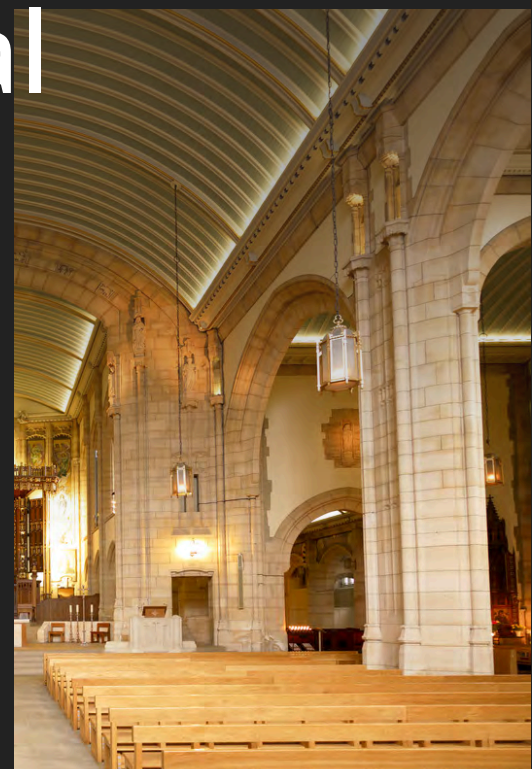


Cathedral Organist and Artistic Director of Leeds International Organ Festival

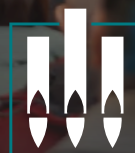


Salary: £28,910-£33,910 (pro-rata for part-time)

Closing Date: 27 January 2025, 5pm



Diocese of Leeds Music
Keyboard Studies Programme



LEEDS INTERNATIONAL
ORGAN FESTIVAL

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Welcome

I am delighted that you are considering an application to work with Diocese of Leeds Music, which shares music-making and teaching of the highest quality with some of the UK's most disadvantaged children. After reading the information in this application pack, I hope you will consider making an application. Colleagues working in the programme have described it as some of the most stimulating, occasionally challenging, yet extremely rewarding work that they have experienced in their careers and this role offers a wealth of opportunity to the successful candidate.

Please note the following dates carefully:

Closing date for applications: Monday 27 January 2025, 5pm

Shortlisting: Wednesday 29 January 2025

Interviews: Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 February 2025

The application form can be accessed as a [Word document](#) or using [Google Docs](#). Completed forms should be sent to recruitment@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk.

Informal enquiries and visits prior to application are very welcome – please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like to arrange this. I am very happy to speak to interested candidates by phone or in an online meeting.

The role starts on Monday 1 September 2025, but we are able to offer an earlier start date in the spring or summer terms.

With best wishes and thanks for your interest in the role,

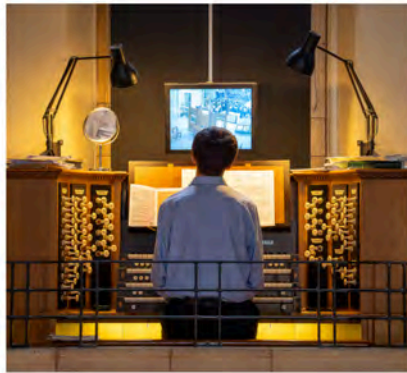


Thomas Leech
Director of the Schools Singing Programme

Working at Diocese of Leeds Music

Diocese of Leeds Music is at the forefront of cathedral music in the UK. Its award-winning Schools Singing Programme has provided the catalyst for the new National Schools Singing Programme and our cathedral choirs are among the most broadcast on BBC radio and television. Today, we employ 17 staff in the delivery of singing and instrumental provision and have been awarded the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for our work with young people. This work has attracted ongoing partnerships with The Sixteen and Gabrieli and internationally with the Universities of Notre Dame, Vanderbilt and Texas.

The role of Cathedral Organist and Artistic Director of the Leeds International Organ Festival occupies a central position in our team and offers a wealth of opportunity to the successful candidate. In this pack we have outlined an illustrative schedule – a high degree of flexibility is possible, and we encourage all interested candidates to contact us for a conversation prior to application.



