The Choir of Merton College, Oxford

Choral & Organ Scholarships

A Choral Scholar at Merton

• sings three services a week during term, plus occasional special services
• receives a generous honararium
• has singing lessons with the College’s singing teachers
• receives free meals in Hall after choral services
• takes part in masterclasses. Recent visitors have included Rogers Covey-Crump, Ian Burnside, Steven Varcoe, and Robert Rice
• tours abroad regularly
• sings on recordings and broadcasts frequently on the BBC
• performs with orchestras (Bach Passions & Mass in B minor, Vaughan The Dream of Gerontius, Mozart Requiem, Pärt Passio etc.)

“Being a choral scholar at Merton allowed me to be part of a tradition stretching back centuries, but one very much living and evolving. It was an opportunity to work with wonderful musicians in an exceptionally lovely space, creating music of the highest possible quality.”
Alexandra Coghlan
Classical Music Critic for New Statesman

The Organ Scholars at Merton

• share the duties of accompanying the College Choir in three services a week and the College Girls’ Choir in one service a week
• have unlimited access to the three-manual Dobson organ, installed in 2013
• assist with the training and direction of the choirs
• receive a generous honararium and music allowance
• take organ and singing lessons
• receive free meals in Hall after choral services
• take part in classes organised by the ‘Betts Scheme’
• tour abroad regularly
• accompany the choir on recordings and broadcasts regularly on the BBC

“Merton Chapel is one of the great spaces in the world for singing – an experience one never forgets. And the Choir has become one of the most sought-after of its kind.”
Peter Phillips, Patron of Merton College Choir

More information:
http://www.music.ox.ac.uk/apply/undergraduate/choral-and-organ-awards/
www.mertoncollegechoir.com
www.merton.ox.ac.uk
www.facebook.com/MertonCollegeChoir
https://twitter.com/MertonCollChoir

One of the City’s finest
Choral ensembles

Merton Chapel
Merton College, the first fully self-governing College in the University, was founded by Walter de Merton in 1264. Over the centuries, many eminent scholars and cultural leaders have been based at Merton. They include four Nobel Prize winners, the mathematician who solved Fermat’s Last Theorem, the physician who discovered the circulation of blood, and the founder of the Bodleian Library.

The College Chapel is one of the most beautiful spaces in the University, and has become known as a stunning venue for choral music through the many recordings made in the building by such groups as The Tallis Scholars, The Brabant Ensemble and the BBC. The Chapel was begun in the late 1280s, and the transepts (what is now the Ante-Chapel) were added in the 14th and early 15th centuries, and the tower was completed in 1450.

Merton College offers excellent facilities for musicians: there are six practice rooms, and performance spaces include the TS Eliot Theatre and the Chapel. Students have the opportunity to conduct The Kodaly Choir (the College’s non-auditioning choir) and the Fidelio Orchestra, and the College Music Society promotes weekly concerts.

"the superb performances are characterised by a phenomenal sense of control and restraint, with every note carefully crafted and bathed in the radiant acoustic of the college chapel" Church Music Quarterly

Merton College Choir records for Delphian, with the most recent CD being named Gramophone Critics’ Choice of the Year. Regular radio broadcasts include Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3 and Sunday Worship on BBC Radio 4. The choir was filmed for David Starkey’s BBC series Music & the Monarchy.

New Music for Merton
The choir has been exceptionally active in commissioning new choral works and, over the last few years, has given the world premieres of works by Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Jonathan Dove, Erkki Ešenvalds, Gabriel Jackson, Matthew Martin, James MacMillan, John Tavener and Judith Weir. The choir has also been involved in new music partnerships with Choir & Organ and the Royal Philharmonic Society.

The Choir of Merton College has established itself as one of Oxford’s leading mixed-voice choirs. The choir consists of thirty undergraduates and post-graduates, many of whom hold choral scholarships at the College. Members of the choir read a wide range of subjects, and some members of the choir are students at other colleges. The main focus of the choir’s work is the singing of services in the College Chapel where, in addition to Choral Evensong, special services such as the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany Carol Services and the Requiem Mass for All Souls have a large following.

Concerts
The choir regularly gives concerts both in Oxford and further afield. Recent performances as part of Passioundi at Merton have been Bach’s St John & St Matthew Passions, Mass in B minor, Handel’s Messiah and Arvo Pärt’s Passio in the Sheldonian Theatre; the choir has sung Bach’s Christmas Oratorio and Haydn’s The Creation of Genesis. Regular London venues include the Cadogan Hall and St John’s, Smith Square.

Tours
Tours are heavily subsidised and take place most years. The choir regularly tours in the USA, and other destinations have included Austria, France, Italy and Sweden.

The regular term-time schedule is:

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>3.45pm-5pm</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.45pm</td>
<td>Choral Evensong</td>
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<td>Monday</td>
<td>1.15pm-2pm</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Rehearsal</td>
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<td>6.15pm</td>
<td>Choral Evensong</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>5pm-6pm</td>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.15pm</td>
<td>Choral Evensong</td>
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Recordings and Broadcasts
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