

SALISBURY DIOCESAN CHORAL FESTIVAL GROUP



Syllabi, Guidance Notes & Entry Forms for the Dean's & Bishop's Awards to Choristers

Validated by the RSCM

2009 onwards

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION TO THE AWARDS.....	3
EXAMINATIONS, ENQUIRIES & ENTRIES.....	3
STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS	4
THE DEAN'S AWARD.....	4
Syllabus.....	4
Guidance Notes.....	7
Entry Form.....	10
THE BISHOP'S AWARD.....	11
Syllabus.....	11
Guidance Notes	13
Entry Form.....	17

Revisions made in this version of the syllabi and notes are indicated by the use of vertical bars in the paragraph margins.

There are also some changes to the entry forms – please ensure candidates are entered using the form from this book.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AWARDS

The Dean's and Bishop's awards are designed to encourage choristers to achieve a high standard of singing and musicianship. The Dean's and Bishop's awards integrate with the training used by choirs that use the RSCM *Voice for Life* scheme. The Dean's award is a requirement for those wishing to proceed to the Bishop's Award, and the Bishop's Award is a requirement for those wishing to proceed to the RSCM Gold award. The *Voice for Life* scheme enables singers to develop their musical skills and understanding within the context of their choir. The awards have been validated by the RSCM – the Dean's award at Bronze standard and the Bishop's Award at Silver standard. The *Voice for Life* scheme provides opportunities for the singer's development to be affirmed beyond their own church, through the Diocesan Awards and the RSCM's regional network.

Successful candidates are entitled to wear the Dean's Award medallion or the Bishop's Award medallion as appropriate to their award. Candidates from churches that are not part of Salisbury Diocese may wish to wear the RSCM Bronze Award medallion with green ribbon (equivalent to the Dean's Award) or the RSCM Silver Award medallion with purple ribbon (equivalent to the Bishop's Award).

The awards are open to choristers of all ages and denominations who are members or either Anglican Churches in the Diocese of Salisbury or choirs affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music (Wessex Area), and the syllabi have been carefully compiled with this in mind.

EXAMINATIONS, ENQUIRIES & ENTRIES

These syllabi are valid for examinations from 1 January 2008 until further notice.

Details of any changes to the syllabi, examination dates and associated entry closing dates, entry fees, medallion costs and the contact details for the Awards Secretary will be posted on the Diocesan Website at <http://www.salisburyanglican.org.uk/existing/showpage.asp?page=302> (or go to the diocesan website, www.salisbury.anglican.org select 'Diocesan Support' and follow the links to Music, Salisbury Diocesan Choral Festival Group and Awards) and, if possible, announced in the Diocesan Newspaper (Sarum Link).

Entries must be submitted to the Awards Secretary by the specified closing date.

Examinations will be held regularly. Successful candidates who so wish will be presented formally with their medallion and ribbon at the Diocesan Choirs Festival held at the Cathedral (normally in June), but may receive it in their own church and wear it as soon as possible after the examination results are known.

The Awards Secretary will be pleased to answer any enquiries

EXAMINATION CONDITIONS FOR BOTH AWARDS

1. There is no age limit on candidates for these awards.
2. There will be two examiners, normally both will be RSCM-validated.
3. The examination will take around 25 minutes (Dean's Award) or 30 minutes (Bishop's Award), with the time allocated to each section approximately in proportion to the marks available.
4. One examiner will act as accompanist. ***The music provided for the accompanist must include the accompaniment the candidate expects (i.e. not a melody line hymn book) and must be in the key the candidate wishes to perform in, the accompanist will not transpose the accompaniment.***
5. Candidates will be given somewhere to warm up before the examination.
6. Copies of all prepared pieces, the items selected in *Section E* and any other relevant materials should be provided for both the examiners. [Candidates should bring 3 copies of all music]
7. The use of illegal photocopies will automatically disqualify a candidate. (See notes on pp 7 & 13)
8. Entry fee cheques should be made payable to "Salisbury Diocesan Choral Festival Group" and sent with the entry form.
9. The Salisbury Diocesan Choral Festival Group (SDCFG) reserves the right to refuse an examination entry without stating a reason. In such cases, the examination fee will be refunded in full.

