

# CHORAL & ORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS



WORCESTER  
COLLEGE  
OXFORD

# Introducing Worcester College

Known across Oxford as a tranquil green oasis at the heart of the city, Worcester is an historic college with a forward-looking attitude. We were founded at the start of the 18th century, but today we're an open and inclusive community which welcomes students from all over the world. We're particularly proud of our work to widen participation and increase access to Oxford for students from all walks of life.

As a Worcester student you don't only benefit from our beautiful gardens, but can also enjoy three years of College accommodation, a dedicated welfare team, and food that's out of this world.

The Chapel is a jewel box of a building and rather different to most other college chapels in Oxford. Opening the door reveals a spectacular space which, despite the low light, sparkles with gold, mosaic and stained glass. The work of the acclaimed Victorian architect and designer William Burges, Worcester's Chapel is a cosy, tranquil place for reflection, prayer and music.



# The College Choir



Our Choir is unique in Oxford in maintaining a choral tradition in which alto, tenor, and bass Choral Scholars are joined alternately by adult sopranos (typically on Monday and Thursday) drawn from the College, and boy trebles (on Tuesdays) with sopranos and trebles either combining or alternating on Sundays. The boys are day pupils at Christ Church Cathedral School.

There are also undergraduate Organ Scholars, who are responsible for accompanying the Choir in services, assisting with the management and practical arrangements of the Choir, and helping to train the boy choristers.

The Choir is led by the Director of College Music, who also has responsibility for looking after the wider musical life of the College including managing Worcester's programme of public musical events.

The Choir performs a wide-ranging repertoire and a typical music list for the term might include everything from plainsong to newly commissioned works in the same week. Whether performing Byrd, Tallis and Palestrina, or contemporary pieces by living composers, the Choir is proud to be part of a rich heritage in a College whose Music fellows have always been distinguished composers. The Choir also gives regular concerts in College, has toured across Europe, and has recorded several CDs which can be obtained from the Worcester Porters' Lodge.



# Choral Scholarships

Twenty-four Choral Awards are available in the Choir across all voice parts. Scholars are entitled to a wide range of financial, practical and social benefits, including:

- Four free singing lessons per term with one of Worcester's exceptional teachers
- Free meals together in Hall after each service, usually including two formal dinners each week
- A generous honorarium awarded each year
- One-to-one coaching and guidance
- Bespoke workshops with singers, teachers and conductors
- Regular public concerts and national and international tours
- A thriving and supportive team of like-minded young singers



‘Being an Organ Scholar at Worcester has changed my idea of who I am and what I am capable of. It has allowed me to work professionally with so many remarkable individuals and given me the confidence to stand up in front of a group of people and express my own opinion. To those who are considering applying: you must. You will grow so much faster than you think you can.’

**Benedict**  
1ST-YEAR MUSIC STUDENT

# Organ Scholarships



An Organ Scholarship at Worcester College provides musical training and experience unique in Oxford and unusual in the musical world. You'll have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills, including organ and keyboard playing, continuo realisation, learning how to rehearse boy trebles, and conducting the whole choir under the supervision of the Director of College Music.

The level of responsibility offered to organ scholars and the level of commitment required to fulfil the role provides a distinctive opportunity for the life of an undergraduate. Students simply looking to become better organists should not apply to Worcester. On the other hand, those seeking to prepare themselves for life as a professional musician will find no better scholarship anywhere.

In addition to all the benefits enjoyed by Choral Scholars, Worcester's Organ Scholars also receive free organ lessons, conducting tuition, financial support towards RCO diplomas, and opportunities provided by the University network of organ scholars, the Betts Centre for Organ Studies.



# How to apply

Prospective Choral and Organ Scholars are warmly encouraged to visit us at Worcester: the Director of College Music will be happy to talk informally about choral and organ award opportunities, the wider music culture in College, and introduce applicants to current choral and organ scholars. Schools also are welcome to enquire about bringing groups of students to sing with the Choir at Evensong.

There are two main ways to join the Choir at Worcester, both of which involve an audition.

1. Most Choral Scholarships are awarded at the University's Choral Trials, which take place in late September each year for those applying to start a degree in October the following year (i.e. 12 months prior to arriving in Oxford). Choral awards are contingent on your being made an offer of a place after the academic interviews in December.
2. It is also possible to apply for a place in the Choir, if there are vacancies in your voice part, once you arrive in Oxford to begin your degree. Members of the Choir do not have to be students at Worcester. The Choir also welcomes applications from postgraduate students.



We don't distinguish between these two routes and almost all members of the Choir are awarded scholarships. In either case, you do not need to be reading for a degree in Music, and recent choral scholars have successfully balanced degrees in Physics, History of Art, Theology, Psychology and Anthropology with their Choir commitments.

Organ Scholarships are awarded solely through the University Organ Trials, which take place in September, again for those applying to begin their studies the following year. Up-to-date information about choral and organ awards across the University can be found on the Music Faculty's website.

Prospective applicants are welcome to contact the Director of College Music with any questions: [caius.lee@worc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:caius.lee@worc.ox.ac.uk)

Discover more about the College and Choir on our website: [www.worc.ox.ac.uk/choir](http://www.worc.ox.ac.uk/choir)



# A typical choral week

## SUNDAY

15:00 Weekly Rehearsal  
16:45 Evensong Rehearsal  
18:00 Choral Evensong

## MONDAY

17:00 Rehearsal  
18:00 Evening Service

## TUESDAY

17:00 Rehearsal  
18:00 Choral Evensong

## THURSDAY

17:00 Rehearsal  
18:00 Choral Evensong / Eucharist

‘Singing in the Choir has been a highlight of my time at Oxford. Making music in such a beautiful space always leaves me feeling calmer, and the routine of rehearsals and services has been crucial to my work-life balance. The sense of community in the choir – possibly helped by enjoying (free!) formal dinners together twice a week – has really helped me settle in as a first year.’

**Anna**

**1ST-YEAR HISTORY & SPANISH STUDENT**

‘Before my first Evensong at Worcester, I had no clue how to even read a Psalm... that first rehearsal certainly involved a lot of learning, but doing it alongside such a kind and talented choir made the experience far less scary.’

**Dan**

**3RD-YEAR MUSIC STUDENT**

‘The frequent services at Worcester mean you get loads of experience, and I love the range of music we sing. There really is a thrill that comes with being part of making a piece come together – especially in such a sublime setting as Worcester Chapel.’

**Visvapriya**

**3RD-YEAR THEOLOGY STUDENT**

‘It’s a real privilege to be part of Worcester College Choir. I love the wide variety of music that we sing in a stunning venue with a great acoustic, and how it is helping me develop my own musicianship. My personal highlight? Singing Fauré’s *Requiem* alongside the orchestra in the Dining Hall!’

**Matt**

**1ST-YEAR MUSIC STUDENT**



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