

Let's Talk Dusty!

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Dusty's vocal range and voice type

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Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48356)

by **Kyles Beguiles** » Mon Feb 14, 2011 2:25 pm

I have seen several youtube videos for well-known singers showing their vocal range in octaves and giving examples of them singing various notes as proof. It then reveals their vocal type - e.g. coloratura soprano, etc.

Has any such thing been made for Dusty? If not, does anyone know her actual vocal range and type?

Despite her reported bouts with vocal strain, her voice often seemed so elastic and multifaceted - she could sing almost anything.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48487)

by **mnmcv1** » Tue Feb 15, 2011 7:01 pm

great question Kyles- I've never seen such a video made for Dusty (someone should get on that! 😊).

And I know Dusty's range has been discussed more than once in print (I also recall that lady in the South Bank show giving her own rather spot-on observation)...but for the life of me I can't recall her actual classification, although a quick uneducated guess would be she was some type of contralto...but dont quote me. 🙄

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48525)

by **st louis blues** » Wed Feb 16, 2011 3:51 am

If I remember correctly the term used was either castrato or castrati. I think this was used when talking about Dusty's lower range. However, I looked up the definition and it refers to a male singer castrated before puberty so the lower range does not develop fully.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48531)

by **jeffery** » Wed Feb 16, 2011 7:44 am

In print they frequently refer to Dusty's voice as "husky". I always thought that missed the mark, and was some sort of butch reference. Contralto sounds pretty close. 😊

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48549)

by **FairyDust** » Wed Feb 16, 2011 10:19 am

I remember thinking those observations on The South Bank Show a bit odd. I think it was Camille Paglia talking, and she seemed to be saying that there was an androgynous quality to Dusty's voice (hence the castrato thing). I don't get that when I listen to her; to me the voice is all female, just as Dusty herself was all woman IMO (and, like you Jeffery, I never get it when people try to suggest any kind of butch quality to her either!). I remember she was basically saying that there's such power behind Dusty's voice that it transcends gender or something like that... I guess that's maybe true, but for me it is such a recognisably female (and warm and lovely) voice. I believe Contralto is the lowest female vocal register, below Mezzo Soprano and Soprano in that order. She certainly had a lot of that Contralto depth and richness going on but in her younger days she could get right up there into the stratosphere too 🌟 So I reckon she had some Mezzo in her too. 'Husky' is a word I'd maybe replace with 'smoky' or some such description. She could definitely do smoky, but at other times her voice was so pure and beautiful ❤️ Maybe a case of it defying categorisation...

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48552)

by **daydreamer** » Wed Feb 16, 2011 10:51 am

Grace, you've said what I would like to have said if I had more knowledge of the terms used to describe voices! I thought that woman on South Bank spouted a lot of nonsense as well, she spoiled the programme for me. Dusty's voice is many things, none of them masculine in any way whatsoever. Annie had a lot of interesting things to say about the voice in her book and if anyone hasn't read it, and is interested in dissecting Dusty's voice (and persona), it's definitely worth a read.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48554)

by **FairyDust** » Wed Feb 16, 2011 11:18 am

😞 Carole, what can I say? I had a brilliant time last year working for an opera company and learning all about such things. Before this, I used to have voice lessons myself and sang in a couple of choirs. I am definitely an alto though - couldn't hope to have the upper register Dusty was blessed with. Do enjoy singing very much though - must get back to doing it for my own enjoyment. And what limited knowledge I have in these areas is NOTHING compared to the incredible Dusty knowledge all of you have 🍏

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48883)

by **zg_250** » Sun Feb 20, 2011 10:47 am

Hi All,

IMHO, I think Dusty was somewhere between a contralto and a mezzo-soprano. Think of the passagio (head voice) bits in 'In the Land of Make Believe'. You could be almost mistaken for thinking she's a soprano, but that song isn't really that high. For me though, it's the nuances in quality that are truly remarkable - sometimes it's smoky, sometimes it's pure sex, it's velvety, sometimes breathy, I listen to some parts of Memphis and the voice reminds me of a trumpet playing very smooth jazz. At all times it's brilliant and overwhelming in the brilliance....