10. In the event of non-attendance at an examination, through illness or emergency, a letter of explanation must be sent immediately to the Awards Secretary. A refund, or credit slip for future entry, of up to 50% of the examination fee, may be issued at the discretion of the SDCFG.
11. On completing the entry form, candidates (and their representatives and trainers) are deemed to be accepting the entry conditions, and the examiner's musical judgements.
12. The result of the examination will be sent to the candidate (or representative, as indicated) by post, usually within two weeks of the examination. Examiners will not divulge results at the time of the examination.
13. Any appeal, concerning either the conduct or the outcome of the examination, must be made in writing to the Awards Secretary, setting out in detail the grounds on which the appeal is lodged, no later than seven days after receiving the result. The examiner is not to be contacted directly. After due consultation, and not later than one month after receipt of the appeal, a response will be issued by the Awards Secretary, this decision is final. If the appeal is successful, a re-examination or alternatively a full refund of the entry fee, will be offered.

STRUCTURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MARKS

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

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

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

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

THE DEAN'S AWARD

SYLLABUS

PRE-REQUISITES

Candidates presented for this award should normally:

1. Have been regular members of their choir for at least two years (transfer will be acceptable if clearly documented).
2. Have completed *Voice for Life* to the Dark Blue level or undertaken training to an equivalent standard.
3. Submit, with their application, written testimonials from their choir trainer and vicar/minister/head teacher/director of music, confirming their commitment to the choir and general musical competence. (This corresponds to *Section D* mentioned above.)

SECTION A USING THE VOICE WELL

1. Hymn Singing

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates should sing three verses of their choice (melody or their own voice part) from a prepared hymn. The second verse should be sung unaccompanied.

2. Psalm Singing

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates should prepare and sing:

- either (a) chanted psalmody (melody or their own voice part), to music of their own choice.
This will be ten consecutive verses (which may include the Gloria) and which may be part of a longer psalm or canticle sung to Anglican chant, a plainsong tone or a monastic tone
- or (b) the whole of a responsorial psalm
- or (c) the whole of one of the following Psalm Songs, chosen from *RSCM Music for Common Worship 1*:
O God, you search me and you know me (Farrell) pp.396-7
O Lord, be my help (Ogden) pp.398-9
Sing to God with joy and gladness (Bell) pp. 400-1.

Marks awarded will take account of the accuracy of the performance, but equal weight will be given to interpretation and musicality.

3. Own Choice items

Maximum 30 marks (18 to pass)

Candidates should, after consultation with their choir trainer, prepare two items that they have already performed or might potentially perform in their own choir.

- The two items should be in contrasting styles.
- One item should demonstrate the candidate's ability to hold an independent vocal line.
- In music which would normally be performed unaccompanied the examiner will only play the parts **not** being sung by the candidate.
- Examiners may ask for all or part of the item.
- Candidates who normally sing Alto, Tenor or Bass may perform the melody or their own voice part. (If they choose to sing the melody, altos and basses may use a transposed edition to suit their vocal range.)
- Marks awarded will take account of the level of difficulty of the music, but more weight will be given to interpretation and musicality.

Indicative Repertoire

The following list of examples is not intended to be prescriptive, but gives an indication of the required standard:

<i>Come Holy Ghost</i> (Attwood)	<i>Steal Away</i> (arr. Weaver), in <i>Songs for Life 1</i>
<i>Praise O praise our God and King</i> (How)	<i>Sing choirs of heaven</i> (Shephard)
<i>Thou knowest, Lord</i> (Purcell)	<i>Day by Day</i> (How)
<i>A Gaelic Blessing</i> (Rutter)	<i>Litany to the Holy Spirit</i> (Hurford)
Any item from the <i>RSCM Bronze Collection</i>	

Throughout the above tests, the examiners will be looking for:

- a) Good unforced quality of tone with consistent control
- b) Good posture
- c) Good breath control with the ability to sustain to the end of a phrase
- d) Clear diction including good open vowel sounds
- e) Accurate intonation
- f) Rhythmic accuracy
- g) Some dynamic contrast
- h) Evidence of comprehension of the text and mood of the piece.

