



## **THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC**

19 The Close  
SALISBURY  
SP1 2EB

### **LINCOLN AREA**

#### **Dean's Chorister (Bronze)**

#### **Awards Syllabus**

##### **Lincoln Awards Secretary**

**Nicholas Pitts**

3 Burtey Fen Lane

Pinchbeck

PE11 3SR

Telephone: 01775 766081

E-mail: [burteyfen@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:burteyfen@yahoo.co.uk)

Entry forms and further copies of this syllabus may be obtained from the Awards Secretary at the above address or downloaded from the website [www.rscmlincoln.co.uk](http://www.rscmlincoln.co.uk)

The fee of £25.00 includes the supply of the medal, ribbon and certificate to successful candidates.

Syllabus Revised January 2007

**THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC**  
**Lincoln Area**  
**Dean's Chorister Award**  
**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

- 1 The award is open to all singers – children and adults. Where an adult is presented for the award, at their choice they may sing either the melody line or their own part where appropriate.
- 2 Candidates for this award, both children and adults, will normally have already made significant progress within the context of their local choir on the *Voice for Life (Dark Blue Level)* or similar scheme and have attended an RSCM day or evening singing course or an RSCM Area Festival.
- 3 Candidates should normally have sung regularly in a church choir for a minimum of 18 months and should have achieved at least a 75% attendance against each church's expected compulsory attendance (including authorised absences)

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- 1 Copies of all music to be sung must be provided for the examiner's use. **The production of illegally photocopied material will result in the cancellation of the examination entry.**
- 2 It is preferable that candidates provide their own accompanist. **If an RSCM accompanist is required, this should be indicated at the time of entry.** After Section A of the examination has been completed, the accompanist should leave the examination room.
- 3 Candidates will be provided with an appropriate room, away from the examination room, in which to warm up prior to the examination. Both the warm-up room and the examination room will be heated if necessary.
- 4 The awards will be examined by a single examiner, who will have been validated by the RSCM.
- 5 The awards are marked out of 100. 60 marks are required for a pass. A mark of at least 75 will be a pass with merit, and a mark of 85 or over will be a pass with distinction.
- 6 **TESTIMONIALS.** The entry form for each candidate for either award should be accompanied by a testimonial signed by the choirtrainer and the incumbent. Should there be no incumbent in the parish (during an interregnum, for example), it may be signed by a Churchwarden.
- 7 The correct fee must be sent with the entry form(s) to the Awards' secretary. Cheques should be made payable to **RSCM Lincoln Area.**

*Exemplar materials for Section B of the award can be found at the back of this syllabus.* In addition, it should be noted that the Lincoln Area organises special training events for candidates considering entering for these awards. Exemplar materials will also be available then.

## APPEALS PROCEDURE

Choirtrainers are asked to understand that, in the interests of preserving the value of the awards to candidates who win them, and to maintain reasonable equivalence to similar awards in other areas, it is necessary to set defined standards for succeeding in these awards. It is unfortunately occasionally the case that a candidate, however well prepared, does not come up to the required level. It should also be remembered that, whilst examiners do their best to put choristers at ease, candidates may occasionally not perform as well as expected 'on the day'.

In entering for an award, the candidate and Choirtrainer are deemed to accept the musical judgement of the examiner.

In exceptional circumstances, appeals may be considered according to the following procedure, which is similar to the practice of the major examining boards.

Appeals must be made in writing to the Awards Secretary by the Choirtrainer who entered the candidate, setting out in detail the grounds on which the appeal is lodged. **Under no circumstances is the examiner to be contacted direct.**

To cover expenses, appeals must be accompanied by a fee of £10 (the cheque to be made payable to **RSCM Lincoln Area**). In the event that the appeal is successful, the fee will be refunded. Appeals must be lodged within seven days of receiving the results. This is to ensure that the circumstances of the examination remain fresh in everyone's memory.

Appeals which question the mark awarded without further justification will not be accepted. Two broad grounds for appeal which may typically be considered are:

- (a) the candidate being expected to do something which is outside the scope of the syllabus, or
- (b) a clear inconsistency between the written comments and the marks awarded.

If an appeal is received, it will be considered by the Awards Secretary, the Area Chairman and the examiner. One of two outcomes will result:

- 1 the mark originally awarded may be confirmed, or
- 2 the candidate may be offered a re-examination with a different examiner at a mutually convenient time. The outcome of any such re-examination will be deemed final.

The Awards Secretary will notify the outcome of the appeal to the Choir Trainer in writing. The target time for resolving appeals is 21 days from the date of receipt.

