



UT VOCE ITA VITA

EXETER CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Nursery | Pre-Prep | Prep



Choristers
@Home

A Chorister's Journey
Through Lockdown

From the Headmaster

Music and singing have been at the heart of Exeter Cathedral School for centuries. Founded as a choir school in 1179, ECS has music and performance in its walls and in its blood.

This rich tradition of choral music has been the bedrock of the School through the centuries. At the epicentre of this tradition are our Choristers; pupils of the School who come together to make world-class music.

We are proud to educate the Choristers: some join the School in order to take up a place in the Cathedral Choir; some discover a love for singing whilst a pupil at the School and consequently take their place in the stalls. However it begins, the journey of Choristership is a life-affirming and life-changing one. It is a journey full of music, of camaraderie, of development and growth (musical, personal, spiritual), of faith, of striving for excellence, of hard work and of fun.

Cathedrals and chapels are closed during this time of national lockdown. Whilst the shutters may have been pulled down on the provision which can be offered by Chapters and Provosts the world over, we are determined as a School to continue to ensure that our Choristers can keep going on their journey – musically, pastorally, and educationally.

The School and its Choristers are indebted to Keith Roberts – ECS Chorister Tutor – whose educational, pastoral and musical skills are central to the launching of this project. It goes without saying that we are also enormously grateful for the time, expertise and support being offered by choir families. Working in partnership has never been more important: thank you for all that you do to support the School and our (your!) Choristers.

With warm wishes

James Featherstone



Choristership at ECS

Singing

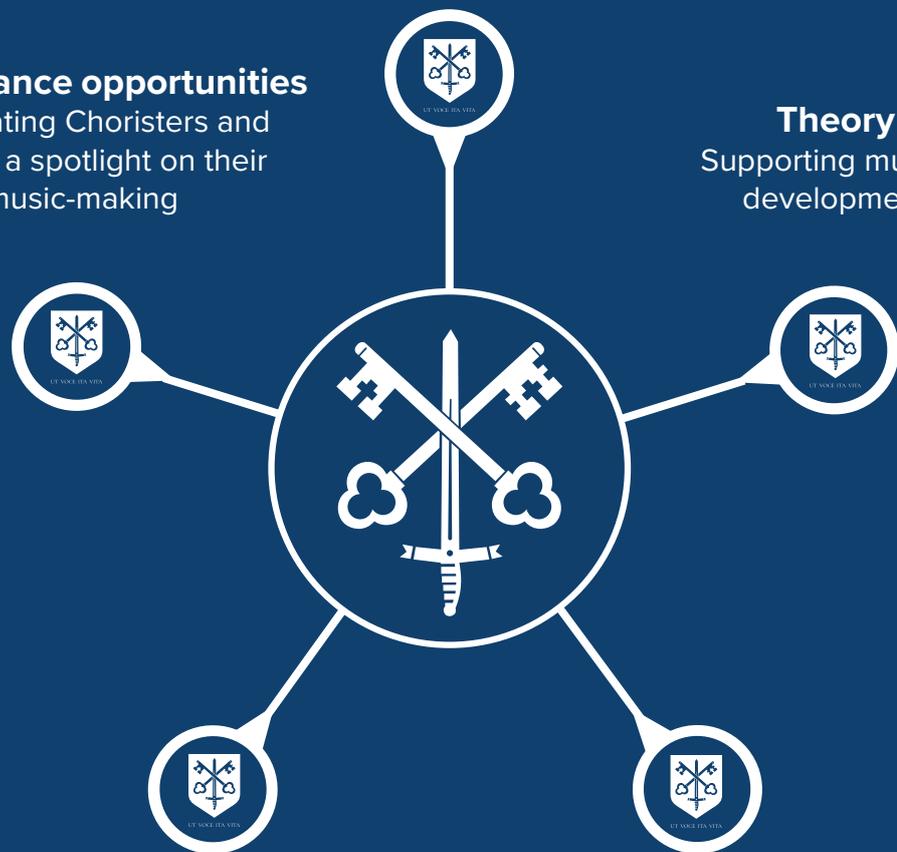
Maintaining and continuing the joys and rigours of high-level music-making