All of the above should produce a *sensitive* and *musical* performance.

SECTION B MUSICAL SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING

1. Sight-reading

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates will be asked:

- a) To clap (or sing on one note) from sight, and unaccompanied, a simple rhythm in simple time, which may include dotted notes. A second attempt will be allowed if necessary.
- b) To sing at sight and accompanied, a short melody (of about 10 notes), in a key of up to three sharps or flats, to a vowel or solfa (at the candidate's choice). The key chord and first note will be given. A second attempt will be allowed.

2. Aural tests & Further questions

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates will be expected to:

- a) Clap the rhythm pattern of a 2-bar phrase played twice, the pulse first being indicated.
- b) 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.
- c) 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 name the interval. Two or three examples will be given, within the candidates vocal range.

Using the prepared items as a starting point, questions will be asked to ascertain candidates' knowledge of:

- a) Notes of *either* the treble *or* bass stave, at the candidate's choice
- b) Time values of notes
- c) Time signatures (simple time)
- d) Key signatures (up to three sharps and three flats)
- e) Simple Italian musical terms

SECTION C REPERTOIRE

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates will be asked straightforward questions on their understanding of their prepared pieces. Answers may be expressed in language appropriate to their age and experience. The topics will be selected from:

- a) Text and music (origin, style, meaning, how the music reflects the text).
- b) Context (historical, musical, liturgical and seasonal).

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 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 award. The written testimonials, submitted with the application must confirm the candidate's commitment to the choir.

1. Bible

Referring back to their prepared psalm, candidates will be asked to describe what kind of prayer it is (joyful, sorrowful, praise, thanksgiving, &c.) and why.

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 are not expected to sing this item**) The selected festival should be indicated on the entry form.

3. Ministry

Candidates will be asked to describe what motivates and inspires them as singers in a Church choir.

GUIDANCE NOTES

PRE-REQUISITES

1. If candidates have not been regular members of their choir for at least two years or they have transferred from another choir and it is difficult to document the length of their service please consult the Awards Secretary well in advance of the closing date.
2. It is the responsibility of the choir trainer to ensure that candidates are prepared to the standards required for *Voice for Life* – Dark Blue level.
3. The two testimonials must be submitted with the entry form
4. Some music can be legally copied for this examination, those preparing candidates are advised to consult the notice regarding copying on the website.

SECTION A USING THE VOICE WELL

Choir trainers, please ensure that your candidates are fully prepared and receive no surprises during their examination, for example being unaware of the requirement to sing a verse of the hymn unaccompanied.

The performance of each piece will be assessed on the following:

1. Posture and presentation

Good candidates will:

- Stand and hold their music well throughout the examination.

Poor candidates might:

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

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

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

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

3. General musicianship: accuracy, expression, sensitivity

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

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

SECTION B MUSICAL SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING

I. Musical skills

Good candidates will:

- Show an awareness of dynamics, phrasing and articulation.
- 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.
- Sound confident and sing with conviction even when wrong.
- Maintain good tone.
- Breathe in appropriate places.
- Be accurate in aural tests, with all sung responses in tune and clapped responses rhythmic and steady.

Poor candidates might:

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

2. Musical understanding

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

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

- 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.
- Fail to observe Italian terms, musical symbols and dynamic markings and be unable to explain them if asked.
- Make mistakes in pitching intervals and be unable to identify intervals or triads in aural tests.

