A PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC
ALPHABET TO THE TEACHING OF SINGING

THESIS

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For the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

By

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Coldwater, Michigan

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The Need for the Study

The teaching of singing is fraught with psychological problems not met with in the other branches of applied music. The inordinate physical and mental concepts with which the singing teacher must deal result in the necessity that the singing teacher, to be highly efficient, must be a practicing psychologist.

As a remedial psychologist, the teacher must first try to eliminate those mental blocks in the attitude of the student which are most readily accessible. The problem of diction, which in the field of music is peculiar to the singer, is the most immediately accessible of the "extra-vocal" problems encountered. Though complicated by the necessity for singing accurately four modern languages, the problem of diction can be solved more efficaciously for the student than it is by most teachers of singing. The International Phonetic Language is the means by which the many and varied aspects of diction can be standardized and made immediately accessible.

In the writer's experience, first as student and then as teacher and observer of the work of other teachers, it has become obvious that in the minds of the majority of pupils,
diction problems are so paramount that they supercede the purely vocal aspects of singing. As the language sounds are rightly but a point of departure for the building of a beautiful and expressive singing tone, it seems absolutely essential that the way must be pointed whereby language in singing can find its proper place in the pupil's development, where it can assume the position of a help rather than a hinderance in vocal achievement.

Definition of Terms and Approach to the Problems Involved.

The intention of this study is to discuss the four modern languages commonly employed by the contemporary singer: Italian, French, German, and English. Language courses are of necessity designed as an aid to comprehension of meaning through the study of grammatical construction. Only a cursory attention to pronunciation is practicable. Foreign language records, though becoming more readily available, are designed for the initiate. The diction courses generally available in music schools are, on the whole, poorly organized and rarely adequate.

Transliteration of foreign syllables into the familiar sounds of the native tongue is the most commonly employed device in the teaching of dictions. The inadequacies of this method are immediately apparent. The French nasals, the German umlaut, and the pure Italian vowel sounds can, at best, be approximated in English; while the more subtle shadings,
such as timbre and inflection, are impossible to communicate through transliteration.

The common complaint that it is difficult to understand a singer employing his native tongue gives rise to the assumption that a more detailed study of English is necessary if the artist is to project the meaning of the poem. Few teachers are aware of the essential distortions necessary to make English an understandable singing language, and only a small number are equipped to correct irregularities of pronunciation due to dialectal euphemisms and personal speech habits.

Two other procedures are currently employed and are as ineffectual as transliteration. The teacher, in the first of these methods, requires that a series of pronunciation rules be memorized; but in the application of these rules so many exceptions are encountered, and such a thorough knowledge of grammar is essential, that the process results in confusion and frustration. The second method, which consists merely in having the student repeat the sounds after the teacher, has no permanent application to the function of true learning.

It is indeed obvious that the need is for standardization of the dictions of these four languages, so necessary to the singer's equipment. Since it is also obvious that no one of these languages can be made to function as a phonetic mean, it is inherent that a common denominator be found and applied. The International Phonetic Alphabet is this common denominator.
The International Phonetic Alphabet\(^1\) as shown in Table 1 has been evolved by the writer from various sources listed in the bibliography. It is designed for the use of singers. As all available copies of this alphabet are designed for the spoken language, several symbols not used in singing are omitted and are shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 1**

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>machine</td>
<td>io</td>
<td>ici</td>
<td>ihm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>pity</td>
<td>sera</td>
<td>été</td>
<td>für</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>vacate</td>
<td>sera</td>
<td>pré</td>
<td>Hütte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>let</td>
<td>prés</td>
<td>Kern Hätté</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ê</td>
<td></td>
<td>vin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>é</td>
<td></td>
<td>peur</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hölle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ</td>
<td></td>
<td>lundi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{1}\)Also referred to as The International Phonetic Transcription and The International Phonetic Language.
TABLE 1 -- Continued

Vowels -- French Semi-vowels Listed with Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td>abide</td>
<td>de</td>
<td>Gedanke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø₂</td>
<td>ask</td>
<td>patte</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td>father</td>
<td>padre</td>
<td>âme</td>
<td>Vater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>η</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>sou</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>whoever</td>
<td>una</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>look</td>
<td>come</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>poetic</td>
<td>poche</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>poche</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɔ</td>
<td>door</td>
<td>poche</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~</td>
<td></td>
<td>bon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To indicate that the sound beneath is nasalized.

Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d</th>
<th>dò</th>
<th>due</th>
<th>dos</th>
<th>das</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>toe</td>
<td>tema</td>
<td>tasse</td>
<td>ton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Sometimes written ɔ
TABLE 1 -- Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(\gamma)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>naso</td>
<td>nid</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\lambda)</td>
<td>life</td>
<td>lega</td>
<td>loup</td>
<td>Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\rho)</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>rosso</td>
<td>rose</td>
<td>Rede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\rho)</td>
<td>then</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\theta)</td>
<td>thin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\zeta)</td>
<td>zeal</td>
<td>paese</td>
<td>zero</td>
<td>See</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\varsigma)</td>
<td>sun</td>
<td>sono</td>
<td>sel</td>
<td>Wasser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\xi)</td>
<td>azure</td>
<td>((\delta))</td>
<td>gelo</td>
<td>jaune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\jmath)</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>acena</td>
<td>chaise</td>
<td>Schall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\varsigma)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>fille</td>
<td>ja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\varsigma)</td>
<td>human</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Lambda)</td>
<td>signor</td>
<td></td>
<td>mignon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Gamma)</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>grande</td>
<td>garde</td>
<td>Geld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\kappa)</td>
<td>kick</td>
<td>canto</td>
<td>kępi</td>
<td>Krone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\eta)</td>
<td>sing</td>
<td>(lungo)</td>
<td></td>
<td>lang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\chi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\nu)</td>
<td>mine</td>
<td>madre</td>
<td>mais</td>
<td>Mann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\theta)</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>bocca</td>
<td>bleu</td>
<td>Bart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The symbol for \(\text{ch}\) as in the English chin is the combination \(\text{\(\iota\)}\).
TABLE 1 -- Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>poet</td>
<td>posa</td>
<td>peur</td>
<td>Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ù</td>
<td>west</td>
<td></td>
<td>oui</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ŵ</td>
<td>when</td>
<td></td>
<td>suis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ù</td>
<td>vale</td>
<td>vivo</td>
<td>Voeu</td>
<td>wo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>foe</td>
<td>fido</td>
<td>force</td>
<td>Fest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2

SYMBOLS OMITTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ø</td>
<td>at (English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ù</td>
<td>urge (English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>all (English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñ</td>
<td>singer (English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>arabe (French uvular &quot;R&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. The flat ø is never sung, but is always broadened to approximate.

5. The symbols ù and ñ indicate a vowel sound modified by an "R". While singing English, we omit all but initial "R"s.

6. The c indicates such a fine distinction between broad sounds that it is pointless to include it.

7. The uvular R is never sung by French singers.
Also omitted are several symbols not used in the four languages under discussion. As the melodic line of the music indicates the length of vowel and the accent, it is not practicable to include the many qualifying symbols which are used to enumerate these inflections.

As the means to better exploit the ideas involved in this study, the writer has chosen to present a hypothetical case in which the diction problems of both the private teacher and the cumulative faculty of a voice department in a music school can be discussed. Although the circumstances involved in this case are patterned on no specific situation, it is the writer's belief that a great majority of the private voice teachers and vocal departments in this country are faced with these very difficulties and have neglected their responsibility in working them out.

These are ϊ, ǔ̈, ỹ̈̄, and ỹ̈, used in Spanish and several languages of Slavic origin.
CHAPTER II

A STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHETICAL CASE TO BE USED IN ILLUMINATING THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED

The vocal department of a small denominational college has two faculty members. Miss A., a retired opera and concert singer, has gained a splendid reputation both in America and abroad. Mr. B., is a capable vocalist and has established a local reputation as a concert and oratorio singer. Due to a marked influx of music students, Mr. C. has been hired for the current year to formulate policies for and to head the greatly expanded voice department.

While going over plans for the coming year with the dean of the music school, Mr. C. discovered that a few of the former students of the school had sung auditions for professional schools in the East and had been criticized severely for inaccuracies of diction. It was also brought to his attention that one of the graduate students had reached the finals of an important national competition and had lost a close decision, as one of the judges later told her, because of "sloppy" diction. After further investigation, the new head of the department discovered that, although four semesters of foreign language was required of all majoring vocalists, these courses were designed primarily to familiarize the students with the grammar and elementary reading material of the languages.
studied. Supplementary courses in vocal diction were required - a semester each of Italian, French, and German.

