Richard Tanner is an organist and choral director who has specialised in the training of boy and girl chorister voices for over thirty years.

Later this year Richard will take up the post of Nancy B. and John B. Hoffmann Organist and Director of Music at Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Since 2012 Richard has been Director of Music at Rugby School, one of the UK's most prestigious and historic independent schools, where he leads a large team of professional musicians and students with broad specialisms.

He is Founder Director of the Rugby Choristers at Bilton Grange, the UK's newest choral foundation in the Anglican tradition comprising separate choirs of boy and girl choristers which sing choral evensong six times each week during term time, alongside professional lay clerks and choral scholars from Rugby School.

He is also a Director of [Festival on The Close](https://www.thefestivalontheclose.co.uk/), an annual five-day celebration of culture, creativity and community in the heart of Rugby.

There has been an annual broadcast of Choral Evensong on BBC Radio 3 from the Chapel of Rugby School under Richard's direction since 2018, most recently in February 2025. In September 2015, he conducted the choir of Rugby School in the Opening Ceremony of the Rugby World Cup at Twickenham Stadium.

Choristers from Rugby School have won the BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition in 2017 and 2022 and destinations for music tours have included Spain, USA, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

In addition, Richard has a busy schedule, both in the UK and further afield, conducting choirs and orchestras, leading workshops and giving organ recitals. In September 2024 he returned for the second year running to give masterclasses in Shanghai and Shenzhen. He has been Guest Director for RSCM America’s King’s College Course five times.

He has worked as music advisor, musical director and accompanist on a range of BBC radio and television programmes. For twenty years Richard was a regular musical director and organist for BBC Radio 4's *Daily Service*, and he has also directed and played for a number of high-profile broadcasts from London’s St Martin-in-the-Fields.

His recordings include Messiaen’s *La Nativité du Seigneur*, *Requiem* and *Organ Concerto* by David Briggs, and *The Manchester Carols* by Carol Ann Duffy and Sasha Johnson Manning. He has worked on over forty commercial recordings as a producer.

He has conducted ensembles including the Malta Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, Northern Chamber Orchestra, and the period instrument ensemble Canzona.

At the age of eight, Richard became a chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral in London, where he was greatly inspired by then Master of the Choir, Barry Rose, and received his first organ lessons from John Scott. He went on to study with Robert Gower at Radley College and with Patrick Russill and David Sanger at the Royal Academy of Music. Undergraduate study for a degree in Music followed at the University of Oxford, where his teachers included John Warrack, David Trendell and Francis Pott. As Organ Scholar at Exeter College Oxford, Richard was responsible for a choir of Men and Boys.

After Oxford, he spent a year as Organ Scholar at St Albans Cathedral, working once again with Barry Rose, before a move to Northampton where Richard was Director of Music at All Saints’ Church, the Civic and County Church, from 1993 to 1998. At All Saints’ he founded a girls’ choir, developed a choral scholarship scheme and considerably increased the number of boys singing in the choir. The choirs toured twice to USA during his tenure.

Richard was Organist and Director of Music at Blackburn Cathedral from 1998 to March 2011, where he was responsible for one of the most wide-ranging musical programmes in any English Cathedral, which included a Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys, as well as several other choirs involving approximately 150 volunteer singers. At Blackburn he introduced externally funded choral scholarship and outreach projects, founded the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music, co-ordinated the restoration of the world-class organ, oversaw thirteen foreign choir tours, directed numerous broadcasts and recordings and established the inclusion of top professional orchestras and period instrument ensembles in worship and as Artistic Director of a concert series.

Eighteen months as Director of Chapel Music at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London followed, where Richard had responsibility for the music in the Old Royal Naval College Chapel in Greenwich. Under Richard’s leadership, the choir, which included undergraduate and graduate choral scholars from Trinity Laban, presented an ambitious repertoire and made many BBC broadcasts, ranging from BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong and BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship on the 10th Anniversary of 9/11 and during the 2012 Olympics, to three Songs of Praise television programmes in celebration of HM Queen Elizabeth’s Diamond Jubilee, the London Olympics and life in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Richard contributed to the conservatoire’s vocal department, taught organ to senior and junior Trinity students and founded the Athenian Ensemble, comprising students from the conservatoire, to accompany the Chapel Choir in worship and concerts. The choral scholars premiered six works in the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music 2012.

In 2008 Richard was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Guild of Church Musicians and in 2010 was made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, an honour conferred on former students of the Academy to recognise and celebrate their significant contribution to the musical landscape.

A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists since 1997, Richard was elected to the Trustee Council of The Royal College of Organists in 2025 and, in the same year, became a Trustee of The Rodolfus Choral Foundation.

Richard is married to the soprano, Philippa Hyde ([www.philippahydesoprano.com](http://www.philippahydesoprano.com)), who is about to complete a MSc in Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London. They have two sons: James (24), a former chorister of Blackburn Cathedral who recently graduated with a 1st Class Honours degree in Drama and Theatre Arts from Goldsmiths, University of London and Benedict (18), a former chorister of St Paul’s Cathedral who will take up the position of Organ Scholar at Chichester Cathedral in September 2025.