

CHORAL MARKING GUIDE

Score marking is integral to productive and engaging rehearsals, and every conductor approaches it differently. I've created this guide so you can become familiar with how I think and talk about it. A choir's success lies in its ability to unify every aspect of every performance. Consistency is key! Taking clear notes will eliminate any discrepancies between releases, articulations, etc. and help us to maintain and grow CMS's reputation for excellence.

For every rehearsal sequence, I will post videos explaining what I'm looking for and scans of marked scores online. I ask that you use these resources and transfer markings that apply to your voice part into your own score outside of rehearsal. This will save a lot of rehearsal time and ensure that our Monday evening practices are spent efficiently.

Note that the symbols in brackets are from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). I've included IPA resources at the end of this document. These are perhaps more technical than we need but may be useful references.

PHRASING

Phrasing refers to when you breathe and where to place any final consonants. Instead of asking you to simply breathe between words, I will ask you to adjust the rhythmic notation. For example, in the measures below, I would ask you to change the half note on "Lord" to a quarter note followed by a quarter rest. You should then make that change in the score and write a "d" under the rest. All final consonants should be followed by a neutral "uh"/[ə]. which, in this case, would be "duh."

You are there, Lord, you are You are there, Lord, ^εyou are
d

Sometimes, the final consonant will be on the offbeat. In this example, I would say, "On the word "praise," please make the quarter note an eighth note followed by an eighth rest. The "s" should go on the and of beat one." This would look like:


Sing the full-ness of your praise? You are God Sing the full-ness of your ^εpraise? You are God
s

Mark spots where we won't breathe with both a slur and "NB" (no breath).

Sing the full-ness of your praise? You are God

DYNAMICS

My dynamic markings are pretty standard (*p*, *mp*, *f*, etc.). The only unique one is “spin,” which describes a gradual increase in volume. This is similar to a crescendo but also implies intensifying your tone. I notate this as:



Sing the full-ness of your praise? You are God


VOCAL TECHNIQUE

Don't be afraid to mark your music! Make notes to yourself, circle tricky intervals, and write reminders about vowel shapes. Even if your markings are incoherent to others, the act of writing will help you remember concepts.

ARTICULATION/DICTION

Text is unique to choral music. It is therefore imperative that we base all our musical decisions upon the text. In addition to rewriting rhythms to reflect breathing (see phrasing section above), I also suggest the following principles:


- Mark syllables as stressed or unstressed to reinforce text declamation and word stress. I use scansion symbols to graphically represent the metrical pattern. Here's an example:



We wor-ship you, we hon-or you,

- Any word starting with an unaccented syllable of a consonant and an “e” should pronounced “ih”/[i]. Examples include: dih-liver, bih-lieve, dih-light, etc.

- “the”
“thee”/[t̥i] if the next word starts with a vowel
“thuh”/[t̥ʌ] if the next word starts with a consonant
Examples: “thee” apple, “thuh” peach

- *Leggiero* is my favorite musical term. It refers to a light, nimble, and quick articulation, similar to staccato but less clipped. It is *non legato*. I use this term frequently in Baroque- and Classical-period music (e.g., Handel, Mozart, Haydn). In scores, I represent it with this symbol: 



There is sprung up a light for - the right - eous.

IPA CHART FOR LYRIC DICTION

VOWELS	ENGLISH	ITALIAN	GERMAN	FRENCH
[i]	see [si]	ivi [ˈivi]	Lied [li:t]	ici [isi]
[ɪ]	wit [wɪt]		Bitte [ˈbɪtə]	
[e]	chaotic [keˈɑtɪk]	perché [perˈke]	Erde [ˈʔe:rdə]	été [ete]
[ɛ]	bell [bɛl]	bene [ˈbene]	Feld [fɛlt]	rêve [ʁevə]
[u]	blue [blu]	luna [ˈluna]	Ruhe [ˈru:ə]	jour [ʒur]
[ʊ]	look [lʊk]		jung [jʊŋ]	
[o]	obey [ʔoˈbeɪ]	solo [ˈsolo]	Mond [mo:nt]	pauvre [povrə]
[ɔ]	ought [ʔɔt]	core [ˈkɔre]	Sonne [ˈzɔnnə]	aurora [ɔrɔrə]
[æ]	glad [glæd]			
[a]	sigh [sai]	caro [ˈkaro]	allein [ʔalˈlaen]	voilà [vvala]
[ɑ]	father [ˈfɑðə]		Abend [ˈʔa:bənt]	âme [amə]
[ʌ]	up [ʔʌp]			
[y]			Blüte [ˈbly:tə]	sûr [syr]
[ʏ]			küssen [ˈkyssən]	
[ø]			schön [ʃø:n]	feu [fø]
[œ]			können [kœnnən]	seul [sœl]
[ɜ]	bird [bɜd]			
[ɝ]			Vater [ˈfɑ:tə]	
[ɑ̃]				enfant [ɑ̃fɑ̃]
[ɛ̃]				bien [bjɛ̃]
[õ]				ombre [õbrə]
[œ̃]				humble [œ̃blə]