Miss A., who had lived and sung in Europe, spoke fluent Italian and French. In teaching the diction courses in these two languages, it had been her procedure to read through the words of a song, line by line, and the pupils would repeat them after her. In this way the students eventually were able to approximate the correct inflections of the words to a few songs in each language. A few general rules were given, but these were not adequate for future self-help in learning new songs.

Mr. B. taught the German diction course. His background included two years of college German and a nominal practical experience in singing German Lieder. His teaching method was to give the class a comprehensive set of rules for pronunciation, on which they were tested. The students would then sing various German songs for the class and Mr. B. would make corrections after each performance. The more difficult sounds, such as the umlaut vowels and the ö, were learned by the process of oral drill - the pupils imitating the teacher.

Realizing that such teaching tactics were at best a helter-skelter approach to the problems of diction, and realizing also that overcrowded schedules had not, in the past, allowed the voice teachers adequate time for course planning, Mr. C. sought aid from the language department. He soon realized that the language faculty was overworked and that it
would be impractical to redesign the grammar courses for the benefit of a relatively few voice students and out of the question to suggest that the members of the language staff assume the added responsibility for the diction courses.

In the few days remaining before the beginning of the semester, Mr. C. began to plan his own inter-departmental solution to the problem. At the voice teacher's meeting prior to the opening of school he presented his ideas to the other teachers.
CHAPTER III

A PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS RAISED
IN THE HYPOTHETICAL CASE

Problems of the Department as a Unit

The members of the voice faculty readily admitted that their diction program had not been as effective as it might have been. They were frankly open to suggestion, and pledged whole-hearted support of any suggestions Mr. C. might offer. The new head of the department then passed out mimeographed copies of the International Phonetic Language.

A four semester program was proposed. During the first semester Mr. C. would conduct a class which would be required of all voice students. In this course the singers would memorize the alphabet and learn the corresponding sound for each symbol. This would be carefully planned so that the symbols for English sounds were learned first and the more difficult foreign sounds later. This course would be the foundation for the complete program and no attempt would be made to apply the alphabet to any language - the semester's goal being merely familiarization with the alphabet itself. During this first semester the other teachers would be cognizizing the alphabet themselves in preparation for the next semester's work.
Once the plan was in full operation, Miss A. would teach the French class, Mr. B. the German, and Mr. C. the Italian, in addition to the basic course. Until the plan had become integrated, Mr. C. would conduct a special elective course for seniors in which all the languages would be taught. It was agreed that language recordings would be utilized as much as practicable, and that special records would be cut by the teachers themselves to illustrate special aspects of the program.

In the classes devoted to the individual languages, simple songs would be approached first - songs such as Weckerlin's "Bergerettes" or Franz' Lieder. The teacher would copy the text of the song on the blackboard and fill in the correct phonetic symbols above the text. With the background of the first semester's work, the students should be able to read and sing the language at sight through familiarity with the symbols and their sounds.

Next, mimeographed rules for pronunciation would be handed to the students. These rules would utilize the phonetic alphabet entirely. When a specific sound was called for, the symbol for that sound would be used, thereby doing away with the need for protractive descriptions of the sounds or

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9 It is suggested that Italian, German, and French be studied in that order.

10 The use of mimeographed sheets was deemed necessary so that the students could spend their time learning the material rather than copying notes.
endless illustrations on the part of the teacher. After careful study of the rules for pronunciation the singers should begin writing their own phonetizations above the words in the scores they are studying.

Problems of the Individual Teacher in the Studio

The teacher at the private lesson should require the pupil to write in the phonetics for each assigned song before studying it. This is the crux of the whole study program. The class work is but preparation for the private lesson. Each teacher should be well enough versed in the application of the phonetic alphabet to all the languages that they can make the necessary corrections in the pupil's work.

It is left to the private teacher to apply the alphabet to the English language. The teacher should be conversant with the distortions necessary to make English an understandable singing language, so that the student will be able to learn the practical application of the alphabet to his native tongue.

In the private lesson the unassailable benefits of this system become at once apparent. Having mastered the phonetic alphabet and having assimilated it, the student is relieved of the traditional bug-bear of language coordination. The approach to the various dictions is upon common ground. The

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11 Examples of such distortion: the necessity for singing s as ç and î as i, The elimination of all but initial "R's".
visual concept, and hence the mental concept of each lan-
guage, gained by means of the one set of symbols and their
implied sounds, is common to all the languages. These
implied sounds, if they have been taught correctly, give an
accurate inflection to the language when employed scrupulously
by the student. The constant repetition by both teacher and
student of widely differing transliterated sound-patterns for
each syllable of each language is obliterated. A standard,
common to all pronunciation, has been discovered. In truth,
we have a universal singer's language.

