

Repertoire for Singers

A Quick Reference Guide by Henry Hubbard

Levels:

B – Beginner

I – Intermediate

A – Advanced

Rubric:

Each song/aria has been assessed by their level (B/I/A) in 3 main areas:

Rhythm – Is the rhythm easy to articulate and understand? Is it sight-readable or will it take hours just speaking the text?

Range/Melody – What are the registration challenges of this piece? Is the range small or large? Will the student have trouble with leaps, or is it mostly step-wise motion?

Harmony – Can the student find their pitches easily? What level of relative pitch is needed? Will they need to retain a pitch through harmonic changes in the accompaniment?

Other Notes – Considerations such as: Tessitura, Phrasing, Other Developmental Challenges

Based on these assessments, each song gets an overall rating of B, I, or A*

*Advanced ratings will happen rarely. At this point in a student's development, he/she/they will most likely be choosing repertoire based on their actual performing opportunities. The pedagogical importance of choosing songs for an advanced singer therefore carries less weight, as the singer should have the expertise and self-awareness to guide their own path.

Other Comments:

It is very easy to give students the same beginning rep over and over. A few times in this list, I have used the same songs very intentionally. In these cases, I feel like they are standards of rep that should be understood by every singer. Otherwise, I tried to pull from lesser known beginning songs. This would hopefully give students an edge in early competition settings, to stand out from the average student.

Sometimes a piece will show up on this list that is out of the realm of the beginning/intermediate student. I believe this can be a good experience, as long as it is not discouraging for the student. Certain works, like that of Debussy, are difficult but so beautiful that it gives a student a view of where they will be with hard work.

Soprano

Italian/Spanish

- **(B) Pur Dicesti, O Bocca Bella – Lotti**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Great for teaching doubled consonants, and ornamentation.*
- **(B) Tu Lo Sai - Torelli**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Very short, a few big leaps, so it would make a good audition piece for a beginner of confidence and talent.*
- **(B) Sebben, Crudele - Caldara**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This piece is very repetitive, so would be good for teaching Italian to a beginner.*
- **(B/I) Nina - Pergolesi**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I (some higher range and leaps)*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: In the minor mode. Also a little more dramatically demanding than some beginner rep.*
- **(B) Caro Mio Ben**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: The pinnacle of beginning repertoire. Only use if the student has never heard Italian before.*
- **(B) L'Ho Perduta - Mozart**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Short, dramatic. A really great introduction into Mozart.*

German

- **(B) Nacht und Traume - Schubert**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Very diatonic. Great introduction into Schubert art song*
- **(B/I) Widmung - Schumann**

- *Rhythm: B*
- *Range/Melody: I*
- *Harmony: B*
- *Other Notes: This one is a classic, and is always fun to sing/ teach. A little expressive for the very beginning singer. Some rhythmic changes and accompaniment make it hard to do well.*
- **(I) Vergebliches Standchen - Brahms**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: This one has a LOT of leaps, so it is very good for teaching beginning vocal agility.*
- **(B) Mondnacht - Schumann**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Lives a little higher than some beginning songs, so good for teaching a higher tessitura.*
- **(I) Standchen - Brahms**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: This piece jumps all over in range, but it generally connects big leaps with arpeggios, which makes it nice to teach range. Also, it is very short, so it may be daunting but it is not too demanding.*
- **(B) Bescheidene Liebe - Wolf**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This lives high, but it is still pretty simple and strophic. The accompaniment supports the voice well, and generally doubles it. Great way to introduce strophic songs.*

French

- **(I) Nuit d'étoiles - Debussy**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: This song is difficult, but is extremely worth it for the student if the teacher thinks they can handle a challenge.*
- **(B) Après un Réve - Faure**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: This is a good one for teaching triplets and slightly more romantic harmony.*
- **(B) Il Neige - Bemberg**

- *Rhythm: B*
- *Range/Melody: B*
- *Harmony: B*
- *Other Notes: Leaps, but still a very diatonic and a very simple structure.*
- **(B) Les Cloches - Debussy**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Stays in middle voice, then big leap, so good for students who are just learning to access the higher end.*
- **(B) L'Heure Exquise - Hahn**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This has a large range, but is slow and gives the singer time to traverse it.*
- **(B) Vieille Chanson - Bizet**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This is a little long, but very simple for a beginning student with enough focus.*

