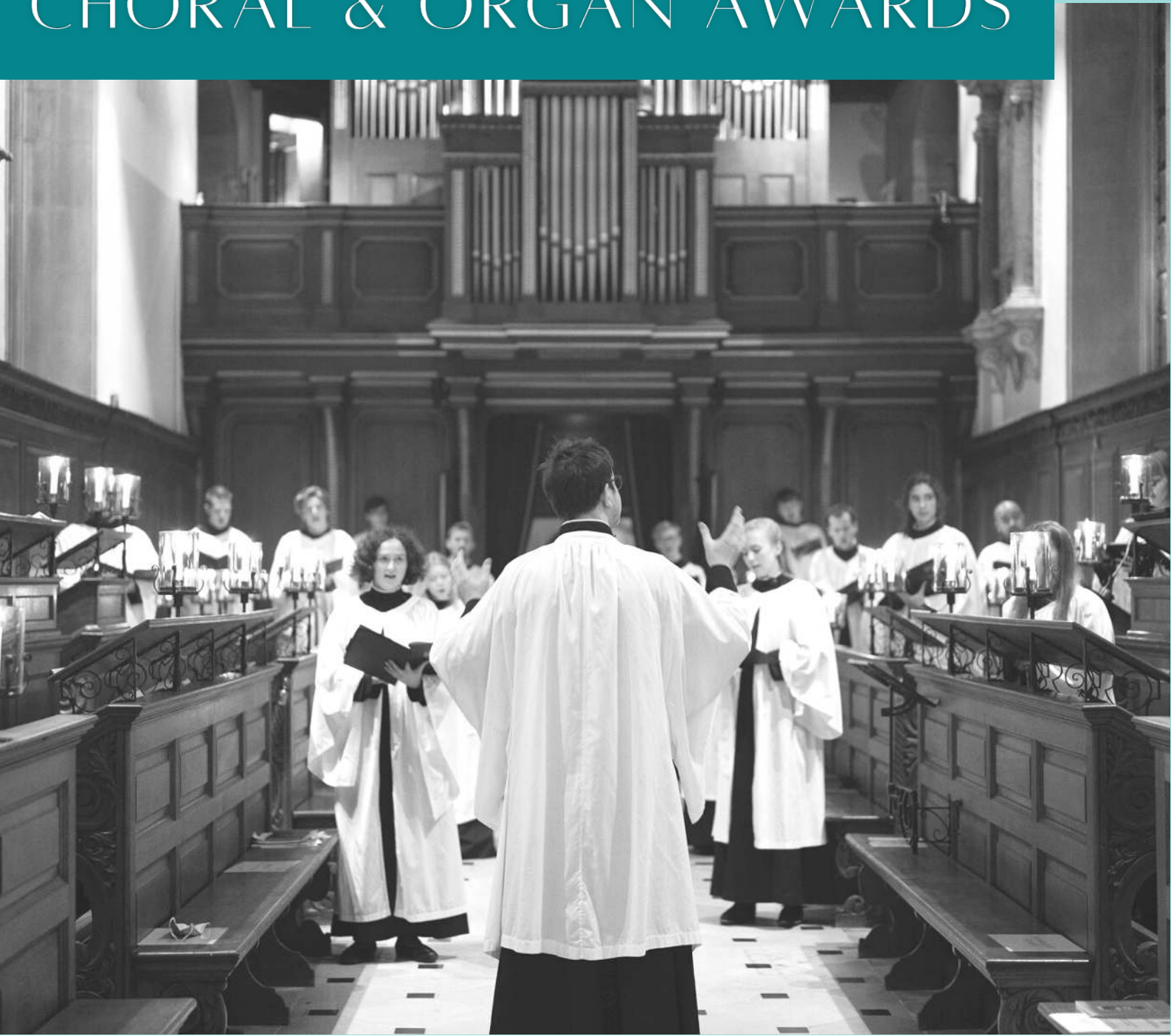


# Gonville & Caius

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

## CHORAL & ORGAN AWARDS



# ABOUT US

---



**Gonville & Caius** ('Keys') is one of the oldest and largest colleges of the University of Cambridge. Founded in 1348, the College combines the best of Cambridge tradition with 21st century teaching and research.

Caius Chapel has a claim to being the oldest purpose-built College Chapel in Cambridge still in use.