Valuable teaching hours, hitherto devoted to these
phonetic problems, can now be employed in erasing vocal and
musical faults. A major mental hazard has been obliterated
in the student's approach. Energies, formerly dissipated in
these worries, can now be utilized in other directions while
in the studio. The teacher's impact and the student's reaction
are enhanced. The actual business of singing is now the main
studio occupation.

Not to be minimized in importance, one of the major bene-
fits to be gained by this method of studying the various
dictions is in the fact that the perceptive student will
immediately recognize the essential linguistic characteristics
peculiar to the languages. He will notice that the Italian
phonetics will closely parallel the actual spelling of that
language, pointing up the purity of sound in the Italian
tongue. The inordinate amount of consonant symbols will point out the harsher aspects of German. The wider use of the semi-vowels and nasals will exemplify the subtle nuance of the French language.

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12 It should be carefully explained that the five Italian vowels be pronounced open at all times. A common error is to teach both an open and a close position for the \( \text{C} \) and \( \text{O} \). The close sound results from the peculiar arrangement of the consonants surrounding the open vowel.
Chapter IV

Examples of Phoneticized Song Texts

Italian

"Caro Mio Ben" - Giordani

Caro mio ben, credimi almen,

Senza di te languisce il cor.

Il tuo fedel sospiro' ognor.

Cessa, crudel, tanto rigor!
German

"Heiden-Röslein" - Goethe - Schubert

Sa h ein knob' ein röslein steh'n,
Röslein auf der heiden,
War so jung und morgenschon
Lief er schnell, es nah' zu sehn,
Sah's mit vielen freuden.

Röslein roth, röslein auf der heiden.
French

"Mai" - Hugo - Faure

Puisque mai tout en fleurs

Dans les prés nous réclame,

Viens, ne te lasse pas

De mêler à ton ame.

La campagne, les bois,

Les ombrages charmants,

Les larges clairs de lune

Au bord des flots dormants.
"Drink To Me Only" - Jonson - Mellish

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup
And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.
CHAPTER V

EXAMPLES OF RULES FOR PRONUNCIATION SHEETS

Italian

Vowels

There are only five vowel sounds in Italian:

- A pronounced \( a \)
- E pronounced \( e \)
- i pronounced \( i \)
- o pronounced \( o \)
- u pronounced \( u \)

It is a common but erroneous device to teach modified sounds to supplement these pure vowel sounds. The modified sounds result from the position of the vowel in relation to the surrounding consonants. At all times the attempt must be made to sing these pure vowel sounds. The gradations of nuance will automatically result if the consonants around the vowel are correctly pronounced.

Consonants

S Sybilant \( S \)

S is sybilant at the beginning of a word, even when proceeded by a prefix. as: sole, sale, senso, solido, or consenso, consolidare. Double S is always sybilant. as: spesso, stesso, cassa, rossa, bosso. S is sybilant in the following suffixes:
oso, amoroso, curiosita, osia, osita, gelosia.

S Voiced Z

S is voiced when the stress is on the preceding vowel.
as: cause, rosa, sposa, chiesa, abuso.

S is voiced when followed by these consonants:

b --- sboglio, sbarrare, sborna
d --- sdegno,adolcinato
g --- sgelo, sguardo
l --- slitta, slanciarsi
m --- smania, smaltire
n --- snello, snidare
r --- sragionare, srodicare
v --- svisare, svelare.

In the suffix esimo, the S is voiced. as: battesimo, cristianesimo.

Z Pronounced tz

Z is pronounced like tz before vowels A and U, and before the diphthongs ia and io. as: zappa, forza, zuppa, zia, ozio, malizia, vizia. Double Z is pronounced as tz before vowels A and U, and before the diphthongs ia and io. as: bellezza, rozza. Z is pronounced as tz in the combination of zi plus a vowel. as: grazia, pazzia, oziare.

Z Pronounced dz

A single or double Z is pronounced as dz when followed by O. as: orzo, azoto, zodiaco, orizzonte, mezzo.

Gutteral Sound of C and G

C and G before vowels are pronounced in two different ways - gutteral and soft - depending on the spelling of the word.
C as K    G as J
ca        ga
co        go
cu        gu
But:  che  But:  ghe
chi       ghi

Soft Sound of C and G

The soft sound of C is pronounced as if there were an S before the C. The soft G is pronounced as the J in just.

