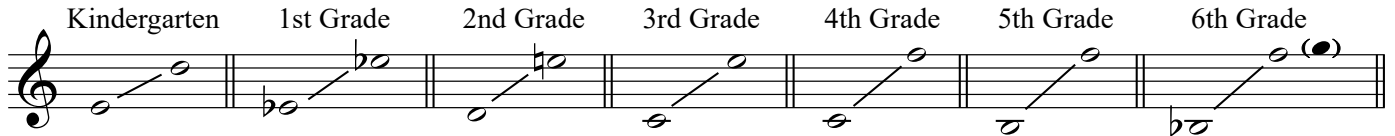


## SUMMARY OF VOICE RANGES AND TESSITURA

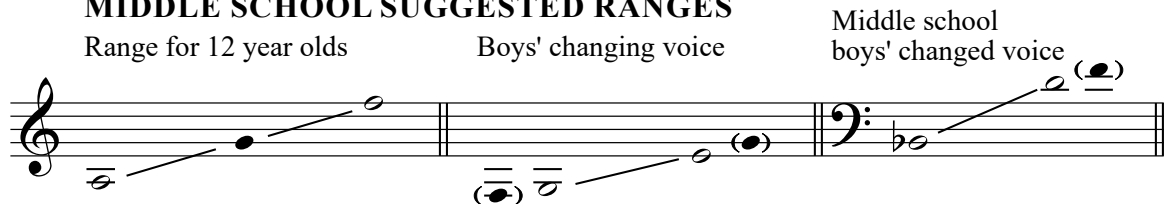
### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SUGGESTED RANGES



The children's choir leader should try to achieve a light, clear tone quality throughout the child's entire vocal range. Be conscious of tessitura, so that no song remains consistently high or low, straining the voice.

From Kenneth Osbeck, *The Ministry of Music*, Kegel Publications, p.72

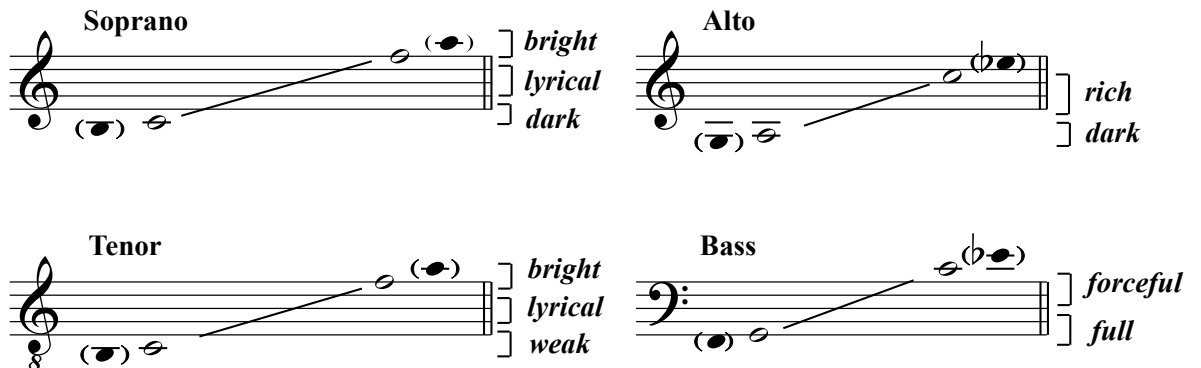
### MIDDLE SCHOOL SUGGESTED RANGES



The rate at which boys move through the maturation stages of the changing voice varies from individual and in time, but the process is predictable. The changing voice is less agile and requires care in choice of repertoire to accommodate the shifting of voice range, but the emphasis should be on utilizing the high part as long as possible. Middle school girls should continue to rotate between high and low parts as their voice matures later than boys.

From Collin Durant, *Choral Conducting: Philosophy and Practice*, Routledge, p.159

### HIGH SCHOOL/AVERAGE ADULT RANGES



The voice range is generally defined as the highest and lowest pure tones that are singable by a particularly voice. The choral conductor must not only be familiar with ranges, but be conscious of the quality, color and timbre over the spectrum of each voice part.

From Kenneth Osbeck, *The Ministry of Music*, Kegel Publications, p.54

### SOPRANO RANGE AND TESSITURA

A musical staff in treble clef showing a melodic line. The notes are black dots on the staff. A blue line connects the notes from the middle of the staff to the top, labeled "soprano tessitura". Above the staff, a bracket labeled "chest" covers the lower notes, and another bracket labeled "head" covers the higher notes. Arrows point to the transition points with labels "adjust out of chest voice" and "adjust into head voice". A dashed line below the staff indicates the "practical soprano range".

### ALTO RANGE AND TESSITURA

A musical staff in treble clef showing a melodic line. The notes are black dots on the staff. A blue line connects the notes from the middle of the staff to the top, labeled "alto tessitura". Above the staff, a bracket labeled "chest" covers the lower notes, and another bracket labeled "head" covers the higher notes. Arrows point to the transition points with labels "adjust out of chest voice" and "into head voice". A dashed line below the staff indicates the "practical alto range".

