



# AGO Certification Exams

## 2025 Choir Master Exam Solutions

Prepared by the Committee on Professional Certification

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PLEASE NOTE: The solutions given in this booklet are *sample* solutions. Some of the given solutions are not the *unique* or only answers. For several short-answer questions, we have elected to give more than the required amount of information to illustrate the range of possible choices.

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# ChM 3. Ear Tests (30 points - 15 each)

## ChM 3-A. Ear Test (15 points)

ChM 3-A Ear Test Recording Link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17vnqsW4L16TsfoePLDmMrU1Ah9YpTQsX/view?usp=sharing>

Johann Speth (17th c.)



## ChM 3-B. Ear Test (15 points - 1 point each)

ChM 3-B Ear Test Recording Link:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/16f5NzbZwkzr422dIs-oWnkEEFHMD5Kdy/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/16f5NzbZwkzr422dIs-oWnkEEFHMD5Kdy/view?usp=drive_link)

1. Meas. 1, beat 3 (alto): Change E ♭ to E♯
2. Meas. 2, beat 3 (tenor): Change A ♭ to A♯
3. Meas. 3, beats 1-2 (tenor): Change dotted rhythm to straight rhythm
4. Meas. 4, beat 2 (tenor): Change A ♭ to G
5. Meas. 5, beat 2 (soprano): Change D ♭ to A ♭
6. Meas. 6, beat 3 (soprano): Change F to F♯
7. Meas. 7, beat 1 (alto): Change D ♭ to D♯
8. Meas. 9, beat 2 (tenor): Change D ♭ to B ♭
9. Meas. 10, beat 1 (alto): Change E ♭ to E♯
10. Meas. 10 (all voices): Change half-quarter rhythm to quarter-half
11. Meas. 11, beat 1 (bass): Change B ♭ to B♯
12. Meas. 12, beat 2 (tenor): Change G♯ to G ♭
13. Meas. 13, beat 2 (soprano): Change E ♭ to E♯
14. Meas. 14, beat 1 (tenor): Change A ♭ to B ♭
15. Meas. 15 (tenor): Change C to E ♭

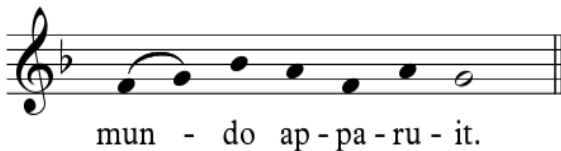
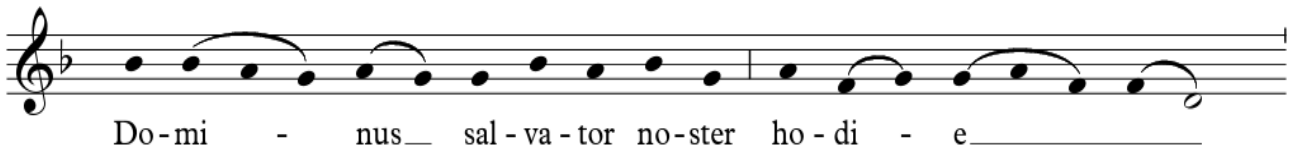
## ChM 4. Analysis (25 points)

1. Write a Roman numeral analysis of the choral parts and accompaniment beginning at rehearsal A (last system of page 62) until rehearsal C (last system of page 63). Be sure to include inversions, secondary harmonies, and non-harmonic tones.
  - a. Key F#m:
    - i. mm. 9-12 = i
    - ii. 13 = d# half-diminished 7 (ii half-dim7/V in f#)
    - iii. 14-15 = G# Major (V/V in f#)
    - iv. 16-17 b2 = i with a G# pedal point
    - v. 17 b3 = G#7 (V7/V in f#)
    - vi. 18 = C#M (V) to f# (i)
    - vii. 19-20 b3 = i
    - viii. 20 b4 = iv 6/4
    - ix. 21 = i
    - x. 22 = ii half-dim7/V (same as m. 13)
    - xi. 23-24 = V/V
    - xii. 25-26 b2 = V7/V
    - xiii. 26 b3-27 = vii diminished
    - xiv. 28 = V7
    - xv. 28 b3-29 = i
2. Cite at least one example of text painting in these measures.
  - a. m. 9 - dramatic shift in dynamic (ff-p) and tempo (Adagio) as God begins to call out to Saul
  - b. m. 14 - God's question to Saul is unresolved (G#M doesn't resolve to C#M).
  - c. mm. 15-16 - confusion of Saul's response illustrated by dissonance of i chord with G# pedal point
  - d. mm. 18-20 - repeated tonic chord under the text "I am Jesus of Nazareth."
  - e. m. 25 - tremolo in the accompaniment with the word "trembling"
  - f. mm. 28-29 - authentic cadence immediately preceding God's response to Saul's question

