



THE CANTUS ENSEMBLE

2019 AUDITIONS
INFORMATION PACK



"It was a joy to hear you sing my music with such vitality and rhythmic intensity. Thank you."

Sir James Macmillan

"Bravo guys!"

Eric Whitacre, Grammy Award-winning composer

"Eye candy as well as ear candy... A really gripping performance!"

Ghislaine Morgan

"Listening to the archive recording of The Cantus Ensemble: A really exciting young choir"
Jonathan Manners, Chief Executive of the Academy of Ancient Music

"I so enjoyed working with The Cantus Ensemble last night... What an excellent choir!"
Ralph Allwood MBE



Welcome

Greetings! Thank you for your interest in joining the Cantus Ensemble. I have put together this information pack to give you a little more information about the choir and of the audition process. This summer **we have vacancies in all voice parts** and are looking for outstanding London-based choral singers to join our team as we head towards a very exciting ninth season together, which features a collaboration with a top London orchestra, a performance of a brand new contemporary work and another European tour in 2019. If you enjoy singing a wide range of choral repertoire to the very highest standard and are looking for an ensemble with a vibrant social life, then I hope you will consider booking an audition with Cantus.

The Choir

Acclaimed as one of London's leading chamber choirs, The Cantus Ensemble continues to delight audiences from across the capital and beyond with its passionate, precise and gripping performances of works large and small from across the choral spectrum.

Founded by myself in 2011, the choir's membership is made up of some of the capital's finest amateur singers who have day jobs ranging from teaching, to accountancy, to Fine Wine, television programming and much more! The choir meets every Tuesday evening in term time for an hour and forty-five minutes to rehearse, and tours to an international destination every season around the second May Bank Holiday.

The choir's repertoire is extensive and incredibly varied and we have become known for exciting and innovative programming, challenging the norms of choral concerts. The choir performs works from the renaissance period up to the modern day, with several UK and European premieres of major works. Cantus has a culture of tackling the most challenging and exhilarating works in the choral repertoire, from Strauss' infamous twenty-part *Deutsche Motette*, to Poulenc's *Figure Humaine*, and recent immersive performances of Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles* and Mason Bates' *Sirens*, plus Grammy and Pulitzer prize for music winner Caroline Shaw's epic *Partita for 8 voices*. As well as introducing singers and audiences to new works, I ensure that Cantus continues to perform choral favourites, from Durufle's *Requiem* to Bach's *Motets*, plus a diet of the finest Anglican music in our termly evensongs.

As the choir has built a growing following so has it been recognised for its excellence, with appearances on Classic FM, BBC Radio 3, Scala Radio and ITV. We have developed an excellent reciprocal relationship with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, with whom we have now performed alongside in five major concerts at both the Royal Albert Hall and the Royal Festival Hall. The choir has won admiration from composers like Sir James Macmillan, conductors like Nigel Short of *Tenebrae* and choral adjudicators like Ghislaine Morgan and Will Todd.

The ensemble is made up of 36 singers (10 sopranos, 8 altos, 8 tenors and 10 basses) with a further six deputy places. Despite its size, Cantus' sound is known for its laser-like intensity, focus and blend.

*Dominic Brennan, June 2019
Director, The Cantus Ensemble*

31 Main
Cantus
Concerts to date

Countries
visited on
international
tours **7**

3 Position in the
UK Classical
charts in 2015

|Past repertoire

To give you an idea of the breadth of repertoire than Cantus cover in a season, below is an inexhaustive list of some past concert repertoire.

Allegri	<i>Miserere</i>
Bach	<i>Motets</i>
Bernstein	<i>Chichester Psalms</i>
Brahms	<i>Ein Deutsches Requiem</i>
Britten	<i>A Ceremony of Carols, Hymn to St Cecilia, AMDG, Five Flower Songs, Rejoice in the Lamb</i>
Dove	<i>The Far Theatricals of Day</i>
Durufle	<i>Requiem</i>
Dyson	<i>Hierusalem</i>
Gesualdo	<i>Tenebrae responses for Holy Saturday</i>
Harvey	<i>I love the Lord</i>
Hogan	<i>Spirituals</i>
Howells	<i>Take him earth for cherishing, Preces & Responses, Requiem</i>
Janacek	<i>Otcenas</i>
Kodaly	<i>Missa Brevis</i>
Ligeti	<i>Nacht und morgen</i>
MacMillan	<i>Miserere, Seven last words from the cross, Strathclyde Motets</i>
O'Regan	<i>The Night's Untruth, Triptych</i>
Maw	<i>One foot in Eden still I stand</i>
Mealor	<i>Now sleeps the crimson petal</i>
Mozart	<i>Requiem</i>
Panufnik	<i>Deus Meus</i>
Parry	<i>Songs of Farewell</i>
Part	<i>Nunc Dimittis, Which was the Son of</i>
Paus	<i>O Magnum Mysterium</i>
Penderecki	<i>Song of Cherubim</i>
Pizzetti	<i>Messa di Requiem</i>
Poulenc	<i>Mass in G, Quatre motets pour le temps de Noel, Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence, Chansons Francaises, Figure Humaine, Gloria</i>
Rachman'ov	<i>All Night Vigil</i>
Shaw	<i>Partita for 8 Voices, To the Hands</i>
Stanford	<i>Magnificat for Double Choir</i>
Strauss	<i>Deutsche Motette</i>
Susa	<i>Carols and Lullabies</i>
Talbot	<i>Path of Miracles</i>
Tavener	<i>Butterfly Dreams, Song for Athene, Hymn to the Mother of God</i>
Tippett	<i>Five Spirituals</i>
Vierne	<i>Messe Sollenelle</i>
Villette	<i>Inviolata, Attende Domine, Three Motets, Tu es Petrus</i>
Whitacre	<i>Leonardo dreams of his flying machine, The Stolen Child, Alleluia, Three flower songs Martin Mass for Double Choir, When David Heard, Sleep</i>



