
Music Lab

Assignment 2: Color and Range — Unit Two

In this assignment, let us compare operatic uses of these voice models in order to better understand their distinctions. Even if you are less familiar with opera the comparison may be useful since many composers of music theatre have been very familiar with uses of the voice types in opera and operetta or also composers in that genre.

Listen to recordings of the following selections and, if possible, follow along in the score. Based upon our examination of musical theatre roles, what kinds of elements do you notice in the suggested roles listed below?

Mezzo-Soprano

- **Carmen** — *Habañera*. This aria may be found in Act I and is sung by the main character, Carmen. Although the opera is tragic, the early acts are lighthearted and Carmen is very flirtatious in this number. *Composer*: Georges Bizet.
- **Samson et Dalila** — *Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix*. This aria may be found in Act II and is sung by Delilah as she tempts Samson into telling her his secret. *Composer*: Camille Saint-Saëns.
- **Vanessa** — *Must the winter come so soon?* This modern American opera is very dark and involves two women, Vanessa (*sop.*) and her niece Erika (*mezzo*). Vanessa is awaiting the return of her lover after twenty years. When his son arrives complications ensue. Erika sings the aria in the first act. *Composer*: Samuel Barber.

Soprano

- **The Magic Flute** — *Ach, ich fühl's*. This aria is may be found in Act II and is sung by Pamina who is in love with the tenor, Tamino. He is keeping a vow of silence and she does not understand why he will not speak to her. *Composer*: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
- **Porgy And Bess** — *Summertime*. This aria may be found at the beginning of the opera and is sung by Clara as she tries to encourage her baby to sleep. *Composer*: George Gershwin.
- **Susannah** — *The Trees On The Mountain*. Based on the biblical story of Susannah, this opera is set in Appalachia. This folk song opens the second act. *Composer*: Carlyle Floyd.

Coloratura-Soprano

- **The Magic Flute** — *Der Hölle Rache*. This famous revenge aria may be found in Act II and is sung by the Queen of the Night. *Composer*: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
- **Ariadne auf Naxos** — *Zerbinetta's Aria*. This aria plays out in the one act opera — though it is preceded by a lengthy prologue. A troupe of performers are forced to perform their comic and dramatic offerings at the same time. *Composer*: Richard Strauss.
- **Ballad of Baby** — *Gold Is A Fine Thing* “The Silver Aria” is sung by Baby Doe toward the end of Act One. The opera takes place in 1880's Colorado. *Composer*: Douglas Moore.
- **The Rake's Progress** — *No Word From Tom/I Go To Him*. Anne Truelove longs for her missing lover, Tom, and vows to go to London to search for him in this aria and cabaletta. *Composer*: Igor Stravinsky