C as tj    G as dj
cia       gia
cio       gio
ciu       giu
But:  ce  But:  ge
ci        gi

Gl combinations are pronounced as in glance gj, with the exception of Gli, which is pronounced h as: negligente, glicerina, anglicana.

Gn combinations are pronounces h as: ogni, magnifico, spagna, stagnante.

H is always silent. It is used to modify sounds and to distinguish words that sound alike.

Care must be taken to distinguish between single and double consonant sounds when pronouncing Italian. In pronouncing the double consonant sound, pause a moment before singing the consonant, and the distinction will be accomplished.

All other sounds in Italian are pronounced as if written in English.
German

The German unlaut is indicated by two dots over the vowel which it affects.

ä pronounced $\ddot{a}$
ö pronounced $\ddot{o}$

But: ö followed by a double consonant $\ddot{oe}$
ü pronounced $\ddot{u}$

A is always $a$.
The Combination ie is pronounced $i$
The Combination ei is pronounced $\alpha i$
e followed by a single consonant is pronounced $e$
e followed by a double consonant is pronounced $\varepsilon$
äu is pronounced $\alpha i$
au is pronounced $\alpha u$
i is pronounced $\ddot{i}$ except when followed by a single consonant it is pronounced $i$
o is pronounced $\ddot{o}$ except when followed by a single consonant it is pronounced $o$
u is always pronounced $u$.

Consonants
b is pronounced $\beta$ except when followed by T when it is pronounced $\beta t$ or when it is the final letter of the word $\beta$.

Initial C and Ch are pronounced $\kappa$ except when Ch is used in proper names, then it is $\mathcal{S}$ as in Charlotte.
Final Ch is pronounced $\zeta$
d is pronounced $\delta$ except when followed by T when it is $\tau$
Final g is pronounced \( \zeta \)
g followed by t is \( \eta t \)
g followed by e is \( \zeta \)
All other g's are \( \eta \)
j is pronounced \( \j \)
ng is pronounced \( \eta \). All other n's are \( \nu \)
qu is pronounced \( \kappa \nu \)
A single S at the beginning of a word is \( \zeta \)
Final S or final double S is \( \zeta \)
sch is pronounced \( \zeta \)
Initial sp is pronounced \( \zeta \phi \)
sp in the middle or at the end of a word is pronounced \( \zeta \phi \)
Initial st is pronounced \( \zeta \tau \)
st in the middle or at the end of a word is pronounced \( \zeta \tau \)
Initial v is pronounced \( \phi \)
Initial w is pronounced \( \nu \)
z is pronounced \( \tau \zeta \)
All other consonants are pronounced as in English

French

The Phonetic Alphabet (Scale of French Sounds).

Vowels

\( \alpha \) --- flamme
\( \alpha \) --- papa
\( \epsilon \) --- mère
\( \epsilon \) --- bebe
\( \iota \) --- fini
\( \upsilon \) --- rue
\( \upsilon \) --- sou
o --- beau, rose
O --- Simone, porte
e --- je
 è --- bleu
è --- fleur

Nasals
a --- enfant
a --- bonbon
æ --- un
ë --- vin

Semi-Vowels
j --- fille, soleil
ɥ --- nuit
ω --- fouet

Consonants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Strong</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
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<tr>
<td>z</td>
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<td>f</td>
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<td>η</td>
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<td>η̃</td>
<td>ñ</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A ë is open when: circumflex accent - ëme. Followed by a silent or sounding s or z - pas, passé. Followed by tion or ssion - nation, passion. Followed by double m - flamme. Followed by il - travail.

A ë is closed in all cases except the before mentioned five. The closed A is typical French A.

E ë is open when: grave or circumflex accent - mère, tête. When preceeded by c and followed by a sounding consonant - chef, cel, cet. ai or ei in the middle of a word -
plaine, neige. ais or ait at the end of a word - jamais, lait. E plus j sound - soleil.

E is closed in all other cases except with an acute accent - passé. When followed by a silent consonant, except nez. ai at end of a word - pueraï, lai.

O ɔ is closed when: circumflex accent - dôme. Followed by a z sound - rose. Followed by tion - émotion. au and eau - chapeau, faune. Final sound in word is followed by a silent consonant - dépôt, repos, impôt.

O õ is open when followed by a sounding consonant, except bol, sotte, bonne, cor.

E ə is pronounced mute when there is no accent or no other letter in the same syllable - madamoï/selle.