😊 Zoe

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48902)

by **mnmcv1** » Sun Feb 20, 2011 5:08 pm

i should clarify-

i do not believe Dusty had a "masculine" voice, but i do believe her voice had an androgynous quality at times, especially early in her career. There is a difference (and this is not a dig or a bad thing, at all). Some of my favorite funk/R&B bands of the late 70's/early 80's (like the SOS Band and Skyy) had female lead singers whose voices are commonly referred to as being androgynous. I consider neither to be "manly". By the same token, I've heard many male singers get referred to in the same manner. Doesn't mean they have "female" voices per se.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48911)

by **FairyDust** » Sun Feb 20, 2011 6:25 pm

Oh no, Markus, of course everyone knows it would never be a dig. It probably is the case that Dusty's voice is so brilliant and special that it can't be defined in any of the accepted ways. Like I say, it really does transcend most things/categories - even gender 😊.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48938)

by **zg_250** » Sun Feb 20, 2011 10:06 pm

Hi Again All,

I too would like to add my 10 cents' worth on the androgynous description of Dusty's voice. Her voice is totally womanly, there's nothing androgynous about it. Perhaps these people are talking about the delivery of occasional words or something - I'd like Camille Paglia or whomever it was to define what they mean by androgynous anyway. About the only example I could think of where Dusty's voice MAY be interpreted as androgynous would be in I Just Don't Know What To Do With Myself. The second time she sings "It needs the sun and rain..." listen to the delivery of It - quite interesting... and I'd be interested to hear what people think of this.

😊 Zoe

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p48944)

by **SweMaria** » Sun Feb 20, 2011 10:44 pm

zg_250 wrote:

Hi All,

IMHO, I think Dusty was somewhere between a contralto and a mezzo-soprano. Think of the passagio (head voice) bits in 'In the Land of Make Believe'. You could be almost mistaken for thinking she's a soprano, but that song isn't really that high. For me though, it's the nuances in quality that are truly remarkable - sometimes it's smoky, sometimes

it's pure sex, it's velvety, sometimes breathy, I listen to some parts of Memphis and the voice reminds me of a trumpet playing very smooth jazz. At all times it's brilliant and overwhelming in the brilliance....

 Zoe

I like your description of Dusty's voice! 😊

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p50123)

by **Kyles Beguiles** » Sun Mar 06, 2011 5:28 pm

Interesting comments, everyone!

I wish I had the technical expertise to create a youtube video showcasing her singing various notes, as I believe many of us would enjoy a more "scientific" look at just how impressive her voice truly sounded. I listen to some notes she reaches in both chest and head voice and am in awe. Her falsetto is undoubtedly one of the most dazzling sounds ever known to man.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p50210)

by **zg_250** » Mon Mar 07, 2011 12:27 pm

Hi KB and Everyone,

Do you think a 'scientific' explanation is really necessary? I think there are technical aspects of singing we can talk about, and certainly Dusty's interpretations and how these are informed by her experience etc, which I think from a musical perspective is much more interesting than a scientific explanation. I know Dusty's voice is heaven-sent, and that's all I need to know!

I notice that there's a thread of Dusty in Memphis reviews on the forum. At some point soon I intend to put mine up, but I was thinking I'd probably make mine more of a 'listening guide' rather than a review, (I don't need to be the gazillionth person to tell the world it's a landmark album) and part of that will certainly talk about Dusty's voice and how she uses it.... once I can get clear of the tender I'm currently writing for work!

 Zoe

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p50249)

by **mnmcv1** » Mon Mar 07, 2011 7:42 pm

I have a friend who is an entomologist. Meaning he studies insects, is utterly fascinated by them, gets his kicks dissecting and examining and researching and hypothesizing and all that good stuff.

I know people who do the same with music, particularly voices.

