

NOTES

BRONZE AND SILVER AWARDS

The scheme is designed to encourage singers to achieve a high standard of vocal technique and musicianship, and is intended for use with the RSCM Voice for Life scheme, which enables singers to develop their musical skills and understanding in the context of their choir or singing group. The area awards scheme provides opportunities for that development to be affirmed beyond the singer's own church, through the RSCM's regional network.

Successful candidates are entitled to wear the prestigious medal, cast in bronze or silver according to the standard achieved. The Bronze medal is worn with green ribbon, the Silver medal with purple ribbon.

The awards are open to singers of all ages and denominations, and the syllabus has been compiled with this in mind.

EXAMINATIONS

These are held twice a year (usually in June and September). Successful candidates who so wish will be presented with their certificate at the Awards Presentation Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral.

ENQUIRIES/ENTRIES

Entries or enquiries should be sent to the Area awards administrator: Mrs Janet Low, 3 Sheepway Court, Iffley Village, Oxford OX4 4JL. Email: glowpigs@aol.com.

STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS

The structure of this award reflects that of the Voice for Life scheme. There are five sections, only four of which are examined. (Section D, which is not assessed during the examination, is satisfied by means of an appropriate testimonial to be submitted with the candidate's application.) The marks are distributed as follows:

A	Using the voice well	50%
B	Musical skills and understanding	20%
C	Repertoire	10%
D	Belonging to the choir	[testimonial]
E	Choir in context	20%

The pass mark is 60%. In order to pass, candidates should demonstrate consistency throughout the examination, though a pass mark in every section is not required. Successful candidates will be classified as follows:

85%+	Distinction
75%+	Merit
60%+	Pass

OTHER INFORMATION

Copies of Voice for Life books and all the music required may be bought from RSCM Music Direct, tel 0845 021 7726, fax 0845 021 8826, musicdirect@rscm.com, <http://www.rscm.com/shop>. The RSCM Gold Award syllabus, for candidates obtaining a Distinction or Merit at Silver standard, may be obtained from RSCM Education, 19 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EB or downloaded from <http://www.rscm.com>.

GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES AND THEIR TRAINERS AT BRONZE STANDARD (DEAN'S AWARD)

SECTION A

Each piece will be assessed as follows:

1. *Posture and presentation*

Good candidates will:

- Stand and hold their music well throughout the examination.

Poor candidates may:

- Bury their head in their music and sing into their copy.
- Slouch, tap their feet or fidget as they sing.

2. *Vocal technique: breath management, tone, diction, range*

Good candidates will:

- Breathe in appropriate places.
- Sustain the sound to the end of a line or phrase.
- Produce good, full tone, even at the extremes of their range.
- Project the voice well.
- Produce good vowel sounds.
- Articulate consonants clearly.

Poor candidates may:

- Produce uneven breathy tone.
- Be unable to sustain to the end of a phrase.
- Strain for high or low notes.
- Have weak or unprojected tone.
- Have poor diction.

3. *General musicianship: accuracy, expression, sensitivity*

Good candidates will:

- Sing notes and rhythms accurately and with good intonation.
- Be able to keep a steady pulse.
- Demonstrate a good dynamic range and an understanding of phrasing and articulation.
- Show an appreciation of musical style appropriate to the piece being sung.
- Be able to convey the mood of the music and reflect the meaning of the text.
- Sing confidently and with great sensitivity.

Poor candidates may:

- Sing frequently out of tune.
- Make a large number of errors of pitch and rhythm.
- Have a tendency either to rush or to slow down without good musical reason.
- Reveal little awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.
- Sing with little regard for the mood or musical style of the piece.
- Falter and appear to lack confidence.

SECTION B

1. *Musical skills*

Good candidates will:

- Sight-read fluently with a high proportion of the notes correct and sung in tune.
- Maintain the tempo and rhythm even when mistakes are made.
- Show an awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.
- Sound confident and sing with conviction even when wrong.
- Maintain good tone.
- Breathe in appropriate places.
- Be accurate in aural tests, with all sung responses in tune and clapped responses rhythmic and steady.

