



AN INTRODUCTION TO

VOICE *for* LIFE

*A practical guide to the RSCM's acclaimed
choral training scheme – what it is, how it
works, publications and resources*

RS  M

About **VOICE** for **LIFE**

VOICE for **LIFE**

is the RSCM's acclaimed choral education scheme for choirs and singers of all ages, and the people who train them. A vast resource, it offers a clear framework to encourage and develop singing within all types of community. It is delivered by means of a range of teaching and learning materials (print and online), specially created graded repertoire, recordings, accessories and motivational items, and training courses.

The scheme contains a wealth of teaching materials and plenty of advice on the practicalities of running a choir. It is systematic but not rigid. Used well, it facilitates effective choir training and helps singers (and choir trainers) grow both as part of a team and as individuals. Most of the training and assessment arises naturally within the flow of the scheme, as part of music-making.

- There are five levels in *Voice for Life* – White, Light Blue, Dark Blue, Red and Yellow. These provide training for singers of all ages and abilities from beginner to advanced. All singers will work through the same levels, although in some cases experienced singers may not need to start the scheme at the beginning.

Voice for Life is divided into five modules. Each explores a particular aspect of choral singing. Throughout the scheme, singers work on all modules, developing a range of skills simultaneously. The modules are as follows:

- *Module A: Using the voice well* addresses good vocal technique.
- *Module B: Musical skills and understanding* develops singers' knowledge of theory and notation, and encourages them to demonstrate this through sight-reading and aural skills.
- *Module C: Repertoire* helps singers to understand the musical and historical contexts of the music they sing.
- *Module D: Belonging to the choir* explores what it means to be part of a choir, addressing issues such as commitment, punctuality and responsibility.
- *Module E: Choir in context* explores how the choir interacts with its surroundings and the wider community.



'A church or a school without a choir is like a body without a soul. Singing lies at the heart of worship and education. *Voice for Life* has a valuable part to play in giving life and soul to us all as we worship and learn.' John Rutter



How **VOICE** for **LIFE** works

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Voice for Life contains carefully graded targets for each module. The number and complexity of these increases at every level, from 18 targets at White to nearly 50 at Yellow. The targets guide the teaching and learning, and most of the training and preparation is delivered during choir rehearsals. Each time a target is achieved, the choir trainer signs and dates it in the singer's workbook. When all the targets in that workbook are achieved, the singer is ready to move to the next level.

This means that *Voice for Life* is self-contained and delivered within the context of the choir. There is no external registration. Singers are internally assessed by choir trainers, teachers or senior choir members. While it does not rely on external exams, *Voice for Life* integrates perfectly with the RSCM's Awards (see page 7), preparing singers to take formal, independently validated exams if they wish.



Voice for Life is flexible. You will find that the scheme adapts itself to your choir's schedule and habits. Much of it will become part of normal rehearsal time; for example, the vocal exercises can be incorporated as warm-ups at the beginning of choir practice, or to break up a rehearsal.

**'When you enable a child to sing,
you ensure him or her of a gift
for life which can be used, free of
charge, until the last breath.'**

Revd John Bell, Iona Community



- *Voice for Life* allows you and your singers to work in a way that suits you. The targets cover the full range of activities in all the modules, so it is easy to steer
- singers to parts of the scheme that are relevant to them as individuals while still developing your
- choir as a group. So within your choir you may have singers at different *Voice for Life* levels, working towards different targets – but everyone will be gaining a sound musical education with measurable outcomes and real choral benefits.