In the event that the choirtrainer is unhappy with the outcome of the appeal, a final appeal may be made in writing to The Warden, RSCM, 19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EB, setting out in detail the grounds on which the appeal is lodged, no later than seven days after receiving the outcome of the first appeal. After due consultation, and not later than one further month, a response will be issued by the Warden, whose decision is final. If the appeal is successful, a re-examination or alternatively a full refund of the entry fee will be offered.

Appeals will be considered only for candidates who have failed. No appeal will be considered regarding the level of mark awarded to a candidate who has passed.

# Dean's Chorister Award (Bronze Level)

## Syllabus

(Applies from Jan 2007 until further notice)

### Section A – Using the Voice Well

#### 1. HYMN SINGING

**Maximum 15 marks (9 to pass)**

Candidates should sing three verses from a chosen prepared hymn (of four-line verses). The second verse should be sung unaccompanied.

#### 2. PSALM SINGING

**Maximum 15 marks (9 to pass)**

Candidates are required to sing:

**Either:** Eight consecutive verses (excluding the Gloria) of the melody (or their own voice part) from a psalm to **either** Anglican chant **or** plainsong.

**Or:** The whole setting of a responsorial psalm (including refrain).

#### 3. PREPARED ITEM

**Maximum 20 marks (12 to pass)**

Candidates are required to prepare the melody (or their own voice part) of one item from the following list:

- Attwood Turn thy face from my sins\*
- Elgar Ave verum corpus\*
- How Day by day\*
- Hurford Litany to the Holy Spirit
- Mozart Ave verum corpus
- Ogden The Fruits of the land
- Shephard Sing choirs of heaven\*
- Tye O come ye servants of the Lord

\* these items may be sung from the *RSCM Bronze Collection* (order ref D0091). Any other item from this Collection may, alternatively, be presented for this test.

Copies of all music required may be readily purchased from RSCM Music Direct,  
0845 021 7726 E [musicdirect@rscm.com](mailto:musicdirect@rscm.com) W [www.rscm.com/shop](http://www.rscm.com/shop)

## **Section B – Musical Skills and Understanding**

### **1. QUICKNESS OF LEARNING**

**Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)**

Some unfamiliar music will be given to the candidate and played through once. The candidate will then be required to sing the item with some keyboard support

### **2.& 3. FURTHER QUESTIONS AND AURAL TESTS**

**Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)**

Using the prepared item (Section A - No.3) as a starting point, questions will be asked to ascertain candidates' knowledge of:

- Notes of the treble or bass stave (at the candidates choice)
- Time values of notes and rests.
- Time signatures (simple time)
- Key signatures of major keys, up to three sharps or flats
- Simple Italian musical terms

Candidates will then be expected to:

1. Clap the rhythm pattern of a 2-bar phrase played twice. The pulse will first be indicated.
2. Sing (as an echo and in strict time) three simple 2-bar phrases, each heard only once. The key chord and the tonic will be sounded, and the pulse indicated, before the excerpt begins.
3. Identify the following intervals each heard not more than twice (both notes played simultaneously): major and minor 3rd, perfect 4th and 5th. The candidate will be asked to sing the lower note, then the higher note, and then to name the interval. Two or three examples will be given, within the candidate's vocal range.

## Section C

### REPERTOIRE

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates will be asked questions about their prepared item (Section A - No.3). Possible topics for discussion will include:

1. Text and music (origin, style, meaning, how the music reflects the text)
2. Context (historical, musical, liturgical where relevant)

Typical questions on repertoire at Bronze standard would be:

“Describe the mood of this piece, and say generally how the text is reflected in the music.”

“When was the text (*or*, the music) written, and by whom?”

“In what season of the Church’s year might this piece suitably be sung?”

“In which part of your Sunday morning service might this piece be sung?”

“Name another piece, or a hymn or song, that your choir might sing at the same season or occasion.”

## Section D

### CHOIR IN CONTEXT

Maximum 20 marks (12 to pass)

#### 1. Bible

Referring back to their prepared psalm, candidates will be asked to say what mood is expressed in the words (joyful, sorrowful, praise, thanksgiving, etc.), giving reasons for their answers.

#### 2. Liturgy

- a) Candidates will be asked to describe the sung parts of the form of Sunday service (morning or evening, at their choice) with which they are familiar. They may bring, and refer to, a service book or card.
- b) Candidates should choose one major festival of the Church’s year (e.g., Christmas, Passiontide, Easter, Pentecost). They will be asked: to show knowledge of the Bible story which the festival celebrates; to name a psalm, hymn or worship song which they consider helps to explain the significance of the festival, and to say what makes it appropriate; and to name, and show knowledge of, a suitable anthem for the festival. (*Candidates should bring two copies of each of their chosen pieces.*)

#### 3. Ministry

Candidates will be asked to describe what motivates and inspires them as singers in a Church choir. They should show some awareness of their own responsibilities as choir members in the services they sing.