English

- **(B) The Call – Ralph Vaughan Williams**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Very simple song, poses a slight challenge of being repetitive. It is a good song for learning how to sing lists.*
- **(I) Sure on this Shining Night - Barber**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Not as straightforward in terms of harmony or range, but a pretty simple song overall. Should be sung by students with higher natural voices.*
- **(I) Love is a Plaintive Song (Patience) – Gilbert and Sullivan**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Good intro to arias. It's a nice melody and not too serious. It gets a little big for the very inexperienced singer.*
- **(B) Here Amid the Shady Woods - Handel**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*

- *Other Notes: Good introduction to Handel, very predicable melody.*
- **(B) Vilia (The Merry Widow) – Lehar, arr. Higgs**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This is such a beautiful melody, it has some good opportunities to extend into the a high range, but is not too demanding otherwise.*
- **(B) Animal Crackers - Hageman**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: This song is honestly pretty stupid. However, it is cute and very simple. It forces the singer to sing all over the harmonies, so it is great to set a basis of tonality.*

Mezzo-Soprano

Italian/Spanish

- **(B) Voi Che Sapete**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* I
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Good introduction to arias. A little high, so better for the younger mezzo. It also briefly reaches low, so it is a nice opportunity to explore true chest mixing.
- **(B) Caro Mio Ben**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* B
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* The pinnacle of beginning repertoire. Only use if the student has never heard Italian before.
- **(B) Star Vicino – Salvator Rosa**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* B
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Such a simple Italian song. Very stepwise motion, with light melismas.
- **(B/I) Nina - Pergolesi**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* I (some higher range and leaps)
 - *Harmony:* I
 - *Other Notes:* In the minor mode. Also a little more dramatically demanding than some beginner rep.
- **(B) Se Tu M'Ami - Pergolesi**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* I
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Very simple, leaps around a little, but approachable for most beginning students. It has multiple sections which makes it good to teach collaboration with a pianist.
- **(B) Vittoria, mio core! - Carissimi**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* B
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Good for introducing melismatic passages. Also, the middle sections are semi-recitative, so it may be good for teaching the dramatic purpose of text.

German

- **(I) Wie Melodien – Brahms**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* I
 - *Harmony:* I

- *Other Notes: This one is a little harder to do well, but is pretty straightforward. It is challenging but beautiful enough to be worth it for the student.*
- **(B) Die Mainacht - Brahms**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This song teaches patience for students, as it is best done slowly. It stays low, but goes up in range at dramatic points, which helps out the breath needed to support the higher notes.*
- **(I) Morgen - Strauss**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This song is beautiful, and a student will be forced to carry the beauty into the higher notes.*
- **(B) Du Bist Die Ruh - Schubert**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Phrases are a bit longer, so may take more breath management for a young student.*
- **(I) Allerseelen - Strauss**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Some bigger leaps, and a more disjunct melody.*
- **(B) Volksliedchen Schumann**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Very short, good minor B section. Octave leaps, but otherwise in a good range.*

French

- **(I) Chanson Triste - Duparc**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Rolling accompaniment, forces the singer to keep good time themselves and lead.*
- **(I) Clair de Lune - Faure**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*

- *Other Notes: Very long, flowing lines, somewhat hard to follow for beginning student. Places a lot of focus on the words and how they form into sentences.*
- **(I) Elegie - Massenet**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Many leaps, but mostly in the tonic/ dominant triad.*
- **(B) Green - Faure**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Very good introduction into French, most high notes are prepped by runs upwards. Many words, but short song, good for digging into French diction.*
- **(B) A Chloris - Hahn**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Slow, not many words. Good for teaching closed [oe] sound.*
- **(I) Ouvre ton Couer - Bizet**
 - *Rhythm: A*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This one is a stretch, because the melody is hard, and filled with melismas. However, it is a good foray into more vocal agility.*

English

- **(B) Orpheus With His Lute – William Schumann**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Good introduction into minor mode and variations on it.*
- **(B) Weep No More - Handel**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Very repetitive in text, good for teaching differentiation, and very classical baroque.*
- **(B) Christopher Robin is Saying His Prayers – Fraser-Simson**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This one is just cute, and everyone loves Christopher Robin, so it is good for younger students. Also, good introduction into character acting.*
- **(B) This Little Rose – William Roy**
 - *Rhythm: B*

