



VOICE *for* LIFE

Singing Awards

Bronze, Silver and Gold levels

Revised Syllabus

Valid from September 2021 until further notice

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Contents

Introduction.....	2
Resources	4
Links and contact information	4
Bronze Award Syllabus	5
Silver Award Syllabus	9
Gold Award Syllabus	14
Publications	19
Scope of Knowledge for Technical Questions	20
Regulations	22
Marking Criteria	26

Introduction

Welcome to the latest revision of the RSCM *Voice for Life* Chorister Awards syllabus which comes into effect for exams after 1st September 2021.

Since its inception in 1927, the RSCM has had a significant role in supporting church music-making. We are proud of our choral heritage and will continue to celebrate this as we support traditional choirs and organists in parallel to the extraordinary kaleidoscope of musical styles in church music, as well as churches which have modest musical resources, or indeed none at all. These award examinations reflect a passion for excellence, something which is reflected in our whole education programme. As candidates progress from one level to another, the emphasis shifts from a range of familiar styles to greater challenges, enabling students to expand their own skill set across a broad range of established musical styles.

The Church of England remains the principal focusing agent of our work, since most of the RSCM's membership is Anglican in nature. However, we are an ecumenical organisation and have tried to make the syllabus content relevant and useful to those from other denominations.

Our motto *Psallam spiritu et mente* (I will sing with the Spirit and with the understanding also) has been at the heart of the thinking behind this new syllabus. We wish not just to teach the music, but rather to learn about realising the notation, understanding the music theory behind it, and glimpsing a vision of heaven through the inspiration of Christian texts, traditions and rituals. These are not just music exams, but are aimed at evangelism through our membership of choirs in places where they sing. These singing awards grow naturally out of the longstanding achievement ladders established through the RSCM's *Voice for Life* training scheme at White, Light Blue, Dark Blue, Red and Yellow levels. An introduction to this scheme and all its associated publications can be found at www.rscm.org.uk

Prepared sung items clearly play an important part of each award examination and allow the candidate to show their ability to perform alone with confidence and assurance. These include a very broad selection of hymns where a candidate can demonstrate their breathing technique and

ability to project the text and mood of the setting. Psalmody is frequently at the core of our worship and the syllabus provides a graded ladder of challenges which, in succession, will take candidates further out of their comfort zones whilst learning new and transferable skills. Anthems and settings cover a range of styles which also expands through the three levels, ensuring candidates are able to demonstrate their understanding of a range of music in different genres.

Alongside the prepared elements are a range of tests which we call PRACTICAL SKILLS. While these elements require some depth of knowledge to be learned and practised, they provide the building blocks which enable singers to grow as musicians. We believe that they are fundamental for any singer to understand and interpret a musical score; therefore, they form a core part of the curriculum. We hope too that this will provide some of the inspiration needed to provide choir leaders for future generations.

The CHOIR IN CONTEXT section is shaped as a series of stages to help choristers become attuned to the church setting in which their work takes place. The syllabus covers bible knowledge and understanding, elements of liturgical structure and a sense of ministry, both personal and as part of the choir.

Summary of changes from the old syllabus

To a large extent, the overall shape of each exam remains very similar to its predecessor. There are, however, some significant changes to the content and delivery of certain areas;

- REPERTOIRE LISTS have been updated and refreshed and have been aimed to cover a range of choral styles. However, there is now also a requirement for candidates to sing music from different periods at both Silver and Gold levels.
- UNACCOMPANIED ITEMS are included at all levels, over and above the demand to sing occasional verses of hymns or psalms without piano support. Items for all levels have been produced, sometimes in a slightly shortened form, and can be freely downloaded for candidates' use. These are the versions that will be expected in the exam.
- SIGHT SINGING, AURAL TESTS and TECHNICAL QUESTIONS have been slightly updated in terms of delivery and are now grouped under the title PRACTICAL SKILLS. Rhythmic and pitch elements are tackled separately in sight singing at Bronze and Silver levels, allowing the examiner to assess and reward them individually, even if the final melody is not fully correct. AURAL SKILLS are now assessed as part of the PRACTICAL SKILLS test at Gold level, and TECHNICAL QUESTIONS are now all drawn from unseen tests which have been devised to cover the full range of defined syllabus requirements.
- CHOIR IN CONTEXT has been simplified somewhat, but candidates are no longer allowed to read from pre-prepared texts. There are some changes to content, and there is no longer a requirement to submit work in advance at Gold level. At Silver and Gold levels, candidates will need to show an ability to read aloud at sight and give some insight as to the meaning of the text.

In addition, the marking scheme has been adjusted so that all levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold, are marked out of a total of 150 with a pass mark of 100. The marking criteria are outlined towards the end of this syllabus.

Resources

All RSCM members can access a whole suite of online support classes at www.showbie.com

Details of how to join can be found at www.rscm.org.uk

The resources within Showbie include:

- Help and guidance in preparing all sung sections.
- A raft of techniques to build success in sight reading.
- A range of specimen sight reading tests, including sample tests delivered in video format.
- Help with each of the aural tests and examples to try.
- Complete lists of technical terms for each level and help with keys, time signatures etc.
- Worksheets and background information for all CHOIR IN CONTEXT questions.
- Links to other sites to broaden your musical knowledge still further.
- Suggestions for further study and personal development beyond Gold level.
- In addition, the RSCM offers a range of courses, both face-to-face and online, to help you develop your skills and raise your musical horizons.

Keep an eye on www.rscm.org.uk/start-learning for up-to-date information.

