an 18th century rank on the pedals and the historic Hope-Jones *Viole d'Orchestre* on the Solo. It is equipped with a wealth of playing aids to assist the player, including pistons to turn pages on a tablet (via Bluetooth) and a large bank of channels for general pistons. A specification for this instrument can be found in an [accompanying document](#).

There is also a three stop Chamber Organ designed by Tickell (Stopped Diapason 8, Flute 4 and Principal 2). The organ was designed for Worcester Cathedral and supplied in 2008.

The exciting possibility of bringing back into use the organ contained in the Gilbert Scott case, located in the South West Transept, has recently been taken up again, and in November 2025 sound from the organ was heard for the first time in approximately 20 years through some exploratory work undertaken by Harrison & Harrison. There is a steering group currently working on this project, and it is expected that the successful candidate will take a full and active role in moving this forward.

The Rodgers digital organ was installed in Worcester in 2006 for use during the construction of the Cathedral's new Tickell pipe organ. It now serves, in conjunction with the quire organ, as a nave instrument for concerts and larger services. It is the intention that this instrument will be retired upon completion of the transept organ project mentioned above.

A programme of weekly free recitals (organ, choral or instrumental) takes place during most of the academic year on Thursday lunchtimes, and in the first weekend in October there is a celebrity recital which commemorates the installation of the Quire Organ. The Assistant Director of Music takes the lead in the organisation of this series, with support as required from colleagues in the department.



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Worcester Cathedral Music Department

The Music Department is one of the largest teams in the Cathedral and includes the following posts:

Canon Precentor	<i>Currently vacant</i>
Organist and Director of Music	Mr Samuel Hudson
Assistant Director of Music	
Organ Scholar	Mr Zane Soonawalla (from September 2026)
Music Administrator	Mr Alan Sheldon
Choristers, Lay Clerks, Choral Scholars, and Chaperones	

The weekly schedule for the music department is as follows:

Monday:	08:15-08:55	Morning chorister practice
	11am	Music Department weekly meeting
	17:30	Evensong
Tuesday:	08:15-08:55	Morning chorister practice
	18:00-19:30	Youth Choir rehearsal
Wednesday:	17:30	Evensong (choral scholars only)
	18:30-19:30	Voluntary Choir rehearsal
Thursday:	08:15-08:55	Morning chorister practice
	17:30	Evensong
Friday:	08:15-08:55	Morning chorister practice
	17:30	Evensong (<i>alternating full choir and lower voices</i>)
Saturday:	17:30	Evensong (<i>soprano lay clerks and lower voices</i>)
Sunday:	10:30	Eucharist
	16:00	Evensong
	18:30	Evening Worship (voluntary choir)

The current day off for the Assistant Director of Music is Friday





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Worcester Cathedral's Choirs

The **Cathedral Choir** is currently made up of up to 20 boy and girl choristers singing in one combined treble line, and professional adult singers who provide the lower choral lines. There are six Principal Lay Clerks (two of each part) who sing at all services during the week and at weekends, and three Assistant Lay Clerks who sing at weekends and major feasts only. There are three Choral Scholars who sing at every service except Evensong on a Friday.

In addition, a team of four newly appointed soprano lay clerks have joined the Cathedral Choir to sing at one service per week (usually Evensong on Saturday). This initiative, supported by a Cathedral Music Trust grant, is one of the first opportunities of its kind in the country for professional sopranos to contribute regularly to cathedral music.

Furthermore, the Cathedral is proud to have three choirs made up of volunteers

The **Voluntary Choir**, founded in the 1870s and known colloquially as 'The Vollers', while previously a full SATB choir, is now a flourishing upper voice choir open to boys and girls of chorister age from the city and wider area. The Voluntary Choir sings an Evening Worship service every Sunday at 6.30pm.

The **Youth Choir**, founded in 2021, represents an opportunity for teenage boys and girls in year 9 and above from across the area to engage with the cathedral music

department, meeting on one evening per week to rehearse, and contributing to a range of services and events at the cathedral and in the local area. Many choristers from the cathedral choir and voluntary choir progress into the youth choir, allowing the cathedral a welcome opportunity to enable them to continue to contribute to the cathedral's music.



Credit ©Michael Whitefoot

The **Worcester Cathedral Chamber Choir** is a mixed adult choir, founded in 1998. It is still directed by its founder (and former long-serving lay clerk), Stephen Shellard, and sings occasional services and concerts in the Cathedral while maintaining a profile in the area through visiting other churches and venues for concerts and services.

The Assistant Director of music serves as principal accompanist for the Cathedral Choir and under current arrangements takes responsibility for running and directing the Voluntary Choir and Youth Choir.



