

SALFORD CATHEDRAL

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Music Department – July 2021

As we mark one year since places of worship across the UK opened their doors to the public following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, we wanted to reflect on how our Music Department has expanded and grown in these last 12 months.



The congregation at our Sunday 9.15am Mass has been enjoying the musical talents of our **Music Group**. Originally formed of longstanding parishioners from St Joseph's Ordsall, we're delighted that the infectious 'Joeys' spirit has been shared with new members who have joined the group over the last year. They have been singing every Sunday since last August and enjoy great comradery in rehearsals and wonderful enthusiasm for leading the singing at the 9.15am Mass. New members are always welcome to join us with a rehearsal once a month, and just before Mass at 8.40am.

We formed our first **Children's Choir** last September with just four keen young singers and we are delighted that the group now boasts 18 members (aged 7 – 12) from the local area who meet every Tuesday and Wednesday to sing together in a fun and inclusive atmosphere at the Cathedral. They have been singing a whole range of music, from plainsong, folk songs, gospel songs and spirituals, to music for the Mass, both in English and Latin. After making their first public appearance at our Carols by Candlelight in December 2020, the children now sing for the Sunday 5.30pm Mass once a month and we are looking forward to seeing them make more appearances at various liturgies over the coming year. Our **Youth Choir** for older children (aged 12 – 19) also started rehearsing in May 2021 and we are eager to see these young individuals sing publicly soon.



In addition to providing opportunities for children and young people to sing here at the Cathedral, our Director of Music has been working in both our Parish primary schools in recent months, leading an after-school choir at **St Joseph's**, and teaching singing within the school timetable to each year group (from Nursery through to Year 6) at the **Cathedral Primary School**.

Like Cathedrals up and down the country, we spent countless hours studying government guidance to see how we might get our **Cathedral Choir** back to live singing for Mass in a safe and 'Covid-secure' way as possible. Thankfully, we were able to do this last October, and have spent our time exploring a whole range of new repertoire, from the Latin plainsong Propers of the Mass, the treasury of Renaissance Catholic polyphonic music, as well as works by contemporary composers. We have also been working hard to include more music written by women composers, to readdress the terrible imbalance that exists across Cathedral music – a tradition which has been dominated by music written by middle class white men.



Our amazing **Choral Scholars** have been working tirelessly over the last nine months as we have grappled with the ever-changing regulations around Covid-19. Many of them have been cantoring for Masses when we have not been able to have a full choir, and they very keenly took up the opportunity to sing Vespers together from Lent and we are thrilled that the Cathedral now sings the Office of Evening Prayer each Thursday at 5pm during term time, thanks to their generosity of spirit. We would like to thank all of them for their talents, enthusiasm, and ongoing good will. Sadly, we will be saying goodbye to Louise, Ross, Caleb, and Julian but we will no doubt see them again in the future. They will always be a part of our musical family here at the Cathedral.

Looking ahead, we have a brand new choir which will be starting in September. The **Voluntary Choir** is open to adults who have a keen interest in singing but who do not necessarily read music or have much experience singing in a choir. They will be singing primarily for the Sunday 5.30pm Mass each week and will enjoy a balance of accessible music with exciting opportunities to tackle some new repertoire and develop their choir skills, in a leisurely way. This new choir is part of a choir re-structure that has been taking place over the past few weeks and we are grateful to some members of our Cathedral Choir who will be helping us lead this new venture in September as they step away from the demands of the Cathedral Choir.

The future certainly feels bright for music at Salford Cathedral. We are delighted that up-and-coming composer Amy Summers has written a new '**Mass of St John the Evangelist**' specially for our choirs which will be first performed here at the Cathedral on Sunday 25 July at the 11am Mass – the final choral mass before the summer break. Do also keep your eyes peeled for details of BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship programme, which will be broadcast from the Cathedral on the 15 August at 8.10am, featuring our Cathedral Choir.

Thank you for all the support you give to the Music Department. We are so grateful for your encouragement and patience as we wait for the government to release details of when we can sing together as a congregation. What a moment that will be!

For more information about all our choirs, please visit www.salfordcathedral.co.uk or get in touch with the Director of Music, Alex Patterson, alex.patterson@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

You can also follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: [@SalfordCathMus](https://www.facebook.com/SalfordCathMus)