

Pop/Rock Songs

A Short List to Make Everyone Happy

Hi Friends!

I hope this helps you in finding songs for your **microphone-music singers**. It's a VERY short list, and also very self-explanatory. I only wrote the ranges, not the keys, because it's both helpful and liberating to think that way. I also included other artists that are like the artist who's song is on the list. That way, if you'd like to look around yourself you'll have some ideas.

The style choices here are very limited. I did not include jazz or musical theater, both because they're not "pop" per se, and because I assume you already have knowledge of those genres. I also did not include anything extreme (like Metal or Stadium Rock) or any really difficult or rangy songs (so no Jennifer Hudson, Kelly Clarkson, or Adam Levine).

I hope this gives you some ideas! Have fun!

- Meredith

NOTE: Songs are indicated by their ranges only. M=major, m=minor, p=perfect

Song	Artist	Style	Range	If the student likes;	Notes	Difficulty
Don't Know Why	Nora Jones	Singer/Song writer	M9	Any jazz/pop. Or, artists Carole King, James Taylor, Allison Krauss, Sarah McLaughlin, Ellie Goulding, Esperanza Spalding, Joni Mitchell	Unnecessary low pickup note in verse. Ignore it. Sing a different note. This is a nice easy song that facilitates textural head register and register breaks as well as easy mix.	1
Sunrise	Nora Jones	Singer/song writer	M9	Any jazz/pop. Or, artists Carole King, James Taylor, Allison Krauss, Sarah McLaughlin, Ellie Goulding, Esperanza Spalding, Joni Mitchell	Gentle, easy-breezy song.	2
The Way I Am	Ingrid Michaelson	Singer/Song writer	M9	Pop ballad: Joshua Radin, Lenka, Colbie Caillat, KT Tunstall, Jason Mraz, KD Lange	Simple, short, easy.	2
Never Gonna Let You Down	Colbie Caillat	Singer/Song writer	M9	Happy pop: Ingrid Michaelson, Pharrel Williams, Jason Mraz, Joe Jonas, Zendaya, Sabrina Carpenter	Happy, easy song.	2.5

No One	Alicia Keys	R&B Med Ballad	M9	R&B Piano Singer/Songwriter: Rhianna, Stevie Wonder, Michael Bublé, Billy Joel, Carol King, Lauren Hill	Solid quarter note track; good for people learning to feel how the melody fits with the groove. Long vowels, and bright vowels on high notes.	4
Count On Me	Bruno Mars	Happy Pop	P11	Happy pop:	Nice combination of bouncy-pop narrative verse and long-vowel chorus.	3
Everything I Wanted	Billie Eilish	Singer/Songwriter	P12	Emo Singer/Songwriter: Ellie Goulding, Grace Potter, Paramore, Evanescence, Sabrina Carpenter, Adele	The song is good, the student's interpretation will have to be more "their own" in order to make this song worthwhile in the studio. Her key is really low. Making it higher and allowing for vocal breaks – or mixed voice – is a better option.	3
Not Over You	Gavin DeGraw	Piano Man, Med tempo	M9	Piano Man Medium Ballad: Billy Joel, Elton John, John Mayer, Shawn Mendez, John Legend, Carol King	High note is a quick quarter; student doesn't have time to be afraid of it.	3
I'm a Lady	Meghan Trainor	R&B Dance	m10	Diva Funk: Rhianna, Mary J. Blige, Beyoncé, En Vogue,	Woman power song. For a student who wants to dip their toe in rap/hip hop. Vocal slides and embellishments. Some	5

				Luther Vandross, Sia, Natasha Bedingfield	riffs, but not too many and they're basically the same thing every time.	
Genesis	Dua Lipa	Pop Ballad	P11	Diva Pop: Adele, Demi Lovato, Zendaya, Selena Gomez, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga	This singer is hugely popular. For your low female or tenor voices who are learning high blend. The chorus of this song is good for touching the blended notes without trying to dig into them. It has an Adele feel to it.	4
A Thousand Years	Christina Perri	Singer/Songwriter	P12	Piano Pop ballad: Paramore, Carole King, Taylor Swift, Bonnie Raitt, Sarah Bareilles, Mary Lambert	This was from a Twilight movie. The original key is really low. The range stated is the actual range, but you can reduce it by P4 by not singing one phrase up an octave, as written.	2
Cups	Anna Kendrick	Country Folk (from Pitch Perfect)	P8	Peppy country folk: Allison Kraus, KT Tunstun, Vance Joy, Christina Perri, Meghan Trainor	Fun, easy, cute, very repetitive with predictable melody. This is a good song for people with limited ability. Especially if they liked the Pitch Perfect movies.	2
Rainbows	Kacey Musgraves	Country Folk	P12	Ballad: Miranda Lambert, Michelle Branch, Lady	Beautiful song with a lovely melody. Opportunity to use textures and register breaks. Use Kacey as model for that.	3

