Application Pack

Ref: WA108

Singing Teacher

Hourly Rate: £39.10

Part-time

Closing Date: 22 June 2021

Westminster Abbey
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About Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is a major centre for Christian worship, a leading venue for tourism and a treasured part of Britain’s heritage. The Abbey has occupied a central place in the celebration of great events for the nation and remains one of the most beautiful architectural masterpieces in Britain.

A living Church, Westminster Abbey is the House of Kings, where the coronation of Kings and Queens has taken place since 1066, and where many of the Kings and Queens of England and of the United Kingdom are buried. Principal among them is St Edward the Confessor, King of England from 1042 to 1066, whose shrine is at the heart of the Abbey Church. Beside and around them are buried or commemorated many of the great men and women from almost every century of British history: statesmen and politicians, lawyers, warriors, clerics, writers, artists, musicians. Westminster Abbey is a Royal Peculiar, and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster are directly responsible to the Sovereign.

The Dean and Chapter of Westminster defines our Mission in these terms:

- To serve Almighty God by offering divine Worship daily and publicly;
- To serve the Sovereign by daily prayer and by a ready response to requests made by or on behalf of Her Majesty;
- To serve the nation by celebrating the distinctive witness of the Christian faith; by upholding the place of religious faith within national life; and by active engagement with Parliament, Whitehall and others in positions of public service;
- To serve all pilgrims and visitors to the Abbey, and to maintain a tradition of hospitality.

Our values

As one we serve each other, our visitors and the wider world in all we do with:

- Truthfulness
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Excellence

The Abbey attracts approximately one million paying visitors each year, from all around the world. A large number of people also attend services which take place seven days a week. Daily services are only part of the Abbey’s work, for there are also many ‘special’ services and events throughout the year. Westminster Abbey currently employs around 320 staff in a variety of roles and an even larger number of volunteers.

The Abbey receives no regular income from the State, the Church of England or the Royal Family, and relies on monies raised from visitors to ensure that the building can be properly maintained and remain open as an amenity for all.
Music at Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey has one of the few fully professional choral foundations in the world, with a historic musical tradition and an international reputation. At its heart is the Choir of Westminster Abbey. Comprising some thirty boy choristers and twelve professional adult singers (known as Lay Vicars), the Choir plays a central role both in the daily choral services in the Abbey and in the many royal, state and national occasions that take place here.

During Choir Term the Abbey Choir usually sings eight statutory choral services per week. In addition to its core liturgical responsibilities, the Choir also records regularly for Hyperion Records and frequently undertakes high-profile concerts, broadcasts and tours.

The Abbey Music Department exists to provide choral and organ music at all services and public events in the Abbey, and to ensure that the music performed in and associated with the Abbey is of the highest standard. The Director of Music and head of the department is James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers. He is responsible, with the assistance of his immediate colleagues, for the musical and vocal training of the Choristers, all of whom are educated at the Abbey’s unique Choir School. The department shares, with the Choir School, responsibility for the recruitment and selection of new choristers. In addition, the department is responsible for the Abbey Choir’s programme of extra-liturgical activities, including concerts, recordings and tours, and for the regular series of organ recitals.

The Organist and Master of the Choristers heads a permanent music staff of eighteen, comprising the Sub-Organist, Assistant Organist and Organ Scholar, together with the twelve Lay Vicars and three part-time singing teachers. In addition, the department maintains an extensive register of approved freelance singers who sing as deputies with the Abbey Choir, and draws on the services of a wide range of external musicians, technicians, and specialist consultants. Two full-time members of office staff are responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the department as well as the planning and delivery of concerts and projects.
Job Description

JOB TITLE: Singing Teacher (part-time, zero hours)

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Organist & Master of the Choristers (with day-to-day work coordinated by the Head Singing Teacher)

KEY RELATIONSHIPS: Choristers, Organists, Head Singing Teacher and other singing teachers, key members of Westminster Abbey Choir School staff (Headmaster, Director of Music, Speech & Language Therapist), Music Department staff.

JOB SUMMARY: To deliver weekly one-to-one singing lessons to the choristers of Westminster Abbey and carry out related duties as required.

Main duties and responsibilities

1. To provide engaging, high-quality singing tuition to the choristers of Westminster Abbey (usually on a one-to-one basis but occasionally in small groups).
2. To ensure that lessons are tailored to pupils’ specific role as Abbey choristers and to the needs and demands of the Abbey Choir.
3. To ensure that tuition fully supports the boys’ vocal needs and is geared towards the maintenance of good vocal health and the formation of sound vocal habits.
4. To prepare and coach choristers to sing solos in Abbey services, auditions, concerts, master classes and occasional external engagements as required (including occasional attendance at rehearsals and performances).
5. To monitor choristers’ progress and contribute to the circulation of weekly reports.
6. In consultation with the Head Singing Teacher, to monitor the progress of boys undergoing voice change, advising on their contribution to the Abbey Choir and on their continuing vocal formation after they cease to sing treble.
7. To advise, in consultation with the Head Singing Teacher, on suitable solo repertory for concerts, scholarship auditions, master classes and other such events.
8. To advise from time to time on the vocal suitability of prospective candidates for choristership.
9. To participate in occasional chorister recruitment and outreach activity (for example leading vocal warm-ups at open days).
10. To maintain regular contact with the other singing teachers and attend occasional singing teachers’ meetings.
11. To adhere at all times to the Abbey’s policies, protocols and codes of conduct, with special reference to Safeguarding and Health & Safety matters, and undertake training as required.
12. To undertake any other duties which are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job, as requested by the head of department.

Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks (including the relevant level of criminal record check) on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training. This post requires an enhanced level criminal record check.
Person Specification

POST: Singing Teacher (part-time, zero hours)

This section outlines the knowledge, skills and abilities the job holder needs in order to fulfil the requirements of the post. ‘Essential’ criteria are those that the job holder absolutely must have in order to do the job. ‘Desirable’ criteria are those qualities that would be either useful, or an advantage or those which the job holder can be trained to do.

Essential Education:

1. Music degree or equivalent qualification.

Experience:

2. Substantial experience of teaching singing to boy choristers, ideally gained in the context of a professional cathedral or collegiate choir.

Skills/Aptitudes/Knowledge:

3. Extensive knowledge of relevant vocal repertoire.
4. Up-to-date knowledge of best practice in voice training and maintenance of vocal health, particularly in children.
5. Understanding of the particular requirements and pressures of choristership.
6. Ability to inspire and motivate young singers.
7. Expertise in working with changing voices.
8. Proficiency as a piano accompanist.
9. Ability to work effectively as a member of a team and engage with a wide range of colleagues.
10. Excellent communication skills (both written and verbal) and the ability to communicate effectively with children of the appropriate age range.
11. Flexibility to adapt teaching methods according to circumstances (for instance to teach remotely if required).

Personal Attributes:

12. Commitment to the mission and values of Westminster Abbey.
13. Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
14. Sympathy with the traditions of cathedral music and the special nature of a Choir School education.
15. Enthusiastic and positive demeanour.
16. Patience, discretion and ability to maintain strict confidentiality.

Desirable Education:

17. Teaching qualification.

This Job Profile will be kept under review and may be amended by the Dean & Chapter from time to time. Any proposed changes will be discussed with the post holder.
Working for us

Salary

The hourly rate is £39.10 and is paid on the last Friday of each month. The hourly rate is reviewed annually in January.

Working Hours

The Music Department has a requirement for visiting singing teachers from time to time. Hours of work will be agreed with the Head Singing Teacher, with each assignment authorised by the Organist & Master of the Choristers. The anticipated working hours for this post are up to 3.5 hours per week during term time, worked principally on Saturday mornings (with the occasional requirement to work on Friday afternoons).

Annual Holidays

In this post your holiday will be calculated and paid in accordance with current legislation. For the purposes of calculating your pro-rata entitlement your holiday entitlement is inclusive of your statutory entitlement which is 28 days per annum. When calculating your statutory entitlement bank and public holidays are taken into account. The statutory entitlement cannot be carried over from one holiday year to the next and no payment in lieu will be made.

Pension Scheme and Life Assurance

All employees can join a Group Personal Pension plan, where the minimum employee contribution is 3% and the maximum employer contribution is 9% (as determined by the level of the employee contribution). You will be auto-enrolled into our qualifying workplace pension scheme after 3 months, if you meet the eligibility criteria.
Equality Statement and How to apply

Equality Statement
The Dean and Chapter aim at all times to recruit the person who is most suited to the job. Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant’s abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, skills and experience will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

We will ensure that our shortlisting, interviewing and selection procedures avoid discrimination in any way, including on grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality or ethnic origins, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Please return the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form with your application. This will help us monitor our recruitment practice. The form will not be seen by the people making the selection decision.

Safeguarding
Westminster Abbey is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk. To prevent them from harm, we undertake appropriate checks on staff and volunteers and require them to complete relevant safeguarding training. Offers are subject to a relevant level of criminal record check, receipt of references satisfactory to Westminster Abbey, right to work in the UK, proof of professional qualifications and medical clearance, which may include a medical assessment from the Abbey doctor.

How to Apply
Please complete our application form as CVs **will not** be accepted.

Read the Job Description and Person Specification carefully and think about how your experience, skills and abilities help you to meet the requirements listed in the Person Specification. Use the ‘Supporting Statement’ section of the form to tell us how you meet each of the requirements.

As well as your previous work experience, tell us about other relevant experience such as community and voluntary experience. Clear information on how you meet all the requirements of the job, with relevant examples, will help us with shortlisting, and we may not be able to shortlist you for interview if you do not provide this.

Please email your completed application to: applications@westminster-abbey.org.

Applications should arrive no later than 12 noon on 22 June 2021.

Selection Process
Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an interview and assessment at Westminster Abbey on Friday 9 July. The assessment will involve teaching one or two short lessons to an individual chorister or a small group.

*We regret that, due to the large number of applications we receive, we are only able to contact or provide feedback if you have been shortlisted for interview. We appreciate your interest in our work at Westminster Abbey.*