About the role

This role provides an excellent opportunity for a skilled organist with ambitions to develop international professional connections and build the profile of the organ in the city and wider region. The post is available as a part-time position, with the option of increasing this to full-time for musicians interested in teaching in our Keyboard Studies Programme and/or our Schools Singing Programme.

Leeds Cathedral

The Cathedral Organist is responsible for the accompaniment of the daily sung liturgies at Leeds Cathedral on the excellent four-manual Klais/Norman & Beard instrument.

Leeds Cathedral Choirs – numbering some 150 young singers across seven choirs – sing for eight services (Vespers and Mass) weekly, give concerts, record, and feature frequently on BBC Radio 3 and 4, with numerous past BBC television live Christmas broadcasts. Ongoing partnerships with The Sixteen and Gabrieli provide further opportunities for our choristers.

- [View the Cathedral music list for Autumn 2024](#)

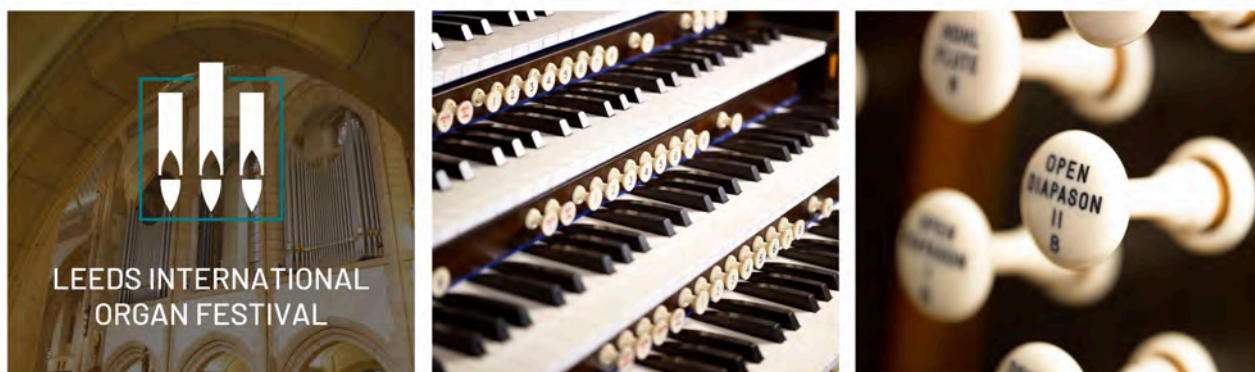
We would be delighted to support the Cathedral Organist in recording projects at the cathedral and also using the other excellent instruments across the Diocese. In addition, there can be regular opportunities to rehearse and direct the cathedral choirs.

Leeds International Organ Festival

Leeds International Organ Festival (LIOF), founded in 2018, brings artists of standing to Leeds Cathedral each summer between May and July, and dovetails with the organ concerts at Leeds Town Hall. Recent performers have included Ourania Gassiou (Megaron Concert Hall, Athens), Thomas Heywood (Melbourne, Australia) and Friedhelm Flamme (Vox Organi Festival, Germany). In addition, recitalists have led workshops for our young students, with classes from Winfried Bönig (Cologne Cathedral) and Gonny van der Maten (Soest, The Netherlands).

Not restricted to classical repertoire, LIOF 2019 featured Van Morrison's percussionist, Teena Lyle, in concert with David Pipe. Since 2020, the festival has also included the accordion, featuring prizewinning students from the Royal Academy of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Our 'in conversation' evenings have welcomed Sir James MacMillan, Dame Gillian Weir, Roxanna Panufnik and Dame Judith Weir.

We are ambitious for the further development of the festival's reach as part of our long term investment in growing the Keyboard Studies Programme. We enjoy a strong relationship with Leeds International Concert Season's Town Hall organ recitals and the West Yorkshire Music Hub, with opportunities to create further educational and performance links.



Full-Time Option: Teaching within the Keyboard Studies and Schools Singing Programmes

The Cathedral Organist and Artistic Director of LIOF role can be increased to a full-time position for musicians wishing to teach within our Keyboard Studies Programme and/or the Schools Singing Programme.

In the Keyboard Studies Programme, the priority is the development of organ teaching, reaching our cathedral choristers and pupils at high schools with instruments on site. There is also an option for musicians interested in teaching younger children to work with beginner piano students at our Cathedral Choir School or to deliver whole-class melodica sessions to schools in Leeds.