We're talking serious dissection and analysis of vocal performances. I read along (and in person, listen along) but i'm honestly out of depth to contribute in any profound way. I dont knock them- we all get our kicks from certain things. If a voice like Dusty's- which inspires so much intense

discussion- has people at that point, where it's to be studied intensely, I say good for whoever wants to do it.

i apologize, but I don't think Paglia's comment was exactly outrageous blasphemy- we all hear and appreciate different things about Dusty's voice- why bash someone for their own interpretation? I honestly dont know the woman from Adam. If the outrage is, for instance, what merit allows her to be on this show?, or what the hell qualifies her as an expert?, then fine. I can understand that. 😊

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p50286)

by **Kyles Beguiles** » Tue Mar 08, 2011 1:59 am

I agree that Dusty's voice can be celebrated without getting into technical labels, but as someone who sings for leisure (and hopefully as a profession one day) and is greatly inspired by Dusty's artistry I am curious as to where her voice falls among the various classifications. That's all 😊

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p50480)

by **terri** » Wed Mar 09, 2011 11:50 pm

My two cents on this (whatever it is worth) is several synonyms that, to me, describe Dusty's unique voice-"breathy, whispery ,sultry, velvet, whiskey and honey, erotic,passionate, seductive, and steamy."

Although not musical terminology, I think most of these have been used to describe a voice NO ONE can imitate perfectly. 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p50855)

by **Checkmate** » Sat Mar 12, 2011 10:21 am

I have often wondered what Dusty's vocal range is .

I did a little research on the web and i think she is a mezzo soprano , many of her songs fall into that range like The Look Of Love , You Don't Have To Say You Love Me and Son Of A Preacher Man .

I'm not an expert on such things , but she seems to fit that middle female vocal range .

I found this on the web which gives some of her vocal range , for some of her songs .

She can hit C# 5 on songs like You Don't Have To Say You Love Me , which is in the soprano range .

If you click on the songs on this web page , then scroll down it gives you some of Dusty's vocal range for some songs .

Other female singers with mezzo soprano range are Frida (ABBA) Kate Bush ,Tina Turner and Whitney Houston , listening to Dusty she seems to sing very much in the vocal range of these other singers .

Frida from ABBA inparticular as a very similar vocal range to Dusty to my hears ,both can get up high and both can sing quite low at there bottom range 😊

Dave 😊

[http://search.musicnotes.com/?hl=y&arti ... pringfield](http://search.musicnotes.com/?hl=y&arti...pringfield) (<http://search.musicnotes.com/?hl=y&artists=Dusty+Springfield>)

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p50923)

by **zg_250** » Sun Mar 13, 2011 3:13 am

Hi Everyone,

Markus, I'm going to try and articulate more on the Paglia thing - I don't wish to 'bash' her particularly, but I just wonder about why she must describe Dusty's voice as androgynous. (and whatever floats her boat is fine with me!) I am a Bebel Gilberto fan, and the woman's voice is so deep her voice classification should be almost a tenor. She's also a heterosexual woman - I just wonder whether Paglia would describe Bebel's voice as androgynous, based on this knowledge. Is she describing Dusty's voice as androgynous because she's 'bisexual'? Is she just trying to create some kind of controversy? I am just a little unconvinced firstly by this labelling, which Dusty hated, not particularly outraged by it. From my point of view, it just begs a few questions.

 Zoe

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p76944)

by **Kyles Beguiles** » Tue Oct 25, 2011 7:34 pm

I thought to give this thread a "bump" since I was watching some vocal range clips on youtube and it made me wonder about this subject again :)

Here is an example of what I mean, spotlighting one of Dusty's idols:

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p76960)

by **jeffery** » Tue Oct 25, 2011 10:24 pm

Say what you will. 🍷

😡 Just don't call her voice "Husky" !

I think it was Pat Rhodes who I heard say she had a head voice, and a chest voice.

Then she had that delightful conversational voice we all love to hear. 🙌

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p77299)

by **Kyles Beguiles** » Fri Oct 28, 2011 8:09 pm

I can see where Pat said she had two distinct components to her voice. She could also "mix" the two very well whenever she desired that breathy vocal style with a little extra oomph.