CONSONANTS	ENGLISH	ITALIAN	GERMAN	FRENCH
[p]	pure [pjʊə]	pace [ˈpatʃe]	Perle [ˈpɛrlə]	porte [pɔrtə]
[b]	beauty [ˈbjʊti]	bella [ˈbella]	Bild [bɪlt]	beauté [bote]
[ʌ]	wheat [ˌmit]			
[w]	wish [wɪʃ]	uomo [ˈwɔmo]		oui [wi]
[m]	mist [mɪst]	mondo [ˈmondo]	Meer [me:r]	même [memə]
[f]	faith [feɪθ]	fiore [ˈfjore]	Fest [fɛst]	fois [fwa]
[v]	voice [vɔɪs]	vita [ˈvita]	Welt [velt]	voix [vwa]
[pf]			Pfad [ˈpfa:t]	
[θ]	thin [θɪn]			
[ð]	them [ðɛm]			
[t]	tone [toon]	tempo [ˈtempo]	Tag [ta:k]	tête [tɛtə]
[d]	dance [dɑns]	donna [ˈdɔnna]	Dank [danʃk]	désir [dezɪr]
[s]	sing [sɪŋ]	spesso [ˈspesso]	Wasser [ˈvassə]	soir [swar]
[z]	zeal [zil]	sdegno [ˈzdeŋno]	Seele [ˈze:lə]	zéphyr [zefɪr]
[ts]		senza [ˈsentsa]	Zeit [tsaet]	
[dz]		mezzo [ˈmɛddzo]		
[n]	night [naɪt]	nome [ˈnome]	Nebel [ˈne:bəl]	noir [nwar]
[l]	little [ˈlɪtl]	luce [ˈlutʃe]	Liebe [ˈli:bə]	lune [lynə]
[r]	thread [θrɛd]	parola [paˈrɔla]	rot [ro:t]	riche [riʃə]
[ɹ]	rose [ɹoʊz]			
[r]		rosa [ˈrɔza]	Herr [hɛr]	

CONSONANTS	ENGLISH	ITALIAN	GERMAN	FRENCH
[ʃ]	shine [ʃaɪn]	lasciare [laʃˈfare]	Sterne [ˈstɛrnə]	chant [ʃɑ̃]
[ʒ]	vision [ˈvɪʒən]			jamais [ʒamɛ]
[tʃ]	child [tʃaɪld]	cielo [ˈtʃɛlo]	Deutsch [dɔɐtʃ]	
[dʒ]	judge [dʒʌdʒ]	gioia [ˈdʒɔja]		
[ŋ]		sogno [ˈsoŋno]		vigne [viŋə]
[ʎ]		figlio [ˈfiʎlo]		
[ç]	huge [çʊdʒ]		Licht [lɪçt]	
[j]	young [jʌŋ]	miei [mje:i]	Jahr [ja:r]	yeux [jø]
[ɥ]				nuit [nuɪ]
[k]	kiss [kɪs]	casa [ˈkaza]	Kind [kɪnt]	cœur [kœr]
[g]	good [gʊd]	guida [ˈgwida]	gern [gɛrn]	guerre [gɛrə]
[ŋ]	wing [wɪŋ]	lungo [ˈlungo]	Engel [ˈʔɛŋəl]	
[χ]			Nacht [naxt]	
[ʔ]	eye [ʔaɪ]		Augen [ˈʔaʊgən]	
[h]	health [helθ]		Herz [hɛrtz]	

STRESS MARKS, LONG MARK AND SCHWA

SYMBOLS	ENGLISH	ITALIAN	GERMAN	FRENCH
[ˈ]	above [ʔʌˈbʌv]	così [koˈzi]	Gesicht [gɛˈzɪçt]	
[ˌ]	melancholy [ˈmɛlənˌkʌli]		Rosenbaum [ˈro:zənˌbaʊm]	
[:]		mio [mi:ɔ]	Boot [bo:t]	
[ə]	listen [ˈlɪsən]		Geliebte [gɛˈli:ptə]	petite [pəˈtɪtə]

AUDIO EXAMPLES ARE ON THE LISTENING PAGE

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*** CONSONANT CHARTS**

VOICING groups consonants in one of two categories. Voiced consonants engage the vocal cords. Voiceless consonants employ air flow without vocalized tone.

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental and Alveolar	Prepalatal and Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Voiceless	[p], [ʍ] <i>when</i>	[f]	[θ] <i>thin</i> , [t], [s]	[ʃ] <i>sheep</i> , [tʃ] <i>chair</i> , [ç] <i>hue</i>	[k], [χ] GR <i>ach</i>	[h], [ʔ] <i>each</i>
Voiced	[b], [w], [m]	[v]	[ð] <i>them</i> , [d], [z] [n], [l], rolled [r], flipped [r], retroflex [ɻ]	[ʒ] <i>vision</i> , [dʒ] <i>judge</i> , [j] <i>yes</i> [ɲ] IT <i>signore</i> , [ʎ] IT <i>gli</i>	[g] [ŋ] <i>sing</i>	

POINT OF ARTICULATION identifies the formation of each consonant by indicating the point of contact or near point of contact made by the articulators.