The College's musical tradition began at the end of the nineteenth century with a choir of men and boys, founded by the celebrated composer of Anglican church music Charles Wood, and later became an exclusively undergraduate male choir under Wood's successor, the composer Patrick Hadley. Hadley was succeeded by Peter Tranchell, under whose direction the choir became mixed in 1979.

The director of the choir at Caius is known as 'The Precentor' and our current Precentor is Matthew Martin. Matthew read Music at Magdalen College, Oxford where he was organ scholar. As a postgraduate, he studied at the Royal Academy of Music and with Marie-Claire Alain in Paris. From 2015-2020 he was Director of Music at Keble College, Oxford and Artistic Director of the Keble Early Music Festival. Although more recently better known as a composer, he worked for some time in cathedral music as Assistant Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral, Assistant Organist at Canterbury Cathedral and also as Organist of the Brompton Oratory.



# CHOIR LIFE

Caius Choir consists of up to 24 singers (8 Sopranos, 5 Altos, 5 Tenors, 6 Basses) and 2 Organ Scholars and has an international reputation as one of the finest mixed University choirs in the UK. It sings three services each week during term and other activities include radio broadcasts, concerts, tours and recordings.

This level of commitment seeks to ensure high standards within our regular services whilst leaving time for members also to participate in other forms of music-making around the University such as operas and concerts. In most weeks there will also be a singing lesson.

## Normal Weekly Schedule

Sunday	5.00pm rehearsal 6.00pm Choral Evensong
Monday	6.00pm - 7.00pm rehearsal
Tuesday	5.30pm rehearsal 6.30pm Choral Vespers
Wednesday	6.00pm - 7.00pm rehearsal
Thursday	5.30pm rehearsal 6.30pm Choral Eucharist



# TOURS, CONCERTS AND BROADCASTS

---



The choir travels abroad at least once each year, singing in concert halls, universities, cathedrals, and churches across Europe and beyond, including South Africa, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, South America and the USA. The choir also performs extensively in the UK and at festivals such as the Spitalfields Festival in London.

In 2018 the choir took part in a UK tour 'Supersize Polyphony 360' with the Armonico Consort culminating in a recording of Striggio's Mass in forty and sixty parts and Tallis' Spem in Alium.

Broadcasts of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3 have been notably adventurous in content, including a service of music composed specially for the occasion by students at Caius and a service of South African music broadcast from Pietermaritzburg in South Africa.



*'Such poise and technical control from a college choir, with its constant turnover of undergraduate voices, is remarkable.'*

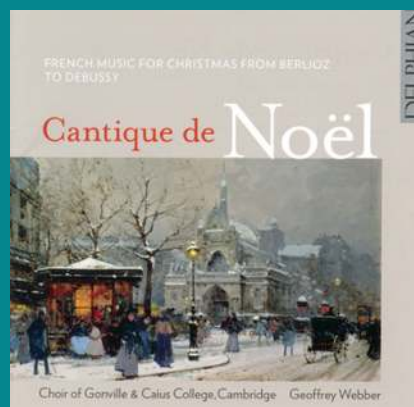
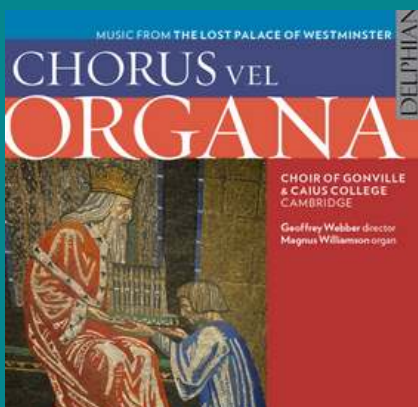
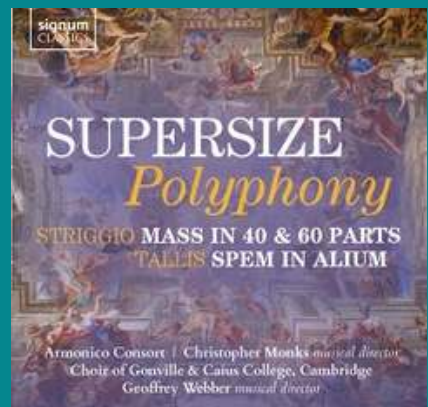
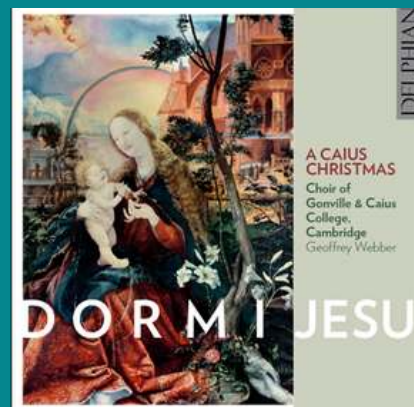
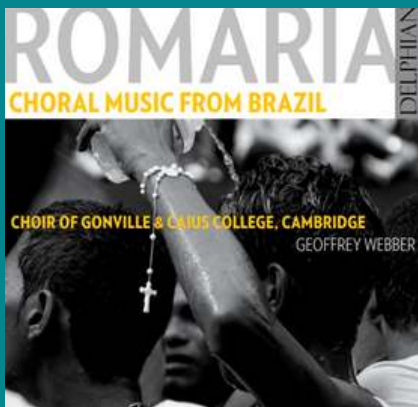
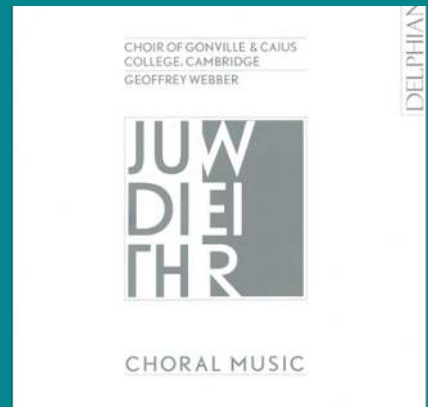
**BBC Music Magazine**

