

SCHOLA

Cantorum of Oxford

Patrons: John Mark Ainsley, Lord Armstrong, Dame Liz Forgan
Laszlo Heltay, Dame Emma Kirkby, Andrew Parrott, Roderick Williams

Conductor: James Burton

Case for Support

WHO WE ARE

Schola Cantorum is the chamber choir of the University of Oxford. The choir is made up of around thirty student singers, who study a wide range of subjects at the University. Each year, Schola provides unique musical opportunities to its members and audiences. The choir is run by the students, and has to raise its own funds through its members, with the help of its Trustees. It has no core funding. Your support will play a vital role in securing its future.

OUR HISTORY

The choir was founded in 1960 by the Hungarian conductor László Heltay, making it Oxford University's longest running chamber choir. Through Schola, Heltay brought the Continental tradition of mixed voice a capella singing to England, and he was the first in a long line of outstanding conductors. This list includes Jeremy Summerly, Ivor Bolton, Nicholas Cleobury, and Andrew Parrott, as well as the current conductor James Burton.

Schola has since provided a succession of talented young singers with life-changing musical experiences and training. The performance and presentation skills, camaraderie and work ethic that they gain from their time in the choir benefit them for the rest of their lives, whether or not they choose to pursue music as a profession.

Schola can count Ian Bostridge, Christine Rice, Emma Kirkby and Jane Glover among its alumni, and this is a testament to the choir's continual success. Patrons of the choir currently include John Mark Ainsley, Dame Emma Kirkby, Andrew Parrott and Roderick Williams.

WHAT WE DO

The choir performs regularly in Oxford and across the UK, as well as embarking upon annual international tours, often to countries that have hardly been visited by British choirs. In recent years the choir has visited Israel, Mexico, Poland, Spain, China, France, Malta and the USA.

Schola has a long tradition of recording and broadcasting music. This has most recently included recordings of a disc of music for its 2014 tour to the United States, and recordings of music by the American composer Randall Thompson and the Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara. The choir frequently appears on UK and international radio and television, and has featured in several of John Bridcut's recent BBC films.

The repertoire performed by Schola is wide ranging, and throughout its history the choir has commissioned works from new composers, most recently including James MacMillan, Roderick Williams and Francis Pott. Schola recently collaborated with French composer and organist Thierry

Escaich in the opening concert of the Fifth Masevaux International Festival of the Organ, which was broadcast on France Télévisions.

In 2011 a Conducting Scholarship was introduced. This is awarded annually to an exceptional young conductor, who receives an annual honorarium, regular podium time under the supervision of the conductor, and performance opportunities with the choir. Two of the three former conducting scholars have gone on to pursue post-graduate conducting studies.

WHY WE NEED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The choir needs to raise funds for its day-to-day running costs. This includes purchasing music, hiring venues and transport, marketing concerts, and funding special projects such as collaborations with composers, orchestras, and other ensembles. Tours are an important major expenditure for the choir, providing a medium for cultural exchange and encouraging the choir to understand the importance of performing together as a group.

Schola is currently building a fund to endow the post of conductor. This will ensure that the members of Schola can continue to benefit from the committed expertise of a talented professional conductor in years to come. The fundraising target for this is £200,000.