3. What is the harmony in the measure preceding rehearsal A, and what is its relationship to the following chord? Does it resolve as expected or unexpectedly?
  - a. E# diminished 7, which is vii diminished 7 of f# minor. It resolves as expected.
  
4. What genre of composition is this? What information from the score supports your answer?
  - a. This is an oratorio. The text is sacred in nature. The form is a recitative alternating with a choir, with (likely) minimal orchestral accompaniment. There are two solo parts - Evangelist (tenor) and Paul (bass) - and the voice of God is represented by the choir. It is modeled after Bach's passions.
  
5. Identify a possible composer and date for this composition. Give two reasons for your answer.
  - a. Felix Mendelssohn, Paulus oratorio, 1836. Reasons will vary.

## ChM 5. Gregorian Chant (20 points)

1. Transcribe the following chant into modern notation, including text and slurs over melismas. Choose a key which will be comfortable for a skilled choir singing in unison or at the octave.



2. What is the mode of the chant in question 1?
  - a. Mode II
3. What are the final and dominant of that mode?
  - a. The final note of Mode II is D, and the dominant is F
4. What is the name of the neume that appears as a jagged note? Discuss how this might be performed.
  - a. Quilisma
  - b. Always as part of a multi-note neume, usually a climacus, this sign is a matter of great dispute; the Solesmes interpretation is that the preceding note is to be lengthened slightly. Other interpretations include treating it as a shake or trill or as a quarter-tone or accidental. The support for this interpretation lies in some early digraphic manuscripts which combine chironomic neumes with letter-names.

5. In the traditional mass, what is the form of the Introit?
  - a. Antiphon/Psalm verse/Gloria Patri/Antiphon
  
6. How does the *tonus peregrinus* differ from other Gregorian psalm tones?
  - a. The reciting tone of the *tonus peregrinus* is different in the two halves of the psalm tone. The reciting tone of the second half is a step lower than that of the first half (which gives the name peregrinus, literally “wanders”).

## ChM 6. Hymnody (25 points)

1. Identify the tune name and the first phrase of the text most commonly associated with it for these three incipits.
  - a. *Ein feste Burg* | “A mighty fortress is our God”
  - b. *I Am the Bread of Life* | “I am the Bread of Life”
  - c. *Salve festa dies* | “Hail thee, festival day”
  
2. Draw a connecting line between these hymnal names and the denominational tradition with which they are most commonly associated.

a. <b>Worship II</b>	<b>Roman Catholic</b>
b. <b>Hymnal 1982</b>	<b>Episcopal</b>
c. <b>Service Book and Hymnal</b>	<b>American Lutheran</b>
d. <b>Songs of Zion</b>	<b>Mormon</b>
e. <b>Glory to God</b>	<b>Presbyterian</b>
f. <b>Songs of Praise</b>	<b>Church of England</b>
g. <b>Geistliche Gesangsbüchlein</b>	<b>German Lutheran</b>
  
3. Describe some of the ways in which you might incorporate the website Hymnary.org in your planning.
  - a. This website can be useful in several ways: investigating variant versions of older tunes; discovering which hymnals used a particular tune; obtaining biographical sketches of the authors and composers; searching the contents of denominational hymnals, etc.
  
