



*“one of Britain’s very best choirs”* (New York Times)

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

## Member of the Board of Trustees

### Role Description

Ex Cathedra is a world-class choir with a portfolio of projects that lead the sector in the fields of education, community and the role of arts in healthcare. For more than 50 years we have been producing inspirational concerts and participatory projects.

We are seeking three trustees to join the Board and help steer Ex Cathedra through an exciting period for the organisation. As we rebuild following the pandemic, we are embarking on projects that develop our co-creative practice, expanding our work with diverse communities who do not traditionally engage with choral music. We have also begun the process of identifying a successor to our founding artistic director Jeffrey Skidmore as we look ahead to the next 50 years.

We welcome all expressions of interest, and at this time are particularly interested to hear from people who can support our development in one or more of the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing - expanding our network and maximising opportunities
- Finance - trustee oversight and support for our skilled, experienced finance team
- HR - recognising our diverse mix of employed and freelance staff, scholars, adult and young amateur singers and participants
- A professional musician or artistic programmer

With the exception of the last category, you do not need to have experience in singing, music or the arts, but you must share our belief that everyone should have an equitable opportunity to experience the physical and wellbeing benefits of singing together and the power of inspirational choral music.

We are committed to building an inclusive and diverse organisation that reflects our region and the communities with whom we work. We recognise that diversity brings a wealth of benefits and strongly encourage applications from all interested people with related experience, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, trans and non-binary candidates, LGBTQ+ candidates and those who have a disability. If you have any access needs relevant to the process, please get in touch with us directly to discuss them.

We look to all our trustees to make a positive contribution to our endeavours to promote diversity in all our work, particularly in terms of broadening our audience reach.

*“a phenomenal feat of musicianship”*  
(New Yorker)

**Time commitment** You would be expected to attend quarterly Board meetings and support the work of the organisation between meetings, including by attending relevant subgroups. This is expected to equate to c.1-2 days per month.

**Location** Ex Cathedra is based in Birmingham so trustees must be willing and able to attend events and meetings in Birmingham as appropriate.

**Terms** The role of trustee is voluntary, but expenses can be reimbursed. Trustees serve a 3-year term, renewal to a maximum of 9 years. Owing to our extensive activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults, we ask all trustees to undergo a DBS check at the appropriate level (arranged by Ex Cathedra) and to sign up to the DBS Update Service.



Top left: Liz Dilnot Johnson's *When a Child is a Witness*, Coventry Cathedral, Feb 2022 with Kadialy Kouyate  
Bottom left: David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus*, Symphony Hall, Jan 2022 with the CBSO and Keneish Dance  
Top centre: Akash Parekar from Milap close-up from Roxanna Panufnik's *Unending Love*, Town Hall, May 2022  
Centre: Stockhausen's *Mitwoch aus Licht* with Birmingham Opera Company, 2012  
Bottom centre: Tallis' *Spem in alium* at Douai Abbey for Newbury Spring Festival, 2018  
Right: annual Good Friday Bach *St Matthew Passion* at Symphony Hall, 2019

## Principal responsibilities

Trustees are expected to accept specific responsibilities in line with statutory requirements and good practice.

### Attendance at meetings

Trustees are expected to make every effort to attend Board meetings, which take place four times a year in Birmingham, on a regular basis. Online attendance may be possible

### Effective functioning of the Board - trustees:

- approve all board appointments
- monitor board appointment procedures to ensure they are open and effective
- ensure that the board includes members with an appropriate balance of skills and experience and has an appropriate gender and diversity balance.
- ensure that there is a regular periodic review of the performance and effectiveness of trustees
- raise and agree items for discussion at meetings, including policies to be reviewed

### Strategic Planning - trustees:

- ensure that impact and excellence for audiences, learners and other beneficiaries are at the heart of our decision-making, driven by a value-led and innovative culture
- approve, adopt and review business plans
- approve the annual programme of activity
- review the scope and compliance with any funding agreements and/or service level agreements with major funders, including applications for such funding

### Policy - trustees:

- determine policies subject to board approval and establish review programmes
- ensure compliance with prevailing legislation
- review the annual risk assessment and agree required actions to mitigate identified risks

### Monitoring and evaluation - trustees:

- approve minutes of all board meetings
- review regular reports from and monitor progress of any subgroup meetings
- review reports on activity and other matters relevant to decision making

**Finance** - trustees:

- approve annual budgets
- approve any change in agreed expenditure/activity that would materially affect the financial forecast
- review quarterly management accounts and financial forecasts against budgets
- review and adopt the annual audited financial statements and approve the appointment of auditors

**Personnel** - trustees are collectively responsible for:

- recruitment and appointment of the Artistic Director and General Manager. Individual members may also be involved in the recruitment of other senior roles as agreed
- reviewing the performance of the executive team and agreement of annual pay for staff
- individual board members may, as agreed, informally mentor and support key members of the executive team

**External relations and fundraising** - trustees:

- act as passionate and committed advocates for Ex Cathedra, using their networks to develop appropriate contacts, and attending concerts, education, learning and participation activities on a regular basis.



Members of our Junior Academy of Vocal Music

## Appointment process

### 1. An informal conversation

We are happy to have an optional, informal conversation with anyone who would like to know more. The simplest way to request this is to email our General Manager Peter Trethewey - [peter@excathedra.co.uk](mailto:peter@excathedra.co.uk) who can arrange for you to talk to Peter Phillips (Chair).