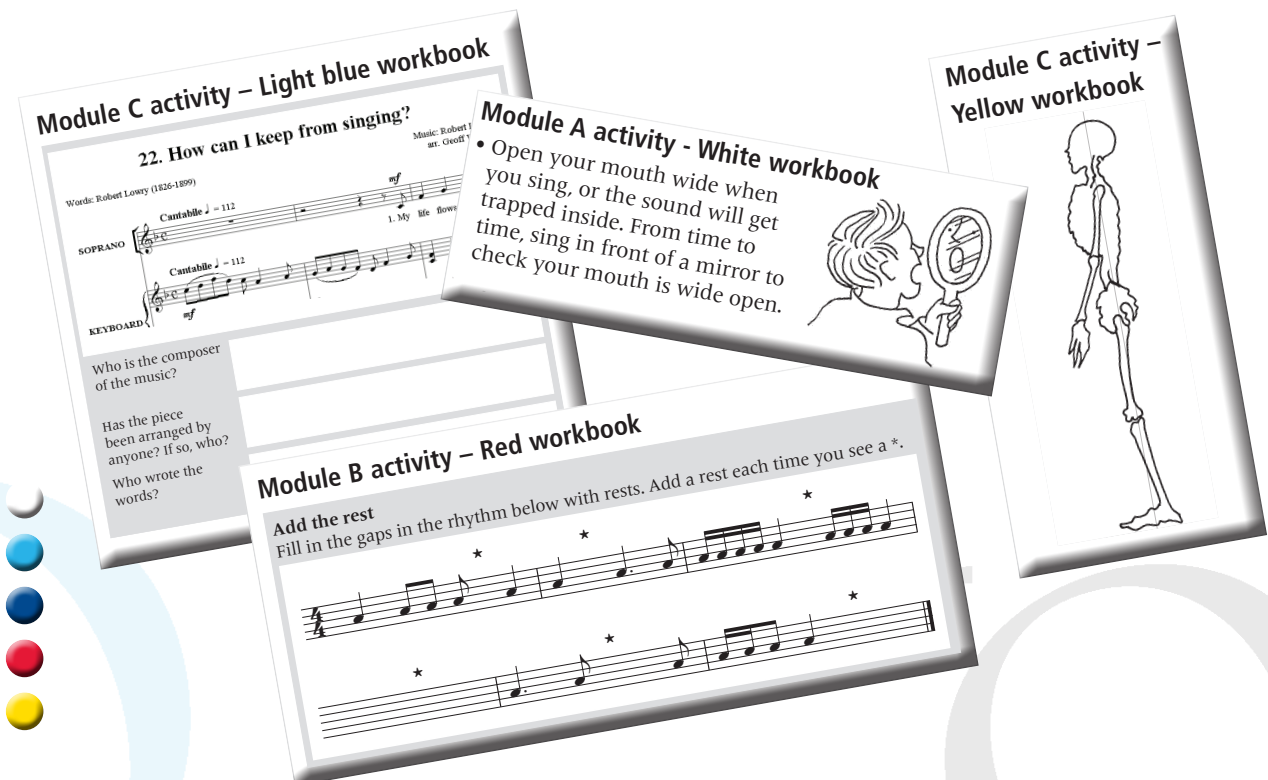


VOICE for LIFE books

For singers

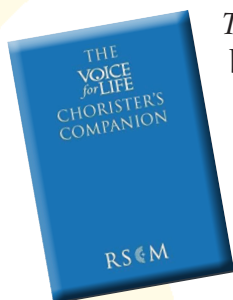
Central to the entire scheme are the five singers' workbooks – one for each level. They address each topic of *Voice for Life* systematically, in terms that users will easily understand. They contain carefully graded materials, including:

- Practical introductions, help and advice about each module
- Practice tips, activities, exercises and projects
- Music reference information
- A target checklist for each module for the choir trainer to sign
- A declaration for the choir trainer to sign when all the targets are met and the level is completed