4. Which of the following hymn tunes were written by Calvin Hampton? Circle the correct answers.

a. <i>De Tar</i>	d. <i>Flentge</i>
b. <i>Marsh Chapel</i>	e. <i>Lukkason</i>
c. <i>St. Helena</i>	f. <i>Jacob</i>

5. Of the above tunes by Hampton, which one is associated with the text “There’s a wideness in God’s mercy?”
  - a. St. Helena
  
6. Of the above tunes *not* by Hampton, pick one and name its composer.
  - a. *Marsh Chapel* – Max Miller
  - b. *Flentge* – Carl Schalk
  - c. *Jacob* – Jane Marshall
  
7. Name one denominational tradition in which it might be common for the piano and organ to play together in accompanying the hymns.
  - a. Baptist
  - b. Nazarene
  - c. Assembly Of God
  - d. Church of Christ
  - e. Latter-Day Saints
  
8. Identify two “call and response” hymns, either by first line or tune name.
  - a. Got on my traveling shoes
  - b. Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love (*Chereponi*)
  - c. Christ, the worker (*African Work Song*)
  - d. When Israel was in Egypt’s land (*Go Down, Moses*)
  
9. What does the term *in alternatim* mean in hymn and chant traditions?
  - a. This broad term can refer to any number of approaches to the chants and hymns of the Church, all involving some form of alternating sections, verses, or stanzas of an original melody with polyphonic choral settings or instrumental interpolations. The organ literature is ripe with composed interpolations, but the tradition also opens up the possibility for improvisation, a practice that reaches back several centuries and today.

10. Name the tune name most commonly associated with “Of the Father’s love begotten.”
- Divinum mysterium
11. With regards to “O thou who camest from above” and its associated tune *Hereford*, identify the author and composer, describe their relationship, and identify the religious tradition out of which the text comes.
- Charles Wesley authored the text, and his grandson, Samuel Sebastian Wesley, composed the tune, naming it after the Three Choirs Festival, which is held in Hereford every third year. Charles Wesley and his older brother John are considered the founders of Methodism.
12. Circle the hymn tunes that spring out of the Appalachian tradition.
- Salzburg*
  - Wondrous Love*
  - Restoration*
  - St. Andrew*
  - Holy Manna*
  - Melita*
13. Name one hymn tune by the English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams.
- Down Ampney
  - Sine Nomine
  - Monk’s Gate
  - Salve Festa Dies
  - Forest Green
  - Guildford
  - King’s Weston
  - Oakley
  - Randolph

14. What is the syllabic structure of LM (Long Metre)?
- a. 8888
15. For the hymn text “God of Grace and God of Glory,” name either the author of the text or the name of the church in New York City for whose dedication it was written.
- a. Harry Emerson Fosdick.
  - b. Riverside Church.

## ChM 7. Liturgy (20 points)

1. Draw a connecting line between the Church Year day or season and the piece of music commonly associated with each one.
  - a. **Easter** **Victimae paschali laudes**
  - b. **Advent** **Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland**
  - c. **Ascension** **God is gone up**
  - d. **Trinity Sunday** **Nicaea**
  - e. **Christmas** **What sweeter music**
  - f. **Pentecost** **Veni Creator Spiritus**
  
2. Of which mass movement is “Jesaia, dem Propheten, das geschah” the Reformation-era German paraphrase?
  - a. Sanctus
  
3. The eight Daily Office liturgies below are chronologically scrambled. Please number them in the correct order.
  - a. Matins – 1
  - b. Terce – 4
  - c. Sext – 5
  - d. Compline – 8
  - e. None – 6
  - f. Prime – 3
  - g. Lauds – 2
  - h. Vespers – 7
  
4. What is the name of the morning Anglican office? Name a Daily Office from which this English Reformation rite is drawn.
  - a. Morning Prayer, or Matins
  - b. Derived from Matins and Lauds.

5. What is the name of the historic evening liturgy in Lutheranism?
  - a. Vespers
  
6. Name the canticle that is associated with this Lutheran evening liturgy.
  - a. Magnificat
  
7. Briefly list the contents of the following books associated with the Roman Catholic liturgy.
  - a. Missal – contains the texts and rubrics, but not the related music, for the celebration of the Mass throughout the year
  - b. Breviary – contains the texts and rubrics, but not the related music, for the observance of the Daily Office throughout the year
  - c. Gradual – sometimes also referred to as the Antiphonal, this book contains the chant music for the Propers of the Mass throughout the year, in addition to chant settings of the Mass Ordinary. This music for the Ordinary, when published separately, is called the Kyriale.
  - d. Liber Usualis – compiled by the monks of Solesmes Abbey, in France, this book contains many of the chants for the Mass Ordinary, as well as some of the more commonly used chants for important feast days and the Daily Offices.
  
