



Vocal Range: an Overview

F.G.J. Absil

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Abstract

Vocal ranges, as specified in literature, may vary considerably. This document gives an overview of various sources; vocal range will be presented for choir and solo voices.

Overview of vocal range

Figure 1 gives an overview of vocal ranges from a number of sources. These include classical orchestration textbooks, [1, 3, 5, 6] and jazz arranging books [4, 7]. The last line (Habermann and Garcia-Duprez) were taken from [2]. *Open notes* indicate the typical range for an average skilled singer (trained amateur), *black notes* indicate the extended range for an advanced, highly trained singer (professional). Also the difference between a solo and a chorus voice is indicated.

Legend:

Female voices: *Col*: Coloratura Voice, *S*: Soprano, *M-S*: Mezzo-Soprano, *A*: Alto,

Male voices: *T*: Tenor, *Bar*: Baritone, *B*: Bass, *B-Prof*: Basso Profundo.

References

- [1] Alfred Blatter, *Instrumentation and Orchestration, 2nd Edition*, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Schirmer, Belmont CA, ISBN 0-00-02-82-864570-70-7, 1997.
- [2] Ernst Haefliger, *Die Kunst des Gesangs, 4., erweiterte Auflage*, Schott, Mainz, ISBN 3-7957-8720-3, 2000.
- [3] Kent Kennan, Donald Grantham, *The Technique of Orchestration, 5th Edition*, Prentice-Hall Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ, ISBN 0-13-466327-6, 1997.
- [4] Nelson Riddle, *Arranged by Nelson Riddle*, Warner Bros. Publications Inc., Miami FL, ISBN 0-89724-954-2, 1985.
- [5] Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, *Principles of Orchestration, 2 Volumes*, Edt.: M. Steinberg, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, ISBN 486-21266-1, 1964.
- [6] Joseph Schillinger, *The Schillinger System of Musical Composition, 4th Edition. Volume I and II*, Da Capo Press, New York, 1946.
- [7] Don Sebesky, *The Contemporary Arranger, Definitive Edition*, Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., Van Nuys, CA, ISBN 0-88284-485-7, 1994.



Kennan Solo Chorus
S M-S A T Bar B S A T B

Blatter Solo Chorus
S M-S A T Bar B B-ProfS1 S2 M-S A T Bar B

Rimsky-Korsakow Solo Chorus
S M-S A T Bar B S A T B

Schillinger Chorus
S1 S2 A-Boy A T Bar B B-Prof

Riddle **Sebesky**
S A T Bar B S A T Bar B

Habermann **Garcia-Duprez**
Col S M-S A T Bar B S M-S A T Bar B

Figure 1: Overview of vocal ranges from various sources