In the Schools Singing Programme there is the option of delivering whole-class singing in our primary schools and developing our offer to the Diocese's high schools.

If needed, support and training will be provided to develop the necessary teaching skills and material. More detailed information about both programmes can be found at the end of this document, and we encourage you to explore our website and social media feeds which provide further examples of a rich musical environment.

Responsibilities

General

- Maintain outstanding professional conduct and relationships.
- Comply with and prioritise the Church’s safeguarding policies.

Leeds Cathedral

- Play for the daily sung liturgies at Leeds Cathedral to a consistently excellent standard.
- Accompany other performances and recordings given by the Cathedral Choirs.
- Collaborate with Choral Director colleagues.
- Provide weekly lessons for the Cathedral Organ Scholars.

Leeds International Organ Festival

- Plan and deliver the artistic content of the festival.
- Ensure the smooth running of the festival.
- Develop the festival to increase live audience and digital reach.

Full-Time Option: Keyboard Studies Programme/Schools Singing Programme

- Deliver tuition within the two programmes, with options including:
 - Whole-class Introduction to Keyboard Studies sessions on the melodica, incorporating existing content from our curriculum.
 - Teach organ and/or piano with ambition for the progress of students.
 - Work with colleagues to recruit pupils and plan sessions.
 - Deliver whole-class singing sessions.
 - Work with our range of after-school choirs, including the cathedral choirs.

This is a broad description of responsibilities, many of which are supported by our administration team.

What might my week look like?

The Music Programme’s working week runs from Sunday to Thursday. This is a guide to what the working week might look like, with essential elements for part-time in green and additional elements full-time additions in blue. There is flexibility for preparation and practice time.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Morning	Cathedral <i>9am-1pm</i>	Preparation/ practice	KSP session	Preparation/ practice	Choir School piano teaching
Afternoon	Preparation/ Organ Scholar teaching	LIOF concerts <i>May to July only</i>	Organ teaching	KSP session	Preparation/ practice
		Cathedral <i>4-6.30pm</i>	Cathedral <i>4-6.30pm</i>	Cathedral <i>4-6.30pm</i>	Cathedral <i>4-6.30pm</i>

Job Description

Post Title	Cathedral Organist and Artistic Director of Leeds International Organ Festival
Reporting to	Director of the Schools Singing Programme
Time Commitment	Either part-time or full-time (37 hours per week)
Location	Leeds Cathedral and the Diocese of Leeds
Date of Commencement	1 September 2025 or earlier by negotiation
Contract Type	Permanent
Probationary Period	Six months
Remuneration	£28,910 to £33,910 per annum (pro-rata for part-time role). Mileage allowance in fixed profit car scheme and contributory pension scheme available.
Conditions	Music Programme staff must adhere to the Church's policies for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This post is subject to an Enhanced with Barred Lists check from the Disclosure and Barring Service. This post requires travel in the Diocese and a full UK driving licence. Sympathy to the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church.

Person Specification

Knowledge and Qualifications

- An ambassador for the organ and its role in cathedral music.
- Education to degree level (or equivalent experience) in any subject.
- Knowledge of effective practice in music education.
- Understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and best practice.

Experience

- Experience of and ability to prove musical excellence in liturgical and solo organ playing.
- Experience teaching from beginner to advanced levels.

Skills and Abilities

- Ability to plan and prioritise work, and work on own initiative.
- Ability to respond flexibly and resiliently to manage competing demands and work independently to deadlines.
- Strong communication and IT skills.
- Ability to perform all duties and responsibilities in the work locations, with reasonable adjustments if necessary (Equality Act 2010).

Frequently Asked Questions

We are happy to answer any and all questions that you might have, so please do not hesitate to get in touch! These are some of the questions we are often asked:

- **Will my salary increase over time?**

Yes, we offer cost-of-living increments and a salary development scale of five points.

- **Do I have to be Catholic?**

There is no requirement to be Catholic. All employees of the Diocese are expected to be sympathetic to the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church and to uphold the values and principles of safeguarding within the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

- **How do I find out more?**

Please look at our [Facebook page](#) and the [Schools Singing Programme](#) or [Leeds International Organ Festival](#) YouTube channels to see and hear some of our work.