Links and contact information

- RSCM websitewww.rscm.org.uk
- RSCM Shopwww.rscmshop.com
- Training resourceswww.showbie.com

- RSCM Exams desk emailexamsdesk@rscm.com

Bronze Award Syllabus

Using the Voice Well

Candidates will be required to sing:

Item	Detail	Marks (pass)
1. HYMN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hymn should have 4 lines per verse Three verses are to be sung Hymns where lines of text repeat are not acceptable The metre must have at least 12 syllables per 2 lines The middle verse is to be sung unaccompanied Candidates may sing the melody or any suitable voice part 	24 (16)
2. UNACCOMPANIED ITEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chosen from the following list. These are available as free downloads here: www.rscm.org.uk <p>B201 – Kyrie – Missa de angelis – Plainsong</p> <p>B202 – Steal away – Spiritual</p> <p>B203 – Jesus walked this lonesome valley – Spiritual</p>	12 (8)
3. PSALM (NB Roman Catholic numbering may vary – any authorised translation is acceptable – opening words are given for guidance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sung <u>either</u> to a single or double Anglican chant <u>or</u> to a responsorial setting at the candidate's choice If sung to Anglican chant, the Gloria should be included at the end Candidates may sing the melody or any suitable voice part Chosen from the following list: <p>B301 – Psalm 53 – <i>The foolish body hath said in his heart</i></p> <p>B302 – Psalm 114 – <i>When Israel came out of Egypt</i></p> <p>B303 – Psalm 121 – <i>I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills</i></p> <p>B304 – Psalm 129 – <i>Many a time have they fought against me</i></p> <p>B305 – Psalm 130 – <i>Out of the deep</i></p> <p>B306 – Psalm 138 – <i>I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord</i></p>	24 (16)

Bronze Award continued**4. ANTHEM**

- Choice of melody line or a suitable vocal part at the candidate's choice
- Chosen from the following list:

30 (20)

Composer		Title	Collection / Order info	Information	
B401	Peter Aston	Loving God	BC1	Up	
B402	Thomas Attwood	Teach me, O Lord	BC2		
B403	John Dankworth	Light of the world	HP	Up	
B404	Colin Davey	An Irish blessing	CPDL	Up	
B405	Richard Farrant	Hide not thou thy face	BC1		
B406	J Forbes L'Estrange	Saint Richard's Prayer	SAM YV20		
B407	Louis Halsey	Let all the world	BC1		
B408	Martin How	Fairest Lord Jesus	BC1		
B409	J-F Lalouette	O mysterium ineffabile	BC1	Un	Up
B410	Simon Lole	I am the Bread of life	BC1	D	Up
B411	Sarah Macdonald (arr.)	Love bade me welcome	Encore	Up	
B412	John Madden	We will remember them	WWR		
B413	Joanna Marsh	Song of St Anselm	AGA	Up	
B414	Piers Maxim	Candle burning in the night	AGA	Un	Up
B415	Morfydd Owen	He prayeth best who loveth best	MOV	Un	Up
B416	Henry Purcell	Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets	BC2		
B417	Andrew Reid	Author of life divine	AGA	Up	
B418	John Rutter	A Gaelic blessing	BC1	Un	Up
B419	David Sanger	Child in the manger	BC1	D	
B420	Richard Shephard	And did'st thou travel light	BC1	T	
B421	Christopher Tye	O Holy Spirit, Lord of grace	BC1		
B422	Norman Warren	Eternal Light	SPS	D	
B423	Geoff Weaver (arr.)	Sent by the Lord am I	BC1	D	
B424	Leonard White	A prayer of St Richard of Chichester	BC1	D	Up

D – taking the descant part where marked

Un – Setting for unison voices

T – ATB singing the tune in unison verses

Up – Setting for upper voices

Practical Skills

a. Sight Singing

Bronze Award

12 (8)

Candidates will be required to:

1. Sing a pattern of 4 printed notes at sight
 - The examiner will first give the key chord and starting note
2. Clap the rhythm of a printed phrase at sight
 - The candidate will be expected to choose a suitable tempo and count themselves in
3. Sing a melody which combines 1. and 2. above.
 - The pattern of pitched notes will occur at the start of the melody and the rhythmic pattern will be used in its entirety
 - The examiner will again give the key chord and starting note before preparation time and again before attempting the test
 - The candidate will choose a suitable tempo and count themselves in

b. Technical Questions

Bronze Award

12 (8)

- The examiner will show the candidate a range of examples and ask them to give the meaning of various musical terms and signs
- Questions will include elements of key signatures, time signatures, note names and lengths, symbols and Italian terms.
- A full list of the extent of terms and symbols for each level can be found [here](#).

c. Aural Tests

Bronze Award

12 (8)

Candidates will be required to:

1. Clap the rhythm pattern of a melody after it has been played twice.
 - The examiner will count two bars of pulse in 2/4, 3/4 or 6/8 time before playing it for the first time
2. Sing three 2-bar phrases as echoes in strict time
 - The examiner will first give the key chord and starting note and then count 2 bars of tempo before playing the first phrase
3. Sing both notes of an interval and then name it – at least two examples will be given
 - Intervals will be a major or minor 3rd, or a perfect 4th or 5th

Choir in Context

24 (16)

a. Bible

Bronze Award

Candidates will be required to:

1. Describe the mood(s) of the psalm they sang as part of the exam.
2. Point out words which suggest that mood, as well as any possible points of change to the mood during the course of the psalm.

b. Liturgy

Bronze Award

Candidates will be required to choose one of the following church festivals

CHRISTMAS : EASTER : PENTECOST

and then:

1. To talk about when in the calendar and church year the season falls, including whether it is fixed or moveable. If movable, knowledge will be expected of how the date is set.
2. To talk about the main elements in the chosen festival, as well as the roots of its name.
3. To know the liturgical colour associated with that season.
4. To show a working knowledge of the biblical accounts and where they can be found in the bible.
5. To suggest a hymn, psalm OR anthem that would be suitable to be used at that festival and to explain why it is apt for that season.

c. Ministry

Bronze Award

Candidates will be required:

1. To show a working knowledge of the layout of a typical church and to be able to identify how their own church is either similar or different.
2. To talk about the appearance, function and use of the following items
ALTAR or COMMUNION TABLE
FONT or BAPTISTRY
LECTERN or READING DESK
PULPIT
3. Candidates will be expected to know from memory the words of the Chorister's Prayer and will be asked to respond to questions about its meaning.

