



## **MK Chorale Conducting Scholar**

Mark has proposed that from January 2020, we should establish a conducting scholarship for a talented young conductor (aged c. 21–26). At its recent meeting, the Board offered this proposal its warm support.

The proposal is consistent with our newly adopted strategy, particularly Aim E: “Become a choir that promotes and values its collective musical development and the musical development of its members.”

We plan to trial the scholarship for an initial period of two years with two conducting scholars, one in 2020 and one in 2021. The trial period will be funded with the legacy left to the choir by Philippa Hamnett.

Throughout the two years there will be regular progress meetings between the Scholar, Musical Director, Assistant Musical Director, and the wider Board to evaluate the success of the initiative and to revise and develop it, ensuring it works for the membership, the MD and AMD, and the Scholar.

Members’ comments are welcome on the proposal that Mark has set out below. Because we plan to have the first Scholar appointed at the beginning of next year, please could you email any comments to [chair@mkchorale.co.uk](mailto:chair@mkchorale.co.uk), by Tuesday 3rd December at the latest.

Will Swann  
Chair, Milton Keynes Chorale



## AN MK CHORALE CONDUCTING SCHOLARSHIP

I am passionate about supporting the next generation of conductors in the same way that other musicians have mentored and given me opportunities in the past. Without these young conductors, choral music in choirs such as ours has no future. As a choir, we can take the lead in providing new opportunities for young musicians.

### THE SCHOLARSHIP

The Conducting Scholar would have the opportunity to observe and assist the MD and AMD in the development and preparation of the choir, would have regular podium time (warm-ups, sectionals and repertoire) under supervision and, where appropriate (e.g. Christmas or other occasions), performance opportunities with the choir. The Conducting Scholar would be expected to attend at least 75% of all rehearsals, even if not required to conduct at them all. The Scholar would have the opportunity to take part in Board meetings should they so wish.

The appointment would be for a 12-month period. Appointing by calendar year allows for a performance opportunity by the scholar as part of the Christmas Concert, as the culmination of their year's work, even though our season runs from September each year.

### BENEFITS

#### FOR THE SCHOLAR

- An opportunity to work with a large amateur choral society; such opportunities are very rare at this stage of a young conductor's career.
- An opportunity to watch an experienced conductor take rehearsals and to learn the art of rehearsal management.
- On-the-job learning: about the art of conducting, working with a rehearsal pianist, concert management, working with a committee, etc.
- Experience of conducting an amateur choir in 'real life'; this can be very different from other conductor learning environments.

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#### FOR THE CHOIR'S REPUTATION

- This is not a common practice amongst choirs and starting the initiative places us in a very select group.
- Press releases announcing the initiative and what we are doing to the wider classical musical world would almost certainly get attention.
- The scholar would naturally talk about the choir to friends and colleagues, promoting our choir and extending its reputation further afield.

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#### FOR THE CHOIR AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

- The scholar would provide other insights to the music being rehearsed.
- Working with different conductors and responding their individual styles helps to keep the choir agile in its music learning.
- The satisfaction of knowing that we are helping to nurture the talent of the next generation of conductors.
- Being younger themselves, they may help attract younger singers to join us.

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#### FOR THE MD AND AMD

- The satisfaction of knowing that we are helping to nurture the talent of the next generation of conductors.
- Ensuring that we remain at the top of our game, knowing that everything we do will be watched and scrutinised.

### APPOINTMENT CRITERIA

Applicants would normally either be studying for a Choral Conducting Master's Degree at a Conservatoire/University, or be a recent music graduate already, with experience of working with choirs.

Selection would be by informal interview and video review against the following criteria (in no particular order):

- Personability
- Rehearsal technique
- Technical capability
- Attitudes toward amateur music-making

Mark Jordan  
Musical Director, Milton Keynes Chorale  
November 2019