

SIXTH FORM ORGAN SCHOLARSHIP

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

King's Ely and Ely Cathedral offer a unique environment for young organists to develop their skills. There is a vibrant choral tradition in the school, and the Cathedral Choir, which sings Evensong daily, has an international reputation. Cambridge, with its unparalleled organ and choral tradition, is only 15 miles away and its links with Ely are strong. The Organ Scholar will have access to a wealth of music-making in a highly professional framework, and to tuition and guidance from a large number of respected and experienced professional organists and choir directors. Only a handful of schools are able to offer this level of training and experience to Sixth Form students. This outstanding opportunity is designed for a young organist seeking to apply for a university Organ Scholarship or conservatoire course, and acts as preparation for a gap-year Cathedral post. Former Ely Organ Scholars have gone on to successful careers as professional musicians, most recently as Organ Scholar of King's and Girton Colleges in Cambridge.

FEE REMISSION

The Scholarship will be awarded to the value of 50% of boarding or day fees. Additional bursarial support up to 100% is available on a means-tested basis, and no one should be deterred from applying for financial reasons.

WHAT IS INCLUDED:

- organ tuition (solo repertoire and accompaniments)
- keyboard skills tuition
- conducting lessons
- piano technique lessons
- singing lessons
- piano repertoire lessons and lessons on other instruments are also available (paid for separately)
- assistance with preparation for Oxbridge or other university organ trials
- grade 8 ABRSM theory coaching
- routine observation of boys, girls and lay clerks rehearsals
- routine page turning and console assisting
- membership of chapel choir
- accompanying, voluntaries, hymn-playing.

PRACTICE INSTRUMENTS

As part of the Scholarship, the Organ Scholar can expect to practise and perform on the Cathedral's fine four-manual, 80-stop Harrison and Harrison instrument. The school possesses two digital practice organs to which the Organ Scholar will have substantial access. There are also several pianos available for practice throughout the school and cathedral.

THE CATHEDRAL AND SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENTS

The Music Department at King's Ely Senior has a thriving and busy schedule. It has a particular strength in choral music: Ely Cathedral functions as the school chapel and the fine Chapel Choir attracts large numbers of senior pupils, including both current and former cathedral choristers. The Chapel Choir, which is conducted by the School's Director of Music, sings regularly at school services in the cathedral, and covers a wide and adventurous repertoire. It has toured in recent years to Barcelona and New York. The Organ Scholar can expect to be heavily involved in its work, as an accompanist and singer, and also taking sectionals and rehearsals.

The Organ Scholar will also be an integral part of the musical life of Ely Cathedral. The structure of the music department there is unique. Alongside six professional Lay Clerks there are two sets of choristers: the boy choristers (years 3-8) typically sing at four services each week. They are conducted by the Cathedral's Director of Music; the girl choristers (years 7-11) sing for at least three services each week and often more, and are unique in having their own director. Both directors have full-time assistants who play the organ for services and play a significant role in training the choirs. Choral Scholarships are offered to Sixth Formers who sing regularly with the Cathedral Choir. The choristers combine for major services at Christmas and Easter and many other high-profile events: recent and future highlights include a concert with the City of London Sinfonia broadcast live on Radio 3, an appearance in the Final of the BBC's *The Choir* with Gareth Malone, and a live BBC broadcast on Armistice Day 2020.

DUTIES

Precise duties and opportunities will vary depending on the Scholar's strengths and interests, but in general the Organ Scholar can expect to be heavily involved in the musical life of the School and Cathedral.

Duties will normally include:

- playing regularly for services in the cathedral
- accompanying the Cathedral Choir and School Chapel Choir at services
- accompanying rehearsals of the Chapel Choir at the piano
- participating in other school ensembles as a keyboard player
- gaining experience by singing with the school and cathedral choirs
- observing and turning pages for the staff organists at school and cathedral services
- gaining conducting experience with the school or cathedral choirs
- assisting with probationer chorister training

TUITION

The Organ Scholar will be entitled to regular organ lessons free of charge from one or more of the school and cathedral staff organists, covering both solo repertoire and accompaniment and liturgical playing, as well as general keyboard skills and piano technique lessons. He/she will also be entitled without extra charge to academic tuition for RCO exams and University/Conservatoire entrance exams, vocal coaching, and conducting tuition. Piano repertoire lessons, as well as lessons on additional instruments are also available, though they would be chargeable separately.

The Organ Scholar can expect to work closely alongside and/or receive tuition from all of the following:

Edmund Aldhouse – Director of Music, Ely Cathedral

Edmund Aldhouse was appointed Director of Music at Ely in 2018, after serving as Assistant Organist for five years. He was Organ Scholar of Pembroke College, Oxford and held posts at Chichester, Rochester, and Ripon Cathedrals before coming to Ely. Much of his organ study was pursued in France under Frédéric Blanc and François-Henri Houbart, resulting in a unanimous Premier Prix de Virtuosité at the Conservatoire de Rueil-Malmaison.

Sarah MacDonald – Director, Ely Cathedral Girl Choristers

Sarah MacDonald was Organ Scholar of Robinson College, Cambridge, before taking up the position of Director of Music in Chapel at Selwyn College, Cambridge in 1999, a post she holds concurrently with her role in Ely. Sarah's teachers included Leon Fleisher and David Sanger. Her many published choral compositions are performed regularly in churches around the world, and she has recorded over 30 CDs.