*'The Choir of Gonville & Caius show themselves once again as one of Cambridge's most accomplished'*

**Gramophone**

# RECORDINGS

The choir's recordings have often specialised in the re-discovery of forgotten choral repertoires, including previously unpublished music from within the English choral tradition and beyond, as well as championing new music such as choral works by British composers Judith Weir and Julian Anderson. 'Romaria: Choral Music from Brazil' features sacred and secular music from the 1950s through to the present day in a programme developed in conjunction with experts from the University of São Paulo's music department. Early English music features on 'Chorus vel Organa: Music for the Lost Palace of Westminster' which includes music from the Caius Choirbook, a manuscript held in the College containing music sung at the Royal Palace of St Stephen's, Westminster, in c. 1520. 'Set upon the Rood' includes seven newly composed pieces for voices with ancient instruments such as the carnyx, lyre and aulos.



# CHORAL AWARDS

---



Choral awards are open to all voices (including both male and female altos) and are compatible with reading any subject. The choral awards scheme is inter-collegiate. Auditions (known as 'Choral Trials') take place in March each year and the deadline for applications is mid-February.

The chief qualities that are looked for in applicants are vocal potential and commitment. Some applicants will have had vocal training and taken grade exams in singing, yet others may have had relatively little vocal training and experience; this factor is taken into account during the auditions and no one should feel excluded from applying on the grounds of their experience at school.

In addition to the University Choral Award (£100 per year), weekly singing lessons are provided in Caius free of charge with one of our College singing teachers: David Lowe and Kate Symonds-Joy.

Fees are normally paid for concerts and broadcasts to supplement the standard choral award. Choir members stay in College free of charge during vacations when undertaking choir activities, and one or more foreign tours are provided free of charge each year. In addition, a special fund exists to help singers wishing to take part in occasional master-classes or other vocal opportunities at any time of the year.

For more information on how to apply, please scan the following QR code:



*'Sung with vivid assurance...  
the results are rich and engaging.'*  
**The Guardian**

# ORGAN AWARDS

---

Organ Scholars play a vital role in the flourishing activities of Caius Choir, accompanying and playing solo pieces for the regular services and for Radio 3 broadcasts, concerts at home and abroad, and CD recordings.

The principal planning and organisational work of the Chapel Choir is carried out by the Precentor and the Choir Administrator, so Organ Scholars have time for the development of solo and accompanying skills to the highest standards. The Organ Scholars also have opportunities to work on their conducting skills with the choir and take a leading role in the musical life of the College in general, often conducting a large-scale choral and orchestral work in the termly College Concert.

The Chapel organ was built in 1981 by Johannes Klais of Bonn. It is a versatile three-manual instrument, containing a few ranks from the previous Walker organ.

In addition to the standard award of £450, Organ Scholars at Caius enjoy rent free living for three years and free organ and singing lessons. There is a financial subsidy for the purchase of organ music and tutorial grants are available to those wishing to undertake organ courses both in the UK and abroad.

