

# The Abbey Church of Dunfermline



Profile for Organist and  
Master of Music



## **Summary**

The recent resignation of the Organist and Master of Music of the Abbey Church of Dunfermline offers a unique and exciting opportunity for an individual to come and continue the work of previous incumbents while also enhancing and developing the role, and its constituent parts, with their own talents.

The role of Master of Music can be traced back to 1610, when Queen Anne (of Denmark), wife of King James VI & I, gave in perpetuity Scots L. 2,000 to make provision for both the Grammar & Sang School at Dunfermline. The annual payment to the “Master of Sang” currently amounts to £8 6s 8d (£8.33).

The present congregation (661 church members) may not have many Royals in its midst, but each Sunday approximately 250 people attend one of the two services. This number is flexible, varying with the seasons and the activities likely to be contained in particular service. The Christmas period brings a large number of visitors, and the Watchnight and Christingle services can fill at least the downstairs section of the Abbey. Baptisms and special services also attract a greater number of people. During the summer, when regular worshippers may be on holiday, the congregation is likely to comprise a significant number of visitors with little knowledge of the Church of Scotland hymnary or the rich musical tradition of the Scottish Church.

The Organist and Master of Music we hope to attract should be sensitive to the shifting patterns of congregation and styles of worship that the seasons and congregational life bring.

To that end we are looking for a highly qualified, proficient and approachable organist and musician able to work with a wide age range of people. They should have a wide breadth of musical experience and taste, and be able to demonstrate an ability to work with a choir while also understanding the need to encourage congregational singing. Excellent communication skills are essential, as is a willingness to participate in church life and engage with the local community.

The successful candidate will be required to obtain a Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Certificate prior to taking up post.

In addition to the Master of Sang payment referred to above the Master of Music will be paid at the appropriate rate (Band C) on the Scottish Federation of Organists Scale (Church of Scotland Practice.)

## **The Role of the Master Of Music**

### **Current Worship Practices:**

At present the Master of Music is required to be available for two Sunday Services each week, at 9.30am and 11.00am. The 9.30am service is a traditional service with hymns, readings and prayers and, while twice a month the choristers are present, there is no significant contribution from them at these services. At the 11.00am service the choristers offer introit, anthem and an offertory piece. The music usually reflects the liturgical season and/or the lectionary themes each week.

There are additional and occasional services where the Master of Music plays a significant part.

### **Additional Services**

- Blue Christmas (Sunday afternoon mid December) – no choir
- The Festival of Lessons and Carols (Sunday afternoon before Christmas) - significant choral contribution
- Christingle (Afternoon of Christmas Eve) – no choir
- Watchnight - Choir contribution
- Christmas Day (where not a Sunday) – choral contribution
- Holy Week (Monday-Friday) - significant choral contribution on Thursday and Friday

### **Occasional Services**

These tend to be on a more ad hoc basis and follow requests from other parties including Fife Council. In recent years these have included:

- SSAFA Advent Carol Service
- World War 1 Vigil
- Commemoration of Bruce
- Commemoration of Beginning of World War 1
- Scottish Churches Gathering

- Weddings and Funerals (We may not always agree with the choices of music, but there has to be an element of allowing the “customer” a degree of choice.)

The Minister may also request the organist to be present at new forms of worship.

### **Expectations and Hopes**

It is expected that the Master of Music will engage with the Minister in seeking to shape worship that both reflects the rich Christian heritage and tradition associated with the Abbey as a place of worship, and also looks to incorporate the best of present day musical practice. Ideally our music should allow and encourage all who participate an opportunity to engage fully in worship, and therefore is likely to offer a diverse range of styles. We would also wish that our music should encourage people to reach beyond their capabilities, while allowing them an opportunity at times to feel comfortable with the present.

The ideal candidate would seek to work with the present choristers, valuing and nurturing the talent already present while also looking to the future and the recruitment of new members. They should engage well with young and old, and consider with the Minister and Kirk Session how we can share our Christian faith with young people through the music they encounter as Junior Choristers.

The candidate should be flexible, recognising that the church community does not have a fully identifiable programme of music. Instead there is an opportunity to grasp new ideas and reflect old traditions through concerts, local music festivals, and borrowing past worship ideas to reflect a modern perspective of church life.

