



Director of Music

The Abbey of St Benedict, London, wishes to appoint a Director of Music to lead the Catholic choir of Ealing Abbey, and to contribute to the development of the Abbey's sacred music programme from September 2026.

Ealing Abbey

Ealing Abbey is a Roman Catholic monastic foundation in West London and is part of the English Benedictine Congregation. It runs one of the largest parishes in the Archdiocese of Westminster and offers a welcoming place of worship to several local schools. The Abbey was founded in 1897 as a parish and was canonically erected as a dependent priory in 1916. In 1947 it became an independent conventual priory and was raised to an Abbey by Pope Pius XII in 1955, with Dom Charles Pontifex as its first abbot. The Abbey is the home to a monastic community. The core of the life of the community is its life of prayer, in private and in the round of daily monastic offices sung in the Abbey Church, from Matins at 6am until Compline at 8pm. All of these are open to public participation. The leadership of the community is entrusted to its Abbot, who is elected for eight-year terms.

Music at the Abbey

Throughout the history of the Abbey, sacred music rooted in the tradition of Gregorian chant has been central to its liturgical life. Likewise, viewing music as a form of evangelisation positions the Abbey as a home for diverse ensembles and styles. The Abbey has one main pipe organ made by Rushworth and Dreaper (1974) with 2 manuals and 26 speaking stops. Besides its liturgical use, the organ is used at recitals. The choir organ is made by Viscount. The Abbey has previously hosted various musical ensembles for programmes of sacred music including *The Sixteen* and *Voces8*.

The Role

The Abbey is seeking a confident and inspiring Director of Music to lead its choir and music programme. The church maintains a high standard of liturgical and musical worship within the Catholic Benedictine tradition and this role offers the opportunity to work in a context where the choral tradition is taken seriously, and where music plays a central role in the liturgical expression of the church. Following the exceptional twenty-year tenure of the current Director, the post will suit a gifted musician who brings artistic sensitivity, professional focus, and a desire to maintain and develop a well-established tradition of excellence in church music. The part-time role requires hours appropriate for fulfilling its responsibilities, including leading the choir at rehearsals, Mass, and Vespers. There is flexibility built in to support the growth and development of the position over time.

The Choir

Ealing Abbey Choir was founded in 1910 by Dom Cyril Rylance (1880–1958), a monk of the monastery, coming into existence as the Catholic Church in England was rediscovering its musical heritage through the works of Renaissance composers and Gregorian chant.

The Abbey Choir consists of twenty boy and girl treble choristers and six professional lay clerks. The Choir's principal commitment revolves around the liturgy in the Abbey Church each week and at Christmas and Easter; repertoire ranges from Gregorian chant and Latin polyphony to works by composers such as Jonathan Dove, Gabriel Jackson & Errollyn Wallen. Outside of the liturgy the choir is extremely active, giving public concerts and touring regularly. The choir has toured across Europe and USA and given concert performances including Bach's *St John Passion*, Handel's *Messiah*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* at Cadogan Hall and Monteverdi's *Vespers*.

The choir is well supported financially by the charitable Trust of the Abbey. The Abbey Choir Management Committee is responsible for reviewing, monitoring, and guiding the strategy, finances, and major business of the

choir. There is an active, supportive, and engaged chorister parent body and a community of Friends of Ealing Abbey Choir.

There is a designated rehearsal space with a well-stocked choir library and office.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Liturgical Music Planning and Leadership

- Plan and prepare all choral and congregational music in line with the liturgical calendar and lectionary.
- Lead the musical elements of worship, normally by conducting the choir in collaboration with an organist. May occasionally play the organ at services and is responsible for arranging appropriate deputies or assistants when required. It is equally possible for a non-organist to undertake this role.

2. Choir Direction and Development

- Direct the choir at the weekly Conventual Mass (Sundays at 10:30am), Ash Wednesday, the Easter Triduum, Midnight Mass, Christmas Day.
- Rehearse the full choir before services, typically 9:00am on a Sunday and one hour before special services
- Rehearse the choristers during the week – the current routine is three morning rehearsals per week (8:00-8:30am) and Tuesday afternoon (4:30-5:30pm)
- Select repertoire that reflects and builds upon the church's well-established liturgical and musical tradition.
- Build and sustain a committed choral community, including families and the Friends of Ealing Abbey Choir. This includes fundraising for future activities such as tours, concerts, and charitable activities.

3. Musical Education and Formation

- Encourage confident congregational singing and musical engagement.
- Be responsible for the recruitment of new probationers, helping to develop the choir's membership over time and ensuring that there is a long-term plan for the sustainability of the choir.
- Support the ongoing musical development of probationers, choristers, and Lay Clerks.
- Provide opportunities for the continuing musical formation of former choristers (e.g. an Adults' Schola).
- Contribute to the broader life of the Parish through outreach initiatives related to music and liturgy.