8. Describe one difference between a Requiem Eucharist and a Eucharistic not associated with a Requiem.
  - a. The Gloria and Creed are omitted. The Gospel Alleluia is replaced by a Tract. Traditionally, the Sequence *Dies irae* is sung between the Tract and the Gospel. The text of the Agnus Dei is altered. The final *Ita misas est* is replaced by *Requiescant in pace*.

9. What is the Latin name for the traditional Sequence Hymn associated with a Requiem?
  - a. Dies irae
  
10. With which time of day is the ancient hymn *Phos hilaron* associated and what is its origin?
  - a. This 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century hymn stems from Greek Orthodoxy and is considered one of the earliest of Christian hymns. It is most commonly associated with worship in the evening and is a prescribed element in the Orthodox Vespers. It is also used as an invitatory canticle leading into the psalm(s) appointed for Evening Prayer in the American Episcopal Church. It is also found in the rites for the evening in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod.
  
11. Name two canticles that are associated with the Daily Offices.
  - a. Te Deum laudamus
  - b. Benedictus
  - c. Jubilate Deo
  - d. Benedictus es, Domine
  - e. Magnificat
  - f. Nunc dimittis
  
12. List one American Protestant hymnals that contain the various rites for their particular traditions.
  - a. Service Book and Hymnal (Lutheran – LCA and ALC)
  - b. The Lutheran Hymnal (Lutheran – Missouri Synod)
  - c. Worship (ELCA)
  - d. United Methodist Hymnal
  - e. Presbyterian Hymnal
  - f. Glory to God (Presbyterian)

## ChM 8. Choir Training (20 points)

1. Name one of the associations that promote the training of young choristers in church?
  - a. Choristers' Guild
  - b. Royal School of Church Music
  - c. Pueri Cantores
  
2. Describe some of the steps you might take were to start a chorister program in your parish?
  - a. Discussions at the staff level. Discussions with parents of potential choristers. Careful construction of a schedule that coordinates with and perhaps even overlaps with an adult choir. Design a system of training, including any number of possible incentives. Create a series of social activities. Think about offering theory training and perhaps private lessons as further inducement to join and commit.
  
3. Name two books that focus on church choir training?
  - a. John Bertalot *Immediately Practical Tips for Choral Directors* (Augsburg-Fortress)
  - b. John Bertalot *How to be a Successful Choir Director* (Augsburg-Fortress)
  - c. Walter Carroll *The Training of Children's Voices* (Forsyth Brothers)
  - d. Henry Coleman *Conducting for Church Musicians* (RSCM)
  - e. Henry Coleman *The Amateur Choir Trainer* (OUP)
  - f. Rollo Dilworth *Choir Builders* (Hal Leonard)
  - g. David Hill *Giving Voice: A Handbook for Choir Directors and Trainers* (Kevin Mayhew) Kenneth Jennings *Sing Legato* (Neil A. Kjos)
  - h. Sydney Nicholson *Practical Methods in Choir Training* (RSCM)
  - i. T. Tertius Noble *The Training of the Boy Chorister* (G. Schirmer)
  - j. Francis Snow *Training Choir Boys* (Charles W. Homeyer)
  - k. Edred Wright *Basic Choirtraining* (RSCM)

4. What is a “shadow vowel”?
  - a. A neutral vowel is added to a consonant at the end of a word, enabling the final consonant to be stronger.
  
5. Describe how you might work on the use of diphthongs with your choir and why you might want to minimize some of them.
  - a. A choir director can incorporate vowel work in the warm-ups but also remain attentive throughout rehearsal. Sometimes, focusing on one or two words and helping the singers to realize the back-to-back vowels in a diphthong can help them to identify these moments themselves. Emphasizing to your singers the importance of classical singing for minimizing the second part of the diphthong and delaying its use until just before the next consonant will likely produce results over time and with patience.
  