Silver Award Syllabus

Using the Voice Well

Candidates will be required to sing:

Item	Detail	Marks (pass)
1. HYMN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hymn should have 6 lines per verse Three verses are to be sung Hymns where lines of text repeat or with refrains are not acceptable The metre must have at least 12 syllables per 2 lines The middle verse is to be sung unaccompanied Candidates should sing any suitable voice part 	12 (8)
2. UNACCOMPANIED ITEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be chosen from the following list. These are available as free downloads here: www.rscm.org.uk <p>S201 – Sing my tongue – Pange Lingua – Plainsong</p> <p>S202 – Drop down, ye heavens – Advent Prose – Plainsong</p> <p>S203 – At the foot of the cross</p>	12 (8)
3. PSALM (NB Roman Catholic numbering may vary – any authorised translation is acceptable – opening words are given for guidance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sung <u>either</u> to a double Anglican chant <u>or</u> to a responsorial setting at the candidate's choice <u>or</u> to plainsong If sung to Anglican chant or to plainsong, the Gloria should be included at the end Candidates should sing any suitable voice part where available To be chosen from the following list: <p>S301 – Psalm 14 – <i>The fool hath said in his heart</i></p> <p>S302 – Psalm 32 – <i>Blessed is he whose unrighteousness is forgiven</i></p> <p>S303 – Psalm 46 – <i>God is our hope and strength</i></p> <p>S304 – Psalm 95 – <i>O come, let us sing unto the Lord</i></p> <p>S305 – Psalm 101 – <i>My song shall be of mercy and judgement</i></p> <p>S306 – Psalm 141 – <i>Lord, I call upon thee, haste thee unto me</i></p>	18 (12)

Silver Award continued

4. EARLY STYLES

- To sing a suitable vocal part at the candidate's choice
- To be chosen from the following list:

24 (16)

	Composer	Title	Collection / Order info	Information
S401	Adrian Batten	O Praise the Lord	A1102	
S402	William Byrd	Sanctus & Hosanna (Mass for 4 voices)	C0033	
S403	John Blitheman	In pace in idipsum dormiam	TUA	
S404	Luca Marenzio	O Rex gloriae	KOG	
S405	W A Mozart	Benedictus and Hosanna (Missa brevis in F k.192)	Bärenreiter	Including solo sections
S406	W A Mozart	Kyrie (Missa brevis in D k.194)	Bärenreiter	
S407	Peter Philips	Ave verum corpus	CP9	
S408	Henry Purcell	O God, the King of Glory	KOG	
S409	Henry Purcell	Hear my prayer, O Lord	APA	
S410	Thomas Tallis	Sanctus (Mass for 4 voices)	CP56	
S411	T A Walmisley	From all that dwell below the skies	CPDL	
S412	Ludovico Viadana	Exsultate justi in Domino	Carus	
S413	T L da Victoria	Gaudent in coelis	WSS	

5. LATER STYLES

- To sing a suitable vocal part at the candidate's choice
- To be chosen from the following list:

24 (16)

	Composer	Title	Collection / Order info	Information
S501	Edward Bairstow	Save us, O Lord, waking	A0128	
S502	Mark Blatchly	For the fallen	WWR	Up
S503	Mark Blatchly	Give us the wings of faith	HP	Up
S504	Benjamin Britten	Gloria (Missa Brevis)	C0333	Up
S505	Ernest Bullock	Give us the wings of faith	A0176	
S506	J Forbes L'Estrange	Magnificat (King's College Service)	RES164	
S507	William Harris	Holy is the true light	WSS	
S508	Herbert Howells	Magnificat (Service in G major)	C0245	
S509	William Mathias	Lift up your heads	ADP	
S510	Cecilia McDowall	Bless to me this day	Oxford	Up
S511	Philip Moore	Come, dearest Lord	SAM	
S512	June Nixon	God is why I am	AON2	
S513	Rosephanye Powell	The Lord is my light and my salvation	Hal Leonard	
S514	Sergei Rachmaninov	The Cherubic Hymn	KOG	
S515	Richard Shephard	A new commandment	KOG	
S516	Richard Shephard	The Secret of Christ	GCGW	
S517	C V Stanford	Benedictus in C	WSS	
S518	Heathcote Statham	Magnificat in E minor	C0228	
S519	Herbert Sumsion	Magnificat in A	C0087	
S520	C-M Widor	Agnus Dei (Messe op.36)	C0416	
S521	Philip Wilby	An Irish Blessing	SAM	
S522	Charles Wood	Expectans expectavi	A0232	

Up – Setting for upper voices

Practical Skills

a. Sight Singing

Silver Award

12 (8)

Candidates will be given an unseen short piece of music (lasting approximately 20–30s) reflecting the technical demands (key, terms, time signature etc.) of Silver level. Before each element of the test, they will be allowed approximately 15s preparation time (30s for those who qualify for extra time).