VOICE for LIFE books

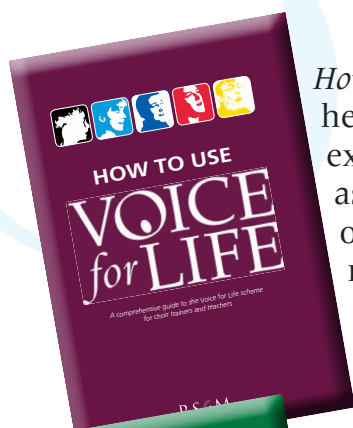
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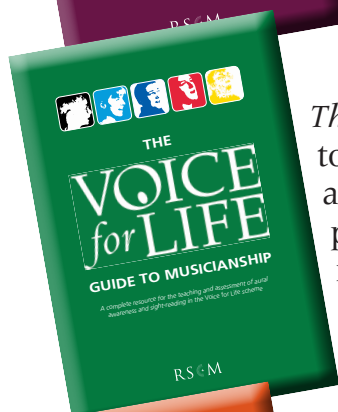
The Voice for Life Chorister's Companion is a handy pocket-sized book that provides everything a chorister needs to know about the routines and practices of church choirs. It exists in two versions – paperback and cloth-bound hardback (the latter is often used by choirs for presentation purposes). Candidates for the RSCM awards (see page 7) will also find plenty to help them prepare for their exams. (Paperback edition: ISBN 978-0-85402-169-7 Hardback edition: ISBN 978-0-85402-182-6)

For choir trainers

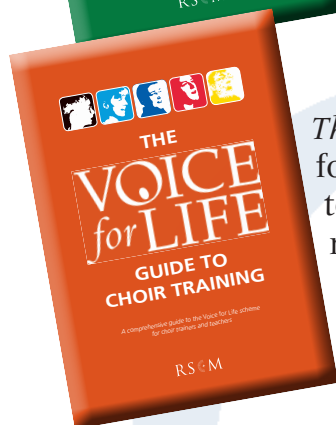
There are three principal *Voice for Life* books for choir trainers, containing vital supplementary information to enhance and enliven the workbooks. They are packed with information about how to deliver the scheme, as well as valuable supplementary resources and advice.



How to use Voice for Life contains everything necessary to help singers get the most out of their *Voice for Life* choral experience. It is both a complete guide to training and assessing singers within the scheme, and a generous source of technical and practical advice for anyone helping choral musicians to reach their full potential. (RSCM F0121; ISBN 978-0-85402-217-5)



The Voice for Life Guide to Musicianship contains all you need to train and assess singers for the musicianship targets at all levels of the scheme, as well as extensive materials to prepare candidates for the aural and sight-reading tests in the RSCM Bronze, Silver and Gold awards (see page 7). (RSCM F0120; ISBN 978-0-85402-216-8)



The Voice for Life Guide to Choir Training is a practical manual for choir trainers and choral practitioners. A complete guide to organising, running and training choirs, it covers a wide range of topics that most choir trainers will encounter at some stage during their careers. (ISBN 978-0-85402-218-2)

VOICE repertoire and for LIFE resources

Repertoire

- The RSCM publishes numerous collections which were specifically created as choral resources within *Voice for Life*. Other publications are suitable for use within the scheme and contain training notes to help you use them to maximum effect. This means that you always have access to carefully selected and graded choral (and solo) materials – repertoire and service books alike – for each ‘colour’ level and also for the RSCM awards (see opposite).



Rewards: certificates, badges, medals and ribbons

The principal record of a singer's progress is the declaration you sign at the back of each workbook. But many choirs also mark singers' achievements in other ways. The RSCM offers a range of badges, medals, ribbons and certificates for all the 'colour' levels of the scheme and the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards too. For details of all available items see www.rscmshop.com/voiceforlife/.



There is an enamel lapel badge for each level, suitable for all singers.

There is a formal certificate for the completion of each level.



For robed choirs, the *Voice for Life* medal (left) can be worn on a ribbon (right) appropriate for the singer's level in the scheme.



VOICE repertoire and for LIFE resources

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Registers and record-books

There are a number of items to help you monitor attendance, progress and standards across your choir. You can use these as a private record, though some choir trainers find that a chart on general display in the rehearsal room is a powerful motivator.