EU gives the ð, or open-closed sound when: circumflex accent - jeûne. Followed by a sounding z - heureuse. Final in a word ending with a silent consonant - cheveux.

EU gives the open ð sound before any sounding consonant except z - fleur, neuf, seul.

Nasal Vowels

All French nasals are not purely nasal, they are half mouth and half nasal. They are formed by starting with the open vowel position and directing the tone through the nose.

ɔ becomes ɔ
ɔ becomes õ
ɔ becomes û
ɛ becomes ë
Start with the open A sound a, keep the position and say a through the nose and mouth. The center of resonance is far forward behind the upper teeth at the base of the nose. Spellings that give a are: an, en, am, em, aon, aen - as in dans, dent chambre, ensemble, paon, Laon, Caen. ent at the end of a verb or verb form is never nasal.

Start with open o and nasalize as above. Spellings that give o are: on and om as in donc and tombeau.

Start with open ë and nasalize as above. Spellings that give ë are: un, um, eum, - as in parfum, jeun.

Start with open position of e and nasalize as above. This is a very high position of resonance. Spellings that give e are:

- in as in vin
- im as in impossible
- ain as in main
- ein as in plein
- aim as in fain
- eim as in Reims
- yn as in larynx
- ym as in thym

en after i as in chien
en at the end of certain words as in examen

Semi-Vowels

There are three semi-vowels corresponding to three full vowels

--- will give j
-- will give y
- will give w

Short i will give the yod sound when: every time we have i plus another vowel in the same syllable we cut the i short
and get \( \mathbf{j} \) as ciel, cieux, chien, papier, bien. Double \( l \) after \( i \) as in fille with the exceptions as in ville becomes \( vi-Ja \), villa, mille, million, tranquille. \( l \) after a vowel - soleil, travail, vermeil.

The French letter \( y \) becomes \( i \) as in systeme and yeux, however, between two other vowels, or at the end of a word the \( y \) becomes two \( i \)'s, as:

- pays becomes \( pait-Js \) or \( pc-i \).
- voyage becomes \( voia-Jge \) or \( vec-j \).
- bruyant becomes \( Brui-iant \) or \( Bry-j \).

Everytime we have \( u \) plus another vowel in the same syllable, we cut the \( u \) short and get the whistle-sound of \( "{i} \), as: nuit and nuage.

We get the sound of \( w \) when: \( ou \) is followed by another vowel in the same syllable, as: oui becomes \( wi \), and fouet \( \mathbf{f}v \).

\( oi \) gives the sound of \( w \). If \( oi \) is final without any other letter following, it is closed, as: moi becomes \( muq \). If \( oi \) is followed by another letter it becomes \( muq \), as: mois becomes \( muq \).

Sometimes for the sake of meter, the poet does not respect the semi-vowel. In that case we sing one full vowel on the preceding note and another on the following note, as: muage becomes \( ny-\mathbf{a}-3 \). Sometimes in singing, we sing a semi-vowel on one note where the word would be normally pronounced with two full vowels, as in: "Nell" of Faure - Juin becomes \( 3y-\mathbf{e} \), when it is normally \( 3y-\mathbf{e} \). Sometimes when we have an \( i \) before a vowel and two notes to sing, we sing a full \( i \) on the first
note and a semi-vowel on the second note, as in "L'Enfant Prodigue" of Debussy, the proper name Lia is pronounced лиа, or prierre пье-ле-ра.

For the purposes of euphony, a vowel that is normally closed becomes open because in the following syllable of the word we have an open vowel, as:

- е becomes е же, open е in next syllable. deteste дез-тесте becomes дез-тесте.
- о becomes о if open о in next syllable. aurore аурур becomes аурур.
- а becomes а, baiser ве-зар becomes ве-зар.
- е becomes е when an i sound appears in the next syllable. plaisir плазэ-зар becomes плаазэ-зар.
- е becomes е when a sound appears in the next syllable. aigue эйг becomes эйг.
- о becomes о if о sound etc. heureux оу-ро becomes оу-ро.
- о becomes о if о sound etc. morose мороз becomes мороз.

Syllabification is extremely important for singers, as it indicates just what consonants and vowels to put on each note.

Every syllable in French must start with a consonant. If a word starts with a vowel and the word before ends with a consonant, we take the consonant of the preceding word and sing it before the first vowel of the following word, as: mon cœur est à toi.

Linking is the pronouncing of the last consonant of one word with the initial vowel sound of the following word, as: Les enfants.