To apply for an Organ Scholarship you enter the Cambridge University Organ Awards competition held in September.

Details of the Organ Awards process can be found here:



# MUSIC AT CAIUS

---

In addition to the Choir, there are plenty of other musical activities with which to get involved. There is an active music society (GCMS), close harmony groups (Caius Men and Gonville Girls), an instrumental awards scheme and jazz nights.

**GCMS (Gonville & Caius Music Society)** organises a Saturday lunchtime recital series and a College Concert each term. The College Concert in the Michaelmas and Lent terms is usually a large-scale choral and orchestral concert. The summer term concert, known as the May Week Concert, is normally a more light-hearted programme or takes the form of a show, such as *The Threepenny Opera*, or *Guys and Dolls*. There are also informal concerts arranged from time to time, known as the Scales Club Concerts (founded in the late 19th century) where everyone is welcome to take part.

**Caius Men and Gonville Girls** sing a wide range of music including everything from madrigals and part songs to pop, show and jazz arrangements. They perform in college and at functions such as May Balls, and other University and private events.





# MEET THE CHOIR

---

**Louis Pettitt**  
**Alto**  
**studying Music**

## **Why did you want to be a choral scholar?**

I loved singing in choirs at school and it seemed the obvious choice to carry it on at university! Choral singing allows for the best of both worlds, learning to blend with a larger group and being exposed to such a variety of incredible music, and developing as a soloist.



## **What attracted you to Caius?**

I wanted to sing in a mixed choir and I knew a few people who sang in the choir, who recommended it highly. It's a good level of commitment and the singing is consistently top rate. I also loved the buildings and how central the college is. It's worth going and visiting if you get a chance before you apply, and by all means reach out to current choir members who can give you an idea of what life at Caius is like.

## **How easy has it been to adapt to the demands of being a choir member?**

Having choir five times a week is definitely intense, but so rewarding. It also brings structure to your day, and provides a break from the rigorous academic requirement of your degree.

## **What's it like to be a member of Caius Choir?**

When you sing with the choir five days a week, it becomes your second family: the choir is such a warm and welcoming environment and we have so much fun singing together and socialising. I've also loved singing in Caius Men, our a cappella group, and performing in May Balls.

## **What has been your most memorable experience in the choir?**

Definitely our broadcasts in Buckfast. Singing live on the radio was a first for me and the Abbey was an amazing building to sing in. We got to live together for a week, cooking for each other (the Christmas dinner was a definite highlight) and going on walks in the countryside – and there's no better group to spend time with than Caius Choir!

## **Do you have any advice for future applicants?**

Give it a go! If you like singing, there's really nothing to be worried about: the trials are all about evaluating potential. For your audition, sing a piece that you're comfortable with and give the tests your best shot. Also, come and listen to evensong – there's no better way to experience the choir than watching us singing live.

---

**Kyoko Canaway**  
**Organ Scholar**  
**studying Modern Languages**

**What organ playing experience did you have before you applied?**

I had very little experience playing the organ with a choir or playing in the context of a service and had mostly spent my time learning solo repertoire. This wasn't a problem at all for the trials, but I think it helped that I applied for deferred entry, since I was then able to spend a year as Organ Scholar at Chichester Cathedral where I could gain more experience playing for services and accompanying before starting at Caius.



**Why did you want to be an organ scholar?**

I have always enjoyed being part of ensembles so I decided to apply for an organ scholarship to make sure that I would still have the opportunity to continue my musical education despite not studying Music.

**What were the organ trials like?**

I remember being quite nervous, especially before my conducting audition, but you do also get a lot of time during the day where you're not required for interviews. I enjoyed bumping into other applicants in cafes around town and bonding over the whole experience. The college organ scholars were also really helpful in showing me around and giving me tips on how to prepare.

**What attracted you to Caius Choir?**

I was looking for a choir that had a high level of commitment but would still allow me pursue other activities and have time for my academic work.

**What's it like being a member of Caius Choir?**

I really enjoy it! Everyone in choir is so friendly. Caius Choir is particularly sociable - we usually eat together after rehearsals and services so it's very easy to spend lots of time with other choir members.

**What has been your most memorable experience in the choir?**

There have been lots of memorable moments including singing in Christmas markets in Romania and performing the Duruflé Requiem at Caius. A particular highlight was our tour to Norfolk. The weather was sunny for the entire week and we spent all our free time outside, either having picnics or playing football on the beach together. The music was also really fun and quite interesting, including extracts from Handel's Oratorio Samson.