6. You have a fine group of staff (or paid) singers in your choir. List some of the guidelines you might offer them for working within the context of your volunteers.
  - a. Assume a leadership role, with regards to punctuality, preparedness, and attitude. On the other hand, be careful to blend in and not assume leadership when it’s not asked of you. Be professional in your attire for church. Offer help “on the sidelines” but only when it appears desired.
  
7. To what does “IPA” refer?
  - a. International Phonetic Alphabet. Created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, its aim to chart the universal sounds of speech in writing.

8. How might the practicing of hymns be used to improve your choir's musicianship?
  - a. It can help with phrasing, production of vowels and consonants, sight-reading, and blending. It can also build the confidence of choirs, particularly as they need to lead their congregations with confidence.
  
9. You have a novice group of young choristers. Describe how you could incorporate solfège in your rehearsals to assist them in the development of their music-reading skills.
  - a. Solfège could be incorporated in your warm-ups.
    - i. Time could be taken before and during rehearsal to teach the basics.
    - ii. Moveable-Do solfège can also be a valuable tool for teaching how key signatures work.
    - iii. Though it might be tiresome to try to sing long stretches of music on solfège, small but challenging excerpts can be honed by having the choristers write in the solfège syllables above a series of notes, then instructing them to sing back those syllables without the aid of the piano.

## ChM 9. Choral Repertoire (25 points)

1. Name three collections of church anthems.
  - a. *Anthems for Choirs I – IV* (OUP)
  - b. *Anthems for Unison Choir* (G. Schirmer)
  - c. Malcolm Archer and John Scott *Epiphany to All Saints* (OUP)
  - d. Philip Brunelle *The New Novello Anthem Book* (Novello)
  - e. Alan Bullard *The Oxford Book of Flexible Anthems* (OUP)
  - f. *Cantica Nova* (OUP)
  - g. *Contemporary Sacred Music* (G. Schirmer)
  - h. Lionel Dakers and John Scott *Ash Wednesday to Easter* (OUP)
  - i. Lionel Dakers *The New Church Anthem Book* (OUP)
  - j. Moses Hogan *The Oxford Book of Spirituals* (OUP)
  - k. Kenneth Jennings *The Augsburg Choirbook* (Augsburg-Fortress)
  - l. David Johnson *Gloria Deo I and II* (Augsburg)
  - m. Christopher Morris *The Oxford Book of Tudor Anthems* (OUP)
  - n. *The New Oxford Easy Anthem Book* (OUP)
  - o. Barry Rose *High Praise* (Novello)
  - p. Barry Rose *Merrily on High* (Novello)
  - q. John Rutter *European Sacred Music* (OUP)
  - r. Paul Thomas *Morning Star Choir Book I and II* (Concordia)
  - s. Paul Thomas *A First Motet Book* (Concordia)
  
2. Which other Christmas work uses the same choral and accompanying forces as Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*?
  - a. John Rutter *Dancing Day*
  
3. Who wrote the *Three Graduals – Christus factus est, Os justi and Locus iste*?
  - a. Anton Bruckner

4. Circle the composers who wrote encyclopedic anthologies of motets that set the Propers for the Church Year.
- a. Tomás Luis de Victoria
  - b. Heinrich Isaac
  - c. Thomas Tallis
  - d. William Byrd
  - e. Thomas Morley
5. Which 20<sup>th</sup> century composer wrote both *Quatre motets pour un temps de penitence* and *Quatre motets pour le temps de Noël*?
- a. Francis Poulenc
6. Name two choral works on sacred texts by Igor Stravinsky.
- a. *Zvezdoliki (Le roi des étoiles)* (“The King of the Stars”)
  - b. *Pater Noster (Otche Nash)*
  - c. *Symphony of Psalms*
  - d. *Credo (Veruyu)*
  - e. *Ave Maria (Bogoroditse Dvevo)*
  - f. *Canticum Sacrum*
  - g. *Threni*
  - h. *A Sermon, a Narrative and a Prayer*
  - i. *Anthem (The dove descending breaks the air)*
  - j. *Introitus*
  - k. *Requiem Canticles*