Past Masters of Music have used their role to organise concerts and arrangements with visiting musicians, within and outwith worship and the church building.

## **The Organ**

In the book 'The annals of Dunfermline' there is mention of an organ being present in the Abbey as early as 1247 but little is known of this instrument apart from its existence. There is no further record until the Scottish Reformation in 1560, when the use of organs was forbidden. However, as the musical demands of the monastic liturgy were considerable, it is reasonable to assume that organs must have been in use in the Abbey during these intervening three hundred years. In 1866 the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland permitted the re- introduction of organs.

The first instrument to be installed in the new church was a Two Manual and Pedal organ built by Messrs. Forster & Andrews of Hull in 1882. In relation to the size of the church it was a comparatively small instrument. However, it served the congregation for twenty-eight years.

In 1911 Messrs. Scovell & Co. of Edinburgh were commissioned to build a four manual and pedal instrument. This was to incorporate some of the flue work and the case from the former organ. It is known from reports that the tone of this new organ was distinctly warm and cohesive. The 1911 organ served the congregation well until 1965 when the mechanisms and general condition of the instrument demanded fairly substantial restoration.

The opportunity was taken to rebuild the organ and bring the tonal specification up to date with current ideas. It incorporated most of the 1911 pipework, revoiced and rescaled to bring it into line with modern practice. New stops were provided, together with electro-pneumatic action and a new draw-stop console which was sited near the east wall of the chancel.

From 1984 to 1987 the Abbey underwent considerable internal restoration and again the opportunity was taken, under the care of David Loosley of Stirling to remove the organ from its north chamber for essential cleaning and also to provide additional stops. The console was also moved and re-sited closer to the central space.

The organ is now in the care of Messrs. David Wells, Organ

Below are the specifications of the 1987 restoration. Those wishing greater details of the previous incarnations of the organ are invited to visit the website, [www.dunfermlineabbey.com](http://www.dunfermlineabbey.com)

[illegible]

II Zimbel 29.33 8 Oboe <i>x Tremulant</i>  16 Contra Fagotto 8 Cornopean 4 Clarion <i>x Swell Octave</i> <i>xi Swell Unison Off</i> <i>xii Swell Sub Octave</i> <i>xiii Positive to Swell</i>	
Positive Organ	Accessories
(playable from Choir keys)	
8 Bourdon	8 Thumb Pistons to Great Organ
4 Chimney Flute	8 Thumb Pistons to Swell Organ
2 Gemshorn	8 Thumb Pistons to Choir/Positive Organs
II Sesquialtera 12.17 (tc)	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Great to Pedal
1 1/3 Larigot	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Swell to Pedal
III Cymbel 29.33.36	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Choir to Pedal
8 Regal <i>xv Tremulant</i>	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Positive to Pedal
<i>xvi Choir Octave</i>	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Swell to Great
<i>xvii Choir Unison Off</i>	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Choir to Great
<i>xviii Choir Sub Octave</i>	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Swell to Choir
<i>xix Swell to Choir</i>	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Choir Tuba
	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Pedal Ophicleide
	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Choir on Choir
	1 Reversible Thumb Piston Positive on Choir

1 Reversible Thumb Piston  
Choir/Positive on Choir  
1 Thumb Piston General Cancel  
8 Toe Pistons to Pedal Organ  
8 Toe Pistons to Swell Organ  
1 Reversible Toe Piston Great  
to Pedal  
1 Reversible Toe Piston Swell  
to Great  
1 Reversible Toe Piston 32  
Posaune  
1 Reversible Toe Piston 16  
Ophicleide  
12 General Thumb Pistons to  
entire Organ  
2 Channel Setting to all Pistons  
1 Thumb Piston Setter  
Balanced Expression Pedal to  
Swell  
Balanced Expression Pedal to  
Choir  
Push Button Control to  
Blower/TR Units  
Signal Lights to Choir/Positive  
ControlManuals CC to C 61  
notes  
Pedals CCC to G 32 notes  
Detached Console  
Electro-Pneumatic Action

## **Dunfermline Abbey Choir**

Music has been an important feature of the liturgy at Dunfermline Abbey since the time of the Benedictine foundation in the twelfth century. In these earlier times music would have been sung at every service throughout the course of each day. The Abbey Choristers are proud to be part of this historic tradition by continuing to provide choral music for Abbey Services.



