

# CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF BISHOPS' CHORISTER AWARD

(Validated at RSCM Silver Standard)

## MUSIC

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 may:

- 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 may:

- 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.
- Show lack of control over vibrato.
- Overuse the glottal stop to attack notes.

### 3. **General musicianship: accuracy, expression, sensitivity**

Good candidates will:

- Sing notes and rhythms accurately and with reliable 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 may:

- 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.

## **MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING**

### **1. 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 may:

- 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 may:

- 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.

## **REPERTOIRE**

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 may:

- 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.

## **RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE**

Good candidates will, within their accepted Projects and throughout Part Two:

- Deliver a clear reading of their Bible passage, with good posture and engagement with the listener.
- Show good understanding of the meaning of the text; a basic knowledge of the Bible, its content and order.
- 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 community.
- Be able to give examples of music suitable for their chosen 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 may:

- Give an indistinct and hurried delivery of their Bible reading, with poor posture and minimal engagement with the listener.
- Show poor understanding of the meaning of the text and a scant knowledge of the Bible, its content and order.
- 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.