21 Different career fields that Cantus members work in

Original Cantus members 3 still in the choir

22 Paid carolling gigs sung by the choir in Dec' 2018



The Social Side

One of the choir's defining features is its social atmosphere - evident in an extensive and varied social calendar. Aside from going to the pub after rehearsals there are regular social events ranging from wine-tasting to Ceilidhs, and comedy club nights to day trips. Once a term there is a Saturday rehearsal (usually around lunchtime) which is followed by a social and the 'Cantus Challenge'. Past Saturday socials have included a Six Nations rugby day, Cantus Sports Day and the bitterly contested 'Cantus Challenge'! At the end of year we have an AGM and then invite friends to a ball or Ceilidh.

It is my firm belief that a warm and vibrant social side contributes to an extremely healthy exchange of musical ideas in rehearsals, and it is a key factor in the dynamic sound that we produce in concerts and services. We're a close knit group of friends and incredibly welcoming to new members - in Cantus you're guaranteed to make new friends for life. Indeed there are now three couples who met in Cantus who are either married or soon to be married!



The choir outside the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, having just sung there on our tour this year. In total we sang at three of the four major Basilicas in Rome, tasted ice cream from about 84 gelaterias and drank over 3,000 Aperol Spritz's.... probably!

20
vocal parts in
Strauss' *Deutsche
Motette*, sung in
2015

10,000+
In the audiences
at the Royal Albert
Hall when Cantus
sang music from
Hollywood with
the RPO in May
2019

|The Audition Process

|Audition Dates

Auditions this summer will take place over the following four dates:

Sunday 11 August (1400-1800)

Tuesday 27 August (1900-2200)

Saturday 31 August (1400-1900)

Tuesday 3 September (1900 - 2200)

I regret that we are unable to offer other dates to those listed above. All auditions will take place in Pimlico, London.

|Audition Format

No one likes auditions. Don't worry, I know and understand: I've been there myself! Since I started Cantus I have auditioned nearly five hundred singers and I am proud of the inclusive and friendly way that we run things. The most important thing to note is that for the majority of your audition you will be singing as part of a quartet (the other three parts being made up by current Cantus members who are not re-auditioning). This hopefully will put you at ease and it allows me to assess the most important things for a choral singer in a tight-knit ensemble, blend and awareness of the other parts.

When you book your audition slot you will be sent an audition pack which will include a short solo that you need to prepare and a piece to be sung within the quartet. On the day you will be asked to sight-read an additional piece for vocal quartet. With sight-reading, rather than looking for absolute perfection, we will spend a few minutes working on the piece together to assess how you take direction and how quickly you are able to get up to speed.

The full audition format is as follows:

- Welcome and informal chat
- Scales to assess range
- Simple aural tests
- Prepared solo (unaccompanied)
- Prepared quartet piece
- Sight-reading with quartet

Auditions take up to fifteen minutes.

To book an audition please fill in the form on the audition page of our website, www.thecantusensemble.com, offering as much availability as possible. I will then contact you individually with a timeslot and a link to your audition pack.



3 Official
Saturday
rehearsals &
socials a season

Evensongs each
member is
required to
sing a term 2

11 Times a Cantus
team has won
the Warwick
Pub Quiz
post-evensong



|Key Information

|Choir deps

Each year, six dep places in the choir are offered to candidates. Deps attend the first three rehearsals of each term and take part in the Christmas concert as a minimum. They then step in to cover for regular members who are unable to take part in a term. On average, deps end up taking part in at least 3/4 of the season and are fully valued members of Cantus, taking full part in the social life of the choir.

|Subs

Members of the choir pay £40 in the first term and £30 thereafter to cover the cost of music and venue hire, although this cost is kept as low as possible. This is substantially less than other choirs. Members of the choir are offered many paid opportunities throughout the year which often offset or even outweigh this cost.

|Commitment

Cantus thrives because of a group of loyal and committed members. Members of Cantus are expected to attend rehearsals every Tuesday in term time from 1915-2100 in Pimlico, sing in four concerts a year and to sing at two evensongs a term at St Gabriel's, Pimlico. This offsets the cost of our rehearsal venue. Members that cannot sing in a particular term can be covered by choir deps. Tour is an entirely optional fixture on the Cantus calendar.

|2019/20 Season Key Dates

Our full programme of concerts for the upcoming season is to be confirmed but will include Macmillan's *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, plus much, much more. Key dates for audition candidates to be aware of are:

Tuesday 10 September
Saturday 5 October
Saturday 2 November
Saturday 14 December

First Rehearsal
Saturday rehearsal, Ceilidh
Michaelmas term concert - *The Arc in the Sky*, Smith
Christmas concert

Tuesday 14 January
Saturday 8 February
Saturday 4 April

First Rehearsal
Saturday rehearsal and social
Lent term concert - *Seven last words from the Cross*,
Macmillan & *Christ in Todes Banden*, Bach

Tuesday 14 April
Friday 22 - Tuesday 26 May
Saturday 20 June
Saturday 11 July

First rehearsal
Tour
Saturday rehearsal and social
Trinity term concert