Poor candidates may:

- Make a large number of rhythmic and pitching errors in sight-reading tests.
- Falter and stumble, disregarding the tempo and rhythm.
- Show little awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.
- Stop when a mistake is made.
- Sing with poor tone and breathe inappropriately.
- Be highly inaccurate in aural tests with responses faltering, out of tune or rhythmically weak.

2. *Musical understanding* (Assessed not only through the 'further questions' (above), but throughout each candidate's performance.)

Good candidates will:

- Demonstrate their knowledge of notation and theory by singing their repertoire and performing sight-reading and aural tests with a high degree of accuracy.
- Observe common Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be able to explain what they mean if asked.
- Demonstrate their understanding of intervals in the aural tests and be able to identify them when asked.

Poor candidates may:

- Demonstrate a poor understanding of notation and theory by making a large number of errors when singing their repertoire or performing sight-reading and aural tests.
- Fail to observe Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be unable to explain them if asked.
- Make mistakes in pitching intervals and be unable to identify intervals in aural tests.

SECTION C

Good candidates will:

- Be able to talk knowledgeably about the music they sing with regard to the period in which it was written, the features of the musical style, and the origins and the meaning of the text.

Poor candidates may:

- Be unable to demonstrate their knowledge of the music they sing beyond what is on the page.

SECTION E

Good candidates will:

- Give thoughtful answers to questions on their role and that of the choir or singing group.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the significance of musical ministry within their church or community.
- Be able to give examples of music suitable for specific occasions or seasons.
- Have some knowledge of the major seasons in the Church's year (e.g., Advent, Eastertide) and understand the pattern and format of services in their church.

Poor candidates may:

- Appear not to have considered their role in the choir or singing group.
- Demonstrate only a poor awareness of the significance of musical ministry within a church or community.
- Be unable to make suitable repertoire suggestions for their chosen occasions or seasons.
- Be unable to answer simple questions on the Church's year or the format of services.

GUIDANCE FOR CANDIDATES AND THEIR TRAINERS AT SILVER STANDARD (BISHOP'S AWARD)

SECTION A

Each piece will be assessed as follows:

1. *Posture & presentation*

Good candidates will:

- Stand and hold their music well throughout the examination.

Poor candidates may:

- Bury their heads in their music and sing into their copies.
- Slouch, tap their feet or fidget as they sing.

2. *Vocal technique: breath management, tone, diction, range*

Good candidates will:

- Breathe in appropriate places.
- Sustain the sound to the end of a line or phrase.
- Produce good, full tone, even at the extremes of their range.
- Project the voice well.
- Produce good vowel sounds.
- Articulate consonants clearly.
- Be able to sing a legato line without aspirating
- Be able to sing wide leaps without breaking the flow of the phrase.
- Be able to move with ease and control throughout the range.
- Be able to sustain crescendos and diminuendos without forcing the sound or losing tone quality.
- Use vibrato appropriately to colour the sound
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Poor candidates may:

- Produce uneven breathy tone.
- Be unable to sustain to the end of a phrase.
- Strain for high or low notes.
- Have weak or unprojected tone.
- Have poor diction.
- Be unable to sing a legato line without aspirating each note.
- Be unable to sing wide leaps without stopping the voice.
- Show lack of control over, or use indiscriminately, vibrato.
- Overuse the glottal stop to attack notes.

3. *General musicianship: accuracy, expression, sensitivity*

Good candidates will:

- Sing notes and rhythms accurately and with secure intonation.
- Be able to keep a steady pulse.
- Demonstrate a good dynamic range and an understanding of phrasing and articulation.
- Show an appreciation of musical style appropriate to the piece being performed.
- Be able to convey the mood of the music and reflect the meaning of the text.
- Sing confidently and with great sensitivity.
- Take care to place consonants carefully at the ends of notes.

