

# **DEANS' CHORISTER AWARD (Validated at RSCM Bronze Standard)**

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this award is to encourage musicianship, loyalty, and a growing awareness of faith, in choristers, and to give a tangible recognition of the attainment of such a standard. The scheme is designed to encourage singers to achieve a high standard of vocal technique and musicianship. It is intended that the Deans' award is used in conjunction with the RSCM *Voice for Life* scheme. The *Voice for Life* scheme enables singers to develop their musical skills and understanding within the context of their choir or singing group. The area awards scheme provides opportunities for that development to be affirmed beyond the singer's own church, through the RSCM's regional network.

### **Eligibility**

The award is open to choristers of all ages in church or school choirs within the area covered by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood and the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford. This award is also open to choristers of other denominations in this area, and to individual church singers and cantors. The syllabus has been carefully compiled with these points in mind.

### **The Award Medallion**

Successful candidates are entitled to wear the prestigious medal, with its distinctive green ribbon, of the Deans of Brentwood and Chelmsford's Bronze Award; this can be purchased at the price indicated in the results letter. They will be presented with this and their Award Certificate at the annual presentation service held at either Brentwood Cathedral or Chelmsford Cathedral on a date to be notified to the candidates.

### **Examinations**

These will be held twice a year (usually in April and October). Successful candidates who so wish will be presented with their medal and certificate at the annual Awards Ceremony held alternately at Brentwood and Chelmsford Cathedrals.

### **Enquiries/Entries**

Entries or enquiries should be sent to the Area Deans' Chorister Award administrator: -

John Cox, 60 Park Avenue, Barking IG11 8QU. Email: [johncarmelcox@hotmail.com](mailto:johncarmelcox@hotmail.com).

To check the forthcoming dates of examinations, please check the Area page on the RSCM website ([www.rscm.com](http://www.rscm.com)), or the RSCM-EEL website ([www.rscm-eel.org.uk](http://www.rscm-eel.org.uk)).

Applications must be: -

- made by the choir-trainer, in the case of choir choristers. Candidates over the age of 16yrs can enter themselves or be entered by the choir trainer. In either case, a written testimonial, signed by the vicar/parish priest/minister/head teacher/director of music, confirming the candidate's commitment to the choir and general musical competence, must accompany the entry form. This testimonial should also give details of any RSCM singing courses or training events in which the candidate has participated.
- supported by a parent or bona fide guardian, if the candidate is under the age of 16yrs, as declared by their signature. Candidates who are over the age of 16yrs may enter themselves, or be entered by the choir trainer.

**NB:** On signing the entry form candidates, their trainers and representatives are deemed to be accepting the entry conditions and the examiners' judgements.

If the prospective candidate suffers from dyslexia, the choir-trainer should make this known, in writing, at the time of application. Dyslexic candidates should provide documentation from an authoritative body: i.e. Educational Psychologist, or teacher with RSA (SpLD) Diploma. If the choir-trainer is made aware after the application has been submitted that a candidate is dyslexic, s/he should contact the Administrator in sufficient time prior to the closing date for the session of the examination. Any special provision made for individual candidates will not jeopardise the integrity of the examination and, once made, the candidate will be assessed as found on the day of the examination.

Should there be any serious mitigating circumstances which might affect the candidate's performance at examination these must be made known to the Administrator as soon as possible before the examination in order that appropriate action if any, may be taken.

### **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 an appropriate testimonial 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

### **Appeals Procedure**

Choir trainers 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 with similar awards in other areas, it is necessary to set defined standards for succeeding in these awards. Unfortunately it is 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 examination day.

In entering for an award, the candidate and Choir Trainer are deemed to accept the judgement of the examiners. In exceptional circumstances appeals may be considered according to the following procedure.

1. Appeals must be made in writing to the Administrator by the person who entered the candidate, setting out in detail the grounds on which the appeal is lodged.
2. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS THE EXAMINER TO BE CONTACTED DIRECTLY .**
3. To cover expenses, appeals must be accompanied by a fee of £10 (the cheque to be made payable to Deans' Chorister Award). In the event that the appeal is successful the fee will be refunded.
4. Appeals must be lodged within 7 days of receiving the results. This is to ensure that the circumstances of the examination remain fresh in everyone's memory.
5. Appeals which simply question the mark awarded, without given grounds, will not be accepted. Two broad grounds for appeal which may be typically considered are:
  - i. the candidate being expected to do something which is outside the scope of the syllabus, or
  - ii. clear inconsistency between the written comments and the marks awarded.
6. If an appeal is received, it will be considered by the Administrator, the Chairman and the Examiner. One of two outcomes will result: -

- i. the mark originally awarded may be confirmed, or
  - ii. 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.
7. The Administrator will notify the outcome of the appeal, in writing, to the person who lodged the appeal. The target time for resolving appeals is 21 days from date of receipt.
8. In the event that the appeal outcome is 6 (i) above, a final appeal may be made in writing to the Chairman of the Deans' Chorister Award (address on application), setting out in detail the grounds on which the appeal is lodged, no later than 7 days after receiving the outcome of the first appeal. The Chairman will appoint an appropriate independent adviser to assess the grounds for the final appeal. A response will be issued by the adviser, whose decision is final. If the appeal is successful a re-examination – without further leave to appeal - or alternatively a full refund of the entry fee, will be offered. In the event that the Chairman is the examiner involved, then the Committee of the Deans' Chorister Award will nominate an appropriate deputy.
9. 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.

### **Training Days/Workshops**

Prospective candidates are encouraged to attend the Deans' Award Workshop usually held in March. The workshop is also open to those supporting their application.

**FURTHER INFORMATION, INCLUDING EXAMINATION CONDITIONS AND PREREQUISITES CAN BE FOUND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SYLLABUS.**