The elements of the test will be as follows:

1. To clap the rhythm of the printed melody
 - Candidates will set their own tempo and count themselves in.
 - If the candidate wishes, they are at liberty to count the pulse out loud whilst clapping.
2. To say the words of the printed melody out loud and in rhythm
 - Candidates will set their own tempo and count themselves in.
3. To sing the printed melody with words
 - The examiner will play the key chord and starting note before the rehearsal time and again before the candidate attempts the test.
 - If necessary, a second attempt will be given. In such circumstances, the examiner will first encourage the candidate to point out the area which was not fully correct, adding guidance if required.

b. Technical Questions

Silver Award

12 (8)

- The examiner will show the candidate a range of examples and ask them to give the meaning of various musical terms and signs.
- Questions will include elements of key signatures, time signatures, note names and lengths, symbols and Italian terms.
- A full list of the extent of terms and symbols for each level can be found [here](#).

c. Aural Tests

Silver Award

12 (8)

Candidates will be required to:

1. Clap the pulse of a melody on its second playing and identify whether it was in 2, 3 or 4 time
 - The melody will be unaccompanied and will not necessarily start on the 1st beat of the bar.
 - Candidates should continue clapping at the end, counting the numbered beats aloud until asked to stop by the examiner.
2. Sing two melodic phrases as echoes and in time
 - The key chord, starting note and pulse will first be given.
 - Each phrase will be played twice, without a break between, before the echo is sung.
3. Sing the middle or lowest note of a triad – at least two examples will be given
 - The key note will first be given.
 - The triad may be in root position, 1st or 2nd inversion.
4. Pitch a note a given interval above the tonic – at least two examples will be given
 - The tonic will first be played and the candidate asked to sing it.
 - Intervals asked could be 2^{nds} (major or minor), 3^{rds} (major or minor), 6^{ths} (major or minor), perfect 4^{ths} or perfect 5^{ths}.

Choir in Context

24 (16)

a. Bible**Silver Award**

- Candidates will need to have studied each of the following texts. The examiner will choose one of these and ask the candidate to talk about its meaning, significance, usage and origins.
 - Sanctus (Holy, holy, holy)
 - Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)
 - Magnificat
 - Nunc Dimittis

b. Liturgy**Silver Award**

- Candidates will be expected to describe in some detail the meaning and flow of a section of a Communion service, Mass or Eucharist from the start of the Thanksgiving (Eucharistic) Prayer through to and including taking communion.
- Candidates should choose three of the following holy days and be prepared to talk briefly (about half a minute) about when they occur, the bible accounts associated with them, as well as any elements of liturgy associated with their celebration in church. For each day, the candidate will suggest a suitable hymn and anthem and should be prepared to say why each piece is suitable for that occasion.

CHOOSE 3 HOLY DAYS – not more than one day may be chosen from Holy Week

- Candlemas
- The Annunciation
- Ash Wednesday
- Maundy Thursday
- Good Friday
- Easter Eve
- Ascension Day

c. Ministry**Silver Award**

- Candidates will be asked to read aloud at sight a passage from the New Testament as if to a large congregation and to respond to supplementary questions about its meaning and when it might be used in the church's year.
- Candidates will be expected to know from memory the words of the Lord's Prayer (any authorized version) and will be asked to respond to questions about its meaning.
- Candidates will be asked to talk about membership of their own choir, the skills they have learned, both musical and social, the inspiration given by other people, and personal aims and objectives for the future.
 - Credit will be given for insight, self-confidence and conveyance of a sense of duty and service to others.

Gold Award Syllabus

Using the Voice Well

Candidates will be required to sing:

Item	Detail	Marks (pass)
1. HYMN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The hymn should have 8 lines per verse Three verses are to be sung Hymns where lines of text repeat are not acceptable The metre must have at least 12 syllables per 2 lines The middle verse is to be sung unaccompanied Candidates should sing any suitable voice part 	12 (8)
2. PSALM <i>(NB Roman Catholic numbering may vary – any authorised translation is acceptable – opening words are given for guidance)</i>	<p>BOTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sung to Anglican chant, using more than one chant, and including the Gloria at the end Candidates should sing any suitable voice part To be chosen from the following list: <p>G201 – Psalm 13 (changing between verses 4&5) <i>How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord?</i></p> <p>G202 – Psalm 18 vv.1–6 (changing between verses 2&3) <i>I will love thee, O Lord my strength</i></p> <p>G203 – Psalm 25 vv.1–8 (changing between verses 6&7) <i>Unto thee, O Lord will I lift up my soul</i></p> <p>G204 – Psalm 44 vv.1–6 (changing between verses 4&5) <i>We have heard with our ears, O God</i></p> <p>G205 – Psalm 78 vv.41–46 (changing between verses 44&45) <i>Many a time did they provoke him in the wilderness</i></p> <p>G206 – Psalm 107 vv.21–27 (changing between verses 22&23) <i>O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness</i></p> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sung to plainsong unaccompanied These are available as free downloads here: www.rscm.org.uk To be chosen from the following list: <p>G221 – Psalm 23 – <i>The Lord is my shepherd</i></p> <p>G222 – Psalm 70 – <i>Haste thee, O God, to deliver me</i></p> <p>G223 – Psalm 82 (omit vv.5–6) – <i>God standeth in the congregation</i></p> <p>G224 – Psalm 93 – <i>The Lord is King</i></p> <p>G225 – Psalm 127 – <i>Except the Lord build the house</i></p> <p>G226 – Psalm 150 – <i>O praise God in his holiness</i></p>	12 (8)

3. 16–17TH**CENTURY
STYLES**

- Sing a suitable vocal part at the candidate's choice
- Chosen from the following list:

24 (16)

	Composer	Title	Collection / Order info
G301	Richard Dering	Quem vidistis pastores	TUA
G302	Orlando Gibbons	O Lord, in thy wrath	OTA
G303	G P da Palestrina	Gloria (Missa Brevis)	C0034
G304	G P da Palestrina	Rorate caeli	ADP
G305	Robert Parsons	Ave Maria	OTA
G306	Peter Philips	Ascendit Deus	OTA
G307	Thomas Tomkins	Almighty God, the fountain	TUA
G308	T L da Victoria	Gloria (Missa O Quam Gloriosum)	C0347
G309	Thomas Weelkes	Alleluia. I heard a voice	OTA
G310	Thomas Weelkes	Hosanna to the Son of David	OTA

4. LATE 17TH–19TH**CENTURY
STYLES**

- Sing a suitable vocal part at the candidate's choice
- Chosen from the following list:

24 (16)

