

# Gold Award for choristers

2016–2021



*Information, syllabus and  
guidelines for applicants*

## Introduction

The RSCM Gold Award is open to experienced choristers who can demonstrate their skill and musicality in solo singing, together with their effective leadership and stylistic awareness as choir members. The award is open to singers of all ages from RSCM affiliated churches or schools worldwide. Candidates should already have achieved considerable success at Bronze and Silver standards and/or in singing exams.

Candidates preparing for this award are encouraged to experience as wide a range as possible of choral styles, and to develop flexibility in interpreting pieces in different ways. Their confidence in solo singing should develop naturally alongside their choral contribution, with their aural awareness a key factor in both. Participation in one or more RSCM residential (or other) courses will help cover the repertoire, and give valuable insight into some subtleties of performance that may not always be experienced in the local choir. Many younger singers experience an extended unsettled time of vocal change, and patience is essential to avoid forcing either the 'old' or the 'new' voice beyond its physically comfortable tone and range: in these circumstances the exam entry must be deferred until the new range has settled and gained sufficient vocal quality and projection to enable convincing, unforced and expressive performances to be enjoyed.

The recommended editions of all music in sections A and B of the syllabus are specified, together with stock codes for those items usually available immediately at RSCM Music Direct. Any alternative standard edition will be accepted. Unless otherwise indicated, all items must be sung in the published key. Copies can be bought or ordered from [musicdirect@rscm.com](mailto:musicdirect@rscm.com) or 0845 021 7726.

Successful candidates will receive an RSCM certificate. They may also buy the RSCM Gold Award medallion with burgundy ribbon from Music Direct.

This syllabus, regulations and marking criteria, together with the entry form, submission form and music list, optional choir questionnaire and other useful information, may be downloaded from [www.rscm.com](http://www.rscm.com)

## Structure and distribution of marks

The structure of this award reflects that of *Voice for Life*. There are five sections, four of which are assessed during the exam. Section D is satisfied by means of a reference and testimonial submitted with the candidate's application. The marks are distributed as follows:

A	Using the voice well	52%
B	Musical skills and understanding	22%
C	Repertoire	16%
D	Belonging to the choir	[reference & testimonial]
E	Choir in context	10%

The pass mark is 100 out of 150 (66.7%). To pass, candidates should demonstrate consistency throughout the exam, though a pass mark in every section is not required. Successful candidates are classified as follows:

135+	(90%)	Honours
100+	(66.7%)	Pass

## Exam conditions

(a summary of details in the General Regulations)

Entries for the Gold Award must be sent to [examsdesk@rscm.com](mailto:examsdesk@rscm.com) or RSCM Gold Award, 19 The Close, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 2EB. Entries should include the written submissions, a signed submissions form, reference, testimonial and the correct payment. They must arrive by **1 May** for the summer session, or **1 October** for the autumn session. Candidates must be at least 10 years old at the entry deadline date. There is no upper age limit. The candidate's choir must be affiliated to RSCM, and the candidate should have sung with the choir (and elsewhere, if documented) for at least three years; alternatively, the candidate must be an Individual or Student Member of RSCM.

**The current fee for this award is £79**, but this figure is not guaranteed for the full currency of this syllabus. RSCM reserves the right to refuse an exam entry without stating a reason, refunding the entry fee in full.

On signing the entry form, candidates (as well as parents and choral/vocal trainers) are deemed to be accepting the entry conditions, and the examiner's expertise in all sections of the exam. The applicant should keep a signed copy of the entry form.

The applicant must prepare the **reference** (verified/counter-signed if necessary) detailing the candidate's attendance, participation and responsibilities in the choir, and any further activity contributing to the wider life of church or school. A **second testimonial** (from an independent signatory) or residential course report must also be submitted. Suggested ways of gaining more general musical experience (if not by attending a residential course) during the previous two years are mentioned on p.4, and further guidance can be obtained from the administrator in advance of submitting the entry.

The **examiner** will be RSCM-validated. For safeguarding and moderation purposes, the exam may be recorded, and copies of testimonials and written submissions for sections C and E will be retained. The exam will take about 50 minutes and will be held at a local RSCM centre, normally (within most parts of the UK and Ireland) no further than 80 miles from the candidate's home or college address. Different arrangements will apply for candidates outside the UK and Ireland.

An **accompanist** must be provided by the applicant for all of section A. On completion of section A, the accompanist leaves the exam room, and the examiner will conduct the remainder of the exam.