SECTION C *REPERTOIRE*

*All singers on the **Voice for Life** scheme are expected to develop their knowledge and understanding of the repertoire. The **Voice for Life Choir Trainer's Book** (RSCM order no: F0100) provides helpful training material for this section of the examination.*

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

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

SECTION E *CHOIR IN CONTEXT*

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

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

SALISBURY DIOCESAN CHORAL FESTIVAL GROUP

DEAN'S AWARD TO CHORISTERS

ENTRY FORM

Please complete and return to The Awards Secretary, Salisbury Diocesan Choral Festival Group
(contact details from www.salisbury.anglican.org/sdcfg)

CANDIDATE'S NAME.....

VOICE PARTTreble/Soprano/Alto/Tenor/Bass/Unison singer (please delete as appropriate)

ENTERED BY.....

Age group: (date of birth if under 25): ____/____/____ 25-45 46-60 over 60

CHOIR.....

POSITION IN CHOIR.....

DATE JOINED CHOIR.....

PREVIOUS CHOIR (Give name of choir and date of entry if less than 2 years in present choir)

.....

Music to be performed:Hymn

Psalm or Canticle

Anglican / Plainsong / Monastic / Responsorial / Song
(please delete as appropriate)

Own Choice 1

Own Choice 2

Selected Festival for Section E

Has the candidate attended an RSCM or other training course? YES/NO

If so, please give details:

I enclose the testimonial from the choir trainer, the testimonial from the parish priest, headteacher or other responsible person: and the entry fee (cheque payable to 'Salisbury Diocesan Choral Festival Group')

Does the candidate have any special needs that the examiner's and organisers should be aware of?

.....

NAME & ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

(This should normally be the Choir Trainer)

.....

.....

POSTCODE..... PHONE

Email

THE BISHOP'S AWARD

SYLLABUS

PRE-REQUISITES

Candidates presented for this award should normally:

1. Have been regular members of their choir for at least three years (transfer will be acceptable if clearly documented).
2. Have completed *Voice for Life* to the Red level or undertaken training to an equivalent standard.
3. Have been awarded the Dean's award or RSCM equivalent (i.e., any RSCM Bronze standard singing award) or other equivalent award.
4. Submit, with their application, written testimonials from their choir trainer and vicar/minister/head teacher/director of music, confirming their commitment to the choir and general musical competence. (This corresponds to *Section D* mentioned above.)

SECTION A USING THE VOICE WELL

1. Hymn Singing

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates should sing three verses of their choice (singing their own voice part) from a prepared hymn. The second verse should be sung unaccompanied. The tune must be a tune more than four lines long.

2. Psalm Singing

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates should prepare and sing:

- either (a) chanted psalmody (melody or their own voice part), to music of their own choice. This will be ten consecutive verses (which may include the Gloria) and which may be part of a longer psalm or canticle sung to Anglican chant, a plainsong tone or a monastic tone
- or (b) the whole of a responsorial psalm

Candidates must select a portion of their psalmody to sing unaccompanied in (a) this must be a minimum of two verses and in (b) a minimum of one verse and response.

Marks awarded will take account of the accuracy of the performance, but equal weight will be given to interpretation and musicality.

4. Own Choice items

Maximum 30 marks (18 to pass)

Candidates should, after consultation with their choir trainer, prepare two items that they have already performed or might potentially perform in their own choir.

- The two items should be in contrasting styles.
- One item should demonstrate the candidate's ability to hold an independent vocal line.
- In music which would normally be performed unaccompanied the examiner will only play the parts **not** being sung by the candidate.
- Examiners may ask for all or part of the item.
- Candidates who normally sing Alto, Tenor or Bass must perform their own voice part.
- Marks awarded will take account of the level of difficulty of the music, but more weight will be given to interpretation and musicality.