Glen Dempsey – Assistant Director of Music, Ely Cathedral & School Organist, King's Ely
Prior to his appointment at Ely, Glen Dempsey was Organ Scholar of St John's College, Cambridge. He has held posts at St George's Chapel, Windsor, and St Nicholas's Basilica, Amsterdam, where he studied with the late Dutch pedagogue, Jacques van Oortmerssen. Glen has appeared on several recordings as organist and pianist, of which three have been 'Editor's Choice' in Gramophone Magazine.

Aaron Shilson – Assistant Organist, Ely Cathedral Girl Choristers

Aaron Shilson studied at Leeds Conservatoire and the Royal Northern College of Music, where he won several prizes. He has studied with Gordon Stewart, Darius Battiwalla, Simon Lindley, and Stephen Farr. He has held posts at the Cathedrals in Leeds, Manchester, and St Davids, and at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He has appeared on several recordings and broadcast as a singer and an accompanist.

Neil Porter-Thaw – Director of Music, King's Ely

Neil Porter-Thaw was a chorister at Windsor under Christopher Robinson and his father John Porter before winning a scholarship to Malvern College and Trinity College of Music. At Trinity he studied strings under Elizabeth Turnbull and vocal training under James Gaddarn. Prior to becoming Director of Music at King's Ely, he was Housemaster to the Choristers and taught at Winchester House School and Birkdale School.

BOARDING

Although boarding is not compulsory, it provides students with the opportunity to develop independence, to get more out of being at school and to grow in self-confidence. Should he/she wish to board, the Organ Scholar will have the opportunity to board in one of the senior boarding houses and enjoy access to the facilities of the Music School at evenings and weekends.

ELIGIBILITY

Candidates should be at ABRSM Grade 7 Level or above on the organ at the time of application and have achieved similar performing standard on the piano. They should have excellent predicted GCSE grades or equivalent. Previous choral experience as a singer or accompanist is advantageous, but not essential.

AUDITIONS

Candidates will attend an audition in Ely. This will comprise:

1. Performance of two prepared organ pieces of their own choice, one by J. S. Bach, and one contrasting work, both of which should be at approximately grade 7 standard.
2. Performance of a "quick-study" set work of approximately Grade 5/6 Level, which will be sent to the candidate no less than seven (7) days before the audition (this is likely to be an accompaniment).
3. Tests in sight-reading.
4. Keyboard skills exercises including score-reading and transposition (these are designed to test a candidate's potential and do not assume prior experience of these disciplines).
5. Academic tests and interviews.

HOW TO APPLY

To find out more please contact the King's Ely Admissions team:

admissions@kingsely.org

+44 (0)1353 660707

We warmly invite parents of potential applicants to discuss the musical aspects of the Scholarship further with one of the Music Staff, whose contact details are available through the Admissions team.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Ely Cathedral is the mother church of the Diocese of Ely, which serves the people of Cambridgeshire, a small part of West Norfolk, and the edge of Peterborough. It is the seat of the Bishop and a centre of worship and mission. The double monastery for men and women, founded in 673 by St Etheldreda, was destroyed by the Danes in 870 and re-founded as a Benedictine community in 970 by Dunstan and Ethelwold. Over the centuries it grew into one of the three most important pilgrimage centres in medieval England. Work began on the present building in the 1080s under Abbot Simeon and in 1109, with the appointment of Bishop Hervey, it became a Cathedral. For more than 400 years, it was both the church of the Benedictine monastery and a Cathedral, but after Henry VIII dissolved the monastery in 1539 it continued to exist as a Cathedral only. The Octagon and the Lady Chapel were built in the 14th century and are masterpieces of medieval architecture. As a result of the Great Restoration of 1980-2000, the Cathedral and medieval college buildings are in the best state of general repair for several generations, though there is ongoing need for considerable expense on the fabric. The City of Ely has a population of approximately 20,000 (2011 Census) and enjoys excellent road and rail communications to all parts of the country. Some 3000 houses are due to be built on the north side of the City in the next ten years, so there is considerable population expansion anticipated which offers opportunity and challenge for the Cathedral and city.

King's Ely was first established to educate the boy choristers of the worshipping community of Ely over 1,000 years ago. In the 11th century, King Edward the Confessor was educated here and throughout our history we have maintained strong links with Ely Cathedral. In 1541, King Henry VIII founded a College of Canons at Ely Cathedral to replace the monks whose monastery had been dissolved in 1539 and the school received its Royal Charter. For much of the school's history, the King's Scholars constituted the entire school. Over the centuries, the school has grown to number nearly 1000 pupils, with children of all faiths and none and from every corner of the globe. In 1970, King's Ely became co-educational and in 1973, Queen Elizabeth II visited the school and instituted the first Queen's Scholars.

The school has always been closely linked with the great Cathedral of Ely, and it continues to educate the cathedral choristers. All pupils attend a school service in the Cathedral at least once a week. Pupils who are not members of the Church of England are made welcome and almost all attend cathedral services. Several medieval monastic buildings are still in use by the school, including the splendid monastic barn, now the dining hall. Despite being over 1000 years old, King's Ely is at the forefront of educational discourse nationally, especially so over the past decade. Although we cherish our history, schools are about the todays and tomorrows of our pupils, and while we learn from the past, we look to the future. Today, King's Ely is a vibrant community that offers all you would expect of a 21st century school and a great deal more.