### 2. Expression of interest and CV

If you are interested in applying then please send us a letter together with a CV or equivalent background information addressed to:

- Peter Phillips, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Ex Cathedra, CBSO Centre, Berkley Street, Birmingham B1 2LF
- or by email to [peter@excathedra.co.uk](mailto:peter@excathedra.co.uk) (Peter Trethewey, General Manager) and marked FAO Peter Phillips

The closing date for the open call is Monday 20 June.

Please note that we guarantee an interview for anyone who fulfils the minimum criteria for these roles and is from a background that is under-represented in the culture sector.

To help us monitor and improve our ability to reach a range of applicants, we encourage applicants for performer, staff and trustee vacancies to complete our [Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form](#), which is anonymous and not part of the selection process.

### 3. Meeting with Chair, Artistic Director & General Manager

Once we have received an expression of interest we may invite you to meet Peter Phillips (Chair), Jeffrey Skidmore (Artistic Director) and Peter Trethewey (General Manager).

We will acknowledge all expressions of interest and ensure you are clear about the process at every step beyond that.



Rebecca Ledgard & Marianne Ayling deliver *Singing Medicine* at Birmingham Children's Hospital

## About Ex Cathedra



**Ex Cathedra is unique, a world-class choir that leads the choral sector in the fields of education, community and arts in health. For more than 50 years we have been producing inspirational concerts and participatory projects.**

We have developed an international reputation for our performances of the best, the unfamiliar and the unexpected in the choral repertoire, from the Latin American Baroque to Stockhausen. We take pride in developing the choral artform - researching and reviving hidden gems, commissioning work, and developing inclusive, co-creative ways of engaging audiences and participants.

We present a series of concerts in Birmingham - where we are an Associate Artist at Town Hall & Symphony Hall - across the Midlands, and in London. We enjoy invitations to appear at festivals and concert series across the UK and abroad.

We place training and development at the heart of our work and have developed a pathway from our Academy of Vocal Music training choirs (aged 4-18) to our graduate Scholars, Associate Conductors and emerging soloists. Our distinctive model has also provided unique opportunities for some of the region's most talented amateur singers.

Our team of expert Vocal Tutors delivers an extensive programme of award-winning schools and community projects. We have worked with children in over 1,000 primary schools across the UK and abroad. Our suite of *Singing Medicine* projects provide wellbeing benefits for children in hospital, young people receiving mental health support, stroke patients, and Long Covid recovery.

As we look ahead to the next 10 years, we face a period of exciting challenges. We are preparing for the phased succession of our Artistic Director; actively seeking to diversify representation amongst our performers; staff and board, must rebuild after the pandemic; and overcome structural funding shortfalls to confidently expand and achieve our potential in the face of modest public funding.

**WATCH:** find a selection of films at [www.youtube.com/excathedrabirmingham](https://www.youtube.com/excathedrabirmingham)

“one of Britain's very best choirs... superb” ([New York Times](#))

“proof, if proof were needed, of why Ex Cathedra are regarded as one of the UK’s elite choirs” ([www.seenandheard-international.com](#))

“Under the leadership of Jeffrey Skidmore this ensemble has acquired a justly-deserved reputation as one of the UK’s finest chamber choirs. This disc [Celestial Bird] will surely enhance its reputation still further. It also serves to remind us that though they made their name for their historically informed performances of Baroque music, much of it rare, they have consistently been highly effective advocates for the choral music of our own time.” ([www.musicweb-international.com](#))

“possibly the best choral experience I have ever experienced as a member of the audience...I was completely absorbed from start to finish. I closed my eyes at times and was transported into the firmament. It was magical. I was enthralled.” ([Arts Council England assessor](#))

“Being a professional choral singer is such a unique vocation, with no real guide book on how to go about your work. Training with Ex Cathedra is that guide book which every young singer wants - lessons in how to be a professional in a safe, supportive environment. I am hugely grateful for this opportunity.” ([Ellie Sperling, 2018-19 Scholar](#))

“I really can't think of a comparative scheme in which a conductor is able to experience the breadth and depth of an organisation, from rehearsals to board meetings.” ([Sarah Latto, Associate Conductor, Spring 2019](#))

“We just want to say a huge thank you for what you do. When Marianne (I think that was her name, the lady with the horses 😊) first visited [redacted] on ward 18 at BCH some time early this year, our little girl was so overwhelmed by all the pokes and treatments and strangers and drugs that make her feel sick that she was quite traumatised and withdrawn. Marianne got out a horse hand puppet and gently sang with us - even though [redacted] didn't want to engage. She left the soft horse puppet behind which was then cuddled for the next few days - and when ‘the singing lady’ came back to fetch her horse [redacted] was already more willing to play along. And so she came more and more out of her shell and back to her usual cheeky self - the one who chose the super sticky slug in the bravery box to play pranks on everybody which eventually turned into the slimy slug song 😊. I strongly believe that experience of song and the soft hand puppet to cuddle was the beginning of her remarkable recovery!” ([Parent of Singing Medicine patient](#))

“[Redacted] has been part of the Junior Academy and Girl’s Academy for a number of years and has gained so much from the experience. She has loved taking part in *The Nutcracker* at the Hippodrome, *St John Passion* at Symphony Hall and many other projects - amazing opportunities, which would not otherwise be available to her. These academies have expanded her horizons, given her confidence, which she did not have before - to sing to large audiences and in professional performances. This is a fantastic experience, we feel very lucky to be part of it.” ([Parent of Academy of Vocal Music singer](#))

“I have to confess that I had a little moment when the children were singing in the mall... I thought it was wonderful and I know from the sheer abandonment and exuberance that my children displayed that they did too.” ([Deputy Headteacher](#))