

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

Singer's Diction for Braille Readers

A self-paced, competency-based lyric
diction and English transcription course

Cheri Montgomery

S.T.M. Publishers
Nashville, TN

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PREFACE

Singer's Diction for Braille Readers is an introductory workbook that provides an in-depth study of lyric diction and English transcription. It is designed for the small diction class or independent diction study. The digital version is intended for students who are able to read from a refreshable braille display. A braille six dot setting is required.

The phonetic symbols selected are easily accessible by both the sighted and the blind. This enables students and instructors to communicate using the same phonetic alphabet. The symbols consist of uppercase and lowercase letters along with a few punctuation marks. A full list of characters is provided on page 170. Art songs transcribed according to this system are also available. Students may send their repertoire requests to info@stmpublishers.com.

Each unit contains an art song selection, transcription rules, twelve transcription exercises, and six IPA recognition exercises. The IPA recognition exercises double as an answer key for the first six lists. An answer key for the remaining lists is included in the instructor's manual. Cumulative testing of transcription rules is provided throughout the book and a comprehensive test follows the final unit. The transcribed art songs in each unit contain a frequent occurrence of the highlighted sound. QR codes give students instant access to recommended performances sung by classically trained singers. The digital version contains web addresses for each listening assignment. A glossary of IPA symbols provides convenient access to enunciation instructions. A listening lab, review of rules, phonetic charts, and IPA Scramble app are available at www.stmpublishers.com.

The transcriptions in this text are based on rules established by Madeleine Marshall, author of *The Singer's Manual of English Diction*. Marshall hailed a dialect-free pronunciation of the English language that is best for singing.

The content and outline of this book represent experience gained from transcribing a database of more than 87,000 English words according to rules established by Marshall. The database allowed the author to search for words based on frequency of occurrence, phonetic symbol, and spelling. The database also provided a valuable tool for organizing the spellings of the English language. Rules for defining the pronunciation of schwa are included in this text. Defining the schwa is important for lyric diction since it must be sustained for singing.

The voice is a phonetic instrument. Vowels and consonants are the basic elements of language and serve as tools for vocal discovery. It is my hope that this text and workbook will help singers enjoy the lovely sounds that are uniquely designed for the human voice. CM

TRANSCRIPTION NOTES

It is interesting to note that vowel classifications established by the International Phonetic Association are not observed by standard lyric diction textbook authorities. Adjustments to the vowel chart are needed for lyric diction. The IPA was created by linguists and intended for speech. Singers adopted the IPA for lyric diction. The articulators are in close proximity for speech (tongue slope is imperceptible). When slope of the tongue is not apparent, tongue height becomes the most obvious landmark feature. As a result, the official IPA vowel chart indicates numerous tongue heights. Companion vowels are not clearly distinguished. The [i], [I], [u], [U], [y], and [Y] are all classified as closed vowels. This text agrees with standard lyric diction textbook authorities by classifying [I], [U], and [Y] as open vowels.

This text uses the term *central vowel* when referring to the [V], [A], [a], and [ae] vowels. *Central vowel* is used in favor of *low vowel*. Wording that might suggest a low placement or pitch should be avoided for lyric diction. The International Phonetic Association classifies [V] and [A] as back vowels and [a] and [ae] as front vowels. The tongue arch for central vowels is indistinguishable in the space required for singing. Central vowels are clarified by means of resonance rather than formation. A central classification also agrees with transcription rules. Take the German *ich-Laut* rules, for example. The transcription of *ch* is dictated by the tongue position of the preceding sound. If [a] were truly a front vowel, then we would articulate *ach* as [ax] instead of [aX]. Standard lyric diction textbook authorities are reluctant to assign a front or back designation to the [a] and [A] vowels. These vowels are typically referred to as bright [a] and dark [A].