Some changes in sound take place when linking, as:
becomes 2, les amis
x becomes 2, deux amis
d becomes t, grand homme
g becomes k, sang ampur
f becomes v, neuf amis

When do we link? Inside a thought group - that is words which have some thought in common. Even inside a thought group there are cases where we do not link, as:

la haine    haute
la houle    hauteur
la hate     hutte
hater       hurler
les haricot les hurlements
les homards les heros
les heron   (not heroine, mute h)

After the word et never link, as: et/un jour.

Inside of a compound expression never link, as: les arca/en ciel.

Before nouns of foreign origin never link, as: les/yacht.

Before words beginning with ou never link, as: mais/oui.

After nouns ending with nasals never link, as: Notre horizon est ferme ɲɔ-ʁɔ-ʁi-ɔ ɛ fɛʁ-ʁe , however, after all other words (except nouns) ending with a nasal, we link, as:

article --- un ami
adjective --- bon ami
pronoun --- mon ami

When a word ends with r plus another consonant, we overlook the last consonant and link the r, as: Dort un clair de lune dɔ-ʁɔʁɛ k1ɛŋ da lʁ-ʁa.
Consonants

All French consonants, even t and r, are produced with the tongue down and with the tip of the tongue against the lower teeth.

b at the end of a word is always mute, as: plomb, Doubs.

P at the end of a word is mute, with these exceptions: cap, cep (de vigne). Champ, camp.

Inside of a word, p generally disappears at the end of a syllable, as: baptême, dompter.

p at the beginning of a word is always pronounced, even if followed by another consonant, as:

- pneumonie --- pneumonie
- psychologie --- psychologie
- psyche --- psyche
- psychiatrie --- psychiatrie

z itself gives the sound of z, as: zéphyr, zénith, azur.
s between two vowels, as: rose, oser. Sometimes x inside of a word gives the z-sound, as: deuxième z - jé - me. z at the end of a word is generally mute, as: assèz, nez, vous avez, BUT: in gaz the z is sounded.

The s-sound is given with one s at the beginning of a word, as: Simone (either before a vowel or a consonant). Two s's inside of a word, as: classe. s after a consonant, as: ainsi.
s plus c - overlook the c completely, as science sj - se.
c before e or i, as cette sj - te, ciel sjel. c with the cedilla, as: garçon sj - só. ti sounds as s, as: addition sj - so, tien sj, démocratie sj - mó - ki - so. At the end of a word, s is generally mute, as les, nes, vais, prends, etais, mais.
In four words s is sometimes mute and sometimes sounding.
When plus has the meaning of no more or no longer the s is
mute, as: Je ne l'aime plus. In an affirmative sentence, the
s is sounding, as: Donnez-m'en plus.

Sometimes the final s is mute, as: Je sens (verb). The
final s sounds when sens means direction, meaning (sense), the
five senses.

When tous is a pronoun meaning all of them, the final s
is sounding. When tous is an adjective the final s is mute, as:
tous les homme. The s is mute in the plural.

At the end of a word, d as a rule is mute, as: chaud,
froid, nid, nord, and in the verb forms prends and perds.
Exceptions to this are: sud, names of people as Alfred, Le Cid.

At the end of a word, t is generally mute, as: in the verb
forms il est, petit, lit, lait, Albert. Exceptions to this are:
ouest, est Est. Inside of a word, t disappears at the
end of a syllable, as: Montréal, Monmartre, Montparnasse. th
gives the sound of t, as: theatre, thym tê. d links as the
t-sound, as: grandi homme.

W sometimes sounds as v, especially in words of foreign
origin, as: wagon Va-ge, Wagner Va-ger.

f at the end of a word is generally sounding, as: neuf,
canif, oeuf, boeuf. Three words in the plural lose their last
f-sound, as:

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oeuf -- oeufs
boeuf -- boeufs
nerf -- nerfs
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ph gives the sound of f, as: pharmacie.

j, as in Jean, Jaune, toujours, gives the sound of \( j \).
g-soft, that is g followed by e or i, as: geste, gilet.

ch, as in chat, architecte, archeveque, gives the sound of \( s \). sch as in schema. Sometimes ch gives the k-sound, as:
orchydee, orchestre, psychologie, (not psyche, which is pronounced as ch) archange, chlore.

k itself, as in kilometre, gives the sound of k. qu as in quatre. c-hard, that is c followed by:
a as in carte
o as in corolle
u as in culture
c at the end of a word is mute, as blan\( c \), ban\( c \). After a vowel at the end of a word the c is pronounced as k, as: sec, bec, sac.

g-hard, that is g followed by:
a as in gare
o as in gosse
u as in guerre
gives the sound of g. At the end of a word, g is mute, as sant\( e \), sein\( e \).