---

## **Toby Barnett**

**Bass**

**studying Mathematics**



### **Did you have a lot of singing experience when you auditioned?**

I had sung a lot before I auditioned to sing at Caius Choir, but never in a choral setting; despite having some classical training I'd always much preferred musical theatre.

### **What's it like to be a member of Caius Choir?**

Being a member of Caius Choir truly is a privilege: you work and sing with unbelievably talented people practically every day. You learn so much about your voice, and yourself as a musician, and get the opportunity to explore incredible music all the time. On top of all this, you become part of a family. Everyone in the choir gets along so well: we are all so supportive of each other, and we do our best to make sure that we all have the absolute best time we can, making the best music possible.

### **How has your time as a Caius choral scholar advanced your music?**

My sight reading has improved ten-fold, and my general musicianship has developed so much: I now have a much better sense of intonation, and I am far better at singing and blending with other people. I also have a newfound appreciation (even love) for choral music, which to be honest I was slightly hesitant about beforehand.

### **What were the choral award trials like?**

The choral trials, although slightly nerve-racking, were made to be as comfortable as possible. Before I had my call-back/trial (which was on Zoom due to the pandemic), I had an online meeting with Matthew Martin, the Precentor, and David Lowe, one of the choir's dedicated singing teachers, in which they helped me to prepare for my trial. They wanted me to succeed just as much as I did, and it was reassuring that when I had my trial, I saw a familiar face.

### **Do you have any advice for future applicants?**

I did not breeze through my trial with flying colours, in fact I made lots of mistakes. Nor did I have any experience singing choral music before I applied to sing in Caius Choir. This isn't a problem though. The choir is not looking for perfectly polished singers who can do everything from the moment they arrive. If that is you, then great! But if it's not, don't worry: you are equally, if not more appealing to the choir, as what the trials really look for are people with potential. If you're considering applying for a choral award, my best advice is: do it.



## **How do I know if I'm the right standard for Gonville and Caius College Choir?**

Choral scholars at Caius come from many different backgrounds so it is always worth making an enquiry or application. Our Precentor, Matthew Martin is always happy to answer questions from prospective choral scholars. You can contact him at [precentor@cai.cam.ac.uk](mailto:precentor@cai.cam.ac.uk)



## **Do I have to be a fast sight-reader?**

The choir does a lot of sight-reading but this is something that can be strengthened with time. We are more interested in potential than a particular standard.



## **Should I have a lot of experience singing/playing with a choir before I apply?**

Our members come to the choir with a variety of different levels of experience. While some have been choristers and sung/played for a lot of their lives, others are relatively new to working with choirs. We would encourage you to apply even if you have relatively little experience.



## **Should I have a particular type of voice or sound?**

No, we are interested in all different types of voices!



## **What sort of music does the Choir typically sing?**

The choir performs a wide variety of music throughout the year however, we specialise in undiscovered or unfamiliar repertoire. We currently sing Choral Vespers on Tuesdays, Choral Eucharist on Thursdays and Choral Evensong on Sundays and in one week music can span as much as 700 years.



## **Where do choral scholars continue their musical life after Caius?**

The choir community extends to over 400 former members, and many have professional lives outside music, such as Engineer and former Cambridge Vice-Chancellor Sir Alec Broers, TV & Arts presenter Alistair Appleton and the actor Simon Russell Beale. However, many former choir members have studied at a music conservatoire after graduating and forged solo careers. Others have joined professional choral groups such as: The Sixteen, Voces8 and the Chorus of the Royal Opera House. Choir members have also gone on to be conductors, composers, cathedral organists, chorus masters and opera directors.

# CONTACT US

---

## Get in touch!

If you have any questions about the choir and applications, you can contact us at:

Telephone: 01223 332411

Email: [choirecai.cam.ac.uk](mailto:choirecai.cam.ac.uk)

The Precentor is also happy to meet prospective choral and organ awards candidates informally at any time of year, either on a separate visit or whilst attending a subject or Caius Open Day.

You can write to him directly: [precentorecai.cam.ac.uk](mailto:precentorecai.cam.ac.uk)



@CaiusCollegeCho



@gonvilleandcaiuschoir



@caiuschoir

[www.gonvilleandcaiuschoir.com](http://www.gonvilleandcaiuschoir.com)