

Project Proposal Application

To be completed by the lead proposed supervisor,
with input from the non-HE Partner Organisation(s).



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY AND APPLICANT DETAILS			
Proposed Project Title:	The Tudor Organ: Practice-led Research on its Changing Repertoire and Use over Time		
Project Summary: <i>(Maximum 100 words)</i>	The studentship involves practice-led research in music performance using an organ reconstructed from a surviving fragment, now owned by the Royal College of Organists (RCO), which will be housed in Newcastle Cathedral during the project. No complete instruments survive from the period, and there remain pressing questions surrounding use of organs in F and their repertoire. They remained in use after the Reformation, so the focus is changing use over time. The project will generate new knowledge for performances at Newcastle Cathedral and dissemination of its results fit into the RCO's core objective of performance enhanced by scholarship.		
Host University:	Choose an item.		
Name of Non-HE Partner Organisation(s): <i>(Add more lines if needed)</i>			
1. Royal College of Organists			
2. Newcastle Cathedral			
Contact(s) at Non-HE Partner Organisation(s): <i>(Add more lines if needed)</i>			
Name:	Andrew McCrea (Deputy CEO and Director of Studies)	Email:	
Name:	Ian Roberts (Director of Music)	Email:	
Primary AHRC Subject Area: <i>Select one subject area from the list here. Please do <u>not</u> add or amend subjects, as there will not be a corresponding Subject Area Review Panel to assess your nomination.</i>	Music		
Does the project include a Creative Practice component?	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you consider the project to be interdisciplinary?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If you consider the project to be interdisciplinary, please state why: <i>(Maximum 100 words. Please note that your application will be assessed by the relevant primary AHRC subject area review panel. However, in this space you should indicate which other subject areas your proposal covers and how your methodology is genuinely interdisciplinary.)</i>			

SECTION 2: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CASE FOR SUPPORT

Please provide full details of the proposal and make your case for support below:

(Maximum 750 words)

The Early English Organ Project (EEOP) reconstructed two Tudor instruments using physical, documentary and empirical evidence. In the absence of surviving instruments as found on the Continent, this was a landmark project. The 'Wingfield' and 'Wetheringsett' organs are used in residencies, heard in broadcasts/recordings, and are in the care of the Royal College of Organists (RCO), the UK's professional body for organists. However, they have yet to be used for a sustained research project.

This CDA forms part of the RCO's strategy to ensure the instruments' future and promote their use, and will enhance liturgical and musical life at Newcastle Cathedral. As custodian of the EEOP instruments, RCO approached the applicants, recognising the expertise in Newcastle upon Tyne. The Wetheringsett will be loaned to NC during the project where it will be used as a tool in researching English keyboard and liturgical vocal music.

What follows is intended as indicative rather than prescriptive, and the successful candidate will have flexibility to mould the project according to their interests and skillset.

Areas of research might include:

- pre-Reformation liturgy;
- solo repertories, 1530s–1630s;
- organs and voices after the Reformation;
- methods of composition and improvisation;
- digital/critical editing of keyboard-related sources/early vernacular liturgical music;

Research context

EEOP led to work by Harper and Gwynn on the instruments. Smith covered principles of editing (2013) and Byrd performance practice (2023). Johnstone 2003 and Harper 2019 examined pitch and Williamson 2019 wrote on improvisation. Williamson and Smith contributed to Quinn 2018. All these are chapters and articles: the Tudor organs have yet to be used for an extended project. The literature has yet to consider continuity of performance practice, or whether it changed according to time/place. Work on post-Reformation manuscript organ books may shed light on modal transposition and whether organists filled in the texture, whilst Morley's chromatic transposition needs to be reconciled with temperament. Alternative pitches for pre-Reformation settings of the same chant have yet to be explained, and more work is needed on the origins of the verse anthem.

Research Methods (indicative)

The student:

RM1: will critically review and evaluate evidence used by EEOP when reconstructing the organs (including examination of primary sources using RCO's EEOP documentation as starting point), interrogating decisions taken at the time to revise documentation.

RM2: will investigate historical performance practice, including the organ's liturgical function, through study of music manuscripts (e.g., post-Reformation organ books containing service music), archival material, liturgical books, using digitised material; and in performance using the Wetheringsett (with Cathedral Choir as appropriate).

