


Upright bass string color guide

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A set of double bass gut strings Click below to download the Ultimate Double Bass String Guide! Download the string guide What a bass player doesn't like to roll up his sleeves and geek on bass strings? In fact, it can almost become a disease and many players get to the point where they feel compelled to try every darn string they can get their hands on. Also, the strings seem to come and go out of fashion. A hot new string hits the market and you suddenly see it on everyone's bass. The standard old model suddenly comes back into fashion, and the forgotten old string suddenly hips a new thing again. In addition, each bass reacts differently to different strings. What sounds awesome on one bass may seem miserable on another bass. Factors such as string tension, flexibility, surface sensation, and more are very personal things, and some players like a lougher or weaker feeling under their noses. However, I thought it would be nice to get a list of shared impressions from the various popular lines going on. It's definitely a work in progress, so leave your own thoughts on your favorite (or least favorite) brand lines. I'll keep this list as an evolving document, so please chime in and let me know your string tastes! I don't get into the solo lines on this list, but feel free to chime with your thoughts on these as well! Also, feel free to join our Facebook group where we have discussions about strings and everything else double bass! Word about the trend pricing line has become significantly more expensive recently for buying European made strings in the United States. This caused the strings, which used to be about the same price (e.g. Pirastro Permanents and D'Addario Helicores) to be quite far apart economically wise, with Pirastro strings now costing 30-40% more than their D'Addario equivalents. If you are an American and cost is a problem, you may want to consider an American thong company rather than a European one. My favorite line is all European by origin, unfortunately... If you are thinking of buying any of the following lines, click through the links below and part of your purchase will go to support doublebassblog.org and our podca! Pirastro Strings Permanent - These are my current line of choice on my own bass. They find a good balance between reliability and flexibility, with a comfortable amount of resistance under their noses. They have an owdative sound all over the upper and lower register. Although not usually considered a jazz string, they have a good pizzicato sound and are used by some players in a jazz setting. Obligato - a little softer and more flexible under the fingers, this is another popular line that works well for both jazz and classical conditions. Many believe that this line grabs the volume and projection of a more robust string line get to these brands later), but the warmth and spread of their sound makes up for it in the eyes of many players. These strings are actually twisted under your fingers, which some players find annoying. Flexocor Deluxe - These relatively new lines are one of my current favorites. They respond well to orchestral bow beats, with a beautiful and even sound that works well on many installations. They have become very popular in the last few years. The original Flexocor is a classic orchestral string. These strings have an unmistakable growl on them in arco play and a lovely chocolate sound. Not for everyone's taste or basses, these strings tend to produce love them or hate their reactions. They have a good amount of resistance to them, which makes them excellent orchestra strings, but lousy jazz strings. They also sound fantastic on high-quality instruments, especially old basses, but tend to sound muted and obscure on cheaper basses. Finally, they sound great under the ear, but can't project well in larger spaces. Again, these are excellent matches for many bass and string choices for many orchestral bassists. Eva Pica - These strings are relatively new and have become quite popular among jazz bassists. Although synthetic core and steel wounds, they have a gutlike sonic quality for them to buy with the stability of steel strings. They bow well, but probably won't satisfy most orchestral bassists. Their pizzicato sound warm and they feel great under their fingers, with a voltage level similar to permanents. Oliv - These chrome steel gut wounds are string thicker than the average steel string and significantly more expensive (though not as much as Eudoxas). Good for players looking for a gut string with some qualities associated with steel strings, these strings lack the projection of other Pirastro lines, but make up for it with warmth and depth of tone. Eudoxa - These silver string wounds had a complicated history. When Original FlatChrom (described below) originally came out, they were labeled the 'Eudoxa' line, being designed to closely replicate an old set of gut strings known as Eudoxas. This naming convention didn't seem to satisfy anyone, so Pirastro rebranded these new synthetic lines like Original FlatChrom and came out with this very expensive line of gut strings. They are a little brighter in tone than Olivs, but are very similar otherwise. You'd better be made out of money if you really get into these lines because they're crazy expensive (\$728.53 list price as the fall of 2008) and break often. Bad combination! Original FlatChrome - These strings are really old-school orchestral guns. Kind of like a more extreme version of the original flexocors, these high-cable theesies produce a gorgeous sound in the lower register, but often tense and throat in the upper register. Although not for every taste Basses (they tend to suppress cheaper basses and can border on being completely