

## M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award - Giving New Voices to Old Music: Baroque Vocal Music with Ex Cathedra

<b>Project Title</b>			
Giving New Voices to Old Music: Baroque Vocal Music with Ex Cathedra			
<b>LEAD INSTITUTION</b>			
Name of HEI institution	Birmingham City University		
Lead regional city	Birmingham <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coventry <input type="checkbox"/>	Leicester <input type="checkbox"/> Nottingham <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PARTNER ORGANISATION</b>			
Name of organisation	Ex Cathedra		
Website URL	<a href="https://excathedra.co.uk">https://excathedra.co.uk</a>		
<b>THE RESEARCH PROJECT</b>			
<p>Since the early music revival of the 1960s and 1970s Baroque music has become a staple feature of the concert hall, with ever-increasing attempts to get as close as possible to the original sound world through historically-informed performance. However, as Bruce Haynes notes, modern musicians ‘perform certain pieces into the ground, like the Brandenburg concertos or the Four Seasons – much more frequently than they were ever performed, or intended to be’ (2007: 87). On the one hand there exists a wealth of music from the period that has been little explored by either musicologists or performers, whilst on the other there is an appetite for new works, as best-selling recordings of modern premières demonstrate. The situation is even more acute for choral works, which have – on the whole – received far less scholarly attention than the operas and instrumental music of the period. Ex Cathedra has been at the forefront of explorations in this field, both in terms of rediscovering hitherto neglected music (particularly, but not exclusively, in the field of Latin American Baroque music) and in exploring the new insights that historically-informed performance can bring to classics of the canon (including Elgar’s <i>The Dream of Gerontius</i>). Yet there is much work still to be done.</p> <p>This project will address the situation by inviting the student to propose a repertoire of hitherto unedited choral works from the period 1580–1740; they will then create scholarly critical editions (enabling the music to be sung by modern performers) and work with Ex Cathedra to explore issues of performance practice. The specific research questions will depend on the choice of repertoire, but overall the project will ask what we can learn about the performance practice of baroque choral music through practical experiments with some of the leading practitioners in this field.</p> <p>Following a common model of such PhDs, at the heart of the project will be the creation of new scholarly critical editions, which themselves constitute an original contribution to knowledge, and an accompanying thesis of c. 40,000 words examining performance practice issues in the chosen repertoire. The process of creating a critical edition involves collating multiple sources and resolving discrepancies to produce a definitive version of the score. The editorial process will involve finding ways of representing in modern musical notation any obsolete or obscure notational conventions in the source materials. It will involve a palaeographic study of the source and – depending on the choice of repertoire – archival work may well be required. Study of the historical context and musical analysis will inform the written thesis, which will examine issues of performance practice. A central feature of the research will be the opportunity to work with Jeffrey Skidmore and Ex Cathedra Scholars in an iterative cycle: trialling drafts of the scores to inform the definitive version, identifying performance issues, and then trying out a range of possible performance decisions (e.g. pitch, temperament, ornamentation, etc.) to help to establish what works practically in an historically-informed performance. The final result will then provide Ex Cathedra with new material for performance and recordings, thereby giving new voice to old works and disseminating the research to an international audience.</p> <p><u>Indicative timetable:</u>  <i>Months 1-12:</i> literature review; completion of BCU’s PGCert in Research Practice; selection of primary sources in collaboration with Ex Cathedra; establishing background context and initial transcriptions  <i>Months 12-24:</i> comparison with other sources of the music; research trips to visit sources in situ and undertake palaeographical work (possibly archival work, depending on the context); work on the text of the critical editions; examination of historical evidence relating to performance practice; workshops with performers (equivalent to 1 month, but spread across the year); conference presentation (e.g. at Royal Musical Association student conference: subject to acceptance)</p>			

*Months 24-36:* completion of critical edition, including editorial method and critical commentary; drafts of accompanying thesis (chapters examining historical evidence); experiments with performers including interviews and data collection (e.g. questionnaires); month-long placement with Ex Cathedra; conference presentation (e.g. at Biennial Baroque conference, subject to acceptance)

*Months 36-48:* incorporation of findings from practical experiments into final study via month-long placement with Ex Cathedra; conference presentation (subject to acceptance of paper); writing up and submission.

#### **HOW TO FIND OUT MORE**

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