

## **Module C2: Writing for voices**

This module is intended to develop your skills and competence in writing for voices. This may, at your choice, include some original composition, but this is not a requirement. The work undertaken is directed primarily to writing music to be sung in Christian worship, and you are encouraged to write some of the music for your own liturgical situation.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the module you should be able to demonstrate:

- competence in laying out a clear vocal score
- competence in writing for a variety of vocal scorings
- grasp of texture, ranges and balance
- awareness of the practicalities of writing for amateur musicians and the unskilled
- awareness of idioms appropriate to Christian worship

### **Issues for study**

As a means of developing your skills in writing for voices you are expected to explore works by other composers, considering the ways in which they approach

- use of resources
- use and treatment of accompaniment
- texture and balance
- considerations for performers
- presentation of score

You need to be clear about the conventions for the presentation of scores, Please consult the recommendations in section B6 of the Brief Study Guide, and at the end of the syllabus for module C1 ('Some suggestions ...'). In vocal music *The Oxford Spelling Dictionary* can be particularly helpful in guiding you over the division of words.

You need to be clear about ranges of voices and instruments and capabilities of singers and players of varying abilities.

You should become aware of issues concerning copyright and performance rights. Further, see below.

### **Study**

Although you may choose (or be directed by a supervisor in) your own pattern of study it must include those issues listed above, and you are advised to take account of the recommended items listed below ('Select List of Scores') and the advice at the end of the syllabus for module C1.

### **Assessment and satisfactory completion**

You are required to submit three pieces of work chosen from the following:

- one movement of the Ordinary of the Mass/Eucharist (i.e. Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei) OR two paired shorter movements from a setting of the Ordinary (e.g. Sanctus and Agnus Dei), excluding the Gloria. Unless composition is for a liturgy which dictates otherwise, a setting of Sanctus must include the Benedictus qui venit.
- a canticle or psalm (prose texts only)
- a sacred text (prose or verse) set as a through-composed song or anthem
- a strophic hymn or sacred song - either a single harmonized verse or an extended setting with variations of scoring and treatment of the melody

The resulting portfolio should include:

- one work for SATB choir with or without accompaniment
- one work for three-part choir (i.e. SSA, TBaB, SAB) with or without accompaniment
- one work for either two-part choir with accompaniment, or unison voices with accompaniment

Where there is an accompaniment it should be scored for organ, acoustic piano, or electric keyboard.

The submitted works should include one work for capable singers, and one

work involving singers of limited ability. One of the works should last at least 5 minutes in performance. The portfolio as a whole should consist of music lasting 10-15 minutes in performance.

You may use existing melodic or harmonic material for your work, or compose original material. The assessment is based on your skills in writing for voices and the overall merit of the work as presented.

All three pieces should be submitted in notated score. Each piece should be accompanied by a short commentary of 150-400 words outlining the purpose and methods of the work, and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. At least one of the pieces should also be submitted in a recorded performance on audio CD (not in any other medium).

Assessment will be based on the portfolio of music for voices, but you will be expected to supply additional evidence in order to complete the module satisfactorily.

Make a list of the works of other composers that you have studied and other exercises or pieces you have completed yourself as part of the course (these should not be submitted but may be requested by the examiners). You must read the statement about copyright and performing rights that is printed below, and study the Code of Fair Practice published by the Music Publishers' Association

at: [http://www.mpaonline.org.uk/sites/default/files/The\\_Code\\_of\\_Fair\\_Practice\\_Revised\\_Apr\\_2016.pdf](http://www.mpaonline.org.uk/sites/default/files/The_Code_of_Fair_Practice_Revised_Apr_2016.pdf) You will not be examined on this, but FGCM and LGCM candidates offering composition must be well acquainted with it.

If you wish to use copyright material, whether words and/or music, you are advised that the Music Publishers' Association consider the use of copyright material to be within paragraph 7 on page 7 of The MPA Code of Fair Practice. This enables you to use copyright words and/or music solely for the purposes of the examination. Any publication or public performance of copyright material is always subject to the usual rules and prior permission must be obtained.

All materials for assessment should be forwarded to the Course Secretary as soon as they are ready. Remember to compile (but not send) the list of works studied and composed, and ensure that you are familiar with copyright requirements as indicated above.

### **Select list of scores suitable for study (neither exhaustive nor exclusive)**

This is a very brief and restricted list confined to composers and works where (a) the understanding of voices is self-evident, (b) the writing uses an economy of means to maximum effect. You may have particular composers and repertory which you favour as models, and this list is not intended to be prescriptive or proscriptive.

Writing for SATB Unaccompanied: Richard Rodney Bennett, *Carols, Verses*; Joubert, 'There is no rose'

SATB Accompanied: Britten, *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Te Deum in C and E, Jubilate in C; Joubert, 'O Lorde the maker'

Arrangements of existing melodies: Folk-song arrangements by Vaughan Williams and Holst

High voices: Britten, *Missa Brevis*, *Ceremony of Carols*

Unison voices: Britten, *Songs for Friday Afternoons*, Jonathan Harvey, 'The Tree'

Accompaniments: Britten - all of the above

Strophic songs and hymns: Lennox Berkeley, *I sing of a maiden*; Elizabeth Poston, 'Jesus Christ the apple tree': Howells, hymn tune 'Michael'

### **Other aids to study**

Maurice Waite (ed.), *The Oxford Spelling Dictionary* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986; 2nd edition, 2000). This includes recommendations for word-division, which can be used as a useful guide but with flexibility, bearing in mind the practical implications of pronunciation for singers. The ultimate authority on matters such as word-division, italicisation, hyphenation, etc. is *Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers at the University Press Oxford* (39th edition,

completely revised and reprinted with corrections, Oxford University Press, 1986).

Annie Gunning, *The Composer's Guide to Music Publishing* (London, The Association of Professional Composers, 1987; 2nd edition 1997).