*Candidates are not expected to perform any examples in Section D. Their understanding of issues raised in this section may vary greatly according to age and experience, and answers may be expressed in simple terms and language. Examiners will keep in mind that this is a first award.*

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## APPENDIX

### Assessment Criteria for Dean’s Chorister Award (Bronze Level)

<b>Section A – Using the Voice well</b>	
The performance of each piece will be assessed on the following:	
<b>1. Posture and presentation</b>	
<p><i>Good candidates will:</i> Stand and hold their music well throughout the examination.</p>	<p><i>Poor candidates may:</i> Bury their head in their music and sing into their copy. Slouch, tap their feet or fidget as they sing.</p>
<b>2. Vocal technique: breath management, tone, diction, range</b>	
<p><i>Good candidates will:</i> 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.</p>	<p><i>Poor candidates may:</i> 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.</p>
<b>3. General musicianship: accuracy, expression, sensitivity</b>	
<p><i>Good candidates will:</i> Sing notes and rhythms accurately and with good intonation. Be able to keep a steady pulse. Demonstrate a good dynamic range and an understanding of phrasing and articulation. Show an appreciation of musical style appropriate to the piece being sung. Be able to convey the mood of the music and reflect the meaning of the text. Sing confidently and with great sensitivity.</p>	<p><i>Poor candidates may:</i> Sing frequently out of tune. Make a large number of errors of pitch and rhythm. Have a tendency either to rush or to slow down without good musical reason. Reveal little awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation. Sing with little regard for the mood or musical style of the piece. Falter and appear to lack confidence.</p>

## Section B – Musical Skills and Understanding

### 1. Musical skills

<p><i>Good candidates will:</i></p> <p>Sight-read fluently with a high proportion of the notes correct and sung in tune.</p> <p>Maintain the tempo and rhythm even when mistakes are made.</p> <p>Show an awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.</p> <p>Sound confident and sing with conviction even when wrong.</p> <p>Maintain good tone.</p> <p>Breathe in appropriate places.</p> <p>Be accurate in aural tests, with all sung responses in tune and clapped responses rhythmic and steady.</p>	<p><i>Poor candidates may:</i></p> <p>Make a large number of rhythmic and pitching errors in sight-reading tests.</p> <p>Falter and stumble, disregarding the tempo and rhythm.</p> <p>Show little awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.</p> <p>Stop when a mistake is made.</p> <p>Sing with poor tone and breathe inappropriately.</p> <p>Be highly inaccurate in aural tests with responses out of tune or rhythmically weak.</p>
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### 2. Musical understanding

Musical understanding will be assessed not only through the “further questions” indicated above, but throughout each candidate’s performance.

<p><i>Good candidates will:</i></p> <p>Demonstrate their knowledge of notation and theory by singing their repertoire and performing quickness of learning and aural tests with a high degree of accuracy.</p> <p>Observe common Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be able to explain what they mean if asked.</p> <p>Demonstrate their understanding of intervals in the aural tests and be able to identify them if asked.</p>	<p><i>Poor candidates may:</i></p> <p>Demonstrate a poor understanding of notation and theory by making a large number of errors when they sing their repertoire and perform sight-reading and aural tests.</p> <p>Fail to observe Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be unable to explain them if asked.</p> <p>Make mistakes in pitching intervals and be unable to identify intervals in aural tests.</p>
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## Section C - Repertoire

<p><i>Good candidates will:</i></p> <p>Be able to talk knowledgeably about the music they sing with regard to the period in which it was written, the features of the musical style, and the origins and the meaning of the text.</p>	<p><i>Poor candidates may:</i></p> <p>Be unable to demonstrate their knowledge of the music they sing beyond what is on the page.</p>
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## Section D – Choir in Context

<p><i>Good candidates will:</i></p> <p>Give thoughtful answers to questions on their role and that of the choir.</p> <p>Demonstrate an awareness of the significance of musical ministry within a church or community.</p> <p>Be able to give examples of music suitable for specific occasions or seasons.</p> <p>Have some knowledge of the major seasons in the Church’s year (e.g., Advent, Eastertide) and understand the pattern and format of services in their church.</p>	<p><i>Poor candidates may:</i></p> <p>Appear not to have considered their role in the choir.</p> <p>Demonstrate a poor awareness of musical ministry within a church or community.</p> <p>Be unable to make suitable repertoire suggestions for their chosen occasions or seasons.</p> <p>Be unable to answer simple questions on the Church’s year or the format of services.</p>
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