



# THE SILVER COLLECTION

ANTHEMS FOR  
THE RSCM SILVER AND BISHOP'S AWARDS

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RS  M

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## PREFACE

Silver standard singing awards are available to singers of all ages in RSCM Areas. The Silver Award is the second level for external assessment of the skills of singers who are progressing through the RSCM *Voice for Life* training scheme. They should have passed all the targets in their Red training book before entering for the award. In many Areas, this assessment is called *the Bishop's Award*: successful candidates may receive their award personally from the Bishop at an RSCM Festival in the Cathedral.

Silver standard singing means having achieved a reliable vocal technique, including secure breathing control, reliable intonation, and clarity of diction with pure vowel sounds. Most singers will already have achieved good success at their Bronze Award, so they will certainly have experienced more confidence in tackling new music, and will now be more aware of technical matters such as tonality and expressive markings. This experience will be especially useful when, during the Silver Award examination, the Sight singing (or, Guided music reading) test in Section B explores the singer's ability quickly to grasp the essentials of their voice line in a new piece. Singers must aim to give a competent rendering, keeping going with some confidence and rhythmic shape, even when not quite accurate with pitching some notes. This is, of course, just what you should do every week when you explore new music in your choir practice. You are now an experienced singer in your choir, and others are relying on your leadership.

Preparing for your Silver Award examination, the performance of a demanding anthem for Section A (most likely chosen from this book) will, of course, receive first priority as it has the greatest weighting. Aim to sing your chosen voice line as a solo part, without undue reticence, but always using the vocal *bel canto* qualities that you have already developed as an experienced choral singer: beautiful tone, centred intonation, clear and shaped diction. These will show off your voice to best advantage. You are also expected to know some facts about the background to your piece – without which, many would say, you cannot possibly achieve a fully expressive, telling account. Find out about the composer, and the author, and make sure you understand the meaning of the text (whether it is in English or not!) and its liturgical appropriateness. All this will be tested in Section C.

Also in Section A, you will be expected to sing one or two hymns and to perform a portion of psalmody, with some sections of these items unaccompanied, to show that you are personally able to maintain your voice part reliably in pitch and tonality, unsupported, with no loss of confidence or poise.

Finally, do not forget to practise your aural tests, and to prepare carefully everything that is needed for Section E. The Silver Award is a test for experienced choristers, not just good singers! A 'model' Silver syllabus, with the assessment criteria, appears at the end of this book: your local validated syllabus will be based on this model. Enquire

for details from your local RSCM committee.

The pieces in this book will give you many opportunities to develop your confidence and musical understanding, as a leading singer within your choir. Be aware, however large or small your group, of the need for every singer to listen out for, and actively contribute to, the overall blend and balance of voices. All the pieces here assume a choir of SATB voices, sometimes *divisi*. Where there are two lines for your voice part, you have the opportunity to be even more self-reliant and, occasionally, you may be asked to sing a solo line. Grasp the opportunity with relish, and prepare it with loving care!

Singers who do well in their Silver Award should then consider the next step, to prepare to take their Gold Award. All the aspects of Silver training will come in useful again, together with the more advanced technique you will develop through using the Yellow training book in the RSCM *Voice for Life* training scheme. Almost no-one in the choir is too young, or too old, to benefit from this further training and I recommend it.

I should like to offer heartfelt thanks to Tim Ruffer for his unstinting support and encouragement while these books, the RSCM *Bronze Collection* and *Silver Collection*, took shape, and to all the many singers, colleagues and friends with whom it has been my privilege to join and help make music, to the praise of God, over the past years.

I hope that singing the anthems in this book will encourage and help you, and your fellow-singers, to develop your skills and technique at and beyond Silver standard, and give you great enjoyment as you offer your ministry of music together.

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*West Tarring*