Candidates will be given somewhere to 'warm up' their voices for up to 10 minutes before the exam.

Candidates should bring copies of all prepared pieces for the examiner's use. As stated in the regulations, these may be authorized photocopies. Use of illegal photocopies by candidate or accompanist is prohibited and may disqualify a candidate. Authorized copies should be clearly marked as such. Candidates should also bring their own copies of their written submissions and their Bible reading in section E for reference during the exam. Other notes should be limited to the permissions given in the regulations.

Exams will usually be held on any weekday, daytime or early evening, five to nine weeks after the deadline date for entries. Any special request for an appointment (e.g. Saturdays) must be made in writing in advance of submitting the entry, and all impossible dates (with good reasons) must be declared on the entry form. Every effort will be made to accommodate these requests. After the deadline, any request to change an exam appointment will incur a fee and possibly deferral of the exam.

In the event of deferral after the entry deadline, or non-attendance at the exam, through illness or emergency, an email of explanation must be sent immediately to the administrator. A partial refund of the entry fee may be made at the discretion of the RSCM.

The **result** of the exam will be sent to the applicant by post, usually within two weeks of the exam. The Gold Award medallion and ribbon may be purchased by successful candidates (details are sent with the result). Examiners are not permitted to divulge results at the time of the exam.

The RSCM operates an **appeals procedure**, details of which are shown in the regulations. The examiner is not to be contacted directly.

# Preparing for the Gold Award

## Prerequisites

The applicant should submit a reference from the choir trainer, counter-signed by the vicar, minister, head teacher or director of music, confirming the candidate's commitment to the choir and general musical competence and experience.

The candidate should normally:

- (a) have been a regular member of the RSCM-affiliated choir for at least three years (transfer will be acceptable if clearly documented), or be an Individual or Student RSCM Member.
- (b) have already achieved a good result in the RSCM Silver (Bishop's) Award or have comparable exam achievement and/or singing experience.
- (c) have completed all the targets in the *Yellow Voice for Life Singer's Workbook* or a comparable training scheme.
- (d) have gained some recent musical experience beyond the usual repertoire of the choir. For instance, the candidate may
  - have attended an RSCM residential course and achieved a good report, a photocopy of which will be included with the application.
  - have sung with RSCM Voices, RSCM Cathedral Singers or the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir.
  - have attended a musical course (instrumental or choral) or taken part in a special project or cathedral visit.
  - have sung with a school or other choir to an advanced standard; this may involve service or concert participation at a major venue (such as a cathedral or concert hall).

Evidence of this additional activity is required in the **second testimonial** (from an independent signatory), which must be submitted with the application. Testimonials will not be returned.

## Syllabus outline and mark scheme

Item		Mark Max (pass)	
A	1(a)	<b>Song</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose from list A; sing the melody line</li> </ul>	9 (6)
	1(b)	<b>Psalm extract to Anglican or responsorial chant, or plainsong</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose from list B</li> <li>▪ Some verses must be sung unaccompanied</li> </ul>	15 (10)
	2	<b>Prepared solo item</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose from an appropriate voice list</li> <li>▪ Singers up to 16 years old (treble/soprano) may choose from the Young Voices list</li> </ul>	24 (16)
	3	<b>Prepared choral repertoire</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Choose an <b>anthem</b> from list A</li> <li>(b) Choose a <b>liturgical setting</b> from list B</li> <li>▪ The two pieces must be by different composers</li> <li>▪ The examiner will indicate which sections of each item are to be performed</li> </ul>	15 (10)
15 (10)			
B	1	<b>Sight-reading</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The examiner will offer a short period of guided preparation before assessment</li> </ul>	15 (10)
	2	<b>Rehearsal and interpretation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Choose an item from each of lists A–E and be ready to rehearse any of them</li> <li>▪ The examiner will choose three of your five items for assessment</li> <li>▪ You may be asked to sing unaccompanied or with minimal accompaniment</li> <li>▪ Questions on each item may be technical, interpretative and stylistic</li> <li>▪ For a few bars, in one item, you will be asked to sing an alternative voice part</li> </ul>	18 (12)
C	1	<b>Repertoire notes</b>	9 (6)
	2	<b>Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Your notes will be the starting point for questions about any of your section A items</li> </ul>	15 (10)
D		<b>Belonging to the choir</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This section is not examined, but is satisfied by means of your testimonials</li> </ul>	
E		<b>Choir in context</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussion of your service outline; general questions on Church year and services</li> </ul>	15 (10)
		<b>Total</b>	150 (100)

# Section A: Using the voice well

Throughout this section, the examiner will be looking for:

- (a) developing, attractive solo tone with consistent control
- (b) good posture and presentation
- (c) good breath control with the ability to shape and sustain phrases
- (d) clear, precise diction including open, well produced vowel sounds
- (e) precise intonation
- (f) rhythmic accuracy
- (g) a mature and sensitive approach to expression and dynamics
- (h) comprehension of the text and communication of the mood of the piece
- (i) musical understanding and awareness of the style of the piece

All of the above should produce a *sensitive* and *musical* performance, with *maturity of tone* appropriate to the candidate's age and experience.