7. List two choral works that would be appropriate for the season of Epiphany.
  - a. Margaret Bonds *Ballad of the Brown Kings*
  - b. Clemens non Papa *Magi veniunt ab oriente*
  - c. David Hurd *We have seen his star*
  - d. Healey Willan *The Three Kings*
  - e. any setting of *Surge illuminae* or *Arise, shine*
  - f. any setting of *Tribus miraculis*
  - g. any setting of *Christ, whose glory fills the skies*
  - h. any setting of *Brightest and best*
  - i. any setting of *Viderunt omnes*
  - j. any setting of *Omnes de Saba*
  
8. Which composer of the High Renaissance is known most for their four-part settings of the Genevan Psalter?
  - a. Claude Goudimel
  
9. Name two of the earliest known composers, both associated with what we've come to call the Notre-Dame School?
  - a. Léonin and Pérotin
  
10. You are planning on a concert performance with orchestra of Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*. Describe the unusual nature of hiring your French horn players and your violinists.
  - a. Fauré's *Requiem* is scored for four French horns (though two can suffice) and only one violin. The violinist only plays on the *Sanctus* and *In paradisum* movements.

11. How does the Brahms *Requiem* differ in text from Fauré's and Duruflé's requiems?
- The texts of Brahms' seven movements are drawn from a wide range of passages from the Old and New Testaments, whereas the texts of Fauré's and Duruflé's requiems, and many others of similar scope, are drawn from the traditional rite of the Roman Catholic Requiem Mass.
12. Name the first movement and one of the later movements of G.F. Handel's *Coronation Anthems*.
- Zadok the Priest*
  - Let thy Hand be Strengthened*
  - The King shall Rejoice*
  - My Heart is Inditing*
13. If you were to program Marc-Antoine Charpentier's *Messe de la Minuit*, using its original scoring, for Christmas Eve, what instrumentalists would you need to hire.
- Strings, flutes and basso continuo (organ and bass violin)
14. Who wrote *Musikalische Exequien*?
- Heinrich Schütz
15. What is one musical component of a typical midweek English cathedral Evensong?
- (Introit)
  - Responses
  - Psalm(s)
  - Canticles -- Magnificat and Nunc dimittis
  - Anthem

16. What is the name of the oratorio from which Franz Liszt's *Die Seligkeiten* ("The Beatitudes") is extracted?
- Christus
17. Which German Romantic composer wrote *Lass dich nur nichts nicht dauren*? And describe the canonic treatment employed by the composer.
- Johannes Brahms. The anthem is a double canon, with the tenor imitating the soprano and the bass imitating the alto – both at the ninth and through all three verses. The outer verses are in E-flat Major, while the inner verse is in the relative minor key of C Minor.

## ChM 10. General Music Knowledge (20 points)

1. Name the American composer of the opera *Susannah*.
  - a. Carlisle Floyd
2. Name one of the collections of Gregorian chants compiled by the Monks of Solesmes.
  - a. Liber Usualis et al
3. State two of several ways the volume of a pipe organ can be increased
  - a. Adding stops
  - b. Opening the swell shades
  - c. Coupling manuals
4. Sir Hubert Parry's choral work *I Was Glad* is based on which psalm?
  - a. Psalm 122
5. Who is the first African American woman to have her music performed by a major symphony orchestra?
  - a. Florence Price
6. What is the term for keyboard music arranged from vocal music?
  - a. Intabulation
7. Name one of J.S. Bach's monumental collections of contrapuntal works.
  - a. Art of Fugue or Kunst der Fugue, WTC
8. On which day of the church year is it appropriate to sing the chorale *Da Jesus an dem Krueze stund*?
  - a. Good Friday
9. What are the two basic types of organ pipes?
  - a. Flues and reeds

10. The Three Choirs Festival is held in alternating years in three cities. From the following list, circle at least two.

a. London

b. Gloucester

c. Bristol

d. Liverpool

e. Hereford

f. Manchester

g. Worcester

h. Birmingham