



'a phenomenal feat of musicianship' (The New Yorker)

Choir | Consort | Orchestra | Education
Jeffrey Skidmore OBE Artistic Director & Conductor

Associate Conductorships application pack

Ex Cathedra is delighted to offer a unique opportunity for an Associate Conductor to spend five months working intensively with the ensemble. The successful candidate will shadow Jeffrey Skidmore OBE, observe and conduct rehearsals of a wide range of repertoire, conduct at least one main season concert, get involved in the artistic planning of the organisation, meet the composers we are commissioning, and engage with research projects we have in the pipeline.

You will work closely with the many different elements of Ex Cathedra: our chamber choir of professional and professionally-trained amateur singers; professional Consort (10 singers); Baroque Orchestra comprising leading period-instrumentalists; graduate choral Scholars; Student Scholars from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire; Academy of Vocal Music youth training choirs; and Vocal Tutors, who deliver award-winning projects in schools, hospitals and the community.

Ex Cathedra performs the widest range of repertoire of any UK choir and you will be involved in period performances of Purcell's *The Indian Queen*, Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers, Latin American Baroque music and Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, through to the premieres of new commissions from Alec Roth and Stevie Wishart.

This is a fantastic opportunity to develop your career, working with a group of outstanding musicians who seek artistic excellence and enjoy making music together. You will also be well-placed as we begin to identify an Assistant Conductor, and eventually a successor to Jeffrey Skidmore.

Subject to funding, we envisage offering a further four Associate Conductorships to run consecutively from August 2019 to June 2021. If you are unavailable for this first term you are strongly encouraged to register your interest for future terms now. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee at present that we will secure funding for all five terms.

What we are offering

Successful candidates will receive payment of £5,750 plus agreed expenses, and a schedule agreed at the outset.

During the course of your 5-month term, you will:

- attend and take part in up to 20 rehearsals covering a wide range of repertoire, rehearsing the ensemble for at least a part of most rehearsals
- attend c.10 concerts, conducting at least one of them
- give input into the repertoire for the concert you conduct, amongst other opportunities to discuss detailed programming with Jeffrey
- attend meetings with Jeffrey ahead of each project
- attend meetings with composers, researchers, and the General Manager as part of longer-term artistic planning, musician fixing etc
- attend feedback sessions with Jeffrey

Your commitment

If you are offered and accept an Associate Conductorship, we will send you a fixed-term contract setting out our expectations. In short:

- you are expected to complete the term and make the most of the opportunities provided
- you must reliably fulfil the commitments as agreed in your schedule at the outset, we will do our best to accommodate any prior commitments you may have
- you will write 1-2 short accounts of your experience during the term to help us report to funders
- we expect you to acknowledge your Associate Conductorship with Ex Cathedra in your future biographies

We will undertake a DBS safeguarding check before you observe any of our work with children or vulnerable adults.

Who is eligible?

We are seeking the best candidates and anticipate that the successful candidates will be at different stages of their careers. We expect that you will have studied music to degree level and conducting at postgraduate level, or be qualified by equivalent experience.

How to apply

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter by email to peter@excathedra.co.uk, or by post to 'Peter Trethewey, General Manager, Ex Cathedra, CBSO Centre, Berkley Street, Birmingham B1 2LF'. Please include a list of rehearsals and concerts you are conducting during October and November as Jeffrey Skidmore will seek to meet and observe shortlisted candidates during that period.

It would be very helpful if you can also arrange for two references to be sent to us ahead of the closing date, or included within your application. If for any reason this is not possible, please provide details of two people we can contact should you be offered the role.

Your covering letter should reflect your performance interests, experience and aspirations, and how that relates to the sort of repertoire Ex Cathedra performs. Tell us why you think you would be the ideal candidate, and how you hope the scheme will help you.

Deadline: please submit your application by Monday 8 October 2018, 5pm. If you are not shortlisted or appointed during the first term we will consider you for future terms.

If you are not available for the first term it would be very helpful if you apply or register your interest at the earliest possible stage explaining your circumstances and providing dates during spring 2019 that Jeffrey could meet and observe you.

Ex Cathedra is an equal opportunities employer and values diversity.

We look forward to hearing from you.

About Ex Cathedra

Ex Cathedra is a leading UK choir and Early Music ensemble, based in Birmingham. Founded in 1969 by Jeffrey Skidmore, we are a unique musical resource, comprising specialist chamber choir, vocal Consort, period-instrument orchestra and a thriving education programme.

Ex Cathedra is known for seeking out the best, the unfamiliar and the unexpected in the choral repertoire. We aim to set the highest standards of excellence in performance and training. We perform perhaps the widest repertoire of any professional choir in the country; our 2018-19 season will include repertoire from Tallis *Spem in alium*, Purcell, Latin American Baroque music and lots of Bach to Alec Roth, James MacMillan, Roxanna Panufnik and Liz Johnson.

We present a series of concerts in Birmingham, where we are a resident ensemble at Town Hall & Symphony Hall, across the Midlands, and in London. We also enjoy invitations to appear at festivals and concert series across the UK and abroad. High-profile performances have included Stockhausen's *World Parliament* at the BBC Proms and the world premiere of *A Shakespeare Masque* by the Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy and composer Sally Beamish watched by 80k people on the BBC iPlayer (UK) and website (internationally). The group has performed as far afield as New York and Tel Aviv. There have been collaborations with Fretwork viol consort, The City Musick, His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, Concerto Palatino, Birmingham Opera Company, Sinfonia New York, the CBSO, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Quebecois dance company Cas Public, the Shakespeare Institute, and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Ex Cathedra has made a significant number of highly regarded recordings for ASV, Hyperion, NMC, Orchid Classics, SOMM, Signum, and on its own label. *A French Baroque Diva* won a Gramophone Award in 2015, with *Brazilian Adventures* and our recording of Alec Roth's *A Time to Dance* amongst recent releases. A CD of choral music by Roxanna Panufnik *Celestial Bird*, featuring two Ex Cathedra commissions is forthcoming in 2018.

Our extensive programme of award-winning schools, health and community projects is delivered by a team of expert Vocal Tutors, who are all members of Ex Cathedra. We have worked with over 700 primary schools across the UK and in Belgium, China, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand. *Singing Medicine* reaches children on 18 wards every week at Birmingham Children's Hospital, and *Singing Pathways* provides a weekly group session with adult stroke and dementia patients at Solihull Hospital.

Nurturing talent is at the heart of our work, and our four Academy of Vocal Music choirs provide a choral training pathway for children and young people ages 4-18. The Academy choirs regularly perform alongside Ex Cathedra in our concert series and appear in their own right.

Over the years, Ex Cathedra has played a role in the development of some outstanding musicians. A long list of singers credit Jeffrey and Ex Cathedra for the opportunities they received at the beginning of their careers. Our choral Scholarships programme provides a year-long scheme for recent graduates seeking to establish their professional singing career, and our Student Scholarships provides parallel singers based in the vocal department at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

www.excathedra.co.uk