### TENOR RANGE AND TESSITURA

A musical staff in treble clef showing a melodic line. The notes are black dots on the staff. A blue line connects the notes from the middle of the staff to the top, labeled "tenor tessitura". Above the staff, a bracket labeled "chest" covers the lower notes, and another bracket labeled "head to falsetto" covers the higher notes. Arrows point to the transition points with labels "adjust out of chest voice" and "into head voice". A dashed line below the staff indicates the "practical tenor range".

### BASS RANGE AND TESSITURA

A musical staff in bass clef showing a melodic line. The notes are black dots on the staff. A blue line connects the notes from the middle of the staff to the top, labeled "bass tessitura". Above the staff, a bracket labeled "chest" covers the lower notes, and another bracket labeled "head" covers the higher notes. Arrows point to the transition points with labels "adjust out of chest voice" and "into head". A dashed line below the staff indicates the "practical bass range".

The term *tessitura* refers to the area of a melody where most of the notes lie. While there is a place for a few notes outside the predominant *tessitura* of a song, too many notes outside the comfortable part range will result in a pushed sound and place undue strain on the voice. Approximations of lower and upper pivot points are indicated by voice part above. Singers learn to smoothly anticipate and blend these changes between voice registers. The goal is one seamless voice without an audible transition between registers. The most "carrying power" (without amplification) occurs above the chest register.

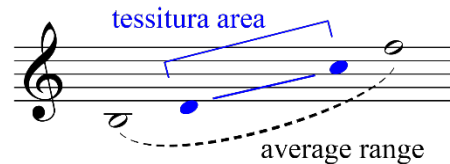
From Bettina Sheppard, *The Everything Singing Book*, Adams Media pp.99-109.

## Appendix 13.3

# THE ADOLESCENT MALE SINGER: UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGE

Adapted from an article by Anthony L. Berrisi  
From *Choristers Guild Letters* – January, 1996, used with permission

**UNCHANGED VOICE**  
(boy soprano)



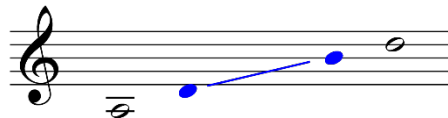
With the onset of puberty, the boys' voice undergoes a change that is, for some, dramatic in its speed of progression, and for others, so gradual as to be almost unnoticed. During the process, the larynx grows in size and the vocal folds within it thicken to approximately double in length accounting for the vocal transformation in range and tone quality. As the voice progresses through the process, the range lowers (approximately an octave) and the tone moves closer to that of an adult male.

## FOUR MAJOR STAGES OF CHANGE

While the speed and pace of the process may be unpredictable, the unfolding stages of the change are predictable:

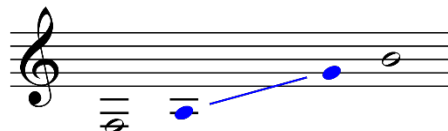
Stage 1: **Beginning mutation stage** (boy alto or sing specially written part)

Many of the boy soprano characteristics remain. In the lower register, the voice remains clear and retains flexibility. However in the higher register, the tone becomes increasingly unclear and the range narrows as this stage progresses. Because the areas of the vocal range sung with relative ease (known as *tessitura*) is similar to those of the unchanged voice, there is often confusion with part assignment. The following represents a “safe” average performance area comparing the unchanged voice with the changing voice at this early stage.



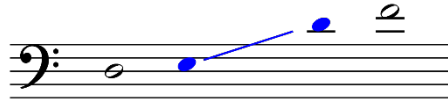
Stage 2a: **High mutation stage** (often called the *cambiata* stage, sing alto or high tenor part)

Drastic vocal alterations, which include the vocal range lowering and narrowing, characterize this phase. The lower half of the range assumes a more mature tone quality, while the top half retains childlike qualities. Vocal flexibility is reduced and the overall tone takes on a huskier quality caused by the thickening of the vocal folds. Even boys who formerly matched pitched well are, for a time, plagued with a hesitancy and disorientation with placing pitches in their “new” emerging voice. Further along in this stage, they achieve greater stability with range, tone quality and the ability to match pitch resumes.



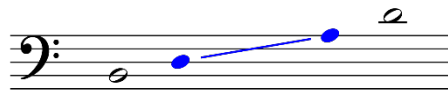
Stage 2b: **Transitional mutation stage** (sing tenor part)

In this brief stage, the alteration of a more mature tone quality covers the entire range. Notably there is a range slide to the new baritone range and the voice becomes more flexible.



Stage 3: **New baritone stage** (sing limited baritone part)

Initially the “new baritone” singer has a tone color like a young tenor, but from this stage voices mature to either tenor or bass. The falsetto voice becomes usable although the shift between the full voice and falsetto can still be dodgy.



From Anthony L. Berrisi, *Chorister Guild Letters*, pp.8-9.