RM3: will develop methodologies for scholarly editing, potentially including reconstructions requiring knowledge of sixteenth-century music theory, and will produce diplomatic transcriptions of musical sources, encoding them in Humdrum and/or MEI to facilitate computational analysis and the creation of dynamic online editions. Editorial decisions will be informed by emerging answers to RQs 1 and 2, realisation of editions in performance, and consultation with RCO, NC and potential user groups. Widescale involvement and engagement of organists and choir directors is crucial, and may involve social media, questionnaires eliciting quantitative data and qualitative responses, and focus

groups of professional/amateur performers.

RM4: will create a website to promote the organ by hosting digital editions of music and documentary material developed with RCO and NC. It may include Vlogs documenting the process and progress of research, including performances together with their evaluation. Practical workshops will engage participants (organists, singers) while allowing the evaluation of different types of educational material. Other workshops will introduce the organ to historians, clergy and the general public. The use of the Wetheringsett in services and concerts will be evaluated from the standpoint of participants and observers.

The student will need DBS checks to work with children in NC choir, and ethical approval for elements of RM3–4 in particular.

Principal Outcomes – indicative:

Academic: live/recorded performances with commentary, (digital) scholarly editions

Impact, Dissemination: RCO resources, video/documentary, website

Provide details of any resources and facilities, including equipment, fieldwork, training, etc., that will be required to complete the project successfully. NBC has limited Research Training Support Grant funding, which may affect the feasibility of high-cost projects. Please note where you might also secure additional funding, (e.g. partner organisations; department or school). Include estimated costs:

(Maximum 200 words)

This is the first opportunity for any researcher to have prolonged access to the Wetheringsett: housed in NC, it will be used regularly for research in performances involving the student, cathedral organists and choir. RCO will provide the instrument; NC will supply space and opportunities for practice research within liturgy and in concert.

Beyond training provided by the supervisors, The Digital Musicology strand in the Digital Humanities at Oxford Summer School (for which bursaries are available) may be useful in relation to creating digital music editions. The National Centre for Research Methods provides training (much of it delivered online) in Analysing Complex Surveys, Principles and Practices of Qualitative Data Analysis, Analysing Interview and Focus Group Data, and Principles and Practices of Quantitative Data Analysis (RM3). NC provides training for working with young people. Northumbria University's web design team will support student work on the website (no additional cost); videos will be professionally produced by the RCO (for iRCO material, so no extra cost) or by a company (e.g., Fugue State Films – commercial, no project cost).

Visits to/from RCO happen twice a year – £100 rail fare and £200 accommodation, making a total of £1,800 throughout the project.

Outline the arrangements for communication between the non-HE partner organisation and the academic host institution in regard to project management and monitoring academic progress:

(Maximum 200 words)

There will be plenary supervisions twice a year involving Smith, Williamson, McCrea and Roberts, held on Teams to facilitate involvement of McCrea (RCO). In addition, advisors from the partner organisations will be invited to Annual Progress Review meetings to ensure full involvement in the university's academic processes.

The existing relationship between Cathedral and Northumbria involves NC's music department providing extracurricular music for the university: Cathedral musicians are already embedded within the University. The student will be based jointly at Northumbria and the Cathedral, and the student's research will contribute to the daily liturgical cycle through performance of editions and incorporation of performance practice. Each year the student will have two formal meetings with Ian Roberts and the two supervisors to review arrangements and to plan future research activity at the cathedral. This will be supplemented by weekly meetings with Ian Roberts to take forward the project at the Cathedral on a day-to-day basis.

The student will have at least two in-person supervision meetings at RCO with Andrew McCrea and three additional supervisions via Teams per year. The focus of these meetings will be on ensuring that the RCO's needs in terms of research and its dissemination are being met.

What benefits will there be for the candidate and the non-HE partner organisation as a result of your collaboration?

(Maximum 200 words)

The candidate will benefit from the collaboration with Newcastle Cathedral (NC) and Royal College of Organists (RCO):

- *Research*
 - Prolonged access to the instrument as research tool in a liturgical setting (NC, RCO)
 - Opportunities to hear research realised in performance within a liturgical setting (NC)
 - Opportunities to conduct research in performance within a concert setting (NC)
- *Dissemination, KE, Professional Development*
 - Publication opportunities in RCO's peer-reviewed *Journal of the Royal College of Organists* (RCO)
 - Possible involvement in high-quality documentary film such as those by Fugue State Films, which has an arrangement with RCO (RCO)
 - Opportunities to make broader contribution to musical life of the Cathedral, contributing to future employability in church music and more generally (NC)

