

Dimash Kudaibergen

Most people know how to sing a basic scale. Begin at a comfortable pitch and proceed: Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti, Do. If you're not sure how it should sound, there's that memorable scene in *The Sound of Music*. You'll notice that by the time you reach the second "do", you are singing the same note as the first "do", but higher. You have covered the distance, musically speaking, of one octave. This is a stretch of 8 notes. The chances are, you can go a bit higher, but unless you're a trained vocalist, not much. It might surprise you to know there are people (very few, but they exist), who can do six octaves. One of them is Dimash Kudaibergen.

Memory Questions

How many steps make one octave?

8 steps/8 notes

Language Questions

In paragraph 1, find a synonym for "singer".

Vocalist

Which word in paragraph 1 tells us that the scene from *The Sound of Music* is well known?

Memorable

Kazakhstan

This rising star vocalist comes from the central Asian country of Kazakhstan. This is a huge but sparsely populated country. Its inhabitants are the product of centuries of blending of influences from China, Russia and Persia. As a result, Kazakh people tend to speak Kazakh and Russian, while also being close to China. This has served Dimash's singing career well, because it has enabled him to access audiences all over the Eurasian landmass.

Memory Questions

Where does Dimash come from?

Kazakhstan

Name the other countries that the writer lists as influences on Kazakh culture.

Russia, Persia and China.

Language questions

Which two-word phrase in paragraph 2 tells us that there are not many people in Kazakhstan despite its large size?

Sparsely populated.

In paragraph 2, find a synonym for “continent”.

Landmass

Musical Upbringing

It's not surprising that Dimash grew up in a musical household. His parents and grandparents all play instruments or sing. On his own website, Dimash describes his family as “musical royalty”. This grandiosity seems to fit well with his persona as a pop artist. As a child in a Kazakh home he learned traditional Kazakh music. He also learned Central Asian instruments such as the dombra, which he plays sometimes on stage. The dombra is similar to a lyre. It's a small, pear-shaped wooden instrument with strings that the player plucks or strikes. As a young person in the 21st century, though, he would have been equally well versed in pop and rock music. The result is his own, distinctive fusion of the two. It's a combination that seems to be working with audiences the world over, including China, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Memory Questions

What is a dombra?

A small, pear-shaped wooden instrument with strings that you can pluck or strike.

Language Questions

What part of speech is “grandiosity” in paragraph 3?

Abstract noun.

What is grandiosity?

An attitude of being very important.

What does it mean if you are “well versed” in something? Why is this phrase appropriate in this article?

It means that you are very familiar with something. It’s appropriate in this context because the article is about singing, and “verses” belong in poetry or music.

In paragraph 3, find a synonym for “combination”.

Fusion

Rise to Fame

Dimash has already been touted as one of the very few living vocalists with the elusive six-octave range. This puts him in a very small category of people that includes Mariah Carey, another singer famous for hitting very high notes. It’s perhaps all the more striking in a male singer, though, because it’s so unexpected. And for the most part, it’s simply the result of genetics. Dimash’s voice is classified as counter-tenor, which is really the highest possible pitch for an adult male voice. At only 26, he has performed at major events such as Miss World and the Cannes Film Festival. Interestingly, though, he did not succeed in the “Masked Singer” competition, in which singers have to sing in disguise. It’s not very clear why this happened, but perhaps it’s because his act is a package deal. It’s not just about the extremely flexible voice. His on-stage persona, interesting fusion of cultural influences and quirky personality are probably all involved in his growing popularity.

Memory Questions

Name one other singer who has a vocal range of similar size to Dimash’s.

Mariah Carey

What is a counter-tenor?

A) A high male voice.

B) A low female voice.

Dimash failed to win the “Masked Singer” and the writer makes a suggestion to explain why this happened. Explain it in your own words.

The writer suggests that Dimash’s personality, attitude and appearance are all important factors in his success, not his voice alone.

Can you think of a different reason that may have caused him to lose this competition?

Open answer. One possibility: his fame really is simply based on his wide singing range and people are only excited by it because it’s rare, not because they actually like how it sounds.

Language Questions

In paragraph 4 we read that Dimash has been “touted”. What does this mean?

A) He has been given an official award for his vocal range.

B) His vocal range has been scientifically assessed.

C) His vocal range is receiving attention and recognition from many people.

Why does the writer describe a 6-octave vocal range as “elusive”?

Because it is rare and very few people have it.

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