

ST NICHOLAS CHORISTERS

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For centuries, the worship of God has been blessed with music made by children. Choirs consisting of children have existed to enhance the church's liturgy through fine music and to lead and inspire a worshiping community. Some of the most important liturgical music ever written was with the pure sound of children's voices in mind, and it is this tradition that has been inherited by the Anglican Church.

The St Nicholas Choristers is a vested choir under the affiliation of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM, America). The overall purpose of this program is to bring children together into a loving community in which each chorister is challenged to develop his or her personal, leadership, and music talents to their fullest potential. Music, being the exemplary art form, provides such an arena in which many of life's important skills can be cultivated over a lifetime.

What is the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM)?

The Royal School of Church Music was founded in England (1927) by Sir Sydney Nicholson (one time organist of Westminster Abbey) to promote the highest possible musical standards in Christian worship for musicians of all ages. This organization believes that whatever music is used should be the best of its kind and be performed as well as the available material permits. The RSCM is interested in supporting church music and in investing in church music for the future.

At the present day, the RSCM has grown to become an international and ecumenical organization with more than 11,000 affiliates in the UK, North America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and Europe. The motto of the RSCM is:

Psallam spiritu et mente.

I will sing with the Spirit and with the understanding also.

What is the training scheme used?

This program builds upon the idea that ALL have ownership of the choir, and consequently leadership and responsibility is heavily emphasized. From the onset, a high standard is put forth in an effort to bring (and expect!) the very best music offerings to our worship. Over the course of time the choristers have the opportunity to study, discuss, and sing some of the most important (and challenging!) liturgical music from the Middle Ages to our present day. Within that larger framework, they are also introduced to the vast expanse of music that comes from our own Anglican choral tradition.

The scheme follows these five basic categories:

- General Training
- Music Skills
- Vocal Skills
- Repertoire
- Christian Education

As children progress through the program, one of the ways in which they are rewarded externally for their achievements is through the following adapted system:

- Black Cassock (probationer)
- White Surplice (official chorister)
- St Nicholas medal with white ribbon
- St Nicholas medal with light blue ribbon
- St Nicholas medal with dark blue ribbon
- St Nicholas medal with red ribbon

In addition, a child (sometimes two!) may be chosen to be Head Chorister/s.

What are the age requirements to be a St Nicholas Chorister?

Open to children (boys and girls) aged 7 to 16 regardless of musical experience or religious affiliation. *A note regarding boy's voices:* This choir is a treble choir, which means that a boy whose voice has changed (which can occur as early as 12, or as late as 15) will be unable to continue in the choir.

When are rehearsals and when do the choristers sing?

Rehearsals take place weekly on Thursdays 5:30pm – 6.45 in the Music Room. This time frame includes a 7-10 minute snack and recreation time. At present, the choristers sing on the First Sunday of every month unless otherwise noted. In due time, the choristers will be incorporated into the cycle of major feasts and Holy Days, in addition to the service of Evensong as the schedule permits.

Rev. Spring 2007