

CHORAL SINGING SYLLABUS

(a) This syllabus is designed to support and motivate the choral activity of a wide range of choirs, giving a sense of progression and achievement from the earliest levels. As with all our assessments, the performance is heard by one of our ABRSM examiners – all highly qualified, experienced musicians. Whether you're a choral member, teacher or director, we hope this syllabus inspires and supports your music learning or teaching.

(b) There is a special entry form for Choral Singing, containing further information about submitting entries and making arrangements for these exams. The form is available online at www.abrsm.org/choralsingingentry, from Representatives or from ABRSM's office in London.

(c) Choral Singing exams are available in the UK and Republic of Ireland (ROI) and in a limited number of other countries. They are held at premises provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner in accordance with the regulations and requirements for Visits (see Reg. 7 in ABRSM's *Exam Regulations*, available at www.abrsm.org/examregulations). They may either be held independently of other exams or as part of a larger exam entry that includes other subjects/grades. An examiner attendance fee is payable in addition to the entry fee if the examiner is attending purely for Choral Singing exams and the total examining time is less than 3 hours. Details of examiner attendance and entry fees are available online at www.abrsm.org/datesandfees.

(d) **UK and ROI:** Exams can take place on any day except Sundays and Bank Holidays. Information about closing dates for entries is given in the Choral Singing entry form, and at www.abrsm.org/datesandfees. The Applicant is asked to specify three preferred exam dates/times and ABRSM then books an examiner, taking these preferences into account wherever possible. **Other countries:** Exams may be scheduled to take place on any day during the Practical exam period(s). Information about exam periods and closing dates for entries is given at www.abrsm.org/datesandfees. The Applicant may make a request on the entry form concerning the days and times of the exam(s), but ABRSM cannot guarantee that any such preferences can be met.

(e) There are three levels of exam:

Initial: For choirs who have reached the standard approximately equivalent to that required for solo singing in Grades 1–3

Intermediate: For choirs who have reached the standard approximately equivalent to that required for solo singing in Grades 4–5

Advanced: For choirs who have reached the standard approximately equivalent to that required for solo singing in Grades 6–8.

All choirs must comprise more than one voice to a part. The minimum number of parts, as well as requirements on performing from memory and unaccompanied items, are specified on pages 3–5.

(f) The exam should last up to 20 minutes for Initial level, 22 minutes for Intermediate level and 25 minutes for Advanced level. These timings include 5 minutes' platform time which is allowed for each choir for setting up, and approximately 5 minutes which is allowed for the performance of the initial vocal exercises.

(g) The preliminary vocal exercises at each level should be presented as an informal working session to help put the choir at their ease and as a preparation for the performance to follow. They should consist of typical examples of the warm-up exercises used by the choir, similar to the suggested examples given on pages 6 and 7.

(h) All choirs are expected to sing a programme of at least three items, contrasting in style and tempo and following the specifications set for each level, chosen either from the suggested list of works (given as a guideline to expected standards) or from any other works, published or unpublished, of the choir's own choice, provided they are similar in standard and have serious musical aims. Wherever possible, vocal scores of all works performed should be made available for the use of the examiner. All works may be sung in any language; a short translation should be provided for the examiner when words other than English are used.

(i) Performing from unauthorized photocopies (or other kinds of copies) of copyright editions is not allowed. ABRSM may withhold the exam result where it has evidence of an illegal copy (or copies) being used. In the UK, copies may be used in certain limited circumstances – for full details, see the MPA's *Code of Fair Practice* at www.mpaonline.org.uk. In all other cases, application should be made to the copyright holder before any copy is made, and evidence of permission received should be brought to the exam.

(j) The examiner will award an overall grading, rather than a mark, for the vocal exercises and programme performed, taking into account the following elements of the performance:

- 1 **Vocal exercises:** breathing, posture, intonation, vocal range and flexibility, tone and vowel sounds
- 2 **Prepared performance:** (i) technical competence (including unanimity, security of technique, consistency of intonation, diction, vocal quality and balance)
(ii) artistic merit (including communication, interpretation, presentation and dress, choice and balance of programme).

(k) The gradings are as follows:

- A:** an outstanding performance, with little reservation
- B:** a very good performance, but with some reservation
- C:** a competent performance, but with significant reservation
- F:** failure to reach the standard required to pass.

(l) The examiner's notes and grading are sent to the Applicant named on the entry form. For choirs obtaining a C grading or above, a special certificate is issued to the Applicant, together with a certificate for each member of the choir present at the exam.