	Composer	Title	Collection / Order info
G401	William Boyce	Save me, O God	
G402	Johannes Brahms	How lovely are thy dwellings	A0130
G403	Anton Bruckner	Os justi	A1156
G404	G F Handel	Hallelujah Chorus	A2840
G405	F J Haydn	Achieved is the glorious work (from Creation) <i>(no.25b, the longer version of this chorus)</i>	E0115
G406	F J Haydn	Benedictus (Missa Sancti Nicolai)	E0003
G407	W A Mozart	Gloria (Orgelsolomesse, inc solos)	E0149
G408	Henry Purcell	I was glad	APA
G409	S S Wesley	Cast me not away	A0856

Gold Award continued

5. 20TH–21ST CENTURY STYLES

- Sing a suitable vocal part at the candidate's choice
- Chosen from the following list:

24 (16)

	Composer	Title	Collection / Order info
G501	Edward Bairstow	Though I speak with the tongues	A1203
G502	Edward Bairstow	Lord, I call upon thee	A1030
G503	Arnold Bax	Nunc dimittis in G	C1147
G504	Lennox Berkeley	The Lord is my shepherd	KOG
G505	Gerald Finzi	God is gone up	A0124
G506	Patrick Hadley	My beloved spake	A0404
G507	Herbert Howells	Sing lullaby	A1282
G508	Kenneth Leighton	Drop, drop slow tears	GCGW
G509	C V Stanford	Justorum animae	A0120
G510	Louis Vierne	Agnus Dei (Messe Solennelle)	C0422
G511	Charles Wood	Hail, gladdening light	A2440

Practical Skills**Gold Award**

21 (14)

This section of the exam takes the form of a combined test to assess breadth of knowledge across a number of areas. These will include elements of sight-reading, aural skills, technical questions and stylistic knowledge and will allow candidates to show depth of understanding. Time taken to explain reasoning will also allow examiners to assess insight, even if an incorrect conclusion is drawn.

Candidates will be given an unseen score.

1. There will then follow a number of questions relating to these details:
 - Elements of key, pitch, intervals, modality and scale
 - Elements of pulse, rhythm and metre
 - Elements of shape, expression and style
 - Elements of harmony, chords and modulations
 - Elements of liturgical usage, period and musical background
 - The full extent of each area is outlined [**here**](#).
2. Candidates will then be given a brief period (about 30 seconds) to look through and try out the piece, having been given a key chord and tempo. They may have to find their starting note from an introduction or from other voices before they begin, or pitch it from the key chord.
3. The examiner will then give the key chord again and introduce the test either by playing the keyboard introduction or, if the choral line to be sung starts immediately, by counting in.
 - The examiner will accompany the candidate, but will avoid doubling the vocal line to be sung.
 - The examiner will expect to keep playing in time, requiring the candidate to make an intelligent approach to getting back on track if things go wrong.
4. The examiner will discuss with the candidate any areas that might be improved in terms of accuracy, style or delivery and will then offer a second attempt in the same way as the first.

Choir in Context

21 (14)

a. Bible**Gold Award**

1. Candidates should choose one of the following psalms and talk about its meaning, highlighting relevant parts of the text and explaining any obvious links to particular seasons of the church year. A copy of the text may be brought to the exam for reference. Credit will be given for insight and research, as well as fluency of delivery.

(NB Roman Catholic numbering may vary – any authorised translation is acceptable – opening words are given for guidance)

- Psalm 22 – *My God, my God, look upon me, why hast thou forsaken me*
- Psalm 51 – *Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness*
- Psalm 80 – *Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel*
- Psalm 114 – *When Israel came out of Egypt*
- Psalm 130 – *Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O God*

b. Liturgy**Gold Award**

1. Candidates should choose 2 of the following saints and be prepared to talk about their story and relevance to the church and Christian life, as well as the date on which their commemoration falls.
2. Candidates will also be expected to recite from memory the relevant or denominational prayer for their chosen saints.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| • Saint Andrew | • Saint Mary Magdalene |
| • Saint Luke | • Saint John the Baptist |
| • Saint Matthew | • Saint Peter |
| • Saint Thomas | |

c. Ministry**Gold Award**

1. Candidates will be asked to read aloud at sight a passage from the Old Testament as if to a large congregation and to answer a couple of supplementary questions about its meaning and when it might be used in the church's year.
2. Candidates will be asked to recite the following prayer from memory and should be ready to speak about what it says regarding God's calling as a chorister.

Remember, O Lord, what you have wrought in us
and not what we deserve;
and, as you have called us to your service,
make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

3. Candidates should also be prepared to deliver a short statement (without notes) about their experience and ministry as part of a choir, including any particular experiences of note and any goals for the future. Credit will be given for fluency and the level of thought that has gone into this brief presentation, as well as examples of service to others.

Publications

Repertoire listings

Where a piece is published as sheet music by the RSCM, or is a standard item in the webshop, its order code is shown in the RH column in **GREEN**.

If a piece is available in an anthology or collection, that will use one of the codes below in **BLUE**.

Anthologies and single pieces published elsewhere are identified by the anthology code (see below) or the name of the publisher in **RED**.

ALL MUSIC may be ordered through the RSCM shop.

Choral Public Domain Library editions may be used, but any significant changes (as compared to traditional published editions) should be checked out by the applicant and approval sought via the Exams Desk.