- *Range/Melody: B*
- *Harmony: B*
- *Other Notes: Good use of triplets, very simple song.*
- **(B) (I'm Called) Little Buttercup (From HMS Pinafore) – Gilbert and Sullivan**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Intro into operetta and recit. Has the same feel as a children's song, so tune is easy. Maybe slightly inappropriate for the very young singer, however.*
- **(I) O Sleep, Why Dost Thou Leave Me - Handel**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Good opportunity for students to learn ornamentation in a simple structure.*

Tenor

Italian/Spanish (in this case, also Latin)

- **(B) Star Vicino – Salvator Rosa**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* B
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Such a simple Italian song. Very stepwise motion, with light melismas.
- **(B) In Amor Ci Vuol Ardir – Antonia Bembo**
 - *Rhythm:* I
 - *Range/Melody:* B
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* A lot of notes, good introduction to melisma.
- **(I) O Sole Mio – Ernesto di Capua**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* A
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* This is hard to sing well, but can be good for a singer who is trying to maintain a higher tessitura.
- **(B) Vittoria, mio core! - Carissimi**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* B
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Good for introducing melismatic passages. Also, the middle sections are semi-recitative, so it may be good for teaching the dramatic purpose of text.
- **(B) Panis Angelicus - Franck**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* B
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Good for teaching the basic vowels of Latin, which can be good for getting an open sound.
- **(I) Ideale - Tosti**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* I
 - *Harmony:* I
 - *Other Notes:* This song is long and has a lot of text, with a wide range of emotion. If the tenor has a highly placed voice, this is nice for traversing the passaggio.

German

- **(B) An Silvia – Franz Schubert**
 - *Rhythm:* B
 - *Range/Melody:* I
 - *Harmony:* B
 - *Other Notes:* Some big leaps, but they are rare in a very simple melody.
- **(B) Die Forelle – Franz Schubert**

- *Rhythm: I*
- *Range/Melody: B*
- *Harmony: B*
- *Other Notes: Storytelling and good for starting to teach fast German and very light coloratura.*
- **(B) Nun Wandre, Maria – Hugo Wolf**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Slow, so phrasing is somewhat difficult. It is also long and slow moving, so it is a good challenge to memorize.*
- **(I) Ständchen - Schubert**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Good for moving the voice around, some agility with big leaps.*
- **(B/I) Widmung - Schumann**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This one is a classic, and is always fun to sing/teach. A little expressive for the very beginning singer. Some rhythmic changes and accompaniment make it hard to do well.*
- **War es also Gemeint (From Die Schone Mullerin) - Schubert**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Good introduction into song cycles, and telling a story. This one is great for popping up to the passaggio for a few slow exposures.*

French

- **(B) Adieu – Gabriel Faure**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Très simple. It is a great for teaching lighter romantic music.*
- **(B/I) Sylvie – Gabriel Faure**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: This one jumps around quite a bit, making it somewhat harmonically difficult. This should be a student's second or third Faure song, once they have a handle on the basics.*
- **(B) A Chloris - Hahn**
 - *Rhythm: B*

- Range/Melody: B
- Harmony: B
- Other Notes: *Slow, not many words. Good for teaching closed [oe] sound.*
- **(B/I) Nell – Gabriel Faure**
 - Rhythm: B
 - Range/Melody: I
 - Harmony: I
 - Other Notes: *Another Faure, probably not the first for a student. The harmonies are a little harder to follow in the melody, which makes it a bit more challenging.*
- **(B) Lydia- Faure**
 - Rhythm: B
 - Range/Melody: B
 - Harmony: I
 - Other Notes: *This is the introduction to French song. Speaks for itself.*
- **(B) Ouvre tes Yeux Bleus - Massenet**
 - Rhythm: B
 - Range/Melody: I
 - Harmony: B
 - Other Notes: *This is another lyric French piece. The way it arpeggiates up to the top of the voice is nice for teaching, then it dips low to show the full consistency of the range.*

