



*"one of Britain's very best choirs"* (New York Times)

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

## Ex Cathedra Scholars Information & application pack 2023-24

*"Being a professional choral singer is such a unique vocation, with no real guidebook on how to go about your work. Training with Ex Cathedra is that guidebook which every young singer wants - lessons in how to be a professional in a safe, supportive environment."*

(Ellie Sperling, 2018-19 Scholar)

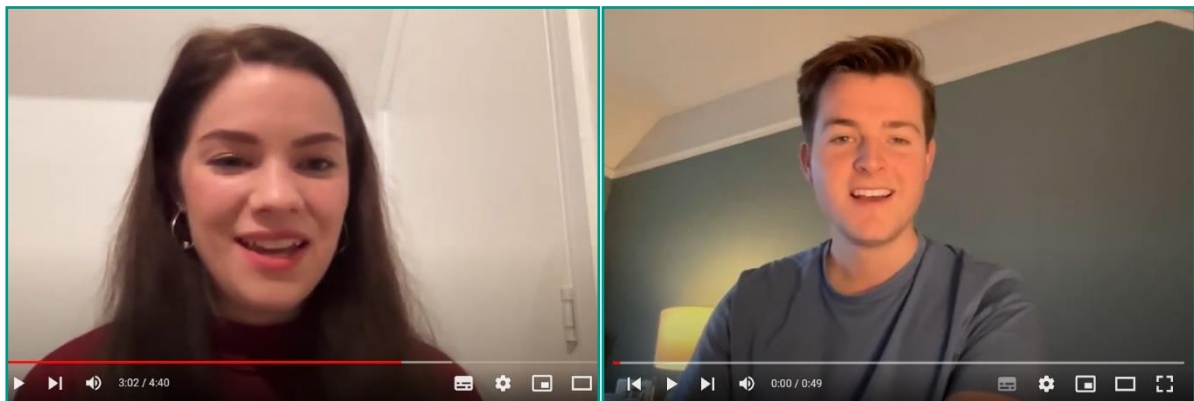
**What is it:** A year-long choral Scholarship, worth up to £4100 paid in equal monthly instalments, for up to 4 of the UK's very best recent graduate singers.

**Am I eligible?** Yes - if you are completing your degree this summer, or have finished in the past 2-3 years, you are not continuing in education, and you are seeking to develop a career as a professional singer

**Apply by:** Monday 12 June 2023, 5pm

Complete the application form and indicative availability sheet, and return with a reference from your singing teacher or equivalent

**Auditions:** Friday 23 June 2023 - CBSO Centre, Birmingham (save all day).  
If you are shortlisted we will communicate the timetable to you on or by Friday 16 June 2023. The day will include group workshops as well as an individual audition, so please save the whole day for now, and let us know with your application form if there is anything you need us to try and accommodate.



Two former Scholars have recorded short videos, explaining how their year with Ex Cathedra helped them. Click each image to watch, or the links below:

- Margaret Lingas: <https://youtu.be/ZQdoJwvIKrg>
- Sebastian Hill: [https://youtu.be/4Ys8PO\\_BqJw](https://youtu.be/4Ys8PO_BqJw)

