



Guinness Choir PhD Scholarship in collaboration with TU Dublin Conservatoire

The Guinness choir is celebrating its seventieth anniversary and recently has deposited its library and archives in the library of TU Dublin Conservatoire in Grangegorman as part of a collaborative venture between the choir and the Conservatoire's Research Foundation for Music in Ireland.

As part of the celebrations the Guinness Choir is offering a PhD scholarship for a student who will undertake a research project centred on the history of the choir. In addition to the extensive choir library, the archive contains wide ranging administrative records and ephemera.

The records have been meticulously kept and are very rich in detail. Fascinating aspects of the archive include correspondence relating to the planning of concerts and other matters, concert programmes, press releases, reviews and detailed financial reports and accounts. It also contains some interesting reflections on concerts. An opportunity to interview and record the memories of some founding members and others with long associations is also possible. Combined, these provide an array of sources to examine the history of the choir. Such a history will place the work of the choir in the wider context of choral music in Ireland. It will also contain some very interesting personal stories and fill in many gaps in our understanding of choral music in Dublin.

The scholarship offered will cover 50% of the fulltime fees for PhD (current fees, €4,500 per annum) up to a maximum of four years or part time fees (current fees, €3,000 per annum) up to a maximum of six years

Background to The Guinness Choir

The Guinness Choir, aka the St James's Gate Musical Society, (originally composed of brewery employees and their families) was established in 1951 by Victor Leeson, who conducted the Choir from its foundation until his retirement in 1984. Leeson was inspirational in its growth and direction, leading the choir to 1st Prize in three successive Cork Choral International Choral Festivals in 1960, 1961 & 1962 & 2nd Prize in the International Choirs Competition of the Welsh Eisteddfod in 1964. Early performances included Bach and Handel oratorios, many of which were performed in Dublin for the first time. The Choir's repertoire encompasses many of the choral works of major composers from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries, including Bach, Britten, Finzi, Handel, Haydn, Holst, Howells, Mahler, Monteverdi, Pärt, Stravinsky and Verdi, as well as Irish composers, Rhoda Coghill, Gerard Victory and Shaun Davey.

Many prominent international and Irish soloists have performed with the choir including, Janet Baker, John Shirley Quirke, Michael George, Jose Cura, Bernadette Greevy, Frank Patterson, Patricia Bardon and Virginia Kerr.



The choir has worked with well known conductors including, Tibor Paul, Albert Rosen, Colman Pearce, Bryden Thomson, John Beckett, Alexander Annisimov, George Manos and Richard Hickox.

In addition, the choir supported the first performance in Ireland of all of Beethoven's string quartets in the Rupert Guinness Hall by the Aeolian String Quartet in the mid 1960s. Victor Leeson's programme notes for the occasion were mentioned favourably in music critics' reports. Numerous examples of this and other concert programme notes form part of the choir's extensive archive.

John Dexter was appointed as Musical Director in 1984 and was succeeded by David Milne in 1991. The choir continues to stage large-scale concerts including the Verdi Requiem at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast with the Belfast Philharmonic Choir and the Ulster Orchestra. The Guinness Choir has also collaborated with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra on several occasions. In December 2009 the Choir gave the first choral performance in the new Wexford Opera House, when it sang Handel's *Messiah*. Another notable event took place in 2011 when the Choir joined forces with The University of Dublin Choral Society to perform Verdi's Requiem in the Grand Canal Theatre.

More recent performances include: 2015: A rare performance of Elgar's *The Apostles*, 2016: Shaun Davey's, *A Nation's Voice* on Easter Sunday in a choir of 1,000 voices with the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra in the RTÉ 1916 Commemoration concert.

Today, the choir consists of c100 members, incorporating several nationalities, who perform a variety of choral works, principally in the classical genre, consistent with its history and tradition. The concerts draw audiences nationwide and enjoy the financial support of leading Irish businesses.



Application Form

1. Applicant Details

1.1 General Details

First Name	
Surname	
Contact Address	
Telephone	
Email Address	

1.2 Highest Qualification

Name of College/University	
Dates Attended From/To	
Final Year Subjects	
Title of Highest Degree Obtained e.g., MA in Music	
Grade of Award For awards obtained outside Ireland, please convert your grade to a percentage of the total marks available.	
Date of Conferral	

1.3 Other Qualifications

Please provide details of all other qualifications (e.g., BMus, Certificates, Awards). International students whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency. Use extra boxes if appropriate.

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Grade of Award For awards obtained outside Ireland, please convert your grade to a percentage of the total marks available.	
Date of Conferral	

English Proficiency (for International Students only)

Name of English Examination Test e.g., IELTS	
Grade Obtained	
Date of examination	



PhD proposal

Max 1000 words: Please outline your research proposal



Dissemination Plans and Impact

Max 500 words: Please explain the significance of the project (e.g. why the research should be undertaken, the impact of the research, etc.) and outline how the results will be disseminated.

Applications should be submitted by email to guinnesschoir@gmail.com

Informal enquires about the archive and the scholarship should be made to Kerry.Houston@TUDublin.ie

Closing date for applications 16 July 2021

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview in late July