English

- **(B) Fear No More the Heat O' The Sun – Roger Quilter**
 - Rhythm: B
 - Range/Melody: B
 - Harmony: B
 - Other Notes: *Simple song, doesn't really go above second, so nice for zone work.*
- **(B/I) Ca' The Yowes – Benjamin Britten**
 - Rhythm: B
 - Range/Melody: I
 - Harmony: I
 - Other Notes: *This one is always interesting for beginning singers. It teaches new dialects which people are used to doing only in impressions and accents in America.*
- **(B/I) Go the Distance (Hercules) – Alan Menken**
 - Rhythm: B
 - Range/Melody: B
 - Harmony: B
 - Other Notes: *This is a good way to take something most tenors know, and reframe it to show them what is different about classical singing. Just cut the "Michael Bolton" middle section, and it is reasonable for the young tenor.*
- **(I) I'll Sail Upon the Dogstar – Henry Purcell**
 - Rhythm: I
 - Range/Melody: I
 - Harmony: B
 - Other Notes: *Perfect for teaching beginning coloratura.*

- **(B) Go, Lovely Rose – Roger Quilter**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: So, so simple.*
- **When I Think Upon the Maidens - Head**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Funny song, teaches how to sing in character and say some ridiculous things. Also has a pretty dramatic approach to the top.*

Baritone/Bass

Italian/Spanish

- **(B) Toglietemi La Vita Ancor - Scarlatti**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: For the higher baritone. The text setting is good for learning the natural lilt of Italian.*
- **(B) Amarilli, Mia Bella - Caccini**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Small range, very simple song, ability for ornamentation at the end.*
- **(B) Il Mio Bel Foco - Conti**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Introduction into recit. Some leaps and melismas, but all easily found in the harmony.*
- **(B) Sebben, Crudele - Caldara**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Another classic starting song, very stepwise and simple.*
- **(B) Ah! Mio Cor - Handel**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Good intro into arias, this one is longer than a lot of songs.*
- **(B) Star Vicino – Salvator Rosa**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Such a simple Italian song. Very stepwise motion, with light melismas.*

German

- **(I) Morgen - Strauss**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This song is beautiful, and a student will be forced to carry the beauty into the higher notes.*
- **(B) Der Wanderer - Schubert**
 - *Rhythm: B*

- *Range/Melody: I*
- *Harmony: B*
- *Other Notes: Dramatic, good for getting a better handle on German text. Somewhat wide range, not for the very beginner.*
- **(B) Zueinung - Strauss**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Hard to express well, so good for students who might need to get better at declaiming text.*
- **(B) An die Musik - Schubert**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Repetitive, short phrases.*
- **(I) Rastlose Liebe - Schubert**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Very short but very difficult. Great for forcing a student to get comfortable with fast German. Collaborative pianist must be good, however.*

French

- **(B) Plaisir d'amour - Martini**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Simple song, also sounds like "Can't Help Falling in Love" which makes it nice for students who are not used to classical rep.*
- **(B) Le Secret - Faure**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: This one is a little challenging for intonation because the accompaniment is thin, so it requires the singer to be confident in his line.*
- **(B) Nocturne - Faure**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Small range, short song, overall very simple song. Requires the same kind of solid harmonic skills as Le Secret.*
- **(I) Villanelle - Berlioz**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*

- *Other Notes: This one is more demanding, because of the harmonic changes and range of tempos and interpretive markings.*
- **(I) Chanson d'avril - Bizet**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Good for trying out a higher extension, because it is all stepwise upwards.*

English

- **(B) Whither Must I Wander – Vaughan Williams**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes – Long phrases help teach good breath support. Dramatic, good for teaching the range of emotions needed.*
- **(I) Arm, Arm Ye Brave - Handel**
 - *Rhythm: I*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: This one is tough, but is pretty standard. Wide range, also some melismas, but they are mostly sequences.*
- **(B) Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind - Quilter**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: The student must have a good idea of pitch, as this melody jumps around a bit.*
- **(B) Willow, Tit-Willow (Patience) – Gilbert and Sullivan**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Introduction into operetta and telling a story.*
- **(B) Some Enchanted Evening (South Pacific) – Richard Rodgers**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: I*
 - *Harmony: B*
 - *Other Notes: Good way to teach dramatic phrasing through a well-known song.*
- **(B) Weep You No More - Quilter**
 - *Rhythm: B*
 - *Range/Melody: B*
 - *Harmony: I*
 - *Other Notes: Very simple. A few weird harmonies and leaps to challenge the student.*