Indicative Repertoire

The following list of examples is not intended to be prescriptive, but gives an indication of the required standard:

Cantate Domino (Pitoni)

By and by (arr. Weaver), in *Songs for Life I*

O thou the central orb (Wood)

O Lord, the maker (Joubert)

All things bright and beautiful (Rutter)

The great southland (Bullock, arr. Weaver), in *Songs for Life I*

Any item from the *RSCM Silver Collection*

Marks awarded will take account of the level of difficulty of the music, but more weight will be given to interpretation and musicality.

Throughout the above tests, the examiner will be looking for:

- a) Good unforced quality of tone with consistent control
- b) Good posture
- c) Good breath control with the ability to sustain to the end of a phrase
- d) Clear diction including good open vowel sounds
- e) Accurate intonation
- f) Rhythmic accuracy
- g) Good expressive and dynamic contrasts
- h) Evidence of comprehension of the text and mood of the piece

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

SECTION B MUSICAL SKILLS AND UNDERSTANDING

1. Sight-reading

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates will be asked to sing at sight, and accompanied, part of a simple anthem or song, choosing a suitable tempo and giving careful attention to dynamics, phrasing and articulation. (The piece may be in any key up to five sharps or flats, any simple or compound time signature, and may include ties and dotted notes.) The key chord and starting note will be given. Two attempts will be allowed.

2. Aural tests & Further questions

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates will be expected to:

- a) Clap the rhythm pattern of a two-bar phrase played twice, the pulse first being indicated.
- b) Sing back as an echo a short phrase which the examiner has played twice. The key chord and the tonic will be sounded, and the pulse indicated, before the excerpt begins.
- c) Sing, as requested, the middle or lowest note of a triad, which will be played twice, and identify the triad as major or minor. The triad will be in close position in any inversion.
- d) Sing the following intervals above a given key note: major or minor 3rd, major or minor 6th, perfect 4th or 5th. Two or three examples will be required, within the candidate's vocal range.

Using the prepared item as a starting point, questions will be asked to ascertain the candidates' knowledge of:

- a) Notes of the treble and bass clef (including leger lines).
- b) Time values of notes and rests including tied and dotted notes.
- c) Time signatures (simple and compound time).
- d) Key signatures (up to five sharps or flats).
- e) Commonly used Italian terms and musical symbols.

SECTION C REPERTOIRE

Maximum 10 marks (6 to pass)

Candidates will be asked questions, appropriate to their age or experience, on their prepared pieces. The topics for discussion will include:

- a) Text and music (origin, style, meaning, how the music reflects the text).
- b) Context (historical, musical, liturgical where relevant, other music written in this genre/period).

In addition to the typical questions given above for the Dean's Award, questions for the Bishop's Award might be:

- "Give an example where the music of your piece varies to reflect the meaning of the text."
- "In which musical period did this composer live?"
- "Name a piece written around the same time, by a different composer, and say whether it is similar."

2. Understanding of a contrasted anthem

Candidates should give the examiner a short spoken account of a chosen, contrasted, piece (following the outline given in the *RSCM Red Voice for Life* book). (They may bring, and refer to, their outline or other notes they have made on the piece). The examiner will then ask one straightforward question about the music or its background.

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 award. The written testimonials, submitted with the application must confirm the candidate's commitment to the choir.

SECTION E CHOIR IN CONTEXT

Maximum 20 marks (12 to pass)

1. Bible

Candidates should show their knowledge, and be prepared to discuss the biblical origins, of two of these texts, as selected by the examiner (all six must be prepared):

- *Our Father, Holy Holy Holy, Glory to God, Lamb of God, Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis.*

2. Liturgy

- Candidates will be asked to describe the structure, and main sung parts, of the form of morning or evening prayer or eucharist (or similar service) with which they are familiar. They may bring, and refer to, a service book or card.
- Candidates should choose beforehand one hymn, anthem or worship song suitable for one season (e.g., Advent) or festival (e.g., Christ the King) celebrated in their church. Candidates will be asked to explain the significance of their choice and of the festival or season chosen and relate them to appropriate bible reading. (**Candidates are not expected to sing this item**) The selected season or festival should be indicated on the entry form.
- The examiners will ask straightforward questions on the meaning and significance of any two further seasons or festivals, and ask the candidate for a choice of a suitable piece of music which might be sung (by choir or congregation) during each season or festival