I think it would be interesting to note specific songs where both her chest and head voices reach their respective deepest depths and highest heights. Folks can compare the studio and live performances and really appreciate her special vocal talent.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p77306)

by **mnmcv1** » Sat Oct 29, 2011 12:20 am

I wish i could put something like that together, Joe. I can read music but my ear just isnt good enough to gauge the notes like that. We need a true musicologist on the job...

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p77309)

by **jeffery** » Sat Oct 29, 2011 4:06 am

mnmcv1 wrote:

I wish i could put something like that together, Joe. I can read music but my ear just isnt good enough to gauge the notes like that. We need a true musicologist on the job...

Yeh, 🍷 I think I'm kinda' like that listener who's always weighing Dusty's vocal qualities when hearing her sing.

But I'm too engaged, too emotionally thrilled to perform an adequate and objective evaluation.

Annie Randall could probably do a good job on something like that. 🙌

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p144456)

by **Beautiful soul** » Wed Jan 29, 2014 8:20 pm

I thought I'd add a bit of info I stumbled across to add for posterity on this thread. 🍷 Dusty is included in the list further down, seems mezzo soprano is the consensus of this article.

As for Camille Paglia, she seems to appear in many "documentaries" as, IMHO, a pseudo expert. I find the majority of her comments to be her opinion, not fact, and generally utter nonsense. I

agree with Carole G, she can ruin a program very quickly, and I find her annoying at best. 😞

Annie's book is thorough and brilliant, (and highly technical 😊)-- should be required reading for any fan. 🙌

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mezzo-sopranos_in_non-classical_music
(http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mezzo-sopranos_in_non-classical_music)

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p144468)

by **jeffery** » Wed Jan 29, 2014 9:39 pm

☹️ Don't know those proper titles Maggie. How does that translate ? Mezzo soprano ?
Does that mean *middle* soprano ? 🙄

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p144477)

by **Beautiful soul** » Wed Jan 29, 2014 10:50 pm

Hi Jeffrey, the link on my post above explains the term fairly well, mezzo does mean middle. 😊

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p144615)

by **Kyles Beguiles** » Fri Jan 31, 2014 4:47 pm

I need to speak with people who have put together these type of videos and learn how to do it. It could include both studio and live performances set to a montage of beautiful Dusty photos.

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p179192)

by **Kyles Beguiles** » Sun Nov 29, 2015 12:02 pm

[http://therangeplace.forummotions.com/t ... pringfield](http://therangeplace.forummotions.com/t...pringfield) (<http://therangeplace.forummotions.com/t2082-dusty-springfield>)

Now if only I could "set my dreams to music" and create a video showcasing her vocal range LOL

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p179318)

by **daydreamer** » Sat Dec 05, 2015 11:06 pm

Goodness, a lot of work goes into that! I can't pretend that it means much to me, not being able to read music but still interesting. I like the end line of "Extremely fragile and light voice. Possesses great colour and tone. Best suited to ballad and soft singing. A Stunning Lyric Soprano voice". She can also belt them out 😊

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Re: Dusty's vocal range and voice type (#p180080)

by **DustyDanny** » Wed Jan 06, 2016 10:07 pm

I've noticed Dusty's voice evolved a lot over the years; some of her 60s stuff (Including her albums A Girl Called Dusty, Ev'rything's Coming Up Dusty) contain a lot of powerful belting, which I think mellowed out as the decade went on. Then we have the late 60s to early 70s where she seemed softer in some of her songs (particularly those on See All Her Faces, such a great album) and then of course we have Cameo, where she seems to sing in a completely different way.

Later on in the late 70s - Mid 80s her voice changed quite a bit in my opinion, but still had the same greatness it always had, and then in the late 80s - mid 90s her voice seemed a lot deeper and smokey, mostly probably due to her smoking habit. I can't think of a singer whose voice changed so much and yet managed to be as great as Dusty's. Such a shame she's no longer with us.

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