**Candidates may choose to perform their section A programme in any order, informing the examiner in advance.**

## Test 1: Psalmody/Song

Candidates should prepare a song from **list A** and a psalm from **list B** (singing their chosen voice part in Anglican chant or the melody line in plainsong or responsorial chant). A fluent performance is expected, with accuracy of pointing in chanted passages, sensitive treatment of the meaning of the words, and appropriate dynamic variety.

### List A

An accompanied performance of the melody line of one of the following songs. A copy of the chosen item, in the edition used by the candidate, must be provided for the examiner (who may decide not to hear all verses, if there are more than three).

- 'There is a higher throne' *AM* 802, or 'In Christ alone' *AM* 678, or 'Here is bread' *AM* 446, *CAHON* 277, *Songs, Psalms and Spirituals*, no.10 (RSCM, B0346)
- 'Bless the Lord, my soul' *AM* 600, *CAHON* 923, *L* 813, *Music for Common Worship 1* (RSCM, D0064), or 'Laudate Dominum' *CAHON* 933, *L* 698: refrain, verses, refrain; each item is also found in *Taizé: Songs for Prayer* (GIA, D0118)
- 'The summons (Will you come and follow me?)' *AM* 510, *CAHON* 752, *Heaven shall not wait* (Wild Goose, D0058), *L* 877
- 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?' No.24 in *Season by Season* (RSCM, B0278), *AM* 184, *CAHON* 721, *STF* 285, *L* 225, *NEH* 93

Stock codes for hymn books are: *AM* (*Ancient & Modern: Hymns and songs for refreshing worship*), 9781848252424; *CAHON* (*Combined Anglican Hymns Old & New*), D0088; *STF* (*Singing the Faith*), 9781848250673; *L* (*Laudate*), D0145; *NEH* (*New English Hymnal*), D0032.

### List B

A psalm excerpt, chosen by the candidate from the selection below, sung to **Anglican or responsorial chant or plainsong**. Metrical psalmody is inadmissible. Any authorized translation, in English or Latin, may be used. If using a source not specified below, candidates should ensure that the text correspond; psalm and verse numberings are not consistent.

**Anglican chant:** The selected verses should be prepared, with the *Gloria Patri*, to a double chant chosen by the candidate from their own psalter. If the selection is nine verses in length a 'second part' verse must be included at a suitable point suggested by the sense of the words. At least two consecutive verses must be sung unaccompanied. The candidate should decide with their accompanist, and inform the examiner in advance, which verses will be performed unaccompanied. Copies of both the pointed text and the chant must be provided for the examiner.

**Responsorial:** The selected verses should be prepared, with the *Gloria Patri*, to a chant and refrain chosen by the candidate from their own psalter. Verse numbers refer to verses in the psalm itself, and not to stanzas within a particular musical setting. The chant should have four phrases. The candidate should sing the melody line throughout; at least one complete stanza and the following refrain should be sung unaccompanied. The candidate should decide with their accompanist, and inform the examiner in advance, which stanza(s) will be performed unaccompanied. Copies of the pointed text, the refrain and the chant must be provided for the examiner.

**Plainsong:** The selected verses and the *Gloria Patri* should be prepared from the candidate's own psalter. A discreet accompaniment may be provided, but at least two consecutive verses must be sung unaccompanied. Alternatively, this test may be sung unaccompanied throughout. Copies of both the text and the plainsong must be provided for the examiner.