## About Ex Cathedra

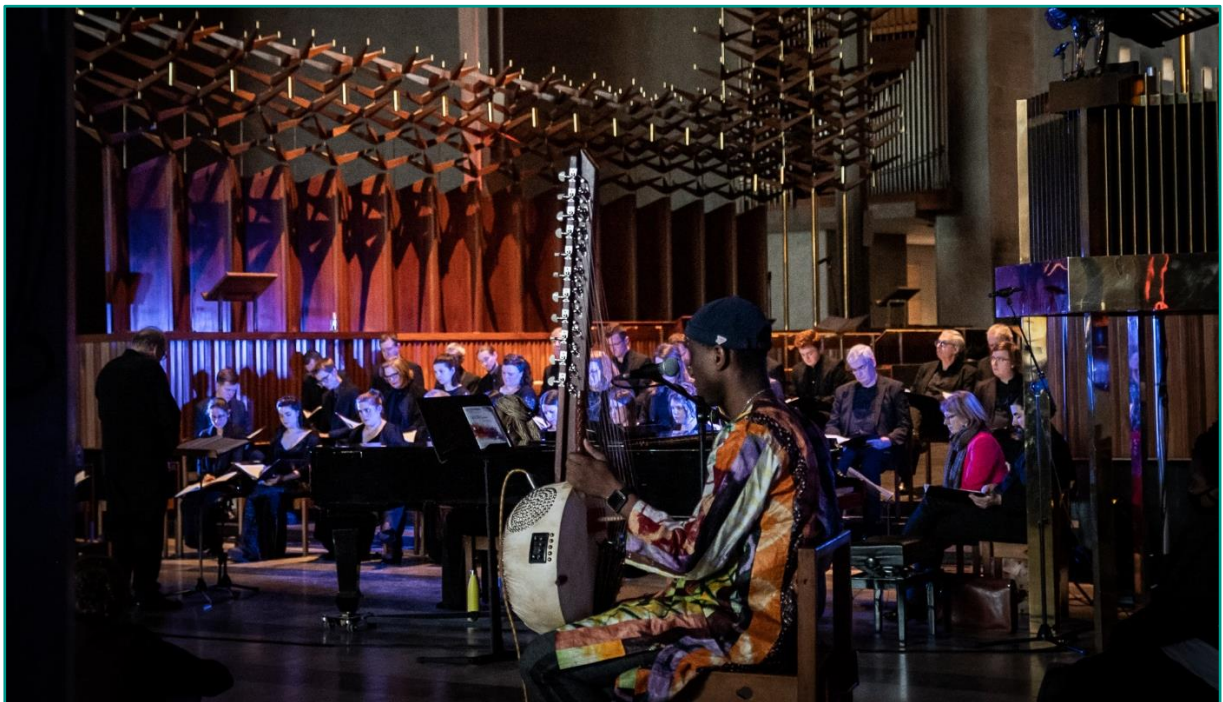
Hailed as “one of Britain’s very best choirs” (New York Times), Ex Cathedra is a world-class vocal ensemble which leads the choral sector in the fields of performance, learning and wellbeing.

For more than 50 years we have been producing highly acclaimed concerts and participatory projects, and nurturing young musicians from our youth training choirs to our Scholar schemes.

We enjoy an international reputation for our performances of the best, the unfamiliar and the unexpected, and take pride in developing the repertoire through researching and reviving little-known gems, commissioning new work, and developing exciting ways of engaging audiences and participants. We perform amongst the widest repertoire of any professional choir in the country - repertoire in 2023-24 reaches from Byrd to Bach, Handel, Rachmaninoff, Bacharach, and a CD of music by Liz Dilnot Johnson, one of our composers-in-residence.

Jeffrey Skidmore founded Ex Cathedra in 1969, and his track record of identifying and nurturing young singers is unrivalled. The list of singers who credit Jeffrey and Ex Cathedra for supporting their early career includes Carolyn Sampson, Paul Agnew (Associate Musical Director of Les Arts Florissants), Nigel Short (Tenebrae), Benjamin Hulett, Andrew Tortise, Marcus Farnsworth, Samuel Boden, Patrick Dunachie (Kings Singers), Nick Ashby (Kings Singers) and many more. Around half of our recent Scholars now sing regularly with Ex Cathedra as established professional singers, including as soloists in our main season.

We’re delighted to invite applications for the sixth year of our Scholarships scheme. You can read more about former and current Scholars [on our website](#), several of whom now work with us regularly as professional singers and as soloists.



Ex Cathedra performs Liz Dilnot Johnson’s “When a Child is a Witness”, co-created with refugee communities, at Coventry Cathedral as part of the City of Culture programme. Kadialy Kouyate is the kora soloist in the foreground.

## What we offer

Successful candidates will receive guaranteed payment of £4,100, paid in equal monthly instalments. Additional paid work may be offered during the year.

