



New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir

AUDITION GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you feel informed and prepared for your upcoming audition for the New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir 2027–28 cycle. It explains what will happen during each part of the audition and includes examples of the aural and sight-reading exercises.

You do not need to prepare every exercise in advance. The examples are provided simply so that you know what to expect on the day.

2026 audition panel

Brent Stewart

NZSSC Assistant Music Director and Pianist

Rachel Alexander-Sutherland

Former NZSSC Assistant Music Director and Vocal Consultant

Task 1: Song (30%)

You will be asked which song you have chosen and which key or starting pitch you would like. The key chord and starting note will be played for you before you begin.

We will be listening for:

- Intonation (ability to sing in tune)
- Vocal quality, tone and resonance
- Vocal technique
- Diction (clarity of text)
- Musical artistry, communication and performance

Your audition song will be sung **unaccompanied** and must be in English or te reo Māori.

We recommend choosing a short, simple folk song that you feel comfortable and confident singing. You are welcome to choose your own song, or you may select one from the suggestions below.

English songs:

Afton Water

Annie Laurie

The Ash Grove

Deep River

Early One Morning

Linden Lea

O Waly Waly

The Salley Gardens

Scarborough Fair

Shenandoah

Te Reo Māori waiata:

Hine e Hine

Pōkarekare Ana

Purea Nei

Whakaaria Mai

He Hōnore

Ka Waiata

If you choose a song that is not on the suggested list, you may bring one printed copy of the music for the panel if you are able to. This is optional.

Task 2: Vocal Exercises (20%)

One of the panellists will teach you some simple vocal exercises in different keys, all within a comfortable range for your voice.

This part of the audition will feel similar to a short voice lesson. The panellist will work with you and may offer suggestions or ask you to try an exercise in a slightly different way.

We will be considering:

- *How you respond to guidance*
- *Intonation (ability to sing in tune)*
- *Vocal quality, tone and resonance*
- *Vocal technique*
- *Vocal range*

Task 3: Pitch Recall (10%)

You will hear one pitch played on the piano and be asked to sing it back. This will be repeated with different pitches, all within your vocal range. We will tell you which syllable to use, such as “ah”, “ba”, “la” or “ma”. Examples are provided below.

We will be listening for:

- *Pitch recall and accuracy*

Pitch Recall Examples

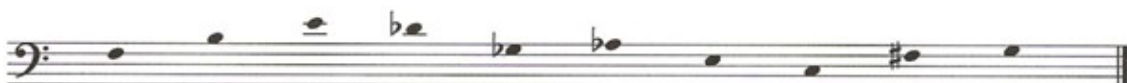
Soprano



Alto



Tenor



Bass



Task 4: Melodic Memory (5%)

You will hear a short melody played twice on the piano. You will then be asked to sing it back.

Three examples are provided below.

We will be listening for:

- *Melodic recall and accuracy*

Memory Examples:



Memory - play an octave lower for tenors and basses



Task 5: Harmonic Recall (10%)

In this section, you will be asked to identify and sing one note from a chord.

Each chord will be played separately, so you will respond to one chord at a time.

You may be asked to:

- Sing the higher or lower note of a two-part chord
- Sing the highest, middle or lowest note of a three-part chord
- Sing the soprano, alto, tenor or bass note of a four-part SATB chord, depending on your vocal range

You may also be shown the written music for a couple of chords before singing your notes.

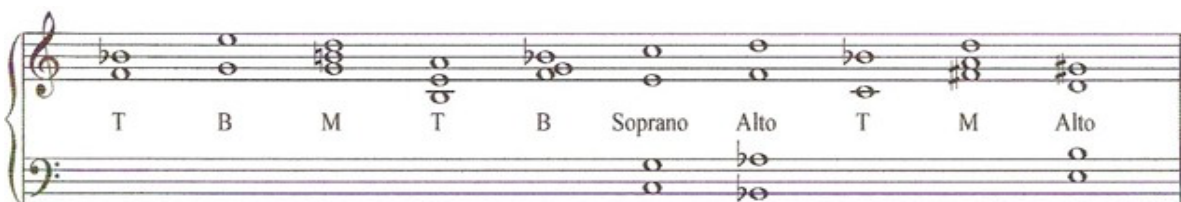
We will be listening for:

- *Harmonic awareness and accuracy*

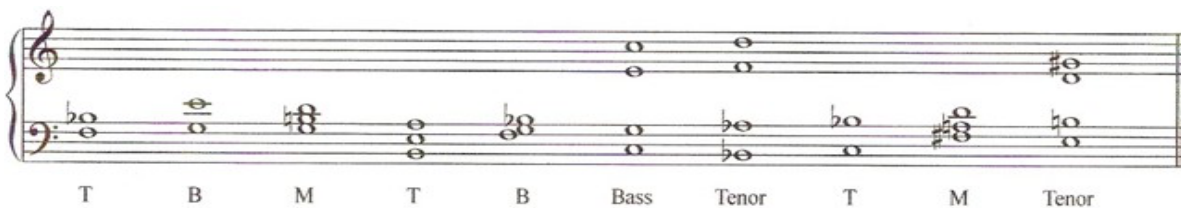
Harmonic Recall Examples

Note: T = top note, M = middle note, and B = bottom note

Soprano + Alto



Tenor + Bass



Task 6: Sight-Reading (5% rhythm, 10% pitch)

First, you will be asked to clap the rhythm of your sight-reading exercise. You will then sing the exercise unaccompanied.

Before you begin:

- The key chord and starting note will be played for you
- You will have approximately 30 seconds to look through the exercise
- You may quietly sing through it during this preparation time if you wish
- The key chord and starting note will be played again before you begin

You may also be asked to sing the exercise a second time while a panellist plays an accompaniment on the piano.

We will be listening for:

- *Rhythmic and sight-reading accuracy*

Sight-Reading Examples

Treble Clef



Bass Clef



Overall Impression (10%)

At the end of the audition, the panel will also consider your overall performance and the contribution you could make to the Choir.

We will be considering:

- *Vocal quality, tone and resonance*
- *Your potential contribution to the Choir*
- *Communication and presentation*
- *Your overall performance*

All the best for your audition. Kia kaha!