Performance opportunities

Celebrating Choristers and shining a spotlight on their music-making

Theory

Supporting musical development



Camaraderie and welfare

Bringing Choristers together; encouraging interaction, socialising and fun

Music appreciation

Developing a broader knowledge of styles, genres and performances



Weekly Schedule

Monday	16:00	Chorister Middle Theory
	16:30 (as arranged)	Parent-led session
Tuesday	9:00	Chorister Form Time & Musical Enrichment
	16:00	Chorister Junior Theory
Wednesday	16:00	Chorister Senior Theory
	16:30 (as arranged)	Parent-led session
Thursday	9:00	Chorister Singing Discovery
	Evening (fortnightly)	Chorister Social Night
Friday	16:00	Year 8 Advanced Workshop
	16:30 (as arranged)	Parent-led session
Throughout	As arranged	Solo items released Ensemble items released

Parent-led sessions

These are additional opportunities for Choristers to get together remotely and are arranged independently by Choir families. Special thanks to Mr Mirfin and Mr Herniman for their considerable time and expertise.



Singing

One of the joys of singing in a cathedral choir is the broad repertoire and high level at which it is performed. Choristers learn an enormous amount of music, some of which often becomes a lifetime favourite. Our school-based singing sessions enable choristers to sing some of these pieces in a regular routine, and learn some new repertoire in the same way as they would in the Cathedral. The parent-led sessions enable more detailed learning, and keeps the rigour of regular rehearsal and performance.

Theory

Learning music theory is a very important part of development as a musician, and we are determined that choristers' (and others') opportunity to develop this way is maintained. All choristers who have not yet passed Grade 5 theory receive lessons and are given the opportunity to progress in this area.

Music appreciation

Normal school and chorister life allows a great deal of music appreciation through the learning of a wide repertoire of many different types of music. This is an opportunity to deepen knowledge of particular composers and to widen experience of music beyond the traditional Anglican canon (and any concerts of other works such as the Bach Passions). Therefore a well-known piece is taken as a start point and other music introduced, either by that composer or a similar one, to encourage choristers to explore more music they would not normally sing (or play).



Year 8 Advanced Workshop

For those senior choristers with an appetite for extending their musical skills and knowledge, a weekly Advanced Workshop is offered. Topics can include Grade 6+ theory, composition, musical analysis.

Camaraderie and welfare

Choristers form strong social bonds through being part of a team that regularly and routinely produce high-quality music. We are very keen that this team spirit continues, even though we are physically apart. More generally, it is important to maintain as much of chorister normality as possible through all our activities so the choristers still feel like choristers. Fortnightly Thursday sessions allow the Senior Choristers to work with Mr Roberts and Mr Featherstone to coordinate quiz nights and other virtual get-togethers.

Performance opportunities

Our children, notably our choristers, gain many opportunities to perform their instruments, and to sing solos, outside their Cathedral routine. It is important that we try to continue this as much as possible, by organising choristers to be able to perform solos and provide a platform for allowing others to hear them.

We also are developing plans for two additional works: a vocal project involving Choristers and other invited singers; and a school-wide mega-ensemble.

In addition, thanks to the skills and goodwill of Mr Mirfin and Mr Herniman, choristers may choose to meet in their own time (and by arrangement among families) three times a week to rehearse together. If they wish, they are able to record their part at home and have their voices edited into a single ensemble piece. We will be delighted and proud to broadcast these ensemble pieces far and wide via the School's various media platforms.



Personal practice

Musical instruments can be learnt and practised anywhere, and home practice does not change when lessons aren't physically available. Most of our VMTs have arranged distance music lessons for choristers, and being at home all the time gives more opportunity for practice, and get ahead in their instruments. Music practice should continue. We are very grateful to the Dean and Chapter for continuing to fund free music lessons on an instrument for the choristers through this period.

Staying in touch

Although our buildings may be closed, we are very much here for each other as a community. The Chorister community is a timeless one and you are encouraged to stay in touch with one another and with the School as much as you can. Our weekly "form periods", our fortnightly "socials" and the Teams messageboards give opportunities to communicate, as well as any means choristers may have arranged by themselves. The chorister team is still there – stay together!

Keith Roberts
ECS Chorister Tutor





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