At the end of a word the l sounds, as seul, sel, bal, cil, ciel. Exceptions to this are: fil\( \acute{e} \), sourcil\( \acute{e} \), gentil\( \acute{e} \), fusil\( \acute{e} \), gril\( \acute{e} \). Double l after i is pronounced yod j as: fille, ville.

M and n form a nasal with a preceeding vowel, unless they start a new syllable as: fu-mee

a plus m and n make \( \acute{a} \), as in dans, chambre
e plus m and n make \( \acute{e} \), as in dent, ensemble, or
e plus m and n make \( \check{c} \), as in chen, examen
i plus m and n make \( \check{i} \), as in vin, impossible
o plus m and n make \( \check{o} \), as in bon, sombre
u plus m and n make \( \check{u} \), as in un, parfum
y plus m and n make \( \check{c} \), as in larynx, thym
When g is followed by n, it blends with the n and gives a new sound η. Very much like a Spanish n, as: magnifique Μάν-η-φι-κά. Exceptions to this are: agnostic Αγ-ν-στ-ικά, diagnostic Εδαγ-ν-στ-ικά.

There are two kinds of r: conversational or Parisian r, produced down in the throat by a motion of the glottus, and the singing r, very much like the singing r in English, produced by the tip of the tongue vibrating against the front of the top palate.

At the end of a word, r is generally sounding, as: sur, mer, car, mort. Endings of first conjugation verbs such as marcher, manger. Names of trades people such as Boulanger, Boucher. Names of trees as pommier, pecher, oranger.

As a fact, x does not exist as a special sound phonetically, for it is always pronounced as something else. x sometimes sounds as k's before a consonant, as: exposition Εξι-στα-σί, extase Εξ-στα-σί. x sometimes sounds as gz before a vowel, as: examen Εξ-α-σμέ, exiger Εξ-ι-ζέ. Sometimes x sounds as z, as: deuxieme dEU-ζί-με, dixieme dI-ζί-με. Sometimes x sounds as s, as dix dI-ς, six sIς, soixante sω-ς-ς. At the end of a word, x is generally mute as in prix, paix.

When two consonants, a weak and a strong, appear together, if the first consonant is weak it becomes strong and vice versa, as:

- absence Αφ-ς-ς-ς-ς
- bras dessus Βρα-τάς-
- bras dessous Βρα-τάς-
- obstination Οφ-στ-νάς-
- Coq d'or Κάκ-ς-
- Paquebot Πάκ-ς-

Or:
- ob-ς-ς-ς-ς
- Πάκ-ς-
- Σ-ς-ς-ς-ς-ς-ς
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The adequacy of a plan, such as the one promulgated in this study, must be measured within the dimensions of the three main elements concerned in the expository process: the student, the teacher, and the languages involved.

To the great majority of students of singing, harassed as they are by difficulties of diction, the occasion to gain, through the process of pure learning, a theorem which can at once be applied to all singing languages, the plan advanced herein will be an incalculable boon. The feeling of transient and abject floundering in foreign language pronunciations, such as current teaching procedures induce, will be supplanted by a definite and heartening knowledge which will inspire confidence and accomplishment - pointing the way to an accurate and expressive diction. The International Phonetic Alphabet used in conjunction with the rules for pronunciation derived therefrom, will provide a permanent and accurate self-help in work independent of the studio.

The teacher will find that the groundwork laid in the phonetic classes will eliminate valuable hours of studio time usually spent in pronunciation drill. The purity of sound achieved by the application of the alphabet will
provide a groundwork for vocalizing never before realized. The parallels in phonetic qualities between the languages will establish new and rewarding bases for technical approaches. It is quite possible that in the instructor's study of the system he will be challenged to re-study and re-vamp many of his own concepts and procedures in the teaching of singing.

A singing language, based on the study of the International Phonetic Alphabet, will emerge - a medium of expression infinitely more pure, true, and communicative. Great strides will have been made toward correcting the impression made by so many singers that the languages in which they sing, not of their native tongue, are in all truth "foreign" languages. One of the basic elements in the singer's art is an eloquent utterance of the text from which the composer has taken his inspiration.


Encyclopedia Brittanica, Fourteenth Edition, Volume IV.