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PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

FRONT VOWELS

IPA	ENGLISH
[i]	greet, heat, field
[I]	hill, win, build, been
[e]	cha <u>o</u> s, <u>e</u> tude, fian <u>cé</u>
[E]	help, bread, friend, many

BACK VOWELS

[u]	food, through, blue, grew
[U]	book, should, put
[o]	<u>o</u> bey, pr <u>o</u> tect, mel <u>o</u> dy
[O]	talk, saw, ought, cause

CENTRAL VOWELS

[V]	dove, sun, young
[A]	father, heart, lock
[ae]	fact, hat, shadow, carry
[R]	bird, hurt, word, earth

SEMICONSONANTS

[j]	yet, year, dew, lute
[w]	winter, web, sweet

STRESSED SYLLABLE

[,] return [RI,tRn], again [V,gEn]

Secondary stress: [!] melancholy [,mElIn!kAlI]

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

BILABIAL

[p] paper
 [b] bell
 [m] moment
 [W] wheat
 [w] win

LABIODENTAL

[f] fair
 [v] vine

DENTAL

[th] thin
 [Th] breathe

ALVEOLAR

[t] teeth
 [d] deed
 [s] since
 [z] zeal
 [n] nice

ALVEOLAR

[l] live
 [r] three
 [R] train

PREPALATAL

[S] sheep
 [Z] vision
 [tS] chair
 [dZ] judge

PALATAL

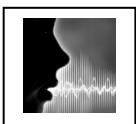
[j] yes

VELAR

[k] keep
 [g] good
 [N] sing

GLOTTAL

[h] home
 [ʔ] I, even



A glossary of IPA symbols is provided on page 121.
 Sound examples are available on the listening page at
www.stmpublishers.com.



UNIT 2:

Closed front [i] and open front [ɪ]

Frequently occurring words from lyrics

	[i]	[ɪ]	[i] & [ɪ]
1.	me [mi]	in [ɪn]	sweetly [ˌswi:tli]
2.	be [bi]	is [ɪz]	weeping [ˌwi:pɪŋ]
3.	he [hi]	it [ɪt]	easy [ˌi:zi]
4.	see [si]	his [hɪz]	breathing [ˌbrɪθɪŋ]
5.	sleep [slɪp]	kiss [kɪs]	feeling [ˌfi:lɪŋ]
6.	leaves [li:vz]	if [ɪf]	greeting [ˌgri:tɪŋ]
7.	deep [di:p]	him [hɪm]	seeking [ˌsi:kɪŋ]
8.	feet [fi:t]	still [stɪl]	fleeting [ˌfli:tɪŋ]
9.	keep [ki:p]	did [dɪd]	pleasing [ˌpli:zɪŋ]
10.	peace [pi:s]	till [tɪl]	leafy [ˌli:fɪ]
11.	meet [mi:t]	ill [ɪl]	gleaming [ˌglimɪŋ]
12.	ease [i:z]	tis [tɪz]	freely [ˌfri:li]

Art song with a frequent occurrence of [i] and [I]



Barbara Bonney: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_wNC1q-DHSA

Dominick Argento (Am. b. 1927)
6 Elizabethan Songs [sIkS !ElIzV ,bithIn sANz]



1. Spring (The student version has IPA only)
Thomas Nashe (Eng. 1567 - 1601)

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king;
[spRIN ThV swit spRIN Iz ThV jIVz ,pIeZae(I)nt kIN]

Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
[ThEn blumz iTS thIN ThEn mEIz dAns In V rIN]

Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
[koUlD dVth nAt stIN ThV ,pRItI bRdz du sIN]

Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
[,kuku dZVg dZVg pu wi tu wItA wu]

The palm and may make country houses gay,
[ThV pAm aend mEI mEIk ,kVntRI ,hAUzEz gEI]

Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipes all day,
[laemz fRIsk aend pIEI ThV ,SEpVdz pAIps Ol dEI]

And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
[aend wi hIVr EI bRdz tjun ThIs ,mErI IEI]

Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
[,kuku dZVg dZVg pu wi tu wItA wu]

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
[ThV fildz bRiTh swit ThV ,dEIzIz kIs AUV fit]

Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit,
[jVN ,IVvVz mit oUlD wAIvz V ,sVnIn sIt]

In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
[In ,EvRI stRit Thiz tjunz AUV IVz du gRit]

Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!
[,kuku dZVg dZVg pu wi tu wItA wu]

Spring! The sweet Spring!
[spRIN ThV swit spRIN]

RULES FOR TRANSCRIPTION

CLOSED FRONT [i]

eat [it], *breeze*, *we*, *field*, *ski*, *receive*, *people*

OPEN FRONT [I]

give [gIv], *quick*, *build*, *myth*, *been*

UNSTRESSED [I]

Final *-y*, *-ie*, *-ies*, *-ied*, *-ing*:
mercy, *daisies*, *pitied*, *singing*
 [,mRɪsI] [,dEɪzIz] [,pɪtɪd] [,sɪnɪŋ]

Unstressed [i] is replaced with [I] for lyric diction. The quality of [i] calls undue attention to unstressed syllables. The [I] replacement enhances phrasing and intelligibility.

