

Part II Paper 8 Advanced Skills, Paper 8b Choral Performance: Marking Criteria

First Class (80 and above)*

Performances in this mark band will demonstrate all the qualities found at first-class level, but to a very considerable degree. Outstanding performances will be marked by fluency in all disciplines allied with technical command and informed artistry as both an individual singer and member of an ensemble. Editions will be of an excellent standard, impeccably presented and eminently suited to use by performers.

First Class (70 and above)

Performances in this mark band will demonstrate a very high level of technical achievement which always serves the goal of musical communication. Sight-reading will be both accurate and expressive, showing sensitivity to musical shaping within the ensemble. Historic notations will be read fluently and with appropriate stylistic nuance. The rehearsal will communicate relevant ideas efficiently and clearly through direction or verbal instruction, and the ensemble performance will be substantially improved during the rehearsal. The editions will convey information clearly and consistently with particular care taken to ensure utility as a performance edition.

Upper Second (60-69)

In this mark band a high level of technical skill is expected, as well as informed musical decision-making. Performances may show exceptional technical ability in the various disciplines, but lack a corresponding degree of musicality; alternatively, they may have a very good sense of musical awareness, but lack the skills required to communicate ideas effectively. Towards the upper end of this band, performances may show considerable achievement in almost all the skills tested, but demonstrate weakness in one area. Performances toward the lower end may be marred by technical lapses across a few disciplines or misjudgements in a number of tests. Editions considered to fall into this mark band will be well presented and follow established editorial criteria, but may contain a small number of minor errors or be presented in ways that hinder use by performers.

Lower Second (50-59)

Performances in this mark band may show a basic grasp of the principles underlying the range of tests, but be routinely marred by an insecure technique, or an undeveloped understanding of historical style or notations, or an inability to communicate effectively with other members of the ensemble. Performances may be largely competent, but interrupted by occasional breakdowns, inappropriate expressive intent or a failure to interact musically with others in the group. Towards the upper end, performances may demonstrate technical weaknesses while showing successful navigation of some of the tests. Towards the lower end of this band, performances may demonstrate failings that lead to extended passages of incoherence in a few tests while showing only a basic level of competence in others. Editions may contain substantial errors or be seriously deficient in aspects of presentation while displaying an awareness of principles of editorial method.

Third (40-49)

Performances in this mark band will demonstrate a basic vocal ability as a solo singer and the capacity to function as member of an ensemble, but be seriously impeded by a lack of knowledge of historic notations, an inability to maintain sight-reading, or a lack of familiarity with the prepared piece. Several tests may not be completed or repeatedly collapse. Editions may be undermined by flaws to the extent that they are barely usable or require considerable adjustment by performers during the test.

Ordinary (35-39)

Performances may demonstrate a reasonable technique as a solo singer but lack the skills required to sing within an ensemble. Almost all tests will be seriously deficient in one or more respects. Editions may be entirely unsuited to use in performance.

Fail (0-34)

Performances will be lacking the technical ability required to attempt several of the tests or show little discernible evidence of preparation for the tests set for this exam. Editions at this level will show systematic misunderstanding of both historic and modern notations.