	Church of England (BCP)	Church of England (CW)	Roman Catholic (Grail)
Psalm	47	47	46
Psalm	99	99	98
Psalm	22.1-8	22.1-8	21.1-9
Psalm	51.1-8	51.1-9	50.1-9
Psalm	119.65-72	119.65-72	118.65-72

## Test 2: Prepared solo item

One solo item must be selected from the candidate's chosen voice list below. Where the original text is not in English, either the original language or an English translation may be used. In verse anthems and solos with chorus, only the solo line is to be sung; the accompanist should play the chorus parts. The recommended edition is specified, but alternative standard editions will be accepted. The solo must be well suited to the candidate's range and vocal timbre, and sung in a key originally specified by the composer. Singers up to 16 years old at the time of entry may choose a solo item from any voice list below (including, if they are singing treble or soprano, the YOUNG VOICES list) which suits their settled vocal range. If a teenage singer is too close to a time of unsettling vocal change, the examination entry must be deferred until the new range has settled and gained sufficient vocal quality and projection to enable a convincing, unforced and expressive solo performance. A copy of the chosen solo item must be provided for the examiner's use.

### YOUNG VOICES

#### Trebles or Sopranos up to 16 years old at the entry deadline (i.e. before the candidate's 16th birthday)

Corpus Christi Carol (unison song arrangement from <i>A Boy was Born</i> )	(D–E)	Britten	OUP	A1259
Pie Jesu (from <i>Requiem</i> )	(E <sup>b</sup> –F)	Fauré	RSCM	E0291
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell (No.32 from <i>Messiah</i> )	(E–G <sup>#</sup> )	Handel	Novello	E0019
Ex ore innocentium	(D–A <sup>b</sup> )	Ireland	B&H	A0279
Lift thine eyes (from <i>Elijah</i> ) – <u>the S1 line</u>	(A–G)	Mendelssohn	Novello	E0147
Hear my prayer – <u>the first solo section only</u>	(D–G)	Mendelssohn	RSCM	A0229

### ALL VOICES

#### Soprano

Ich will dir mein Herze schenken ('Jesus, Saviour, I am thine') (from <i>St Matthew Passion</i> ) – <u>including D.C.</u>	(D–G)	Bach	Bärenreiter	E0141
How beautiful are the feet (No.38 from <i>Messiah</i> )	(F <sup>#</sup> –G)	Handel	Novello	E0019
Benedictus (from <i>Missa Brevis St Johannes de Deo</i> ) – <u>not Osanna</u>	(D–B <sup>b</sup> )	Haydn	OUP	E0015
Cujus animam gementem (from <i>Stabat Mater</i> ) – <u>in C minor</u>	(F–A <sup>b</sup> )	Pergolesi	Novello	E0063
Crucifixus (No.9 from <i>Petite Messe solennelle</i> )	(C–G)	Rossini	Ricordi	E0101
Song of Peace	(C–G)	Stanford	RSCM	A0245
How can I cherish my man? (from <i>A child of our time</i> )	(E–B <sup>b</sup> )	Tippett	Schott	E0142
Domine Deus, Rex coelestis (No.VI from <i>Gloria</i> )	(G–F)	Vivaldi	OUP	E0018

#### Mezzo-soprano & Contralto

Et exultavit spiritus meus (from <i>Magnificat</i> )	(C <sup>#</sup> –F <sup>#</sup> )	Bach	Bärenreiter	E0069
My work is done, my task is o'er (from <i>Dream of Gerontius</i> )	(D <sup>#</sup> –E)	Elgar	Novello	E0143
O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion (No.9 from <i>Messiah</i> )	(A–B)	Handel	Novello	E0019
Man has measured the heavens (from <i>A child of our time</i> )	(B–E <sup>b</sup> )	Tippett	Schott	E0142
Qui sedes ad dexteram (No.X from <i>Gloria</i> )	(C <sup>#</sup> –D)	Vivaldi	OUP	E0018

#### Countertenor

Erbarme dich ('Have mercy, Lord') (from <i>St Matthew Passion</i> )	(B–E)	Bach	Bärenreiter	E0141
Adonai roi (No.2 from <i>Chichester Psalms</i> ) – <u>1st section: bars 1–63 only</u>	(D–E)	Bernstein	B&H	E0127
The Mouse (from <i>Rejoice in the Lamb</i> )	(A <sup>b</sup> –B <sup>b</sup> )	Britten	B&H	A1184
O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion (No.9 from <i>Messiah</i> )	(A–B)	Handel	Novello	E0019
Qui sedes ad dexteram (No.X from <i>Gloria</i> )	(C <sup>#</sup> –D)	Vivaldi	OUP	E0018