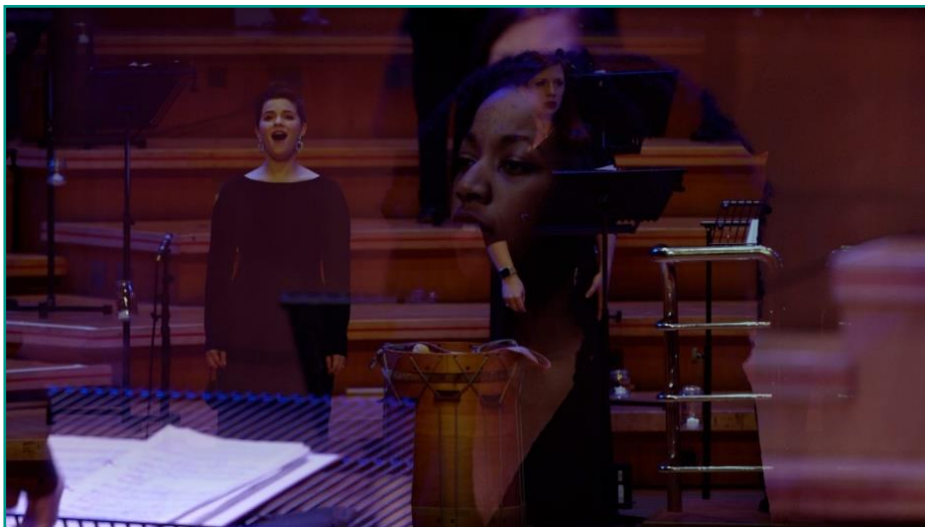
You will gain real life experience of working with a professional choir, including time and diary management, and develop your singing in a professional and supportive environment by:

- rehearsing and performing a wide range of repertoire stylistically, learning the different approaches required as you take part in all our full choir performances and recordings
- observing rehearsals and concerts given by our Consort of 10 professional singers, who you will sing alongside in choir concerts
- observing soloist rehearsals
- attending termly one-to-one feedback sessions with Jeffrey Skidmore
- observing our Vocal Tutors as they deliver projects in schools and healthcare environments

Our aim is that the scheme will accelerate your professional development, and increase your chance of being offered professional work by Ex Cathedra and other choirs. By working alongside and learning from some of the UK's finest professional singers, you should develop an invaluable network of contacts and raise your profile within the industry.

Watch the videos linked on page 1 to see what two former Scholars think.

Our 2023-24 season includes: Rachmaninoff 'Vespers' (at least 4 performances), Handel *Messiah* and a Good Friday Bach *St John Passion* with period instruments at Symphony Hall, and magical anthology concerts that range from Byrd to Bacharach, with pretty much everything in between! We will also be recording a CD of music by Liz Dilot Johnson. [Download our season brochure.](#)



A screenshot from our **Christmas Music by Candlelight** online concert at Symphony Hall in December 2020

Margaret Lingas (2019-20) & Gabriella Liandu (2020-21) were soloists in this piece.

“With Ex Cathedra I really feel a sense of mentorship and support from the other professionals I sing with”

(Jacob Ewens, 2019-20 Scholar)

## Your commitment

If you are offered and accept a Scholarship, we will send you a contract setting out our expectations. In short:

- you are expected to complete the year and make the most of the opportunities provided!
- you must attend the c.25 rehearsals and c.20 concerts over the course of the year, which will be agreed with you and provided in a work schedule appended to your contract if offered the position. Provisional dates are available below
- you must attend a termly feedback session with Jeffrey Skidmore
- you will be provided with complimentary tickets and encouraged to attend concerts that you are not performing in, help out with stewarding etc
- to write 1-2 short accounts of your experience during the year to help with reporting to funders etc
- to acknowledge your Scholarship with Ex Cathedra in your professional biography as your career progresses

Aside from these commitments you are encouraged to build up a portfolio of freelance work.

We will undertake a DBS safeguarding check before you observe any of our work with children or vulnerable adults. If you do not observe any of this specific work and we do not undertake a full DBS check for any reason, we will undertake a Safer Recruitment declaration.

## Who is eligible

To apply:

- we expect you will be about to embark or have embarked on a career as a professional singer within the last 2-3 years
- normally you will have studied or are about to complete a degree-level course in music with singing lessons
- or, exceptionally, you have recently changed career to focus on being a professional singer

If you are in full-time or part-time education (undergraduate or postgraduate), you are not eligible to apply unless you will have completed your course by the time your Scholarship starts. If you are studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire do take a look at our [Student Scholarship scheme](#), which is assessed alongside an audition for the Conservatoire chamber choir.