4. Administration and Oversight

- Act as Line Manager for choir staff, including Organist, Choir Matron and Lay Clerks.
- Report each term to the Abbey Choir Management Committee, which oversees the running of the choir.
- Plan and manage income and expenditure guided by the Abbey Choir Management Committee.
- Oversee the maintenance and tuning of instruments (organ and piano).
- Act as the Safeguarding Representative of the choir to the Safeguarding Liaison Committee.
- Ensure compliance with copyright and licensing policies.

5. Collaboration and Wider Engagement

- Work closely with the Abbot, Monastic Community, parents and local schools.
- Support occasional collaborations with visiting musicians, choirs, and other churches.
- Develop the organisation of concerts, recitals, or musical events consistent with the liturgical and musical life of the church.
- Represent the musical life of the church in appropriate external settings, e.g. tours.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

- Music degree or professional qualification relevant to the post (e.g. ARCO)
- Proven experience in choral direction and liturgical music.
- Knowledge of the Catholic choral tradition, (Gregorian chant and Renaissance polyphony), organ repertoire, and its liturgical context.
- Ability to lead, inspire, and develop a choir of skilled singers.

- Experience of working with young people in a musical context and an understanding of safeguarding.
- Strong organisational and communication skills appropriate to a professional church setting.

Desirable

- Familiarity with the Catholic tradition.
- Excellent keyboard skills, particularly in organ performance and improvisation.
- Experience managing music in a liturgical context.
- Experience of working with professional musicians.
- Ability to collaborate with clergy, staff, and volunteers.

Making an application

We are unable to accept CVs so please do not attach your CV, references, or copies of educational certificates to your form. If there is insufficient room on the form in a particular section, you can simply attach an extra page and mark it clearly with your name and the job title, indicating the number of the relevant question.

Section 5: *Qualification/Training* – this section should include details of any Public Music Examinations/Diplomas as well as any non-musical qualifications and/or training which might be relevant to the role.

Section 6: *General Experience & Further Information* - this section of the form is where you make your case for the job and is your opportunity to tell us specifically why you wish to apply and what makes you a suitable applicant. You should include anything you feel would be useful in support of your application telling us as much as possible about yourself in relation to all the items listed in the job description.

Please remember that those involved in the selection process cannot make assumptions about you - tell us everything relevant to your application and complete all the sections on the form.

Applications and Timetable:

Application forms are available from:

Website: www.ealingmonks.org.uk

E-mail: info@ealingabbey.org.uk

Please return the application form together with a covering letter:

By Post: Abbot's Secretary
 Ealing Abbey
 Charlbury Grove
 London W5 2DY

By Email: info@ealingabbey.org.uk

For enquiries: Tel.: 020 8194 2300 (reception)

Further information: www.ealingabbeychoir.org.uk

The closing date for completed applications is Wednesday, 7 January 2026 at 11.59pm.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview and to rehearse with the choir at a date in January. Further details about what this will involve will be provided, should you be invited for interview. If you have not heard by Monday, 12th January you may assume your application has not been successful.

Data Protection

Information provided by you as part of your application will be used in the recruitment process. Any data about you will be held securely with access restricted to those involved in dealing with your application and in the recruitment process. Once this process is completed the data relating to unsuccessful applicants will be stored for a maximum of 6 months and then destroyed. If you are the successful candidate, your application form will be retained and form the basis of your personnel record. By signing and submitting your completed application form you are giving your consent to your data being stored and processed for the purposes of the recruitment process, equal opportunities monitoring and your personnel record if you are the successful candidate.

Equal Opportunities

Information provided by you on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be used to monitor our equal opportunities policy and practices. This part of the form will be detached from the main body of the application form and will not form any part of the selection process.

Work Permits

Under the Asylum and Immigration Act, we are required to check that anyone taking up employment with us has the legal right to work in the UK. Short-listed applicants will be asked to provide us with documentary evidence to support their entitlement to work in the UK prior to any offer of employment being made.

DBS Checks

Ealing Abbey is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. All staff must adhere to the policies of the Catholic Church in England and Wales for safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults. In line with our safeguarding policy, some employees and volunteers working in specific roles at the Abbey will be subject to satisfactory clearance being obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). As this work involves regulated activity with children, this appointment is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check. The check will be undertaken as part of the appointment process with the successful candidates. In the event of an offer of employment being made, we will take up references and reserve the right to validate all information entered on the application form.