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Worcester Cathedral's Choirs

Worcester Festival Choral Society

Worcester Festival Choral Society (WFCS), founded in 1861, is one of the oldest and most prestigious choral societies in Britain. The Society had close associations with the Elgar family from its early days, with Sir Edward Elgar leading the WFCS Band in the 1890s and often conducting his own works at its concerts.

Today the Society's conductor is Worcester Cathedral's Director of Music, Samuel Hudson.

It is the custom of The Worcester Festival Choral Society to appoint the Assistant Director of Music as its accompanist (remunerated separately), including playing the organ or chamber organ in concerts as required by the repertoire. The society rehearses in the Cathedral on Monday evenings and usually gives three concerts per year with professional orchestra and soloists (see www.wfcs.online for more information).

The Three Choirs Festival

The Three Choirs Festival is the longest running non-competitive classical music festival in the world, boasting over 300 years of history, and features some of the world's leading orchestras (the festival's current orchestra-in-residence is the Philharmonia), conductors and soloists. The cathedral choirs of the three cities play a central role in the festival, jointly singing services during the week (including a live Choral Evensong broadcast on BBC Radio 3) and performing their own concert. The festival is to be held in Gloucester in the summer of 2026, returning to Worcester in 2027.



Credit ©Michael Whitefoot

Subject to a separate contract from the Three Choirs Festival Ltd., which is an independent charity, participation in the festival also commands an additional fee. Duties for assistant organists vary from year to year, and can include:

- accompanying rehearsals of the local contingent of the festival chorus, and some massed rehearsals (in home years)
- assisting with the preparation of the cathedral choir
- accompanying the Festival Youth choir rehearsals (usually once every 3 years)
- Performing as an organist in evening concerts (as dictated by the repertoire)
- Playing Evensong services during the festival (particularly in home years, which include a BBC Radio 3 broadcast).

Job Description

Job title: Assistant Director of Music (ADoM)

Department: Music Department

Reporting to: The Director of Music

Hours of work: 38 hours per week

Overall purpose of the post:

1. To engage fully in assisting the Organist and Director of Music, leading the musical elements of the Cathedral's life;
2. To accompany, on the organ, the Cathedral Choir for the majority of choral services;
3. To take delegated responsibility for the running and direction of the Cathedral Voluntary Choir;
4. To play a key role in the music team, in all aspects of its operation and to deputize as required for the Director of Music.

Role Responsibilities

Direction of the Cathedral Choirs and Organist duties

1. To play the organ and accompany the Cathedral Choir as directed by the Organist & Director of Music;
2. To have an overview of all musical elements at the Cathedral and play a key role in supporting the Director of Music in organizing allocation of responsibilities;
3. To assist in training the Cathedral Choir (typically taking one morning chorister rehearsal each week, and leading separate sessions for probationers on other days), ensuring the highest musical standards in worship at all services;
4. To lead, recruit and direct the Voluntary Choir, including collaboration with partner schools;
5. To have first refusal on accompanying the Chamber Choir when they sing services in the Cathedral, for which an additional fee may be payable;
6. To play for Diocesan and other external services (e.g. weddings and funerals), for which an additional fee may be payable;
7. To work alongside the Organ Scholar and to develop their skills and expertise;
8. To work closely with the Director of Music in the musical and logistical planning of tours, recording, concerts and other related projects.

Administration and Management

9. To assist in appropriate and diligent management of cathedral choristers, and to ensure that safeguarding is prioritized across the Song School and other Cathedral activities;

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10. To attend the weekly music department meeting and play a key role as a senior member of the Cathedral's music team in ensuring all Cathedral policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to within the music team;
11. To actively contribute to the termly meetings with Lay Clerks, working with the Precentor and Director of Music to ensure robust communication and that mutual areas of concern are addressed;
12. To attend frequent liaison meetings with King's School relating to choristers and other relevant matters;
13. To oversee management of the Cathedral Music Library, and to support the Organ Scholar in their day-to-day running of the library;
14. To assist in the provision of printed music (e.g. psalms, hymn tunes, choral music editions) for the Cathedral Choir and for service sheets;
15. To administrate the weekly lunchtime recital series, including booking performers and producing publicity materials and programmes;
16. To sit on the committee of the Worcester Cathedral Choristers Association as an ex-officio member and to support the work of the WCCA in fundraising for the cathedral's choirs;
17. To assist in ensuring the proper maintenance of the cathedral organ and supporting any major projects relating to the organ or other music related matters, working with the Cathedral Surveyor of the Fabric and others as required;
18. To work with other Departments on developing plans to contribute to achieving the Cathedral's mission and vision.