We encourage enquiries prior to application and if you would like an informal conversation with Thomas Leech (Director of the Schools Singing Programme), please contact us by email at recruitment@dioceseofleedsmusic.org.uk.

- **I've not got much (or any) experience working with children, is it worth applying?**

We have worked with many early career musicians, including new graduates, and provide full support with both planning and delivery. It will be a steep learning curve initially, but you will gain a vast range of highly sought-after teaching and musical skills.

- **I'm also an experienced Choral Director, will I be able to use these skills?**

We are able to be flexible and would be happy to adjust schedules to provide choral directing opportunities for candidates with the appropriate skills.

- **Do you allow full-time employees to carry out freelance work?**

We encourage colleagues to take musical opportunities outside of their employed timetable – recognising that these can provide valuable extra skills and recognition for our programmes and musicians. There is a formal and simple framework for requesting permission to carry out additional work.

About Diocese of Leeds Music

Diocese of Leeds Music provides a world-class programme of music education to children in state schools. Through the Schools Singing Programme and Keyboard Studies Programme, it nurtures the potential of over 7,500 children and young people across the diverse communities of West and North Yorkshire each week.

Our current staff include Benjamin Saunders, Thomas Leech, Laura Steelyard, seven Choral Directors and six Keyboard Tutors, with a wide range of previous professional experience, musical interests and education. Alongside regular musical broadcasts, our work has been featured on BBC radio and television and in numerous publications, recently including *The Times* and *The Observer*.

'The mission of this Diocese in Leeds is entirely bound up with music. Look at all those young people singing ... from all different parts of the Diocese.'

'What a marvellous lesson to many of us. Music and the arts have to be at the core: that thirst for beauty, truth and goodness – a triumvirate of terms that are absolutely intertwined.'

— Sir James MacMillan

'I was so pleased with the performance of my piece – many thanks to all taking part. It was sung so musically and with a rich and intense atmosphere. It seems wonderful to me that these singers are coming up through your own singing programme. A ray of optimism!'

— Dame Judith Weir



Keyboard Studies Programme

Organ lessons are given to the Cathedral Organ Scholars, choir members and at two of the Diocese's high schools where instruments are available. We benefit from a close relationship with the Royal College of Organists, the University of Leeds, the University of Huddersfield and Leeds Conservatoire. Currently we are creating a new tutor book for beginner organists with inspiration and musical creativity as its driving force.

The Keyboard Studies Programme has access to an excellent selection of Diocesan instruments. In addition to Leeds Cathedral's organ, there are many recently restored or new instruments, including a number of new mechanical organs by Skrabl, in our 98 churches. For practice and additional teaching, the Cathedral Chambers facility has four small pipe organs and five digital instruments.

We offer tuition on the piano and classical accordion, the latter of which is a pioneering programme in the UK which has been inspired by work in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Keyboard Studies Programme instrumental tutors teach from beginner to advanced levels and support regular pupil concerts.

'The work dynamic among Keyboard Studies Tutors fizzes with creativity, as we share repertoire, performance opportunities, techniques of teaching musical concepts to children, and much more. Most importantly, I feel we are supported and valued in our endeavours to bring keyboard music education in all forms – be that piano, organ or accordion – to as many children as possible.'

— Anthony, Instrumental Tutor, Diocese of Leeds

A large part of the KSP's work takes place in state primary schools during the school day with Introduction to Keyboard Studies sessions on the melodica, giving children a secure musical foundation using our comprehensive and innovative learning scheme. More information on why the melodica is such an effective instrument for primary school music can be found in [this article from *The Observer*](#) and the programme has enjoyed superb feedback.

'The melodica sessions have perfectly complemented the singing we already did in school and allow children an opportunity to experience playing an instrument – one they might not get anywhere else.'

— Diocese of Leeds primary school headteacher



Schools Singing Programme

Whole-class singing sessions are the core of our Schools Singing Programme, and are currently delivered in 70 primary schools, reaching around 6,500 children every week. Led by an expert team, these school day sessions cover a wide range of sacred and secular repertoire and support schools' overall offer for music. Our schools singing curriculum has been developed in consultation with Dr Rebecca Berkley at the University of Reading and a musicianship and notation resource written for us by Lucinda Geoghegan.