#### Tenor

Benedictus qui venit (from <i>Mass in B minor</i> ) – <u>not Osanna</u>	(E–A)	Bach	Bärenreiter	E0070
The Salutation (from <i>Dies Natalis</i> )	(D–A)	Finzi	B&H	E0144
But thou didst not leave his soul in hell (No.32 from <i>Messiah</i> )	(E–G <sup>#</sup> )	Handel	Novello	E0019
He counteth all your sorrows (No.3a from <i>Hymn of Praise</i> )	(D–G)	Mendelssohn	Novello	E0008
I have no money for my bread (from <i>A child of our time</i> )	(C–G)	Tippett	Schott	E0142

#### Bass & Baritone

Mighty Lord (from <i>Christmas oratorio</i> ) – <u>including D.C.</u>	(A–E)	Bach	Novello	E0145
Kyrie (from <i>Messe cum jubilo</i> )	(C–F)	Duruffé	Durand	C0396
When thou tookest upon thee (No.8 from <i>Dettingen Te Deum</i> )	(D <sup>#</sup> –E)	Handel	Novello	E0146
The trumpet shall sound (from <i>Messiah</i> ) – <u>1st section: to b 156 only</u>	(A–E)	Handel	Novello	E0019
Now heav'n in fullest glory shone (No.23 from <i>Creation</i> )	(F–D)	Haydn	Novello	E0115
Is not his word like a fire? (No.17 from <i>Elijah</i> )	(B–F)	Mendelssohn	Novello	E0147
Clouds and darkness (from <i>Hear my words, ye people</i> )	(B/F <sup>#</sup> –E)	Parry	Cathedral Music	A0139

### Test 3: Prepared choral repertoire

Candidates must prepare their chosen voice part in **two** items, by different composers.

One item must be taken from **List A (Anthems)** and the other from **List B (Liturgical settings)**. The examiner will indicate which sections of each item are to be performed in the examination. Semi-chorus and solo sections must be included, if requested by the examiner. In the case of *divisi*, the candidate may choose which line to follow. Where a recommended edition is specified, any alternative standard edition will be accepted, but these items must be sung in the published key.

A copy of each chosen item must be provided for the examiner's use.

#### List A: Anthems

And I saw a new heaven	Bainton	Novello	A0108
How lovely are thy dwellings (may be sung in German or English)	Brahms	RSCM	A0130
Zadok the priest (SSAATBB edition)	Handel	Novello	A0355
Insanae et vanae curae	Haydn	Novello	A0091
O pray for the peace of Jerusalem	Howells	OUP	A0163
Solus ad victimam*	Leighton		
My soul, there is a country*	Parry		
Jehovah quam multi sunt hostes (SSATB)	Purcell	Novello	A0649
Beati quorum via (SSATBB)	Stanford	RSCM	A0219
Wash me thoroughly*	SS Wesley		
* these anthems are included in RSCM Silver Collection 1		RSCM	B0111

#### List B: Liturgical settings

Te Deum in F	Ireland	Novello	C0100
Te Deum in B flat	Stanford	RSCM	C0096
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in D minor	Walmisley	RSCM	C0054
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (Second service)	Gibbons	OUP	C0185
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G <i>or</i> Collegium Regale <i>or</i> St Paul's service	Howells	Novello	C0245, C0050 <i>or</i> C0052
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in G minor	Purcell	OUP	C0045
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in A	Stanford	RSCM	C0153
Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in A flat	Harwood	RSCM	C0089
Magnificat quarti toni (including plainsong verses, at appropriate pitch) *	Lassus	Cathedral Press	CCL207
Missa Brevis (Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei and Gloria)	Berkeley	Chester	C0190
Missa Brevis (Gloria, Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei)	Dove	Novello	C0777
A Mass of your choice (the whole work excluding the Credo)	Haydn or Mozart or Palestrina or Byrd		

\* first published as number 13 in *Iubilus beatae virginis, hoc est centum Magnificat ab Orlando de Lasso* (Munich, 1619). There is more than one 'quarti toni' setting by Lassus (including number 12 in the same volume). If using an alternative edition, ensure you have the right setting.

## Section B: Musical skills and understanding

In this section, the examiner will be looking for:

- confident sight-reading and the ability to keep going
- good presentation, accurate part-singing in prepared pieces and evidence of experienced choral leadership
- confident, prompt responses to questions about the pieces
- musical understanding and awareness of different styles of repertoire
- the ability to read accurately a different voice part

All of the above should demonstrate the ability and experience to provide *effective leadership* and *stylistic awareness* in choral rehearsal, with alertness to the choral director's instructions.