Code	Collection Title	Publisher
ADP	Advent Pilgrimage	RSCM
AGA	All Glorious Above	RSCM
AON2	Anthems Old and New vol.2	Mayhew
APA	A Purcell Anthology	OUP
BC1	RSCM Bronze Collection 1	RSCM
BC2	RSCM Bronze Collection 2	RSCM
GCGW	God's Church for God's World	RSCM
HP	High Praise	Music Sales
KOG	King of Glory	RSCM
MOV2	Multitude of Voyces volume 2	www.multitudeofvoyces.co.uk
OTA	The Oxford Book of Tudor Anthems	OUP
SAM	RSCM Anthems for S A Men	RSCM
SC1	RSCM Silver Collection 1	RSCM
SC2	RSCM Silver Collection 2	RSCM
SPS	Songs, Psalms and Spirituals	RSCM
TUA	Tudor Anthems	Novello
WSS	With Saintly Shout and Solemn Jubilee	RSCM
WOC	The Way of the Cross	RSCM
WWR	We will remember them	RSCM
YV20	Young Voices Festival Book 2020	RSCM

Scope of Knowledge for Technical Questions

	BRONZE	SILVER <i>Everything needed for Bronze PLUS</i>	GOLD <i>Everything needed for Bronze and Silver PLUS</i>
Pitch/ Clef	Notes of treble OR bass clef as appropriate to candidate's voice	Notes of treble AND bass clefs including some leger lines	Recognition and understanding of C clefs, if not fluency of use Double sharps and double flats
Key signatures	Major and minor keys up to 3 sharps or flats	Major and minor keys up to 5 sharps or flats	All keys Melodic and harmonic minor scales Modal tonality
Intervals	Major 2 nd Major/minor 3 ^{rds} Perfect 4 ^{ths} Perfect 5 ^{ths}	Minor 2 ^{nds} Major/minor 6 ^{ths} Octaves	Major/minor 7 ^{ths} Augmented and diminished intervals Compound intervals
Note values and rests	Semibreves, minims, crotchets, quavers, semiquavers Triplets Dotted rhythms Ties	Breves Duplets and other ratio note values (sextuplets etc.) Syncopated patterns	
Time signatures	Simple times with 2, 3 or 4 beats, including crotchet and minim beat lengths	Compound times with 2, 3 or 4 beats (6/4, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8) Times with quaver beat lengths	5, 7, beats per bar

Dynamic markings	p, mp, pp f, mf, ff crescendo diminuendo [inc. hairpins]	sfz, fp	
Expressive markings	slurs staccato dots accent marks breathing marks	tenuto lines	
Other elements	adagio lento moderato andante allegretto allegro presto rallentando ritardando ritenuto accelerando a tempo poco molto fine da capo (al fine) dal segno (al fine) coda staccato slur legato	largo larghetto mosso maestoso vivace tempo primo rubato meno mosso piu mosso stringendo tempo I a capella divisi unison meno piu dolce semplice sempre subito espressivo cantabile sostenuto	Technical names for the degrees of the scale – Tonic, Supertonic etc. Triads and inversions Recognition of harmony and counterpoint Recognition of musical textures Recognition of musical styles Cadences

Regulations

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Singing awards are designed to encourage singers to achieve a high standard of vocal technique and musicianship. It is hoped that the awards will be used in conjunction with the RSCM *Voice for Life* scheme, which enables singers to develop their musical skills and understanding within the context of their choir (or singing group) and worshipping community.
- 1.2. The awards are open to singers from RSCM Group and Individual memberships of all denominations. Adults and children who have completed the relevant training are welcome to enter.
- 1.3. **Representatives**, when making the exam entry, are deemed (on behalf of the candidate and all involved in the entry) to have read, and agree to abide by, the terms of these regulations and conditions, and to accept the expertise of the examiner in all sections of the exam.

2. Making the award exam entry

- 2.1. All UK and Ireland award entries are made through the online portal by awards **representatives** who have registered with RSCM Education.
- 2.2. RSCM International Partners organise their own award exam sessions.
- 2.3. The online "entry window" for the session will, in normal circumstances, be open on the system for at least 4 weeks prior to the entry deadline date, and will close automatically at 23:59 (UK time) on that date.
- 2.4. Each online entry will generate an email receipt.
- 2.5. The entry is complete when all choices have been made online and the payment has been successfully received.
- 2.6. The RSCM will compile the exam day timetable, and notify **representatives** of the appointments (by email if possible), with venue location. An appointed exam supervisor will be in attendance.
- 2.7. Once an entry has been submitted and payment made, the **representative** will be required to pay an administrative surcharge, termed the "deferral fee", if requesting a change of appointment.

- 2.8. RSCM Education may exceptionally agree to waive the deferral fee, or the forfeiture of a substantial proportion of the entry fee, for compassionate reasons, though a minimum of 20% of the entry fee will be retained to help cover administrative costs.
- 2.9. Results will normally be sent to the **representative** within 2 weeks of the exam date.
- 2.10. Personal data in the online entry system will be held according to the RSCM's Privacy Policy, which can be found here: <https://www.rscm.org.uk/privacy-policy/>
- 2.11. RSCM Education reserves the right to decline any entry, returning entry fees in full, and to remove any **representative** from the online system.

3. Payments

- 3.1. Current entry fees, and surcharge/deferral fee, are indicated at rscm.org.uk.
- 3.2. All payments are made at the time of entry through the online system using standard online payment methods.

4. The Representative

- 4.1. ...must be at least 18 years old.
- 4.2. ...may also be the **candidate**, but if not must declare their relationship of trust to the candidate (choir leader, teacher, parent/guardian or other).
- 4.3. ...if not the choir leader/trainer/teacher, must register as **representative** with the agreement of someone responsible for the choir. The RSCM reserves the right to verify that the **representative** has the authority to enter candidates on behalf of the affiliation.
- 4.4. ...must take responsibility for accurately compiling and correctly submitting the entry, any supporting information required, and the payment.
- 4.5. ...must **submit** the entry online no later than 23:59 on the deadline date.
- 4.6. ...is deemed to accept all regulations at the point when an entry is made.
- 4.7. ...will be the only point of contact with the RSCM, and must forward all details to the candidate and anyone else involved in the entry.
- 4.8. ...must make arrangements (including payment if required) for the **accompanist** for the **Using the Voice Well** section of the exam.