If you aren't sure, please contact us to discuss. In the first instance, please email [melissa.brown@excathedra.co.uk](mailto:melissa.brown@excathedra.co.uk) and we can arrange a telephone call.

Scholars will be offered a fixed-term employment contract so you must be eligible to work in the UK.

## How to apply

### 1. Application form & reference

Please complete:

- the application form below
- the indicative availability sheet

Please email both forms with a supporting reference from your singing teacher (or choir director) to [melissa.brown@excathedra.co.uk](mailto:melissa.brown@excathedra.co.uk).

Ex Cathedra is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment practices, and values diversity. To help us monitor and improve our ability to attract 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.

Applications must be submitted by **5pm on Monday 12 June**. Late entries and incomplete applications are unlikely to be accepted.

### 2. Audition & workshop day

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend our workshop and audition day on **Friday 23 June** in Birmingham. Please reserve the date in your diary. On this day you will take part in a group session and have an individual audition. Please save the whole day for now, and contact us ahead of your application if you have any limiting time issues so we can advise.

We will let you know whether or not you are invited to attend for an audition on or by **Friday 16 June** and will let you know then what times you will be required.

The audition and workshop day is designed to be friendly and welcoming. Depending on the final timetable, it is likely that everyone will have a shared lunch break.

*This scheme is possible thanks to the financial support of several trusts and individuals. Ex Cathedra would like to thank them all, including: the Claverdon Fields Charitable Trust, Idlewild Trust, GMC Trust, S&D Lloyd Charity, and all the pledgers and donors to our 2022 Big Give campaign.*





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

## SCHOLARS SCHEME 2023-24 - APPLICATION FORM

<b>Name:</b>			
<b>Address:</b>			
<b>Email:</b>		<b>Age at application:</b> (20-23 / 24-29 / 30-39 / 40+)	
<b>Phone:</b>		<b>Voice (SATB):</b>	
<b>University/College:</b>			
<b>Graduation date:</b>		<b>Degree obtained/expected:</b>	
<b>Current singing teacher:</b>			
<b>Current work place/job, if applicable:</b>			
<b>Where/how did you hear about this scheme?</b>			
<b>Singing experience:</b>  Please outline your choral and solo experience			
<b>Short personal statement.</b>  What are your reasons for applying? What do you hope to achieve during a Scholarship year? What are your long-term aspirations?			

Please complete and return this form, with a letter of recommendation from your singing teacher, or equivalent, and send to: Melissa Brown, Concerts Producer, Ex Cathedral, [melissa.brown@excathedral.co.uk](mailto:melissa.brown@excathedral.co.uk) by 5pm on Monday 12 June 2023.