External Working

19. To play an active role in the Three Choirs Festival, particularly in years when hosted at Worcester and to work with the Director of Music in ensuring strong liaison with Hereford and Gloucester Cathedrals. This includes accompanying rehearsals for the Worcester contingent of the chorus and playing for Festival services and concerts as required. This role is not part of the cathedral contract and, as such, commands additional fees;
20. It is expected that the Assistant Director of Music will adopt the role of accompanist to the Worcester Festival Choral Society. This role is not part of the cathedral contract and, as such, commands additional fees;
21. To participate in relevant national Cathedral networks and to be an active member of the Association of Assistant Cathedral Organists. The Cathedral funds attendance at these twice-yearly conference meetings;

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22. To work closely with the bishop and other Diocesan staff on major Diocesan Services;
23. To develop external relationships with schools and other bodies, especially through the Choir Church project and to encourage recruitment to the Voluntary Choir, but also in promoting the Cathedral and its music to a wider audience;
24. The ADoM may be asked to sit on committees of local music organisations, such as the West Mercia Friends of the Organ and the Severn Arts Music Education Hub Steering Group.

Health & Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, you must take reasonable care for your own Health and Safety and that of any other person who may be affected by your acts or omissions. In addition, you must co-operate with the Organisation on Health and Safety and not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for your health, safety or welfare.

Safeguarding

This role requires an Enhanced DBS check.

The Cathedral is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk who visit our premises and precinct. All staff and volunteers are expected to actively demonstrate a commitment to a culture of safeguarding by:

- Understanding and adhering to cathedral safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Maintaining professional boundaries and demonstrating behaviour that prioritises safety and wellbeing.
- Taking responsibility for identifying and promptly reporting and safeguarding concerns in line with the policy and procedures.
- Undertaking safeguarding training and fulfilling any specific safeguarding duties required in their role.
- Actively contributing to an environment where everyone feels safe, valued and empowered to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

Cathedral ID badges must be worn at all times while on duty. Badges are for use by the named individual only.

Person Specification

The post requires the dedication of a skilled Christian musician, whose faith seeks expression in the enhancement of worship and the communication of the Christian faith through music in the daily round of worship. It is expected that the Assistant Director of Music will offer inspiration to the Lay Clerks, Choral Scholars and Choristers. Good relationships with the choir, Cathedral colleagues and members of the Cathedral community are essential to the post. It is expected that the successful candidate will play a full part in the Christian life of the Cathedral community.

Person specification

You will need to demonstrate the following:

Essential

- A passion and vision for how music can contribute to the worship life of Worcester Cathedral and its wider community, with a strong personal motivation for seeing how your own Christian faith is worked out through the expression of worship through music. (A/Int)
- Experience of playing a key role in leading the music traditions within a Cathedral or similar context and familiarity with the shape of the church's year and music in the Cathedral tradition. (A)
- An ability to play the organ with flare and commitment in the disciplines of choral accompaniment, liturgical playing and repertoire performance. (Aud)
- Demonstrable ability to direct and lead music within the context of choral services. (Aud)
- Experience and ability to motivate, train and inspire girl and boy choristers, lay clerks, organists and other adults contributing to the use of music in worship. (A/Int)
- Understanding of safeguarding, including policies, procedures and culture, and how this leadership role plays a part in maintaining safe practice throughout the work of the Music Department. (A/Int)
- Ability to represent the Cathedral externally with funders and other stakeholders, and to build networks with relevant agencies, including other Cathedrals. (A)





Person Specification

- Administrative competence, including the ability to plan, schedule and work to deadlines, and is competent in IT (A/Int)
- Leadership presence and gravitas (A/Int)
- Ability to format, check and present music liturgy
- Ability to relate well with choristers and handle maintaining discipline and behaviour
- Music Qualification at first degree level/Associate of the Royal College of Organists (A/Int)
- Strong team player (A/Int)
- Ability to communicate well within teams (A/Int)

Desirable

- Technical music skills including music arranging
- Experience of organizing trips, including overseas visits
- Understanding of marketing and profile-raising strategies, including recruitment of choristers
- Fellow of the Royal College of Organists
- Knowledge of Organ maintenance

Key: A – Application Aud – Audition Int – Interview





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Terms and Conditions of the Post

The post will attract a salary of £37,000 per annum, plus other benefits. These include in-service death benefit and generous leave arrangements. Accommodation is not offered with this post.

Pension scheme

All eligible members of staff will be automatically enrolled into the occupational Staff Pension Scheme, operated by Royal London. Contributions will be payable by the member of staff at 4% of basic salary and a 5% contribution by the Chapter. The Chapter may amend the pension scheme at any time.

Staff Discount

All employees will receive a 10% discount on purchases in the Gift Shop and Café within the Cathedral.

Employee Assistance Programme

All employees and their immediate family have access to a range of confidential support through our commissioned employee assistance programme.