Obtaining exam music

Exam music is available from music retailers as well as online. Every effort has been made to ensure that all the publications listed will remain available for the duration of the syllabus. Candidates are advised to obtain their music well in advance of the exam in case of any delays with items not kept in stock by retailers. Apart from queries relating to exams, all enquiries about the music (e.g. editorial, availability) should be addressed to the relevant publisher: contact details are listed at www.abrsm.org/publishers.

Choral Singing

INITIAL

VOCAL EXERCISES: consisting of warm-up exercises. See page 6 for suggested examples.

PREPARED PERFORMANCE: a programme with a minimum of three contrasted items lasting in total between 7 and 10 minutes which may include any of the suggested works listed below, any appropriate item from ABRSM's current Singing syllabus Grades 1–3, or any alternatives of the choir's own choice which are similar in standard. The programme must include at least one item to be sung from memory *and* one work of two or more parts:

Anon. This little light of mine. SA, SAA or SAB: *4 Jazz Spirituals, arr. Arch (Faber)*

F. Roy Bennett The Wind Sings on the Mountain. *Unison (Ashdown)*

Richard Rodney Bennett The Aviary: any one song. *Unison (Universal)*

Britten The Salley Gardens. *Unison (Boosey & Hawkes)* or *TTBB: Britten 3 Folksong Arrangements (Boosey & Hawkes)*

Andrew Carter Badgers and Hedgehogs: no.1 from 'Bless the Lord' (or no.4 from 'Benedicite').
SSA (OUP)

Bob Chilcott The Child. *Unison (OUP)*

Douglas Coombes Whales (Swimming Free). *Unison or SS (Lindsay Music)*

Cecil Cope Fire or Shiny: from 'Two Songs from *The Wandering Moon*'. *Unison (Roberton)*

Copland Ching-a-ring Chaw. *Unison (Boosey & Hawkes) (now out of print)* or SA: *Copland Old American Songs (Boosey & Hawkes)*

Franck Panis Angelicus. SS, SSA, SATB or TTBB (*Ashdown*)

Gershwin I got plenty o' nuttin' (from 'Porgy and Bess'). *Unison: Porgy and Bess song album (Warner Bros)* or SAB or SATB: *arr. Stickles (IMP Choral Archive)*

Gibbs Five Eyes. SA (*Boosey & Hawkes*)

Hazel Hudson Linstead Market. SS (*Ashdown*)

Kabalevsky Good Night, arr. Rao. SS (*Boosey & Hawkes*)

Peter Rose and Anne Conlon Forest People: from 'Yanomamo'. SS: *vocal score (Weinberger)*

John Rutter Angels' Carol. SS or SA (*OUP*)

Catherine and Alan Simmons Butterfly: from 'A Clang and A Clatter!'. SS (*Simmons Music*)

Vaughan Williams Linden Lea. SS, SSA or SATB (*Boosey & Hawkes*)

Choral Singing

INTERMEDIATE

VOCAL EXERCISES: consisting of warm-up exercises. See page 6 for suggested examples.

PREPARED PERFORMANCE: a programme with a minimum of three contrasted items lasting in total between 9 and 12 minutes which may include any of the suggested works listed below, or any alternatives of the choir's own choice which are similar in standard. The programme must include at least one item to be sung from memory, one unaccompanied work, *and* one work of three or more parts:

Anon. All my Trials. SSA: 4 Negro Spirituals, arr. Arch (Boosey & Hawkes)

Anon. Didn't it rain, arr. Neaum. SSA (Roberton)

Anon. Joshua fought the Battle of Jericho, arr. Dexter. SS (Ashdown)

Anon. Siyahamba, arr. Rao. SSS unaccompanied (Boosey & Hawkes) (now out of print)

Anon. This train/The gospel train. SA, SAA or SAB: Get on board! - Favourite Gospel Choruses, arr. Arch (Faber)

Anon. Water of Tyne, arr. Neaum. SSA (Roberton)

Anon. Spanish A la ruru nino. SSA: 2 Spanish Traditional Songs, arr. Neaum (Roberton)

Campion Never weather-beaten sail. SATB (Stainer & Bell)

Andrew Carter Two for the Price of One. SS (Banks)

Elgar Ave verum corpus, Op.2 no.1. SATB (Novello)

Fauré In Paradisum: no.7 from Requiem, Op.48. SSA edn. of vocal score, arr. Ratcliffe (Novello)

Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe Ascot Gavotte (from 'My Fair Lady'), arr. Duro. SA (IMP Choral Archive)

Andrew Lloyd Webber Macavity, the Mystery Cat (from 'Cats'). SA, SAA or SAB: Favourites from 'Cats', arr. Hare (Faber)