### **The Choir**

Dunfermline Abbey Choir is a group of enthusiastic singers who enjoy singing Sunday by Sunday. It is a mixed ability group of 22 including professional musicians. The members have not been auditioned as the previous Master of Music believed that singing was an act of worship. There are presently 6 juniors aged between 7 and 16. The Abbey Choir is gowned, with the Junior Choristers in the traditional cassock with ruffs once they are past probation, and the Adults are in hooded Albs. All the gowns are in scarlet to reflect the Abbey's history and as a Church with strong royal connections.

Choir members are not contracted to sing in a set number of services. At present absences are noted as far in advance as possible and the music is planned accordingly. Choristers always endeavour to attend any extra services in which we are invited to participate.

The choir recognises its role in supporting worship and is committed to providing the best possible performance for each service. Choristers are extremely hard-working, rehearsing weekly during term times, and are fiercely loyal to the choir and the Abbey.

Over the years the Choir has undertaken overseas tours as well as concerts in a number of churches throughout the UK. The Choir also takes part in the day to day life of Dunfermline Abbey

participating in Church events including sales of work, talent shows, and concerts.

Although we work hard we also have a lot of fun. The sense of family runs deep in the choir providing a caring support team when individuals are in need. We are a friendly bunch and have been known to have BBQ's and mulled wine and mince pie parties!!!

### **Rehearsals**

The singers meet in the Abbey each Tuesday evening for their rehearsal. There is a Junior Chorister section which currently meets between 7pm and 8pm and this overlaps with the Adult Choristers' rehearsal which commences at 7.30pm until 9.00pm. The Choristers are in attendance each Sunday morning for the 11.00am Service.

At the Junior Chorister rehearsal, young singers (aged 7 to 17) are taught the techniques required for good voice production and learn how to read music from vocal scores. However, the main qualification for joining this section is to have the ability and enthusiasm to sing.

The Adult Choristers, in the main, are all good music sight-readers, though this should not deter prospective singers from joining this choir. All we ask is a clear singing voice; the ability to read music will follow with practice.

### **Music**

The range of music sung at services and concerts ranges from the 16th century to the present day. Anthems are either accompanied by organ or sung a cappella and the extensive choir library means the choir has access to music from a wide range of composers from Byrd to Lauridson and Tavener. At each Abbey service the choir will normally sing an Introit, Anthem and a prose psalm; short choral piece or, for communion services, a communion motet.

### **Assistant Organist**

The post of Assistant Organist is an honorary post created by the previous Master of Music. This position is currently held by William Campbell (who has indicated a desire and willingness to retain this position.) Mr Campbell is a local government councillor, and has been organist to other congregations including Falkland Parish

Church. He has been at Dunfermline Abbey for 5 years and knows the current workings of music, choir and Abbey. He would be open to any changes the new Master of Music may bring.

### **Dunfermline Abbey Music Library**

Dunfermline Abbey Choir has an extensive music library covering the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and supporting a very wide variety of services, concerts, and other events that involve the Choir's participation. The library has been built up over a period 60 years with the support of the congregation by way of a £500 library budget. Additional music is also purchased using Choir funds.

The library extends to over 450 individual sheet music copies of anthems; introits etc. and over 17 Anthem collections. In addition there are over 60 descants for regularly used hymns including some carols and 45 alternative harmonies to hymns.

In addition to the anthem collections we also have 12 sets of full vocal scores for a range of mass settings from Palestrina to Karl Jenkins and Morten Lauridsen.

We generally hold between 30 – 40 copies of everything depending on when we purchased the music.

### **Further Information:**

<b>Minister</b>	Rev MaryAnn R Rennie, BD, MTh
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://dunfermlineabbey.com">dunfermlineabbey.com</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/dunfermlineabbey">https://www.facebook.com/dunfermlineabbey</a>

**Letter of Application and Curriculum Vitae with two references should be sent to:-**

The Joint Session Clerks  
Dunfermline Abbey Hall and Office  
6 Abbey Park Place  
Dunfermline  
KY12 7PD  
[dunfermline.abbey.church@gmail.com](mailto:dunfermline.abbey.church@gmail.com)  
by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015