3. Ministry

Candidates will be asked to explain, with reference to a chosen piece of music, how music helps people to pray. They should prepare comments on both the music and the words, and are encouraged to show awareness of the choir or singing group's contribution to the worshipping life of their church or chapel. (*Candidates should bring two copies of their chosen piece.*)

Candidates are not expected to perform any examples in Section E, but they may refer to their copies of the chosen music. Their understanding of issues raised in this section may vary according to age and experience, and answers may be expressed in straightforward language.

GUIDANCE NOTES

PRE-REQUISITES

- If candidates have not been regular members of their choir for at least three years or they have transferred from another choir and it is difficult to document the length of their service please consult the Awards Secretary well in advance of the closing date.

2. It is the responsibility of the choir trainer to ensure that candidates are prepared to the standards required for *Voice for Life* – Red level.
3. If the candidate has not previously received an award validated by the RSCM at Bronze level then the Awards Secretary should be consulted well in advance of the closing date to confirm the eligibility of the candidate to enter the award examination.
4. The two testimonials must be submitted with the entry form
5. Some music can be legally copied for this examination, those preparing candidates are advised to consult the notice regarding copying on the website.

SECTION A USING THE VOICE WELL

Choir trainers, please ensure that your candidates are fully prepared and receive no surprises during their examination, for example being unaware of the requirement to sing some verses of their psalm and hymn unaccompanied.

The performance of each piece will be assessed on the following:

1. Posture & presentation

Good candidates will:

- Stand and hold their music well throughout the examination.

Poor candidates might:

- 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 might:

- 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 might:

- 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 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

I. Musical skills

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

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

2. Musical understanding

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

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

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

SECTION C REPERTOIRE

All singers on the **Voice for Life** scheme are expected to develop their knowledge and understanding of the repertoire. The **Voice for Life Choir Trainer's Book** (RSCM order no: F0100) provides helpful training material for this section of the examination.

Good candidates will:

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

Poor candidates might:

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

SECTION E CHOIR IN CONTEXT

Good candidates will:

- Give thoughtful answers to questions on their role and that of the choir.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the significance of musical ministry within a church or community.
- 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 church.

Poor candidates might:

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

SALISBURY DIOCESAN CHORAL FESTIVAL GROUP

BISHOP'S AWARD TO CHORISTERS

ENTRY FORM

Please complete and return to The Awards Secretary, Salisbury Diocesan Choral Festival Group
(contact details from www.salisbury.anglican.org/sdcfg)

CANDIDATE'S NAME.....

VOICE PARTTreble/Soprano/Alto/Tenor/Bass (please delete as appropriate)

ENTERED BY.....

Age group: (date of birth if under 25): ____/____/____ 25-45 46-60 over 60

CHOIR.....

POSITION IN CHOIR.....

DATE JOINED CHOIR.....

PREVIOUS CHOIR (Give name of choir and date of entry if less than 3 years in present choir)

.....

DATE OF PASSING DEAN'S (Bronze) AWARD.....

Details of other award (if not Diocese of Salisbury Dean's Award)

Music to be performed:

Hymn

Psalm

Anglican / Plainsong / Monastic / Responsorial

(please delete as appropriate)

Own Choice 1

Own Choice 2

Selected Season or Festival for Section E

Has the candidate attended an RSCM or other training course? YES/NO

If so, please give details:

I enclose the testimonial from the choir trainer, the testimonial from the parish priest, headteacher or other responsible person and the entry fee (cheque payable to 'Salisbury Diocesan Choral Festival Group')

Does the candidate have any special needs that the examiner's and organisers should be aware of?

.....

NAME & ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

(This should normally be the Choir Trainer)

.....

.....

POSTCODE..... PHONE

Email