unplayable on others), these strings can produce a rich, chocolate bass sound in the right hands. This is pretty much the opposite of what jazz musicians are looking for in a row. On the wrong bass, they can have a pinched and nasal flat Chromesteel - another mid-road line for pirastro lines, somewhere between the constant and flexicors in terms of string voltage and sound reliability. These poduce strings are non-muss and without the fuss sound that works very well for the classic and moderately good (but not surprisingly) for jazz. Great for bowing out to play in general across a wide range of basses. Thomastik Strings Dominant - These strings are not as popular as their top string equivalents. Quality control is a problem for the dominant (an issue that rarely haunts The Pirastro strings). Although not used very often in the United States these days for bass, these strings actually have many desirable characteristics, including a throat growl that both jazz and classical players like. They are medium to medium-heavy string tension with good projection and even response. Spirocore - The gold standard for steel string jazz plays, these strings are also popular as low E, Advanced E, or Low B strings. Bright and loud with plenty of support, these strings don't bow particularly well on the top three rows, making the full set of Spirocores a dubious choice for the classic game. They are excellent jazz strings, with the unmistakable sound of pizzicato. They come in a few guages, so experiment with the set if possible to find a good match for your bass. Spirocore Weich - These lower voltage, thinner, and softer options are extremely popular with jazz players. They bow much easier than conventional Spirocores and are lighter on hand. They are good crossover strings for players who usually play pizzicato but also have to sound good with a bow, and they work well on a wide range of basses. Belcanto - These newcomers from Thomastik have exploded in popularity, although they are much quirkier than many other popular line brands. They carry a high price tag compared to American strings. They also have a gorgeous, buttery sound when paired with the right instrument and quickly become loved by orchestral bassists. They may take some getting used to at first. They are weaker than other popular orchestra strings such as Original Flexocors, Original FlatChroms or Permanents. Also, many onion strokes feel significantly different on these strings. Their pizzicato sound and support is also very nice, albeit without hitting and growling Spirocores. Oddly, they tend to wear out faster than other popular brands, which can be a factor if you on a tight budget. D'Addario String Helicor Orchestra, Jazz, and Hybrid - These Lines From Island string maker D'Addario exploded on stage in the early 1990s, and the orchestra and jazz bassists sang their praises. Around 1995, it seemed that every bassist had Helicore offers on their instrument. They have disappeared in popularity in recent years, but remain a common line of choice for American bassists. They come in three different guages (light, medium and heavy) and orchestra, jazz, and jazz/classic hybrid versions, giving the player plenty of variables to experiment with as they search for the perfect setup. I used a lot of combinations of these lines on my bass. Check out this comparison chart to determine which option is right for you. Kaplans - These new offerings from D'Addario have become very popular in the last few years. Released in 2012, they play very easily with a bow and have a great sound. They are one of the most popular lines from non-European companies and a good kick for your dollar. Siex- These strings are flexible under the bow and finger. D'Addario's goal is to mimic the sound of the gut. They have a synthetic core and have a more complex sound than most steel core strings I've tried. Available in light, medium and heavy voltage. Savarez Strings Corelli - Like Helicore, Corelli Savarez's strings come in several different calibers, including solo and orchestral tuning. Long known as the string of choice for bass soloist Francois Rabbat, these strings are made of tungsten steel. They are thinner and lighter than other brands. They are also bright and low voltage. Even their forte strings are brighter and weaker than most other brands. Corelli's answer is more suited to solo play than orchestral. Super-sensitive strings Red label - Super craptaculous. The last line of the resort is to avoid at all costs. My dislike of Red Label strings made me avoid all other super-sensitive options. If you have opinions on any super-sensitive lines just leave a comment on this post. Jargar Strings is another line that has disappeared significantly in popularity with bass players these days. Cellists often use these string bassists much less. It's been years since I've used them to be honest, so it's hard to even remember a lot about them. Velvet Strings Many jazz players love these low voltage and earthy sounding strings. They are radically different in their sound and reactions to steel strings such as Spirocores. These strings work well for many jazz and pizzicato contexts. They are usually not as great for other styles, however. Get all the information in this post in a handy line guide! Just click below. Download the Line Guide To Additional Resources there are fantastic resources out there for more information on the strings. Here are some of my personal favorites: 1 of tons of strings on this this Let me know what cords you use! Any good tips for readers out there? What doesn't work for you? Join our Facebook Subscribe group to get our weekly newsletter covering the world of double bass. Success! Now check your email to confirm your subscription. Subscription.

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