'The children's enjoyment is evident and they truly sing like angels! Visitors and parishioners over the years have often commented on how beautifully our children sing and that's down to your excellent provision.'

— Diocese of Leeds primary school headteacher



Our after-school choirs – juniors, boys, girls and youth choirs based in towns and cities across Yorkshire – provide further opportunities for children who have shown particular interest and potential in our school sessions. They include the seven choirs of Leeds Cathedral and provide liturgical music for parishes, give regular concerts and participate in tours, BBC broadcasts and recordings. Many of the choirs enjoy partnerships with world-renowned ensembles including Gabrieli, The Sixteen and several US universities.

'My experiences with the Bradford Catholic Boys' Choir have shaped me as a person. Growing up in inner-city Bradford with limited options, the choir gave me the confidence to aspire to more. From singing weekly vespers at the local church to performing on TV in front of millions, each experience has proven invaluable in my life journey and I will continue to draw on the lessons of resilience and perseverance gained here as I move on to my next chapter at the University of Oxford.'

— former member of Bradford Catholic Boys Choir

'As a Choral Director, I feel so supported by a large team of other musicians. Our programme is filled with top-quality choral leaders and people. I learn so much from my colleagues – we share repertoire, pedagogical insights, tea-making duties, and most importantly the desire to make music education as accessible as possible for every child.'

— Lizzie, Choral Director

National Schools Singing Programme

In addition to our work with schools across West and North Yorkshire, we lead the [National Schools Singing Programme](#), which is now underway for Catholic dioceses and Anglican cathedrals across the UK. This is based on the model developed in the Diocese of Leeds since 2003 and benefits from £5 million of grant funding from the Vinehill Trust and Benefact Trust.

The programme is led by Benjamin Saunders, alongside fellow consultants Thomas Leech and Callum Tempest. It currently reaches 32,000 children in 400 schools across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This has established an immediate network where colleagues can share best practice and support one another through nearly 75 new or expanded Choral Director roles across the UK.



NATIONAL SCHOOLS SINGING PROGRAMME

27 Catholic dioceses and
7 Anglican cathedrals

32,000 children

400 state schools

75 Choral Director jobs



Programme Planned



Programme Underway



A snapshot of musical life in the Diocese of Leeds: What's happening in 2024/25?

September

- National Schools Singing Programme (NSSP) curriculum training
- Cathedral Girls Choir Pergolesi Stabat Mater concert, with baroque strings and continuo

October

- Visit from the University of Texas at El Paso singing with the Cathedral Choirs and working in the SSP
- Visit from Liverpool Junior Choirs
- Parish Musicians Workshop: Preparing for the new lectionary translation

November

- Weekend workshops and concert led by Eamonn Dougan and singers from *The Sixteen* and *Genesis 16*
- Cathedral Choir Remembrance Sunday concert

December

- Leeds International Concert Season Christmas concert
- Carol services for all choirs
- Huddersfield choirs and schools gala Christmas concert, Huddersfield Town Hall
- BBC Radio 4 Midnight Mass Broadcast

January

- Cathedral Junior Choirs visit to Liverpool Cathedral
- Instrumental teaching training day with Paul Harris

February

- Parish Musicians Workshop: Leading from keyboard

March

- *Choral Vespers* broadcast live on BBC Radio 3
- BBC Radio 4 *Sunday Worship* recording
- NSSP Conference, hosted in Leeds, including a wide range of speakers and workshops

April

- Holy Week and Easter Masses

May

- Leeds International Organ Festival
- Keyboard Studies Programme Celebratory Concert

June

- Leeds International Organ Festival
- Bradford and Huddersfield choirs sing for Diocesan Eucharistic Procession
- Parish Musicians Workshop: Brush up your keyboard skills
- Diocesan Boys Choirs Festival
- Diocesan Girls Choirs Festival

July

- Leeds International Organ Festival
- Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust Schools Concert
- Bradford and Huddersfield Choirs Pilgrimage to Lourdes
- Choristers take part in *Gabrieli Roar* residential in Norfolk