Poor candidates may:

- Sing frequently out of tune.
- Make errors of pitch and rhythm.
- Have a tendency either to rush or to slow down without good musical reason.
- Reveal little awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.
- Sing with little regard for the mood or musical style of the repertoire.
- Falter and appear to lack confidence.
- Be careless with the placing of consonants and the change of vowel in diphthongs.

SECTION B

1. Musical skills

Good candidates will:

- Sight-read fluently with a high proportion of the notes correct and sung in tune.
- Maintain the tempo and rhythm even if a mistake is made.
- Show an awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.
- Sound confident and sing with conviction and continuity even when wrong.
- Maintain good tone.
- Breathe in appropriate places.
- Sing words correctly.
- Be accurate in aural tests, with all sung responses in tune and clapped responses rhythmic and steady.

Poor candidates may:

- Falter and stop when they are unsure or make mistakes.
- Lack confidence, sing with poor tone and out of tune.
- Ignore dynamic markings, phrasing and articulation.
- Breathe in inappropriate places.
- Make frequent errors of pitch and rhythm.
- Fail to sing words correctly.
- Be inaccurate in aural tests, with responses faltering, out of tune or rhythmically weak.

2. Musical understanding (Assessed not only through the 'further questions' (above), but throughout each candidate's performance.)

Good candidates will:

- Show their knowledge of notation and theory by singing their repertoire and performing sight-reading and aural tests with a high degree of accuracy.
- Observe common Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be able to explain what they mean if asked.
- Show their understanding of intervals and triads, and be able to pitch and identify them, and their tonality, in the aural tests.

Poor candidates may:

- Show a poor understanding of notation and theory by making errors when singing their repertoire or performing sight-reading and aural tests.
- Fail to observe Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be unable to explain them if asked.
- Make mistakes in pitching intervals and be unable to identify intervals or triads or tonality in aural tests.

SECTION C

Good candidates will:

- Be able to talk knowledgeably about the music they sing with regard to the period in which it was written, the features of the musical style, and the origins and the meaning of the text.
- Be able to compare and contrast any piece they sing with another setting of a similar text, or with a piece by another composer of the same period.

Poor candidates may:

- Only be able to offer simple observations on the repertoire and show little background knowledge about the text, composer or musical style.
- Be unable to make meaningful comparisons with other pieces.

SECTION E

Good candidates will:

- Give thoughtful answers to questions on their role and that of the choir or singing group.
- Demonstrate an acute awareness of the significance of musical ministry within their church or community.
- Be able to give examples of music suitable for specific occasions or seasons.
- Show understanding of a Bible passage chosen in relation to a specific season or festival.
- Have a comprehensive knowledge of the seasons (e.g., Lent) and major festivals (e.g., Ascension) in the Church's year and understand the pattern and format of services in their church.

Poor candidates may:

- Appear not to have considered their role in the choir or singing group.
- Demonstrate a poor awareness of musical ministry within a church or the importance of music in the community.
- Be unable to make suitable repertoire suggestions for specific occasions or seasons.
- Be unable to relate music for their chosen season to any suitable Bible text.
- Be unable to answer questions on the Church's year or the format of services.

Other items in this syllabus obtainable from RSCM Music Direct:

(tel 0845 021 7726, fax 0845 021 8826, musicdirect@rscm.com, <http://www.rscm.com/shop>)

Music for Common Worship

RSCM

order ref RCW101

Here is bread (Kendrick)

Worship in Song (RSCM)

order ref D0062

Panis angelicus (Franck) &

Sing Solo Sacred ed Jenkins (OUP)

order ref B0146 (high),

The Woodcutter's Song (Vaughan Williams)

B0291 (low)

Dark Blue Singer's Workbook

RSCM Voice for Life

order ref F0102

Red Singer's Workbook

RSCM Voice for Life

order ref F0103