STRESS MARKS [ˌ] AND [!]

A stress mark is placed before the stressed syllable: *believe* [bɪ,lɪv]. Secondary stress is indicated with a [!] mark: *melancholy* [,mElɪn!kAɪl].

Transcription notes. Silent vowels are not transcribed. A final *e* is often silent in English. For example, the word *love* [lʌv] is transcribed with three symbols to represent the three sounds that are actually pronounced. Sometimes a vowel cluster makes one sound: *tree* [tri]. Silent consonants are not transcribed: *could* [kʌd]. Double consonants are represented with a single symbol: *still* [stɪl]. Some consonants have phonetic changes. Pronunciation depends on the consonant's position within the word. For example, a final *s* is pronounced as a [z] when preceded by a voiced consonant: *waves* [weɪvz]. A final *d* is pronounced as a [t] when preceded by a voiceless consonant: *liked* [laɪkt]. The spelling *x* is transcribed as [ks] or [gz]. The spelling *c* is transcribed with [s] or [k]: *cent* [sɛnt] *cook* [kʊk]. A glottal stop [ʔ] precedes initial vowel words in speech: *eyes* [ʔAɪz]. Glottal stops are not indicated in this text.

Worksheet #2: Closed front [i] and open front [I]

#1

1. mimic _____
2. cease _____
3. stills _____
4. beets _____
5. glimpse _____
6. seek _____
7. mint _____
8. sleepy _____
9. fixed _____
10. zeal _____

#2

1. eats _____
2. lilies _____
3. filled _____
4. sleeve _____
5. bliss _____
6. cleave _____
7. limbs _____
8. heat _____
9. split _____
10. key _____

#3

1. flits _____
2. seen _____
3. visit _____
4. ceased _____
5. pity _____
6. six _____
7. peas _____
8. feast _____
9. hills _____
10. leaned _____

#4

1. bids _____
2. steep _____
3. gifts _____
4. deeply _____
5. midst _____
6. leaf _____
7. sinned _____
8. eve _____
9. timid _____
10. clean _____

#5

1. fields _____
2. lived _____
3. bleak _____
4. cities _____
5. picked _____
6. seeds _____
7. mists _____
8. scenes _____
9. skill _____
10. leagues _____

#6

1. sits _____
2. easily _____
3. scenic _____
4. missed _____
5. bee _____
6. pick _____
7. lean _____
8. dims _____
9. hid _____
10. seize _____

Worksheet #2: Answer key and IPA recognition exercise

#1

1. _____ [,mImIk]
2. _____ [sis]
3. _____ [stIlz]
4. _____ [bits]
5. _____ [glImps]
6. _____ [sik]
7. _____ [mInt]
8. _____ [,slipI]
9. _____ [flkst]
10. _____ [zil]

#3

1. _____ [flIts]
2. _____ [sin]
3. _____ [,vIzIt]
4. _____ [sist]
5. _____ [,pItI]
6. _____ [sIks]
7. _____ [piz]
8. _____ [fist]
9. _____ [hIlz]
10. _____ [lind]

#5

1. _____ [fildz]
2. _____ [Ilvd]
3. _____ [blik]
4. _____ [,sItIz]
5. _____ [pIkt]
6. _____ [sidz]
7. _____ [mIsts]
8. _____ [sinz]
9. _____ [skII]
10. _____ [ligz]

#2

1. _____ [its]
2. _____ [,IIIz]
3. _____ [fild]
4. _____ [sliv]
5. _____ [blIs]
6. _____ [kliv]
7. _____ [II mz]
8. _____ [hit]
9. _____ [splIt]
10. _____ [ki]

