

# Music Lab

## Female Voice Ranges

Mezzo-Soprano/Belt

*(Alto is a term more frequently used in choral music — including choral settings within a musical score. Most often soloists will identify themselves as mezzos or belt singers rather than altos.)*

Soprano

*(To establish octave numbers on the piano, start at the left and count from the first “C” on the left to the right. Each “C” begins a new octave, so that C4 is middle C and all the notes above it are in the “4” octave until you reach C5 which begins the next octave.)*

Coloratura Soprano

(Middle C is C4)

- Belt** Singing with an emphasis on the chest voice including carrying it up as far as possible
- Break** The area between the chest and the head voice sometimes called the *passagio*
- Chest** The lower area of the voice which resonates in the chest while singing
- Color** The overtones and qualities of the sound creating different qualities to the sound
- Coloratura** Rapid movement in the voice, usually associated with a very high voice
- Head** The upper area of the voice which resonates in the head or masque while singing
- Ingenua** The young lover within the story structure
- Leading Lady** The main female role — when not an ingenua — usually a bit older than the young lover
- Masque** The area behind the face where the head voice resonates
- Mezzo** Italian word for “medium” and refers to a lower soprano voice
- Optimal Range** The area of the voice which is produced with great ease and the desired color or timbre
- Passagio** Italian word for “passage” referring to the area between the head and the chest voice
- Possible Range** Vocal production from the lowest to highest produced notes regardless of color
- Range** The lower and upper limits to a given voice
- Soprano** The higher female voice usually modified by an adjective to give a more specific range
- Tessitura** The area of the voice where a composition primarily lies
- Timbre** Another word for color describing the overtones and qualities of the sound