



CADEIRLAN
LLANDAF
CATHEDRAL



VOICE TRIALS

A Guide to your Chorister Audition

WELCOME

Thank you for your application to become a chorister at Llandaff Cathedral. Choristerships are a unique experience for children, providing opportunities to create friendships that last a lifetime, and to develop skills beyond just their musicianship that will benefit them for years to come. For many, being a chorister is a life-changing (and in some cases, a life-defining) period of their lives and Voice Trials are the first step to beginning this journey with us.

Whilst we make every effort to ensure they take place in a relaxed atmosphere, we understand that Voice Trials can be an anxious time for parents and their children. We hope that this document we help you to feel prepared for the day, and as confident as possible during the audition.

Thank you once again for applying to be a chorister, and we look forward to seeing you soon.



Arrival

When you arrive at the cathedral, the directions to the **waiting room** will be clearly signposted. If you get lost, or think you may be late for any reason, a contact number will be provided.

You can use your time in the **waiting room** to:

- Get your music ready.
- Warm up your voice.
- Prepare your instrument if you have one.
- Think calmly through your music.
- Have a drink and relax.

When it is time, our Director of Music will collect you to take you to the **Song Room**, where your audition will take place. Parents are invited to remain in the **waiting room**, where they are welcome to make use of the facilities available.

Remember:

Please arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of your audition time.

Please make sure you bring enough copies of music for you and the accompanist, who will be one of the cathedral musicians.



During the audition

Your audition will take place in the **Song Room**, where the cathedral choir rehearses every day. Inside you will be greeted by our Director of Music, Stephen Moore. He will normally be joined by a panel of two other people; Aaron Shilson, our Assistant Director of Music, and Canon Ian Yemm, our Precentor. They will all welcome you and make you feel at home before your audition begins:

Stephen Moore

Director of Music

Stephen is in charge of all the music at Llandaff Cathedral, and in particular for training the choristers of the choir. He trained at Trinity College of Music in London, and held posts at The Royal Hospital, Southwell Minster, Salisbury Cathedral, and St Matthew's Church in Northampton.



Aaron Shilson

Assistant Director of Music

Aaron helps in the running of the music department. His main job is to accompany the choir during services from the organ, but he also spends a lot of time helping to train the choristers. He studied music in Leeds and Manchester, and was previously an Organist at Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire before moving to Cardiff.



Rev'd Canon Ian Yemm

Canon Precentor

Canon Ian is the priest in charge of music, liturgy and worship at the Cathedral, and has particular responsibility for the pastoral care of the musicians, including the choristers. Canon Ian was a professional singer and spent much of his career working with Welsh National Opera.



The audition happens in 3 parts:

Prepared Songs

In the first section of the audition, you will be asked to perform one prepared song of your own choice, and a verse of the hymn 'Tell out, my soul'. **Sheet music and words for this hymn can be found at the back of this booklet.** One of the musicians will accompany you on the piano. These songs are your opportunity to show us what you can do, so choose something that you can sing confidently.

When you have finished a piece, one of the panel may ask you to sing part of it again, but trying something different in the performance. Do not be worried if this happens, as it not a bad thing, and not an indication of how your performance went. This just allows our panel to see how you respond and to hear you voice in a different way.

Tests

Once you have sung your songs, Mr Moore will guide you through a series of aural tests. The first of these will involve singing some simple exercises to see how high and low you can sing. Further tests will involve singing notes back that you hear on the piano, repeating melodies and clapping rhythms. These allow us to better understand your voice and how you hear music.

Examples of these tests can be found at the back of this booklet to help you prepare.

Reading

Following the tests, you will be asked to read a short portion of a text from the bible. This might not seem relevant, but choristers spend much of their time singing music with words taken from scripture. Sometimes the language used is quite old and unusual, and so this lets us see how you cope with reading unfamiliar words.

There will also be an opportunity for you to play a piece on an instrument if you have brought one with you.

Remember:

Don't be concerned or put off if the panel write notes during your performances. This is neither a good nor a bad thing, but simply to help them remember what they have seen and heard during your audition.

That's all!

That's all there is to your voice trial at Llandaff Cathedral!
The audition usually lasts no more than **20 minutes**.



After the audition

Once the audition is finished, you'll be taken back to the **waiting room** to meet your parents, and you will be free to leave.

We aim to publish the results of the Voice Trials in April. For external candidates also applying to join The Cathedral School, the Registrar will be in contact with further details regarding next steps.

If you have any further queries about the audition process, please contact Stephen Moore via email: stephenmoore@llandaffcathedral.org.uk



Sample Tests

Part 1 - Rhythm

In this part of the test, candidates will be asked to clap a rhythm that they hear demonstrated by the Director of Music.

Seven musical staves illustrating rhythmic patterns. Each staff begins with a double bar line and a time signature. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: 4/4 time. Notes: quarter, quarter, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, quarter, quarter, half.
- Staff 2: 4/4 time. Notes: quarter, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, quarter, half.
- Staff 3: 4/4 time. Notes: quarter, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, quarter, quarter, half.
- Staff 4: 3/4 time. Notes: quarter, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, half.
- Staff 5: 3/4 time. Notes: quarter, eighth-beam eighth, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, eighth-beam eighth, quarter, half.
- Staff 6: 3/4 time. Notes: quarter, quarter.
- Staff 7: 6/8 time. Notes: quarter, quarter.

Part 2 - Pitch

The Director of Music will play a series of notes on the piano. The candidate will be asked to sing these notes back as quickly as possible after hearing them.

A musical staff showing a sequence of ten notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4.

Part 3 - Melody

The Director of Music will play a short melody on the piano. The candidate will be asked to sing these short phrases back, matching both the pitch and the rhythm of what was played.

The image displays four musical staves, each containing a short melodic phrase. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The second staff is in treble clef with a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The third staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The fourth staff is in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat).

Part 4 - Chords

The Director of Music will play two notes on the piano simultaneously. Candidates will be asked to sing both of the notes that they hear. Candidates may sing either the upper or lower note first.

The image shows a single musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It contains six pairs of simultaneous notes (dyads) separated by double bar lines. The notes in each pair are: 1) G4 and B-flat4, 2) A4 and C5, 3) B-flat4 and D5, 4) C5 and E5, 5) D5 and F5, and 6) E5 and G5.

Hymn - Tell out, my soul

The image displays a musical score for the hymn 'Tell out, my soul'. It is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The score is arranged in three systems, each featuring a vocal line on a single treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are printed below the vocal line. The first system contains the first two lines of the hymn. The second system contains the next two lines. The third system contains the final two lines. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands, providing harmonic support for the vocal melody.

Tell out, my soul, the great-ness of the Lord! Un-num - bered bless-ings, give my
spi - rit voice; ten - der to me the pro - mise of his
word; in God my Sa - viour shall my heart re - joice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.



Find audio recordings here:
www.llandaffcathedral.org.uk/voice-trials/
or scan the QR Code.

Words: Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-2024)
Music: WOODLANDS
Walter Greatorex (1877-1949)