Mozart Ave verum corpus, K.618. SATB (Novello)

Pergolesi Stabat Mater dolorosa: no.1 from 'Stabat Mater'. SA: vocal score (Novello)

Purcell Thou knowest, Lord, the secret of our hearts. SATB (Novello)

Tallis If ye love me. SATB (Novello)

Vaughan Williams O taste and see. SATB (OUP)

arr. Vaughan Williams The Turtle Dove. Unison (Curwen)

Charles Wood The ride of the witch (The hag). SA: English Edwardian Partsongs for Upper Voices (Faber)

Choral Singing

ADVANCED

VOCAL EXERCISES: consisting of warm-up exercises. See page 7 for suggested examples.

PREPARED PERFORMANCE: a programme with a minimum of three contrasted items lasting in total between 12 and 15 minutes which may include any of the suggested works listed below, or any alternatives of the choir's own choice which are similar in standard. The major part of the programme must comprise works of three or more parts, *and* must include at least two items to be sung from memory and one unaccompanied work:

Richard Rodney Bennett What Sweeter Music. *SATB a cappella (Universal)*

Brahms Ave Maria, Op.12. *SSAA: vocal score (Peters EP 66136)*

Britten There is no Rose or This little Babe: no.3 or no.6 from 'A Ceremony of Carols', Op.28.
SSS or SSA: separately or vocal score (Boosey & Hawkes)

Britten Deo Gracias (Adam lay i-bounden): no.10 from 'A Ceremony of Carols', Op.28.
SSS or SSA: vocal score (Boosey & Hawkes)

Britten Gloria: no.2 from Missa Brevis in D, Op.63. *SSS/SSA: vocal score (Boosey & Hawkes)*

Mervyn Burtch The Lantern Festival: any one song. *SSA: vocal score (Banks)*

Byrd Ave verum corpus. *SATB (Stainer & Bell)*

Fauré Madrigal, Op.35. *SATB: French Chansons (Faber)*

Gershwin It ain't necessarily so (from 'Porgy and Bess'), arr. Stickles. *SATB (IMP Choral Archive)*

Gibbs The Song of Shadows. *SSA (Boosey & Hawkes)*

Kern Can't help lovin' dat man (from 'Show Boat'). *SSA, SATB or TTBB: Show Boat Medley, arr. Warnick (IMP Choral Archive)*

Kodály Ave Maria. *SSA a cappella (Universal)*

Kodály Dancing Song. *SSA a cappella (OUP)*

Kodály Ladybird (Katalinka). *SSA (Boosey & Hawkes)*

Kodály See the gipsies. *SSAA or SATB a cappella (OUP) (SATB now out of print)*

Philip Lane It was a lover and his lass. *SSA (Roberton)*

Mendelssohn Lift thine eyes (from 'Elijah'). *SSA a cappella (Novello)*

Poulenc Salve Regina. *SATB (Salabert)*

Purcell Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts. *SATB (Novello)*

Imant Raminsh White Feathers. *SS (Boosey & Hawkes)*

Schubert The Twenty-third Psalm. *SSAA: Schubert 3 Partsongs for Upper Voices (Faber)*

Verdi Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves (from 'Nabucco'). *SATB (Boosey & Hawkes) or SATB (OUP)*

Vivaldi Gloria in excelsis Deo: no.1 from Gloria, RV 589. *SSA edn. of vocal score, arr. Ratcliffe (Novello)*

VOCAL EXERCISE EXAMPLES

The following examples are designed to show the types of warm-up exercises choirs may choose to offer.

INITIAL



1 No - ah, No - ah, No - ah, No, No - ah, No - ah, No - ah, No.

2 To - ny, To - ny, To - ny. To - ny, To - ny, To - ny, To - ny, To - ny.

3 The Tip of the Tongue and the Teeth and the Lips. The Tip, etc.

4 To be sung to any of the 5 vowel sounds, ma (ah), mi (ee), me (ay), mo (o), mu (oo).

INTERMEDIATE



1 No - ah, No - ah, No - ah, No, No - ah, No - ah, No - ah, No.

2 Ma Me etc.

3 Oo Si Fa etc.

4 Ya Ya Ya Ya

ADVANCED

To be sung to all vowels

1

Musical staff 1: A single melodic line in treble clef, 2/4 time, consisting of a continuous eighth-note run: G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5-F5-G5, followed by a quarter rest.

Legato octave leaps

2

Oo - oo - oo. Oo - oo - oo. Oo - oo - oo. etc.

To be sung to any vowel

3

Ma Ma Ma Ma etc.

To be sung to any vowel

4