#4

1. _____ [bIdz]
2. _____ [stip]
3. _____ [gIfTs]
4. _____ [,dipII]
5. _____ [mIdst]
6. _____ [lif]
7. _____ [sInd]
8. _____ [iv]
9. _____ [,tImId]
10. _____ [klin]

#6

1. _____ [sIts]
2. _____ [,izIII]
3. _____ [,sinIk]
4. _____ [mIst]
5. _____ [bi]
6. _____ [pIk]
7. _____ [lin]
8. _____ [dImz]
9. _____ [hId]
10. _____ [siz]

Worksheet #2: Closed front [i] and open front [I]

#7

1. lids _____
2. pleased _____
3. cynic _____
4. bees _____
5. cliffs _____
6. east _____
7. hint _____
8. seem _____
9. lifts _____
10. deity _____

#9

1. seats _____
2. mill _____
3. eaves _____
4. since _____
5. heed _____
6. mix _____
7. builds _____
8. leaps _____
9. guilty _____
10. sealed _____

#11

1. busy _____
2. please _____
3. tints _____
4. simplicity _____
5. beasts _____
6. slipped _____
7. meek _____
8. clicks _____
9. deeds _____
10. bid _____

#8

1. been _____
2. feel _____
3. lists _____
4. deceit _____
5. fifty _____
6. meat _____
7. stick _____
8. gleams _____
9. seas _____
10. kissed _____

#10

1. tease _____
2. knit _____
3. scene _____
4. lily _____
5. hymns _____
6. speak _____
7. mystic _____
8. hissed _____
9. need _____
10. peaks _____

#12

1. beams _____
2. sickly _____
3. knee _____
4. lips _____
5. inn _____
6. heaped _____
7. city _____
8. seams _____
9. gild _____
10. leave _____

Front Vowels

The term *front vowel* refers to a vowel that is formed with a forward arch of the tongue. Closed front [i] has the most forward tongue arch. The angle of the tongue for [I] is similar to [i] but with a lower arch (there is more space between the tongue arch and the roof of the mouth). In speech, front vowels are enunciated by spreading the lips. The singer must learn to release the jaw and form front vowels with the tongue arch (not the lips). Front vowels are also called tongue vowels.

Closed Front [i] *tea*

Enunciation. Release and lower the jaw. Find the space of *ah* without spreading the lips. The tongue tip touches the lower front teeth, the front of the tongue arches *far* forward, and the sides of the tongue contact the length of the upper molars (to the eye teeth). Raise the soft palate and direct vocalized tone toward the upper front teeth.

Warning. Form [i] with the tongue arch (*not* by spreading the lips). Do not replace [i] with [I]. Avoid the low placement of [i] in spoken English. Do not mask the brilliance of [i] by making it dark or covered. Avoid a nasalized tone. Maintain an unaltered vowel formation throughout vocalization.

Tongue push-ups. Release and lower the jaw. Form an [i] vowel without spreading the lips. Check for accuracy by whispering an *ich-Laut* [x] (*humor*). Have your teacher listen to the sound to insure that it is actually an [i] vowel and not an [I] sound. Release the tongue to the *ah* position without altering the jaw, lip, or tongue tip position. Alternate between the two formations by means of tongue arch movement only.

Exercise: *eve, reed, seat, eagle, dreamer, pleading*

Open Front [I] *give*

Enunciation. Release and lower the jaw. Find the space of *ah* without spreading the lips. The tongue tip touches the lower front teeth, the front of the tongue arches *far* forward, and the sides of the tongue contact the upper molars. Raise the soft palate and direct vocalized tone toward the upper front teeth.

Warnings. Form [I] with the tongue arch (*not* by spreading the lips). The [I] of spoken English lacks height and forwardness. Avoid the raspy sound associated with vocal fry that is common in the American English manner of speech.

Exercise: *win, ill, rim, bitter, sipping, thistle*

IPA

[V][A]

[ae]

[b]

[d]

[e][E]

[.]

[f]

[g]

[h][?]

[i][I]

[j]

[k]

[l]

[m]

[n][N]

[o][O]

[p]

[R]

[r][R]

[s][z]

[S][Z]

[t]

[th][Th]

[tS][dZ]

[u][U]

[v]

[w][W]

Diph.

