ORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS AT JESUS COLLEGE

Why Jesus College?

Here at Jesus the Organ Scholars not only get to play the Drake Organ, but they have the opportunity together to direct Chapel music, including directing and training the Chapel Choir. Supported by weekly supervisions with the Chaplain, they are able to enjoy being in charge as well as being upheld and valued by the Chapel community and the College as a whole. The annual Turl Street Arts Festival offers particular opportunities for the Jesus College Organ Scholars at a slightly broader level. The musical life of the Chapel benefits from connections with the RCO, various other organ societies, and prominent English church musicians, through frequent masterclasses, courses and conferences attracted to our Chapel and organ, such as courses led by James Parsons and John Wellingham. There are two Organ Scholars at any one time, with other musicians ready to help and support them if need be, so they never find themselves alone. The Organ Trials in September have taken place here for the last few years.

Organ and other Chapel Instruments

The Organ is an historically informed instrument, built in the nineteenth century English style by the leading UK organ builder William Drake in 1993. A refined instrument with sensitive action and musical voicing, it is still relatively new and consequently in good condition. It is a superb organ for practice and to enhance technique, as well as sparkling in performance both on a secular level and in the worship offered in the Chapel. For a full organ specification see www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/chapel/organ.php. There is also a grand piano, and a harpsichord by Goble (1975) available for use in the Chapel. A music practice room with grand and upright pianos may be booked during music hours.

Post of responsibility

The Senior Organ Scholar is effectively the Director of Music, and as such takes responsibility for organising and directing music for all Chapel services, doing so with the support of the Junior Organ Scholar. It is an opportunity to recruit and mould a choir as well as to develop organ technique and experience. By making decisions about repertoire, the Organ Scholars also have the chance to shape performances and themselves to increase and broaden their knowledge of sacred music, as well as passing on the expertise they gain.

Jesus College Chapel

The Chapel of Jesus College is a vibrant worshipping community with a rich musical tradition. During term, Choral Evensong is the main Sunday service, at 5.45pm, and Holy Communion is a more informal gathering on a Thursday simply accompanied by a hymn. There are occasional services - such as Gaudies, weddings, memorial services, and carol services for Old Members and staff, and the annual Patronal Festival on St. David’s Day, which we celebrate in great style.

Jesus College Chapel Choir

A thriving choir, which sings at Sunday Choral Evensongs, and some occasional services, is led by the organ scholars. They come together for two rehearsals a week, and social occasions beyond their weekly choir tea and free Sunday formal dinner mean that there is a great fellowship and shared enjoyment of choral music. Our broad repertoire is taken overseas on choir tours such as, most recently, to Krakow, Lisbon, Cologne, Bonn, Bratislava and Vienna. The college has no Choral Scholars, retaining a very high standard of music alongside a warm, inclusive character, which enables many singers to grow in their love of sacred choral music. The college’s financial support for the choir therefore is channelled into training the singers, by offering a generous number of free singing lessons to all choir members with David Crown. Regular choral masterclasses are arranged with leading church musicians such as Paul Leddington Wright, conductor, composer, and organist; Kerry Beaumont, Director of Music.
at Coventry Cathedral, and Paul Spicer, conductor and composer. Choir reunions, concerts, and other events enable the performance of music such as Tallis’ *Spem in Alium* and help maintain the joyful character of our music-making. Once a year, the choirs of Lincoln and Exeter join with Jesus to play their part in the Turl Street Arts Festival, which offers scope for larger-scale joint concerts such as Bach’s Magnificat, alongside the Festival Evensong.

**Supervision and Support**

The college recognises that although this is an exciting task for a student organist, he or she will need support, both practically and musically. This is provided by the Chaplain, who happens to be a former Oxbridge Choral Scholar, and whose own passion for church music is shared with the organists she gets to work with. We all meet at least once a week, and the Chaplain’s own experience and musical connections play an important part in helping to nourish and resource the work of the Organ Scholars. Through such regular discussions, the Organ Scholars also have the opportunity to grow in knowledge of liturgy and to reflect on the relationship between music and worship.

The Chaplain is also keen to help Organ Scholars to balance the demands on their time so that they are fully able to achieve their academic potential, which is a priority for any student.

Meanwhile the College simply enjoys raising the profile of Chapel music, highly valuing our Organ Scholars and the work they do, and being open to whatever potential musical developments come our way.

**Benefits**

Each Organ Scholar receives £450 per year, and then on top of that has a very generous allowance towards organ and conducting lessons from their choice of teacher. At present the Organ Scholars receive lessons from both Steven Grahl and Paul Spicer respectively. Singing tuition is also available. The College offers further financial support to Organ Scholars seeking RCO diplomas. The Organ Scholars are allocated some of the best rooms in college for the duration of his or her course, and each will have an electronic piano in their rooms. Scholars are entitled to dine in Formal Hall free of charge on Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as after Sunday Evensong. Scholars are also entitled to wear longer academic gowns.

**Selection criteria**

The successful candidate will have the following qualities:

- Academic standard to gain a place to read a Final Honour School of the University of Oxford in Music, Modern Languages, History, or Engineering
- Ability to play the Jesus College Chapel Organ to a good standard
- Ability to conduct the Jesus College Chapel Choir
- Commitment to develop organ and conducting skills through regular practice and lessons
- Willingness to engage fully in the musical life of the Chapel
- Willingness to respect the aims and practices of Christian worship
- Willingness to develop interpersonal skills in working with members of college at every level.

**Former Organ Scholars…**

Two recent Organ Scholars have continued honing their organist skills: one as Sub-Organist at Portsmouth Cathedral and another as Director of Music at Burford Church. Two others, one of whom read Music and another History, have since trained in Law. The most recent Organ Scholar has gone on to further study at Oxford in Music Composition.

**Want to know more? Look at our website: **[www.jesus.ox.ac.uk](http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk)

- [http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/admissions/a-week-in-the-life-of-the-organ-scholar](http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/admissions/a-week-in-the-life-of-the-organ-scholar)
- [http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/about/the-choir](http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/about/the-choir)
- [http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/about/jesus-college-chapel](http://www.jesus.ox.ac.uk/about/jesus-college-chapel)

Better still, get in touch with the Chaplain to talk further:

The Revd Dr Megan Daffern, [chaplain@jesus.ox.ac.uk](mailto:chaplain@jesus.ox.ac.uk), 01865 279757