### Test 1: Sight-reading (after guided preparation)

Candidates will be expected to sing at sight any appropriate voice part, in treble or bass clef, in a section of an unprepared anthem, in 16th/17th century or 20th/21st century tonal style. The standard of difficulty will be comparable with Philips 'Ascendit Deus' or Joubert 'O Lorde the maker of al thing'. The duration of the section to be attempted will be at least one minute. The successful production of the words, which will be in either English or Latin, is an integral element of this assessment.

The examiner will first offer the candidate a short period of guided preparation of part of the test, the key chord, starting note and an indication of tempo having been given. *A candidate who, at the time of entry, submits supporting evidence of dyslexia, will be given an initial period of up to one minute to read aloud and practise the words of the section of the anthem to be attempted.* Then after a pause of 30 seconds for private study, the key chord, starting note and tempo indication will be repeated before the candidate begins the assessed attempt; the examiner will play the accompaniment (or, where unaccompanied, a sketch of the other voice parts) on the piano. One assessed attempt only is allowed.

## Test 2: Rehearsal and interpretation

Candidates must prepare their chosen voice part in **five** pieces, **one** piece from each of lists A–E below.

Where a recommended edition is specified, any alternative standard edition will be accepted. The examiner will choose three of the five pieces to rehearse, and will ask the candidate to:

- sing short excerpts, some unaccompanied, others with minimal accompaniment provided by the examiner. The examiner's selection may include semi-chorus and/or solo lines for this voice. The candidate must be prepared to sing either line in any *divisi* section. The examiner may require the candidate to respond to varied stylistic requests at certain times (e.g. varying the phrase structure, articulation or tonal colour, or altering the dynamic shaping).
- answer a variety of straightforward technical, interpretative and stylistic questions on each tested piece. Candidates may expect questions to include: tonality, including key signatures and modulation, rhythmic features, imitative entries, common Italian terms, and basic harmonic understanding (e.g. cadences, sequences, suspensions).
- sing, with accompaniment, an alternative voice part for a few bars in one of the tested pieces. (The examiner will choose the voice part to be sung, which may be in a different clef, and will select some phrases within the candidate's vocal range.)

### List A

Sing joyfully (SSAATB)	Byrd	OUP	A1125
Call to remembrance, O Lord	Farrant	OUP	A0585
Almighty and everlasting God	Gibbons	OUP	A0206
Ascendit Deus (SSATB)	Philips	OUP	A0202
O nata lux de lumine (SATTB)	Tallis	OUP	A0201
Hosanna to the son of David (SSATBB)	Weelkes	OUP	A0190

### List B

God is gone up	Finzi	B&H	A0124
Tomorrow shall be my dancing day	Gardner	OUP	A0323
In the city of the Lord	Harper	RSCM	A1877
O Lorde, the maker of al thing	Joubert	Novello	A0102
Let all the world in every corner sing	Leighton	Novello	A0096
A babe is born	Mathias	OUP	A0318
I saw the Lord	Stainer	RSCM	A1765
Set me as a seal upon thine heart	Walton	OUP	A0187

### List C

Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in D	Brewer	RSCM	C0079
Jubilate Deo in C	Britten	OUP	C0099
A Little Jazz Mass (Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei)	Chilcott	OUP	C0689
Communion service in F (Gloria, and one other section of your choice)	Darke	OUP	C0035
Versicles and responses (Magdalen College, SATTB)	Rose	Novello	C0141
Preces and responses (SSATB)	Shephard	RSCM	C0129
Ave verum corpus (SS, no.3 in <i>English Anthem Collection 2</i> )	Wills	RSCM	B0031

### List D

As water to the thirsty (No.4 in <i>Worship in Song</i> , No.2 in <i>RSCM Silver Collection 1</i> , or No.93 in <i>Season by Season</i> )	arr. Barnard	RSCM	D0062 or B0111
Lord of the Dance (No.29 in <i>Season by Season</i> )	arr. Barnard	RSCM	B0278
Be still, for the presence of the Lord	Evans, arr. How	RSCM	A0082
The Father's love (SS, also available in <i>English Anthem Collection 2</i> )	Lole	RSCM	A0275
Maranatha, alleluia! (No.27 in <i>Songs for Life 2</i> )	Ogden	RSCM	F0059
I will sing with the spirit (SS or SATB edition)	Rutter	OUP	A0254 or A0185
The Lord bless you and keep you (SS or SATB edition)	Rutter	OUP	A0280 or A0154