				Antebellum, Sheryl Crow, Allison Kraus		
So Far Away	Carol King	Pop Ballad	m10	Retro Pop/R&B ballad: Carly Simon, James Taylor, John Legend, Beatles	Nice pop ballad with small range.	2
Stay with Me	Sam Smith	Pop Ballad	P8	Ballad: Michael Bublé, Shawn Mendez, Sam Cook, The Beatles, Luther Vandross, Etta James	Retro pop ballad. Really simple and repetitive with a small range. Good for a beginner.	1
At Last	Etta James	R&B Ballad	P11	Motown Ballad: Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Janis Joplin, Lady Gaga	Retro R&B ballad. A standard. Easy to negotiate, lots of style without a lot of riffs. Many singers can do this without having to negotiate into their mix.	3
A Song For You	Donny Hathaway	R&B Ballad	M14	R&B Ballad: Luther Vandross, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Michael Bublé, Aretha Franklin	Just a gorgeous ballad. Nice for a baritone. You can embellish like mad, just sing the melody as is, or anything in between. High notes can be blended or pure head/falsetto	4
Carolina In My Mind	James Taylor	Singer/song writer	M6	Easy-breezy: Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Nancy Griffith, Lucy Kaplanski	Nice transition song for someone who's just learning pop styles.	2

Already Gone	Eagles	Rockin' Country	M9	Eagles uptempo: It's the Eagles. Love 'em or hate 'em.	This song has a small range and a narrative verse. The chorus holds the same pitch four times for 5 beats on different vowels. Really good for getting the hang of vowel modification in mix.	2
You and The Mona Lisa	Shawn Colvin	Singer/song writer	m7	Medium tempo:	Small range, no drama, very narrative. Good for your intelligent singer who wants to sing a good song but doesn't have a lot of chops yet.	2
Passionate Kisses	Mary Chapin Carpenter	Easy Listenin' Rock	M10	Easy rock: Lucinda Williams, Emmy Lou Harris, James Taylor, Ed Sheeran, Lenny Kravitz	Fun song for grown-ups. Can be done in any number of styles. Three verses, three choruses, Bob's your uncle. No pressure to embellish. Can be sung as written.	3
Sucker	Jonas Bros	Upbeat pop	M9	Regulation pop: Michael Jackson, Katy Perry, One Direction, Britney Spears, Sabrina Carpenter	Small range, and two simple melodic ideas on top of a great groove. What's not to love? Oh yes, the video is PG as well...	2

Other Ideas & References

A few helpful sites:

MyVocalRange.com can be a quick reference to look up the range of many pop songs.

MusicNotes.com can also be handy reference for vocal ranges, and will also print out music in different keys.

Karaoke-Version.com has backing tracks in many keys, as do several other sites.

Student engagement idea:

Have your student write a list of 10 songs they like, or would like to sing. Keep that list with their stuff. When it's time for a new piece that will be your reference. Just because they wrote the song on the list does not mean you're going to work on it in lessons, but you might. And the list will help guide you in making appropriate song choices.

Studio performance idea:

Have a studio theme for everyone who will be taking part in your next recital. Everyone learns at least one song in the Theme Genre. This makes your task of finding the perfect fit a lot more relaxed. It also gives you an opportunity to expose your students to different types of music. Ideas for themes:

- Jazz
- Motown
- Country
- A decade (songs from the 80's)
- Singer/Songwriter
- Band songs
- Diva Songs
- Songs by a prolific band or songwriter (e.g. Eagles songs)

Time investment idea:

Start a file where you can cross reference songs. Mine is still a 3-ring binder with tabs. My tabs are:

- Small Range
- Easy Melody
- Style
- Blending
- Bad-Ass

I have lists of songs under each of those. And I also subdivide a bit. So, under “Easy Melody” I have a page for adults and a page for teens. I might write the same song under Blending and Style, if the song does both those things. Under “Bad Ass” I have a page for R&B/riff songs, one for diva songs with high mix, and one for emo band songs. (If you’re wondering where I would put Kelly Clarkson, who would fit under all those categories, it’s diva. Duh.)

You do NOT need to give yourself another project to accomplish with this reference binder. It can be an ongoing thing. When you work on a song with a student, and you get to know the song, just jot it down on one of your lists.