NC will benefit from the collaboration:

- Access to current research on historical performance practice when using the Wetheringsett in liturgical performance
- Access to Wetheringsett for concerts and liturgical use over longer timespan than would otherwise be possible
- Broadening repertoire of cathedral's choirs
- Contribution of student to musical and liturgical life of the cathedral as organist and/or singer
- Enhancing NC's reputation as a centre for research-based exploration of Tudor repertory

RCO will benefit from the collaboration:

- Research on the Wetheringsett leading to the creation of documentation to accompany it on residencies
- Creation of scores and performance materials of various kinds to accompany the Wetheringsett on residencies
- Creation of dedicated web site for the promotion of the Wetheringsett and EEOP Tudor organs more generally
- The collaboration will ensure the long-term future of the reconstructed instruments by promoting their use

State what financial (if any) or in-kind contribution the non-HE partner organisation will be making over the duration of the award:

(Maximum 200 words. A financial contribution is not a requirement. However, the AHRC expect that non-HE partners based overseas will make a financial contribution to the costs of the student's return travel and accommodation when visiting.)

RCO is providing the Wetheringsett, including funding its physical removal to NC, in exchange for research on the organ to form the backbone of documentation on the organ for residencies, its members and the wider public.

RCO can facilitate contact with members for user groups and workshops (see RM3 and RM4).

The Cathedral will provide space for the organ and time for the student to spend with it. It will provide office space for when the student is working at the cathedral, and staff time (c. 2 hours a month) in supporting the student.

Describe the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the activities the candidate will be undertaking with the non-HE partner organisation:

(Maximum 200 words)

Northumbria University has a close relationship with NC: e.g., the Assistant Director of Music at NC is Campus Music Director at the university. This CDA application is a natural extension of the existing agreement between institutions. NC is a local partner organisation; RCO is a national one for which both supervisors have given masterclasses. The RCO has worked with NC and invested in the provision of the Wetheringsett organ for a long residency: e.g., the organ will be used in a series of collaborative interactions in 2025–26. The CDA builds upon strong existing relationships between all parties.

Activities undertaken with NC will be practical, contributing to the regular cycle of services and events. The research will be embedded within the cultural life of NC, informing and enriching the liturgy. NC will be the laboratory in which hypotheses surrounding performance of keyboard and choral repertoires may be tested using the organ supplied by RCO. The activities relating to the RCO involve using its instrument in the conduct of research to produce high-quality, research-based materials to promote the organs in residencies, workshops and masterclasses. The RCO seeks documentation, editions of music and other performance materials alongside peer-reviewed articles, videos and documentaries.

SECTION 3: SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

Primary (or Co-) Supervisor:	Professor David J. Smith
School or Department:	Humanities/Music, Northumbria University
Email Address:	
Secondary (or Co-) Supervisor:	Professor Magnus Williamson
School or Department:	School of Arts and Cultures, Newcastle University
Email Address:	
Advisor based at the Non-HE Partner Organisation:	Andrew McCrea
Organisation/Institution:	Royal College of Organists
Email Address:	
Advisor based at the Non-HE Partner Organisation:	Ian Roberts
Organisation/Institution:	Newcastle Cathedral
Email Address:	
Additional Internal or External Advisors or Academic Supervisors, if any:	
Name:	
Organisation/Institution:	
Email Address:	

Explain how the expertise of the supervisory team and external advisor(s) will allow them to support the proposed project and the selected candidate:

(Maximum 500 words)

This project will be supervised by David Smith (Northumbria – post-Reformation, critical/digital editing, keyboard performance practice) and Magnus Williamson (Newcastle – pre-Reformation, improvisation, critical editing). Both are experienced doctoral supervisors: Smith is currently supervising four PhD students and has seen four through to successful completion; Williamson has 25 years’ experience of doctoral supervision.

Smith convened the Symposium of Early English Keyboards as part of an EEOP residency in 2005, was PI on the AHRC networking grant, ‘Digital directions for collected editions: keyboard music by British musicians before c.1700’ (2022–3), and was editor of Smith 2019, which contains work on *alternatim* practice by John Harper and on Tudor organ improvisation by Williamson as well as his own chapter on Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. Smith 2023 discusses the interpretation of keyboard ornament signs in Byrd’s keyboard music. He already supervises a PhD on English organs of a

later period. Smith has published volumes in *Musica Britannica*. Smith will contribute expertise in post-Reformation keyboard music, critical/digital editing, historical performance practice and improvisation.