### List E

And the glory of the Lord (No.4 from <i>Messiah</i> )	Handel	Novello	E0019
Hallelujah chorus (No.44 from <i>Messiah</i> )	Handel	Novello	E0019
Achieved is the glorious work ('Second Chorus' no.27b from <i>Creation</i> )	Haydn	Novello	E0115
The heavens are telling (No.14 from <i>Creation</i> )	Haydn	Novello	E0115
Recordare (from <i>Requiem</i> )	Mozart	Novello	E0004
The Lord is my Shepherd (SSAA or SATB edition)	Schubert	Novello	A0665 or A0357

## Section C: Repertoire

Candidates will be expected to:

- (a) submit programme notes on all or any of the pieces performed in Section A (maximum of 800 words). Candidates may choose to write a detailed note on one piece or more concise notes on any number of pieces from this section. Candidates may seek help from teachers and choir trainers, and should consult appropriate written sources of information, but must declare that the notes, as finally submitted, are their own work. Two copies of these notes must be submitted with the examination entry. The copies will not be returned.
  - Marks will be awarded for depth of knowledge and clarity of expression.
  - A reasonable standard of presentation is expected, and notes must be legible if hand-written.
  - A personal view, written with an audience in mind, is encouraged.
  - Sources must be acknowledged. Lack of a bibliography will significantly limit the mark available. (Bibliography and footnotes should not be counted within the 800 words limit.)
- (b) answer questions on matters arising from their programme notes, and their understanding of any of their prepared pieces in Section A (solo, anthem and liturgical setting, song and/or psalm settings).

The topics which should be considered in the notes, and may be asked by the examiner, are as follows:

- Text and music (origin, style, meaning, how the music reflects the text)
- Context (historical, musical, liturgical where relevant)
- Background knowledge (including comparison with another setting, known by the candidate, of a similar text, or with a piece by another composer of the same period).

Candidates should bring to the examination their own copy of their programme notes.

*Please refer to the section on Repertoire, p.161–186, in How to use Voice for Life (order ref F0121), including some sample answers at **Yellow** level on pp.182–185.*

## Section E: Choir in context

Candidates should devise their own order of short evening service for one of these occasions: **Advent, the Baptism of Christ, a Sunday in Lent, the Day of Pentecost, or** (if applicable) **the Patronal Festival of their own church**. The service should include the following five liturgically suitable items:

- (a) one passage of scripture, in a translation of the candidate's choice
- (b) a simple prayer, original prose or poetry written, unaided, by the candidate
- (c) three varied musical items, which may include anthems, solos and vocal/instrumental ensembles, hymns and songs.

These five items can be used at any point in the service. Candidates are welcome to include additional material (e.g. a Blessing, sung or said) and rubrics (e.g. 'a time of silence') to shape the service, but should aim to keep the overall structure simple.

Candidates should write a brief outline of the service:

- (a) giving the scripture passage reference, the titles and composers of pieces, the first lines of hymns and/or songs
- (b) including any rubrics
- (c) showing where each of the five items fits.

The outline and your written prayer must be presented neatly and legibly.

Candidates should bring to the examination their own copy of all the prepared items (the outline of the service, the three musical items, your prayer, and the passage of scripture), and be prepared to:

- (a) read part or all of the passage of scripture, and their prayer, aloud
- (b) discuss their outline, their choice of items and the style, suitability and liturgical relevance of each item
- (c) answer some further straightforward questions on the Church's year, and on the services, together with the music sung in their own church.

This section is designed to allow candidates to show their developing depth of liturgical understanding. Candidates are encouraged to use initiative in writing their own service outline, not restricting themselves to existing denominational liturgies. Using an existing liturgy (for example evensong or vespers) will limit the mark available for this section.

In preparation, candidates are also encouraged to gain experience sharing in the leading of a simple service and the effective public delivery of Scripture reading and prayer. The final mark in this section will take account of the quality and thoughtfulness of the service outline and prayer, as well as answers to questions and the general liturgical discussion with the examiner. Reading aloud must be accurate, expressive and clearly projected, at a standard suitable for public worship.

Candidates will not be required to perform any musical items in this section of the examination.

# Useful guidance for candidates and their trainers

## Section A: Using the voice well

The candidate's performance in this section is assessed on the following aspects:

### 1. Posture and 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.

*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.
- Have no control over vibrato (i.e. vibrato used either indiscriminately or not at all).
- Overuse the glottal stop to attack notes.

