

Music Lab

Male Voice Ranges

The diagram shows three musical staves representing male voice ranges. The Bass staff (bass clef) shows a range from G2 (two ledger lines below) to C4 (middle C, one ledger line below). The Baritone staff (bass clef) shows a range from Bb2 (two ledger lines below) to F4 (below staff). The Tenor staff (treble clef) shows a range from C3 (below staff) to A4 (below staff). A note for C4 is explicitly labeled as '(C4 is middle C)'.

(Baritenor is a term made up word that is used to refer to leading roles in early music theatre through the golden age from the late 1920's through the 1950's. The word is still used occasionally.)

(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.)

- Baritenor** A voice that has resonance while singing low, but can still sing high notes
- Baritone** A medium man's voice which has a lower color, but can sing higher than a bass
- Bass** The lowest voice for men which often has a warm, dark color
- 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
- Common Range** Used interchangeably with optimal range to describe the best range for a voice to sing
- Head** The upper area of the voice which resonates in the head or masque while singing
- Ingenue** The young lover within the story structure
- 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
- Patter Song** A song with many words which is half spoken and half sung (usually a baritone)
- Possible Range** Vocal production from the lowest to highest produced notes regardless of color
- Range** The lower and upper limits to a given voice
- Tenor** The highest male voice usually used for a leading role or ingenue
- Timbre** Another word for color describing the overtones and qualities of the sound