How to apply

Your application should include:

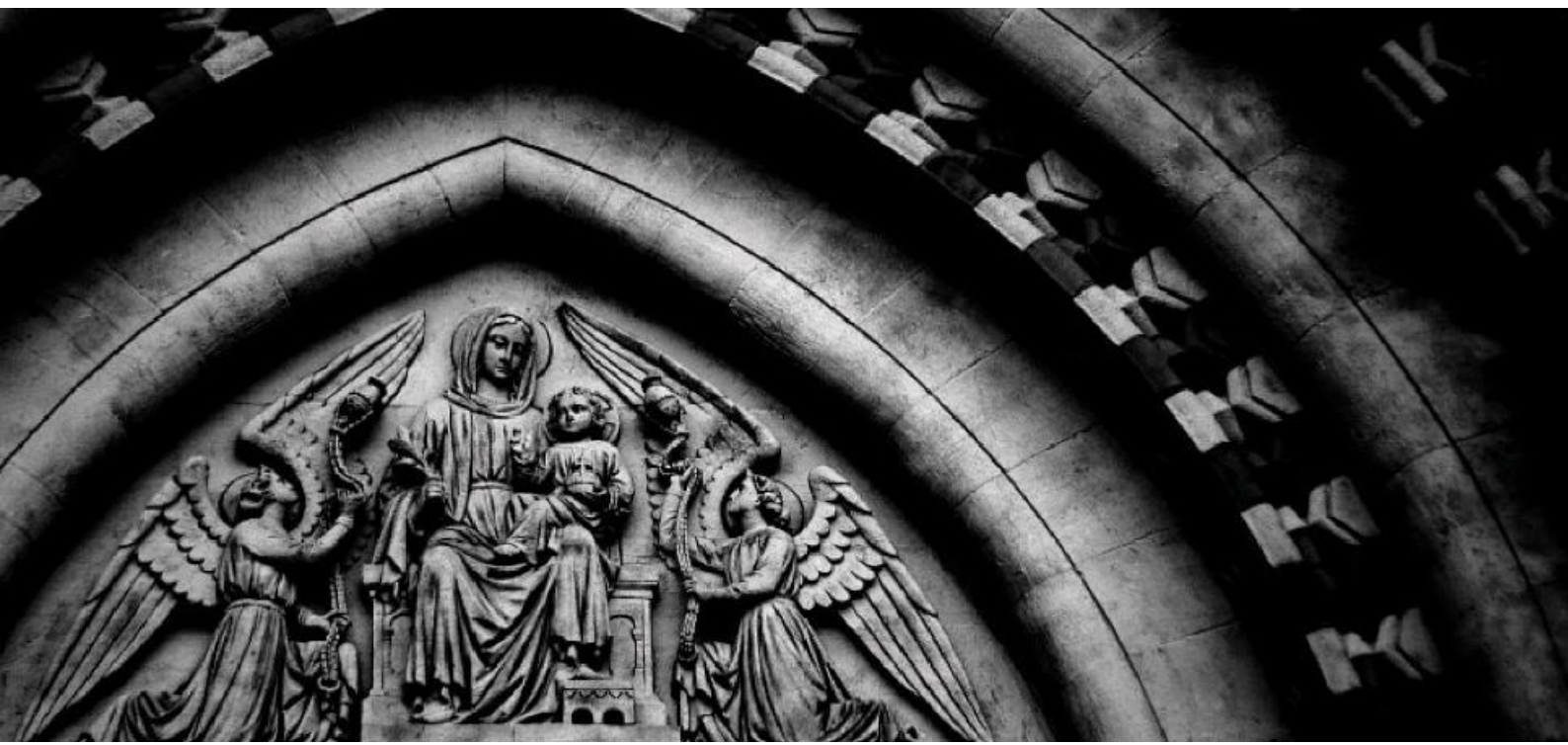
- A full CV containing education and musical and professional qualifications and full employment history;
- A brief covering letter (not more than two sides of A4) saying how your skills and experiences match the requirements of the post;
- Details (name, address, telephone number and e-mail) of three referees who would be able to speak about your relevant experience and personal qualities. One must be your current employer (referees will only be contacted with your permission); and
- Your contact details including daytime and evening telephone numbers.

Potential candidates are welcome to contact the Organist and Director of Music, Samuel Hudson, for an informal discussion about the role (01905 732916 or samuelhudson@worcestercathedral.org.uk)

Applications should be submitted by 12 noon on Tuesday 21 April 2026, marked for the attention of the Chief Operating Officer by email to: jobs@worcestercathedral.org.uk

Interviews/auditions will be held in Worcester on Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 April 2026.

More information about the process will be provided to the short-listed candidates nearer the time.





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www.worcestercathedral.co.uk



Worcester Cathedral is fully committed to Equal Opportunity policies.