## EX CATHEDRA 2023-24 INDICATIVE SCHEDULE & AVAILABILITY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Times	Project	Where	Available?
Mon 4 Sep	1830-2130	Dilnot Johnson CD - rehearsal (ams & Scholars)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Wed 6 Sep	1400-1700	Dilnot Johnson CD - rehearsal (observe pro rehearsal)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
	1830-2130	Dilnot Johnson CD - rehearsal (full choir)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Thu 7 Sep	1400-1700	<b>DILNOT JOHNSON REC - session 1 (choir)</b>	Bradshaw Hall, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire	
	1830-2130	<b>DILNOT JOHNSON REC - session 2 (choir)</b>		
Sat 9 Sep	1030-1330	<b>DILNOT JOHNSON REC - session 5 (choir)</b>		
	1500-1800	<b>DILNOT JOHNSON REC - session 6 (choir)</b>		
Wed 4 Oct	1830-2130	Rachmaninoff Vespers - rehearsal (ams & Scholars)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Sat 7 Oct	1100-1400	Rachmaninoff Vespers - rehearsal (full choir)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
	1500-1800	Rachmaninoff Vespers - rehearsal (full choir)		
Tue 10 Oct	1500-1800	<b>RACHMANINOFF VESPERS concert day</b>	St Mary's, Warwick	
	1930			
Sun 15 Oct	1100-1400	<b>RACHMANINOFF VESPERS concert day</b>	Town Hall, Birmingham	
	1600			
Wed 8 Nov	1830-2130	Messiah - rehearsal (ams & Scholars)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Wed 15 Nov	1830-2130	Messiah - rehearsal (ams & Scholars)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Wed 22 Nov	1800-2100	Messiah - rehearsal (full choir)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Mon 27 Nov	1800-2100	Christmas Music by Candlelight rehearsal (full choir)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Wed 29 Nov	1100-1400	Messiah - soloists & orchestra rehearsal (observation)	Amadeus Centre, London	
	1500-1800	Messiah - choir & orchestra rehearsal (pro & Scholars)		
Fri 1 Dec	1500-1800	<b>CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day</b>	St Chad's, Shrewsbury	
	1930			
Sun 3 Dec	1100-1400	<b>MESSIAH concert day</b>	Symphony Hall, Birmingham	
	1600			
Tue 5 Dec	1500-1800	<b>CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day</b>	St John's, Hagley	
	1930			
Thu 7 Dec	1330-1630	<b>CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day</b>	Lichfield Cathedral	
	1900			
Mon 11 Dec	1830-2130	Christmas Music by Candlelight rehearsal	St Paul's Church, Bham	
Tue 12 Dec	1430-1730	<b>CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day</b>	St Martin-in-the-Fields, London	
	1900			
Thu 14 Dec	1330-1630	<b>CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day</b>	Coventry Cathedral	
	1930			

Fri 15 Dec	1600-1830	CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day	St Paul's Church, Bham	
	1930			
Sat 16 Dec	1400-1500	ANGELS STARS AND KINGS concert day		
	1600			
	1730-1830	CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day		
	1930			
Mon 18 Dec	1730-1830	CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day		
	1930			
Tue 19 Dec	1730-1830	CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day		
	1930			
Wed 20 Dec	1730-1830	CHRISTMAS MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day		
	1930			
Wed 7 Feb	3 hours	Baroque Passion (Consort observ - optional 7 or 11)	London, venue tbc	
Sat 10 Feb	1500-1700 1815-1915	RACHMANINOFF VESPERS concert day	Hereford Cathedral	
	2000			
Sun 11 Feb	1130-1430	BAROQUE PASSION concert day (observation - optional 7 or 11)	Town Hall, Birmingham	
	1600			
Tue 27 Feb	1500-1800	RACHMANINOFF VESPERS concert day	St Martin-in-the-Fields, London	
	1930			
Wed 6 Mar	1830-2130	St John Passion rehearsal (ams & scholars)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Wed 13 Mar	1830-2130	St John Passion rehearsal (ams & scholars)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Wed 20 Mar	1830-2130	St John Passion rehearsal (full choir)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
Wed 27 Mar	1100-1400	Bach St John continuo reh OBSERVATION (optional)	Amadeus Centre, London	
	1515-1845	St John Passion - choir & orchestra (pros & Scholars)		
Fri 29 Mar	1030-1230	BACH ST JOHN PASSION - 300 concert day	Symphony Hall, Birmingham	
	1400			
Sat 4 May	tbc	RACHMANINOFF VESPERS concert day TBC	Sherborne Abbey	
	tbc			
Sat 8 Jun	1100-1400	Summer Music by Candlelight rehearsal (full choir)	St John & St Peter, Bham	
	1500-1800	Summer Music by Candlelight rehearsal (full choir)		
Fri 14 Jun	1500-1800	SUMMER MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day	St Chad's, Shrewsbury	
	1930			
Tue 18 Jun	1530-1830	SUMMER MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day	St Paul's Church, Bham	
	2000			
Wed 19 Jun	1700-1830	SUMMER MUSIC BY CANDLELIGHT concert day	St Paul's Church, Bham	
	2000			

Please return with indicative availability.

Note that it is not essential to be available for every date. Pro rata contracts are sometimes offered, but a minimum involvement is necessary.

1-2-1 sessions with Jeffrey Skidmore will be arranged by agreement. Observation dates for our Education & Participation projects will be by individual agreement, and flexible according to the suitable projects and the availability given for rehearsals and concerts.