[:]

Worksheet #2: Closed front [i] and open front [I]

#7

1. lids [lIdz]
2. pleased [plIzd]
3. cynic [sInIk]
4. bees [biz]
5. cliffs [klIfs]
6. east [Ist]
7. hint [hInt]
8. seem [sim]
9. lifts [lIfts]
10. deity [ˌdiItI]

#9

1. seats [sits]
2. mill [mIl]
3. eaves [ivz]
4. since [sIns]
5. heed [hid]
6. mix [mIks]
7. builds [bIldz]
8. leaps [lips]
9. guilty [ˌgIltI]
10. sealed [sild]

#11

1. busy [ˌbIzI]
2. please [plIz]
3. tints [tInts]
4. simplicity [sImˌplIsItI]
5. beasts [bIsts]
6. slipped [slIpt]
7. meek [mik]
8. clicks [klIks]
9. deeds [didz]
10. bid [bId]

#8

1. been [bIn]
2. feel [fil]
3. lists [lIsts]
4. deceit [dIˌsit]
5. fifty [ˌfIftI]
6. meat [mit]
7. stick [stIk]
8. gleams [glimz]
9. seas [siz]
10. kissed [kIst]

#10

1. tease [tiz]
2. knit [nIt]
3. scene [sin]
4. lily [ˌlII]
5. hymns [hImz]
6. speak [spIk]
7. mystic [ˌmIstIk]
8. hissed [hIst]
9. need [nid]
10. peaks [piks]

#12

1. beams [bImz]
2. sickly [ˌsIkII]
3. knee [ni]
4. lips [lIps]
5. inn [In]
6. heaped [hipt]
7. city [ˌsItI]
8. seams [simz]
9. gild [gIld]
10. leave [liv]

Symbol Chart: IPA Braille for Lyric Diction

- [A] father [ˌfAθ.] [a] voila [vwala] [æ] glad [glaed]
 [b] baby [ˌbEɪbɪ]
 There is no *c* in IPA.
 [d] deed [did] [dZ] judge [dZVdZ]
 [e] chaos [ˌkeAs] [E] bell [bEl]
 [f] faith [fEɪθ]
 [g] good [gUd]
 [h] heart [hAt]
 [i] key [ki] [I] sit [sIt]
 [j] yet [jEt]
 [k] kiss [kIs]
 [l] little [ˌlɪt.l] [L] figlio [ˌfiLlO]
 [m] mist [mɪst]
 [n] nine [nAɪn] [N] wing [wɪN] [-j] sogno [ˌso-j-jo]
 [o] obey [ˈo,bEɪ] [O] ought [ˈ?Ot]
 [oe] schoen [Soe;n] [OE] koennen [kOEnn.n]
 [p] pure [pjU.]
 [q] song [sqN] This vowel sound is replaced with [A] for lyric diction.
 [R] rose [RoUz] [r] thread [thrEd] [rr] rosa [ˌrroza]
 [s] sing [sɪN] [S] sheep [Sɪp]
 [t] tone [toUn] [tS] child [tSAɪld] [th] thin [θɪn] [Th] them [ThEm]
 [u] moon [mun] [U] book [bUk]
 [v] voice [vOɪs] [V] up [ˈ?Vp]
 [w] wish [wɪS] [W] wheat [Wɪt]
 [x] hue [xju] [X] Nacht [naXt]
 [y] Bluete [ˌbly;t.] [Y] Kuesse [ˌkYss.]
 [z] zeal [zil] [Z] measure [ˌmEZ.]
 [ˌ] A stressed syllable mark is placed before the stressed syllable.
 [!] Secondary stress mark: melancholy [ˌmElɪn!kAlɪ]
 [.] The schwa stands for an undefined sound in an unstressed syllable.
 [ʔ] The glottal stop: ever [ˌ?EvV]

The keystrokes needed to create documents with IPA are awkward for both the sighted and the blind. This system provides a mutually accessible set of symbols. Grade 1 braille is used for all symbols. The digital output is visually similar to standard IPA characters helping the sighted transition to a new system. Art songs transcribed according to this system are also available. Repertoire requests may be sent to info@stmpublishers.com.

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