Job Description: Precentor and Director of College Music

Background
Gonville & Caius College is seeking a new Precentor and Director of College Music to succeed Dr Geoffrey Webber, who has stepped down after 30 years of service. The full-time appointment will commence on 1 January 2020, or on a mutually agreed date not later than 1 September 2020. The ideal candidate will have a proven track record as a choral conductor, including experience of directing the music for Anglican worship, and will possess the strategic vision to further the development of one of the UK’s leading collegiate choirs with an international reputation for innovative and adventurous recordings. The successful applicant will be elected to a College Fellowship. The appointment will be for two years in the first instance and will then, after review, be renewable in accordance with the College statute to the retirement age.

Caius has a distinguished musical tradition. Indeed, it was the first Cambridge College to elect a Fellow in Music. This was Charles Wood, who was appointed Organist in 1891 and then elected to a Fellowship in 1894. Wood’s successor, Patrick Hadley (elected 1938) was the College’s first Precentor, a role that was created so that Hadley could run the College choir without infringing his terms of employment as Professor of Music. He was succeeded in 1962 by Peter Tranchell, who was the first person also to hold another newly-created post: Director of College Music, which carries the specific responsibility of overseeing concerts and other musical events within College. Tranchell was thus the first to hold a Trinity of musical appointments: Precentor, Director of College Music and Director of Studies in Music. Until 1981, Caius had an all-male choir without boys, as did Trinity College until 1982. Caius choir’s going mixed was a defining change of direction. Geoffrey Webber was appointed in 1989 to develop the mixed choir, and he did this with spectacular success over the subsequent thirty years. Caius choir is now one of the UK’s leading collegiate choirs with an international reputation for highly acclaimed innovative and adventurous recordings.

The current status enjoyed by Caius choir is perhaps best summed up by its last recording with Geoffrey Webber (a joint venture with the Armonico Consort), which has just been released. It is of epic works by Tallis (Spem in Alium) and Striggio (Ecce Beatem Lucem and the rarely-performed Missa sopra Eccio Si Beato Giorno); the reviews so far have been glowing, and the disc was recently profiled as one of the year’s best new releases on BBC Radio 3’s Record Review. During the last thirty years, Webber has also admitted and guided many fine musicians through the Music Tripos, including conductors Andrew Griffiths, Clement Power and Kwamé Ryan, and composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad. He will be a hard act to follow.

The Roles of Precentor and Director of College Music
The Precentor is responsible for music in the College Chapel on those occasions when the Chapel Choir is present. The Precentor works in close collaboration with the Dean and the Dean’s Vicar. The Chapel Choir has 24 members, comprising mainly Choral Scholars supplemented by a small number of Volunteers and occasional Lay Clerks. During Full Term, the Choir sings Choral Evensong on Tuesdays and Sundays, and a Choral Eucharist on Thursdays. There are five weekly rehearsals. The Precentor is
expected to be present on all of these occasions. There are, in addition, special services in which the Choir participates, including Memorial Services and the Commemoration of Benefactors. The Choir sings at three College feasts a year (Perse, Branthwaite and Benefactors’), and at three Annual Gatherings. It also regularly makes broadcasts. At all these services, and on all these occasions, the Choir is directed by the Precentor, assisted by the two Organ Scholars. A Choir tour often takes place in June, customarily including visits to College livings, and the Choir usually undertakes tours abroad in the Easter and Summer vacations. Recordings are also made in some vacations. These projects are all devised, developed and directed by the Precentor. The variability of these duties means that the Precentor has to be prepared to work flexible hours.

In the wider University, the Precentor represents the College at the Choral and Organ trials and, in consultation with the University's Choral and Organ Awards committees, makes recommendations for elections to the College. Another important part of the Precentor’s role is active participation in the Caius Choir Alumni Association, which exists to bring together all former choir members, choral scholars and clergy, and which arranges a variety of events each year.

The Director of College Music is responsible for overseeing the termly College concerts. This role also involves overseeing the use and maintenance of all the musical instruments and other musical equipment belonging to the College, and of the College’s music library. More generally, the Director of College Music is expected to promote and cultivate inclusive music-making within the College, and to play a full part in the activities of the College Musical Society.

Possible Additional Role as Director Studies in Music
A successful candidate who also has a profile as an academic may be offered the additional role of Director of Studies in Music. This position involves overseeing the education of all those undergraduates of the College reading Music. The duties include advising Music students on choice of papers within the Music Tripos and arranging supervisions for the students. The number of students reading for the Music Tripos varies slightly from year to year; the median number of Music undergraduates is fifteen in total.

Stipend and Allowances
The annual stipend of a Precentor and Director of College Music who does not hold a University or other office will be on the University’s Single Salary Spine within a range extending from point 45 (currently £36, 261 per annum) to point 56 (£50,132 pa). The starting salary is subject to negotiation and will commence at a point within this range appropriate to the qualifications and experience of the successful candidate. The person appointed may apply to reside in College. There is some College accommodation at a reduced rent subject to availability for Fellows with partners and/or families. If resident outside College, the Precentor may either receive a housing allowance or participate in the College’s shared equity scheme and will be allocated a College room for study and teaching. The Precentor is entitled to receive a generous entertainment allowance, a research allowance and a certain number of meals each week. The Precentor manages the Choir Fund, which receives an annual allocation for the purchase of music for the Choir Library, for copying work, and for tour expenses. In addition, the Precentor may apply to the College Council for sabbatical leave. The
College will further provide a suitable piano in College for the person appointed. Administrative assistance is provided by a Choir Administrator, who reports to the Precentor.

A Director of Studies receives a stipend that varies with the number of pupils and is on an incremental scale. In addition, a Director of Studies receives supervision fees at the University rate for any supervision undertaken for the College.

**Applications**

Applications, which will be treated as confidential, should be sent to the Academic Dean, Dr Paul Wingfield, to arrive by Friday 30 August 2019. Email applications should be sent to academic.dean@cai.cam.ac.uk Each application should include an up-to-date curriculum vitae, details of any stipend to be received after 1 January 2020, and the names, titles and addresses of three persons to whom reference may be made. As regards the latter, one of the three people should normally be a present employer or colleague, and one should be able to write about the applicant’s abilities and achievements as a choral conductor. The curriculum vitae should include details of the applicant’s education and qualifications, appointments and awards held, practical musical experience with particular reference to choral conducting, publications and musical compositions, and proficiency on any musical instruments.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to take a short choir practice with members of the current choir and to attend for interview on 2 October 2019.