

## Contrabass

A [bass](#) who can sing G1 or lower is known as a sub-bass or **contrabass** singer, or a basso profundo. Generally, though, contrabasses are “lumped in” with other basses when parts are assigned.

## Bass

A **bass** singer is considered to be the lowest male part sung in multipart choirs. A typical singing range for a bass singer is F2-E4 with a comfortable range normally between G2 and A3. (A true bass singer is a rarity. In fact, most bass sections of choirs are comprised of baritones or **bass-baritones** who have access to lower notes.) The primo passaggio for a bass-baritone is A3, and his secondo passaggio at D4.

## Baritone

A **baritone** refers to the male singer whose range falls somewhere between that of a bass and that of a [tenor](#). A typical range for a baritone is F2-G4 in choral music and G2-E4 in operatic music. A baritone's primo passaggio will lie roughly at Bb3 or B3, and his secondo passaggio at Eb4 or E4, depending on the particular voice's weight.

## Tenor

A **tenor** is considered to be the highest male voice within the [modal register](#). A tenor's typical range in classical repertoire is roughly C3-G4, although the extremes of accessible range can vary greatly from singer to singer. A tenor's primo passaggio will lie roughly at C#4 (drammatico), D4 (lyric), Eb4 (leggiero) or E4 (tenorino), and the second passaggio at around F#4 (heavier tenor voice), G4 (lyric tenor voice) or A4 (leggiero).

## Countertenors

Males with high vocal ranges, or who can project [falsetto](#) pitches in a clear sound, are referred to as **countertenors**. Countertenors possess ranges equivalent to those of the female ranges [alto](#), [mezzo-soprano](#) and [soprano](#). (A male soprano is specifically referred to as **sopranist**).

## Contralto

**Contralto** is the deepest female singing voice, and the contralto range would be below that of an [alto](#). (Although the subtle distinction between contraltos and altos is typically only made in classical or operatic music, I want to include it here for informative purposes.)

## Alto

In choral music, **alto** is the lowest female voice part in a four-part [harmony](#), and the standard range is approximately E3-E5. An alto's first passaggio occurs around Eb4 or E4, and her second passaggio around Eb5 or E5. (Technically, 'alto' is not a voice type, but a designated vocal line in choral music. The range for the alto line in choral music is typically more suitable for mezzo-sopranos, the most common voice type amongst females, than true contraltos.)

## Mezzo-soprano

**Mezzo-soprano** refers to a female singer whose range lies between the [soprano](#) and the [alto/contralto](#) ranges, usually extending from A3-F5. While mezzo-sopranos generally have a slightly heavier, darker tone than sopranos, the mezzo-soprano voice resonates in a higher range (and has a different [timbre](#)) than that of an alto voice. A mezzo-soprano's primo passaggio lies around F4 or F#4, and her secondo passaggio around F5 or F#5.

## Soprano

**Sopranos** take the highest female part, which usually encompasses the [melody](#) of a song, in four-part choral style harmony. Typically, a soprano is expected to be able to sing from C4-A5, or even higher. A soprano's first registration pivotal point (passaggio) lies around F#4 or G4, and her second around F#5 or G5.

## Sopranino

Sopranos who can sing higher than C#6 are known as a **sopraninos**, although they are most likely to be called sopranos. (Of course, there are altos and mezzo-sopranos who are also capable of singing these higher pitches. This is why registration events are more important and accurate in determining Fach than vocal range.)