The chart is a large grid with columns for 'Name of chorister', 'Date of birth (if < 18)', 'Date of admission', and 'Voice'. The 'Voice' column is further divided into 'Tenor', 'Bass', 'Soprano', and 'Alto'. The main grid is divided into sections for 'RESPONSIBILITY' (including 'Tenor', 'Bass', 'Soprano', 'Alto', 'Tenor', 'Bass', 'Soprano', 'Alto'), 'OTHER RSCM TRAINING' (including 'RSCM Choir', 'RSCM Choir', 'RSCM Choir', 'RSCM Choir', 'RSCM Choir', 'RSCM Choir', 'RSCM Choir', 'RSCM Choir'), and 'OTHER MUSICAL ACTIVITIES' (including 'Other Musical Activities', 'Other Musical Activities', 'Other Musical Activities', 'Other Musical Activities', 'Other Musical Activities', 'Other Musical Activities', 'Other Musical Activities', 'Other Musical Activities').

The
Voice for Life
General Progress Chart

The RSCM Bronze, Silver and Gold awards

Each level of *Voice for Life* is assessed informally by you, the choir trainer: you award singers their badge and/or ribbon and medal. In order to support you and affirm the *Voice for Life* levels achieved within the choir, the RSCM provides a parallel external system of awards assessed through formal examinations: the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. Each of these has its own syllabus and regulations. These come with guidelines to prepare the candidate and the choir trainer fully for the examinations.

Successful award candidates are entitled to wear a prestigious medal cast in the appropriately coloured metal (bronze, silver or gold) on a distinctive ribbon. Bronze awards are worn with a green ribbon, Silver awards with a purple ribbon and Gold awards with a dark red ribbon.

The medals and ribbons
for the bronze, silver
and gold awards








Voice for Life support and training

The scheme is supported by its own website at www.rscm.com/voiceforlife/ where you will find additional information and helpful links. A number of the RSCM's training courses are specifically based on *Voice for Life* (see www.rscm.com/courses/ for details). The RSCM also provides other training schemes for choir trainers, organists and worship leaders – many of which support the key principles of *Voice for Life* and make use of its resources.

VOICE *for* LIFE


Books for singers:

-  White level ISBN 978 085402 193 2
-  Light Blue level ISBN 978 085402 212 0
-  Dark Blue level ISBN 978 085402 213 7
-  Red level ISBN 978 085402 214 4
-  Yellow level ISBN 978 085402 215 1






The Chorister's Companion

- ISBN 978 085402 169 7 (paperback)
- ISBN 978 085402 182 6 (hardback)





Books for choir trainers and teachers:

-  The *Voice for Life* Guide to Musicianship ISBN 978 085402 216 8
-  How to Use *Voice for Life* ISBN 978 085402 217 5
-  The *Voice for Life* Guide to Choir Training ISBN 978 085402 218 2









Lapel badges (for all choirs):

-  White lapel badge F0017
-  Light Blue lapel badge F0018
-  Dark Blue lapel badge F0019
-  Red lapel badge F0020
-  Yellow lapel badge F0021

Medals and ribbons (for robed choirs):

- The *Voice for Life* medal M0008
-  Light Blue ribbon M0012
-  Dark Blue ribbon M0013
-  Red ribbon M0014
-  Yellow ribbon M0036

Repertoire:

-   *Voice for Life* Songbook 1 ISBN 978 085402 217 9
-   *Voice for Life* Songbook 2 ISBN 978 085402 166 6
-  The Bronze Collection Book One ISBN 978 085402 209 0
-  The Bronze Collection Book Two ISBN 978 085402 240 3
-  The Silver Collection Book One ISBN 978 085402 211 3
-  The Silver Collection Book Two ISBN 978 085402 238 0

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Tel: +44 (0) 1722 424848

education@rscm.com • www.rscm.com/voiceforlife/

To order *Voice for Life* books and resources contact:

RSCM Music Direct

c/o Norwich Books & Music

13a Hellesdon Park Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR6 5DR, England

Tel: +44 (0) 1603 785906

musicdirect@rscm.com • www.rscmshop.com/voice-for-life.html