Williamson has been general editor (2008–2021) and chairman (2021–) of the British Academy’s Early English Church Music, was PI of *Tudor Partbooks* (AHRC, 2014–17) and is currently CI on three UKRI projects. Williamson and Smith’s contributions to *Studies in English Organ Music* (Quinn 2018) illustrate the mutual complementarity of their expertise, Williamson writing on the pre-Reformation period, 1350–1550, and Smith covering the long seventeenth century. Williamson will support the student’s work in pre-Reformation music, liturgy, critical editing and improvisation.

Andrew McCrea is Director of Studies at RCO, overseeing the College’s accreditation and educational programmes, its digital and print publications (he is editor of the annual *Journal of the Royal College of Organists*), and its library and archives. He is responsible for the EEOP organs. He has published articles in the *Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies*, the *Journal of the Royal College of Organists*, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, and *The Organ Yearbook* as well as contributing to *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* and Quinn 2018. He teaches at the Royal College of Music, including supervision of student projects. His academic background makes him ideally placed to offer supervisory guidance, especially on the RCO’s archival material relating to EEOP. His responsibilities for the organs at RCO mean that the student will be working closely with him in developing new documentation for EEOP and website materials.

Ian Roberts is a highly experienced choir director and organist who is Director of Music at Newcastle Cathedral where he has overall responsibility for the musical life of the cathedral, including three choirs which sing at services throughout the week, and a well-established series of lunchtime organ recitals. He will act as supervisor for the practical elements of the project, working with the student to incorporate their research into the liturgy and concert series as appropriate. He will coordinate the student’s work with the cathedral organists and provide support and guidance on working with choirs comprising children, sixth formers, students, and lay clerks.

SECTION 4: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Please provide details about the research environment the selected candidate will be joining and its suitability:

(Maximum 500 words)

Northumbria and Newcastle universities have thriving postgraduate communities in Music, including those working in the early modern: e.g., one is working on German compositional theory (Northumbria); another is studying pre-Reformation compositional techniques, working on editing and reconstructing vocal music (Newcastle). The [Music Research Group](#) at Northumbria provides a cross-disciplinary home for all those involved in research involving music and sound, and provides regular opportunities for postgraduate research students to present their work.

At Northumbria, Music is situated within Humanities which is home to the Medieval and Early Modern Studies ([MEMS](#)) research group: membership of MEMS will ensure that musical aspects of the project are considered within a broader cultural and historical framework, and the student will be able to present work, share ideas and to seek advice from scholars in other disciplines. Similarly, the student will participate in [MEMS](#) at Newcastle University of which Williamson is co-convenor; it hosts visiting speakers, sponsors research fellowship applications, and disburses funds for research collaborations. Involvement in these two research groups is essential for a project examining the role of the organ in religious contexts during a period of great upheaval.

The [Northumbria Practice Research Group](#) is an interdisciplinary forum for the student to engage with issues surrounding practice elements in their research. Questions concerning scholarly editing tend to cross disciplinary divides, so any editing component will benefit from involvement in Northumbria’s [Scholarly Editing and Print Culture Research Group](#).

The student will benefit from the North-East Early Music Research Network (NEMReN), which draws together music researchers from consortium members based in the north-east of England (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria) to work collectively on projects and to coordinate recruitment of doctoral students in an area where the consortium has a particular strength. In 2025, NEMReN hosts the international Med-Ren conference with activity taking place at all three institutions. Members of NEMReN will provide a rich research environment: e.g., as well as the supervisors, Katherine Butler (Northumbria) and Kirsten Gibson (Newcastle) both explore music of the period in its cultural, social and political contexts; Hector Sequera (Durham) is a lutenist with expertise in digital musicology, editing and reconstruction.

The RCO's peer-reviewed journal demonstrates a commitment to scholarship, and RCO has a strong commitment to education of organists of all stages of development. The RCO's journal has been home to a number of scholarly contributions to work on Tudor organs and their use.

The successful candidate will be joining a thriving musical community at NC in which there is an openness on the part of the Dean and Chapter to experiment with the use of the Tudor organ in liturgical contexts. The student will be assimilated into the daily life of the cathedral and have the opportunity to contribute as a musician. This important civic community at the heart of Historic Newcastle provides the student with important public engagement and educational outreach opportunities