



Pilling Trust Organ Scholarship at St Ann's

Prospectus

www.stannsmanchester.com

The Pilling Trust Organ Scholarship at St Ann's Church, Manchester, 2026-2027

St Ann's Church is looking to appoint an enthusiastic and hard-working musician to become the Pilling Trust Organ Scholar from October 2026.

St Ann's has a long history of excellence in music and has trained organ scholars for many years. The scholarship has normally been offered to students who are reading for degrees at either the RNCM or the Department of Music at the University of Manchester. It is funded via the Church Council of St Ann's by the Pilling Trust.



Music at St Ann's Church

St Ann's is an open Christian community which welcomes people from many backgrounds, including a strong cohort of young adults who play an important role in our fellowship. The church has an outreach into the city centre which connects us with the civic and cultural life of Manchester, as well as with people who might be considered vulnerable, including those experiencing homelessness. Music plays an important and cherished role in worship at St Ann's.

The music department is led by the Director of Music, Robin Shakespeare, who is supported by an Associate Director of Music, Dr James Hume, and the Pilling Trust Organ Scholar. The church is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM).

The choir is an auditioned adult robed choir of around 30, which achieves a high standard of music-making. The choir sings anthems and settings drawn from a wide repertoire, and has a rich tradition of performing new music. Monthly music lists can be found [on the church website](#). The church has an extensive catalogue of choral and organ music.

Besides our own music-making, St Ann's is a prestigious recital venue. Our programme includes weekly organ recitals, regular recitals or chamber concerts by RNCM students in term-time, and concert series by Manchester Jazz Festival, Manchester Baroque, the Piccadilly Sinfonietta and others.

There is a fine four-manual romantic organ, some of which dates back to the original instrument of 1730. It has been through successive rebuilds, most recently by George Sixsmith & Son in 1996. The full specification can be found on [NPOR](#). The church also has use of a well-maintained Steinway Model B which belongs to the RNCM.

Safeguarding

St Ann's is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all church members.

The appointment of the Organ Scholar is subject to a satisfactory DBS Enhanced check. The candidate will be required to complete online safeguarding training.

Scholarship details

The Organ Scholar is awarded a £3,300 bursary per year, paid in instalments at the start of each term. The bursary is a grant to support the organ scholar's learning. The scholar will receive tuition, and experience rehearsing and playing for services and concerts. For certain exceptional candidates, conducting and solo recital opportunities will be given.

The successful candidate will receive free organ lessons from the Director of Music. After induction, they will become a keyholder for the church and gain use of the church's organ and piano for practice (subject to availability). The scholarship runs for one year, and can be extended to up to three years subject to review by the Director of Music along with the Rector after the end of each third term.



Duties

To undertake the role of Organ Scholar, as agreed with the Rector and the Director of Music. The scholarship runs through each of the three terms and will involve some playing over the Christmas and Easter festivals. As there is no position of assistant organist, the standard of organ scholars in the past at St Ann's has been and must continue to be exceptionally high. Duties include:

- Playing at all rehearsals and services during the week. The usual pattern of commitments is:

- Friday 7.30pm–9.30pm rehearsal
- Sunday 10am for 10.45am Eucharist
- Sunday 4pm for 5pm Choral Evensong

- Playing hymns, psalms, canticles, mass settings and anthems at services.
- Selecting and providing suitable voluntaries, with guidance from the DoM.
- Supporting the choir by singing in unaccompanied repertoire, and for a suitable candidate, conducting.
- By arrangement with the Rector and the DoM, an exceptional organ scholar may be asked to play for weddings or funerals in church, for which the PCC's set fee will be payable.
- Giving a yearly lunchtime organ recital as part of the church's weekly recital series.
- Maintaining a culture of openness, communication and respect for all who use the church.

Essential Criteria

- A proven high standard of organ playing. An able performer of solo repertoire, improvisation, accompaniments, and congregational playing.
- An appreciation of the role of music in Christian worship and outreach. A talented musician in tune with the worship, ministry and ethos of St Ann's.
- Excellent sight-reading and the ability to prepare music quickly. Keyboard skills of score reading and transposition are desirable but not essential.
- A good communicator with effective interpersonal skills; someone who can relate positively

to both their musician colleagues and wider church community.

- A satisfactory DBS Enhanced check, carried out after an offer of scholarship has been made.

Application

To find out more about St Ann's, please see the church's website listed on the front of this prospectus. To discuss the role informally in advance of applying please contact Robin Shakespeare by email at the address below.

- A CV
- A covering letter setting out your experience in music, church life (if any), and your reasons for wanting to take up the organ scholarship.
- The names and addresses of two referees, one of whom should be your current organ teacher or Director of Music.

The above should be sent to Robin Shakespeare at **robin.shakespeare@stannsmanchester.com** no later than **15 July 2026**.



Interviews and auditions will take place in Manchester on **Saturday 8 August** and the successful candidate will be expected to begin the scholarship by **1 October 2026**. Reasonable expenses to support travel to audition are available.

We will do our best to facilitate in-person interview and audition. In exceptional circumstances we will consider video audition for candidates from e.g. Ireland.

Audition

The post is subject to an audition and interview. On the panel will be Robin Shakespeare (Director of Music), Dr James Hume (Associate Director of Music) and Rev Adam Robertson (Rector).

Requirements for the audition will be:

- To prepare a recital of two items, of which one should be by Bach.
- To prepare a choral accompaniment given in advance of audition.
- To prepare a psalm given in advance of audition.
- To play a short repertoire excerpt at sight. This will be written on three staves, and candidates may be expected to make manual and registration changes as directed.
- To play a hymn at sight, and improvise an extension of approximately 30 seconds after the last verse.

Prior to auditioning, each candidate will be given up to two hours' preparation time on the organ during the church's open hours by arrangement. The Associate Director of Music will be available to act as registrant during your audition.

St Ann's Church, St Ann Street,
Manchester M2 7LF
Registered Charity No 1136159