- 4.9. ...must check that all items specified in the syllabus are taken into the exam room, including copies for the examiner's use (*see reg. 9.1*), are in the same edition (or copied from the same book) as that being used by the candidate.

5. The candidate

- 5.1. ... by entering for the exam will be deemed to have accepted these regulations.
- 5.2. ...should have sung regularly in a choir, or as a member of a singing group (whether or not regularly leading music in worship) for the past 2 years. A singer who has changed choirs during this period may be asked to supply evidence of attendance record with their previous choir or group.
- 5.3. ...must be affiliated to the RSCM through this membership, or (if the choir or group is not currently affiliated to the RSCM) by Personal Membership (Individual Member, or Student Member: for details, email membership@rscm.com). Singers with no current affiliation to RSCM are not eligible to enter for RSCM Awards.
- 5.4. ...may only be entered for one award in any one exam session.

6. Candidates with specific individual needs

- 6.1. The online entry form permits the **representative** to state if the candidate has any physical, social, or learning needs that might affect the environment or conduct of the exam.
- 6.2. If extra time is requested, a copy of a specialist's report, in support of the statement of physical, social, or learning needs, must be uploaded with the exam entry. In every case where an adjustment is granted, an extra 5 minutes will be allowed for the exam overall and the report will be shared in confidence with the examiner.
- 6.3. In cases of physical need, it is the responsibility of the **representative** to request accessibility information, and of RSCM Education to arrange a more accessible venue for the exam if this appears to be necessary.
- 6.4. Negotiation with RSCM Education on special requests is needed, over (e.g., for visual impairment) larger, or alternative, tests, or (e.g., for dyslexia) the use of tinted overlays. Such requests will initially be made via the 'Alternative tests' section at online entry stage.

- 6.5. In conducting the exam, the examiner will pay due regard to the candidate's individual needs, including giving guidance, and extra time where granted, for completing items; but the marking criteria will always be applied unaltered.

7. The examiner

- 7.1. ...is appointed by RSCM Education.
- 7.2. ...currently satisfies all RSCM safeguarding procedures (as does the exam supervisor).
- 7.3. ...will mark the candidate strictly in conformity with the published marking criteria.
- 7.4. ...is regularly moderated, to help ensure uniformity of examining standards across the whole of the RSCM.

8. Use of English and other languages in the exam

- 8.1. Options or requirements to **sing** a piece in a language other than English are stated in the syllabus.
- 8.2. Candidates wishing the exam to be conducted in a language other than English will need to provide an interpreter at their own expense.

9. Authorised copies of music for the examiner's use

- 9.1. The MPA Code of Fair Practice allows a **representative** or candidate, using a purchased edition of music, to make a copy for the examiner's use; it must be marked "Examiner's copy: destroy after use". Accompanists must **not** play from photocopies.

10. Recordings (audio / video)

- 10.1. ...of all award exams will be made by the Examiner, for safeguarding, training & moderation, and dispute resolution purposes.
- 10.2. ...must be used only for these purposes, and under no circumstances may be publicly released, but will remain the property of the RSCM in secure electronic storage.

11. Certificates and medals

- 11.1. Successful candidates receive a certificate; this is posted to their **representative**.
- 11.2. Candidates may purchase the appropriate medal and ribbon from RSCM Music Direct (rscmshop.com) upon presentation of proof of a successful result.

12. Cancellation, disqualification and infringement

- 12.1. RSCM Education may cancel an exam session if fewer than 3 candidates in total have entered. In this event, each entry received will, if possible, be offered a choice of later alternative sessions (with no deferral fee payable) or, by mutual agreement, may be cancelled with full refund of the entry fee.
- 12.2. The same provisions will apply in the event of unexpected examiner indisposition, if no substitute can be appointed in time.
- 12.3. Candidates risk disqualification if photocopies, other than authorised ones, are brought into the exam room.
- 12.4. Examiners are instructed to refer to the Chief Examiner in cases of infringement of syllabus or rubrics. In these circumstances, marks may be deducted and an explanatory sentence added in the relevant item box on the marksheet. 30% of the item total, at most, might be deducted for a serious infringement.

13. Accompanists

- 13.1. The aim for an accompanist should be to leave musical space around the melody relatively clear, allowing the singer's voice to project and develop a sense of performance around the line itself, rather than the singer having to compete with loud playing which doubles the melodic line.
- 13.2. Accompanists will need to be able to adapt a written accompaniment, either providing a skeleton of choral parts in unaccompanied sections, or thinning out the notes to leave a sufficiently light support for the singer.
- 13.3. Accompanists should bear in mind that the examiner is trying to assess the candidate's ability to count rhythms and rests, as well as to find pitches and melodic shapes. When the piano is dominant, often intended as a helpful gesture, it merely gets in the way of a successful performance. Indeed, in some cases it becomes evident that the singer is totally dependent on the accompaniment and cannot adequately maintain pitch without it.
- 13.4. Where the standard of an accompaniment is detrimental to the ability to assess accurately the singer's performance, marks may be deducted. In such cases the **representative** will receive a letter explaining the reasons for this action and what has been done as a result.

14. Other exam details and conditions

- 14.1. Music choices must suit the candidate's voice and range, with the following allowances:
 - 14.1.1. Where a candidate is to sing the melody line only, it may be performed at treble or bass pitch.
 - 14.1.2. Candidates may sing different voice parts across the prepared sung parts of the exam. For example, a candidate may sing the tenor part in one or more items whilst singing bass in other areas. This extends to pieces where there is a choice of 1st or 2nd parts, and also to those who might, for example, wish to sing bass and counter-tenor in different works. The candidate must inform the examiner before they start singing.
 - 14.1.3. For young, recently changed male voices, when a bass part is almost entirely within range but occasionally drops out of the bottom end of the range, an upward octave transposition is allowed. This is most likely to occur at cadence points at ends of phrases. The candidate must inform the examiner before they start singing.
 - 14.1.4. Music from the Baroque period or earlier may be transposed up or down a tone or a semi-tone without comment.
- 14.2. Candidates will be given somewhere to "warm up" for 10 minutes before the exam, but a rehearsal keyboard will not usually be supplied.
- 14.3. The candidate should be prepared to sing the whole of each sung item, as specified in the music lists. The accompaniment must be played on the piano.
- 14.4. Pencilled rehearsal notes and information are permitted in the candidate's copies. Such notes must be limited to breathing and interpretation elements of that piece and may not be referred to in later sections of the examination.
- 14.5. An entry once deferred may be cancelled and the entry fee forfeited if the exam is not completed the second time.