### 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 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 or 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: Musical skills and understanding

The candidate's performance in this Section is assessed on the following aspects:

### 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, be alert and maintain continuity even when momentarily wrong.
- Maintain good tone.
- Breathe in appropriate places.
- Sing words correctly.

*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.

## 2. Musical understanding

*Good candidates will:*

- Demonstrate their knowledge of clefs, notation and theory by singing their repertoire confidently and accurately, and by performing sight-reading competently in their own, and an alternative, voice part.
- Observe common Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be able to explain what they mean if asked.
- Show their understanding of stylistic matters and be able to respond effectively to interpretative demands when asked.

*Poor candidates may:*

- Demonstrate a poor understanding of clefs, notation and theory by making significant numbers of errors when singing repertoire and performing sight-reading tests.
- Fail to observe Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be unable to explain them if asked.
- Display inadequate understanding of stylistic matters or make a poor response to interpretative requests.

## Section C: Repertoire

*Good candidates will:*

- Have written knowledgeably about one or more pieces they sang 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.
- Have presented their material concisely, clearly, and with due acknowledgement of sources quoted.
- Give thoughtful answers to questions about their repertoire.
- Be able to compare and contrast any piece they sing with another setting they know of a similar text, or with a piece by another composer of the same period.

*Poor candidates may:*

- Have written only scantily, or with poor presentation, about their repertoire, showing little background knowledge about the texts, composers or musical styles.
- Be unable to answer questions about their repertoire.
- Be unable to make comparisons with other pieces or composers.

## Section D: Belonging to the choir

There is no formal examination for this section and no marks are allocated. Nevertheless, it remains a vital part of the Gold Award. On application, candidates must present a written testimonial from their choir trainer, signed by the vicar/minister/head teacher/director of music, confirming their attendance at and commitment to the choir. They are also required to submit copies of RSCM residential course certificates and reports, and/or an additional testimonial, with their application. Testimonials will not be returned.

## Section E: Choir in context

*Good candidates will:*

- Give thoughtful answers to questions on their selection of music, reading and prayer in their chosen service.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the significance of musical ministry within a church community.
- Read aloud clearly and thoughtfully.
- Be able to give examples of music suitable for specific occasions or seasons.
- 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 own church.

*Poor candidates may:*

- Appear not to have given careful consideration to their selection of items in their chosen service.
- Have only a poor awareness of musical ministry or the importance of music in the church community.
- Be ineffective, inexpressive or inaccurate in reading a passage of scripture, or their prayer, aloud.
- Be unable to make suitable repertoire suggestions for specific occasions or seasons.
- Be unable to answer questions on the Church's year or the format of services.

# Check list

## for preparing your Gold Award entry

### 1 As you begin to prepare:

- Book your accompanist, and arrange some rehearsals.
- Your accompanist will need a copy of each of your Section A pieces.

### 2 During your preparation:

- Go to the RSCM website and download the 'Training healthcheck' for you and your trainer to use
- Also download the Submission Form, Music List and psalm excerpts.
- Begin work on your written submissions in good time.
- Prepare your section A pieces to good performance standard.
- Know the notes of all your five section B pieces well, to be able to rehearse any of them confidently.
- Practise sight singing, too!
- Have your testimonials to hand (ask suitable people to write them, if you have not done so already).
- Check your diary carefully for any impossible dates during the forthcoming exam period.
- Contact RSCM Education, in good time, to request special arrangements if:
  - you have a specific physical or educational need that will affect your access to assessment.
  - a group of three or more candidates, entering together, wish to arrange for the examiner to visit .

### 3 Before the entry deadline, scan your application material to [examsdesk@rscm.com](mailto:examsdesk@rscm.com) including:

- Your completed entry form, making electronic payment of the correct entry fee
- Notification of any impossible exam dates, as once appointments have been issued they cannot be changed
- Scans of your reference, and residential course report or second testimonial
- Scans of the submission form, signed, with your service outline and your own prayer (section E)
- A file containing your programme notes (section C)
- Your completed music list

Alternatively, you can post your entry form, all submissions and cheque (payable to 'RSCM') for the correct entry fee

### 4 Bring to your exam, for the examiner's use:

- A file containing all your prepared pieces (sections A & B)

### 5 Bring to your exam, for your own use:

- A file containing all your prepared pieces (sections A & B) and all the following important items:
  - A copy of your programme notes (section C)
  - A copy of your service outline and your own prayer (section E)
  - A copy of your passage of scripture for you to read aloud, or a Bible to read from (section E)
  - A copy of each of the music items chosen for your service outline (section E)