15. Comments and appeals

- 15.1. An **appeals procedure** is operated by RSCM Education, but initial reaction (good or bad) to the exam experience is welcome. The **representative** may email examsdesk@rscm.com (Subject title: Bronze/Silver/Gold exam comment) with the candidate's name, the date & venue, and giving details. This must be received within 7 days of the exam date.
- 15.2. The **appeals procedure** is detailed in the appeals document which can be found on the RSCM website or emailed on request.
- 15.3. A formal appeal must be made in writing by the **representative**, and the appeal fee paid (see online table of fees; refunded in full if the appeal result is successful). It must arrive not later than 14 days after the results have been issued and may encompass the relevant aspects of any initial concern (as expressed in the email, reg. 15.1) and/or the exam result, but no afterthoughts will be entertained.
- 15.4. The recording of the exam may be reviewed to help determine the strength of the case being made.
- 15.5. The outcome of any appeal will normally be sent to the **representative** within three weeks from the date of receipt. The outcome of a successful appeal may be a new mark sheet (and certificate, if necessary) or the offer of a free re-examination, either of which terminate the appeal procedure, whether or not the latter is accepted. The appeal fee will be refunded in full if the appeal is successful.

Marking Criteria

RSCM AWARDS CRITERIA (All levels – 2021 syllabus) – [03 March 2021]

ALL PREPARED SUNG ITEMS

Total marks (pass mark)	30 (20)	24 (16)	18 (12)	12 (8)	Pitch	Time	Tone	Shape	Performance
Very Good	30 - 27	24 - 22	18 - 16	12 - 11	Accurate and secure throughout.	Rhythmically assured and precise. Accurate pointing in psalms	Tone was well projected across the range with excellent diction.	Performance showed instinctive colour and shape.	Excellent communication and delivery with well-managed breathing.
Good	26 - 24	21 - 19	16 - 14	11 - 10	Occasional slips, but convincing and stable overall.	Rhythmic detail largely very secure, despite occasional lapses. Pointing largely secure	Tone largely secure and confident, despite occasional blemishes and/or issues with diction.	Some colour and tonal variety present, if not fully stylish in musical shape.	Confident delivery achieved, despite occasional lapses in breathing, style or presentation.
Satisfactory but some technical lapses	23 - 20	18 - 16	14 - 12	10 - 8	A broad level of control, but with various lapses in precision.	A broad sense of rhythm, pulse and pointing, but with some errors and/or inaccuracies.	A basic sense of tonal stability, but with more frequent issues with diction and vocal control.	Limited use of colour as yet, but with sufficient variety so as not all delivered at one level.	Some significant lapses in delivery and/or continuity, but sufficient to achieve a basic level.
More significant technical concern	19 - 15	15 - 12	11 - 9	7 - 6	Imprecise pitching and/or significant loss of pitch when unaccompanied.	Some repeated rhythmic insecurity including counting of rests, or pointing errors.	Repeated areas of concern in terms of tonal control and/or diction, including distorted vowel colours.	Insufficient use of colour and shape to add interest and a sense of basic musical understanding.	Repeated areas of concern with musical continuity, breath control or knowledge of the music.
Much more preparation needed	14 - 1	11 - 1	8 - 1	6 - 1	Pitching was not yet sufficiently stable or secure overall.	Rhythmic instability and/or frequent counting/pointing errors.	Major problems with tonal control and/or presentation of the text.		
	0	0	0	0	No work offered				

OTHER SECTIONS - [03 March 2021]

Practical Skills					
Total marks	21 (14)	12 (8)	Sight Reading	Technical Questions	Aural tests
Very Good	21 - 19	12 - 11	Fluent and assured from the outset.	Secure and informed responses.	Secure and confident responses
Good	19 - 17	11 - 10	Occasional errors, but showing improvement.	Largely accurate responses, despite occasional errors.	Largely accurate responses, despite occasional errors.
Some hesitation or mistakes / Mainly responsive	17 - 14	10 - 8	A broad outline of the music was found, but with a variety of errors in either pitch or rhythm.	Successes outweigh errors, but greater technical security needed to be fully convincing.	Successes outweigh errors, but greater aural security needed to be fully convincing.
More significant concern / Gaps in knowledge & understanding	14 - 10	7 - 6	Errors outweigh positives in terms of flow, direction of pitching and rhythmic detail.	Errors outweigh successes and/or hesitant responses.	Errors outweigh successes and/or hesitant responses.
Much more preparation needed	9 - 1	6 - 1	A vague or hesitant response needing significantly more security to be convincing.	Very insecure responses.	Very insecure responses.
	0	0	Not attempted	Not attempted	Not attempted

24 (16)	21 (14)	Choir in Context
24 - 22	21 - 19	Secure and informed responses. No prompting needed. Convincing reading.
21 - 19	19 - 17	Largely accurate responses, despite occasional errors or prompting needed. Occasional reading slips.
18 - 16	17 - 14	Successes outweigh errors, but greater knowledge needed to be fully convincing. A basic flow in reading, but lacking much expression or comprehension.
15 - 12	14 - 10	Errors outweigh successes and/or hesitant responses. A lack of sufficient fluency in reading
11 - 1	9 - 1	Very insecure responses. Reading lacked sufficient coherence.
0	0	Not attempted