Points of Articulation	English	Italian	German	French
Bilabial [bɑɪ'leɪbiəl] Refers to the lips	[p] [b] [m] [ʍ][w]	[p] [b] [m] [w]	[p] [b] [m]	[p] [b] [m] [w]
Labiodental [leɪbiə'dentəl] Involves the lower lip and the upper row of teeth	[f] [v]	[f] [v]	[f] [v] [pf]	[f] [v]
Dental ['dentəl] Involves the tongue tip and the back of the upper row of teeth	[θ] [ð]	[t] [d] [s] [z] [l] [n] [r] [r] [ts] [dz]	[s] [z] [l]	[t] [d] [s] [z] [l] [n] [r]
Alveolar [ʔæl'viələɪ] Involves the tongue tip and the ridge behind the upper teeth	[t] [d] [s] [z] [l] [n] [r] [ɻ]		[t] [d] [n] [r] [ts]	
Prepalatal [pi'i'pælətəl] Involves the tongue and area between the alveolar ridge and hard palate	[ʃ] [ʒ] [tʃ] [dʒ]	[ʃ] [tʃ] [dʒ] [j] [ɲ] [ʎ]	[ʃ] [tʃ]	[ʃ] [ʒ] [j] [ɲ] [ɥ]
Palatal ['pælətəl] Involves a middle arch of the tongue and the hard palate	[j]		[j] [ç]	
Velar ['viləɪ] Involves a back arch of the tongue and the soft palate	[k] [g] [ŋ]	[k] [g] [ŋ]	[k] [g] [ŋ] [χ]	[k] [g]
Glottal ['glətəl] Involves the air flow and the opening between the vocal cords	[ʔ] [h]		[ʔ] [h]	

MANNER OF ARTICULATION describes how air moves past the articulators during the enunciation of a consonant.

Manner of Articulation	English	Italian	German	French
Stop [stɒp] A momentary closure of the air flow passage	[p] [b] [t] [d]	[p] [b] [t] [d]	[p] [b] [t] [d]	[p] [b] [t] [d]
Plosive ['plɒʊsiɪv] A stop released without aspiration (for Italian & French)	[k] [g] [ʔ]	[k] [g]	[k] [g] [ʔ]	[k] [g]
Fricative ['frɪkətɪv] Produced by directing the air flow past a set of articulators	[f] [v] [s] [z] [ʍ] [ʃ] [ʒ] [h] [θ] [ð]	[f] [v] [s] [z] [ʃ]	[f] [v] [s] [z] [ʃ] [h] [ç] [χ]	[f] [v] [s] [z] [ʃ] [ʒ]
Affricate ['ʔæfrɪkət] A stop or plosive that is followed by a fricative	[tʃ] [dʒ]	[ts] [dz] [tʃ] [dʒ]	[tʃ] [pf] [ts]	
Nasal ['neɪzəl] Produced by directing vocalized tone through the nasal passages	[m] [n] [ŋ]	[m] [n] [ŋ] [ɲ]	[m] [n] [ŋ]	[m] [n] [ɲ]
Lateral ['lætərəl] Produced by directing vocalized tone over the sides of the tongue	[l]	[l] [ʎ]	[l]	[l]
Glide [glaɪd] Produced by directing vocalized tone past the articulators without friction	[j] [w]	[j] [w]	[j]	[j] [w] [ɥ]
Trill [tɹɪl] Formed by taps of the tongue tip against the alveolar ridge and/or teeth	[r]	[r] [r]	[r]	[r]
Retroflex ['ɹetɹɔʊflɛks] Produced with rounded lips and the tongue tip curled up	[ɻ]			

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*VOWEL CHART

The IPA symbols with English examples provide an approximation of the vowel sound. Actual vowel formation and resonance must be defined for each language.

TONGUE VOWELS are also called front vowels. They require a front arch of the tongue. There are two fundamental closed front vowels: [i] and [e]. Each closed vowel has a corresponding open vowel form.

closed [i] *see* < open [ɪ] *bit* closed [e] *chaos* < open [ɛ] *said*

LIP VOWELS are also called back vowels. They require lip rounding and a back tongue arch. There are two fundamental closed back vowels: [u] and [o]. Each closed vowel has a corresponding open vowel form.

closed [u] *blue* < open [ʊ] *look* closed [o] *provide* < open [ɔ] *ought*

MIXED VOWELS require lip rounding and a front tongue arch. There are two fundamental closed mixed vowels with a corresponding open vowel form: closed [y] < open [ʏ] closed [ø] < open [œ]

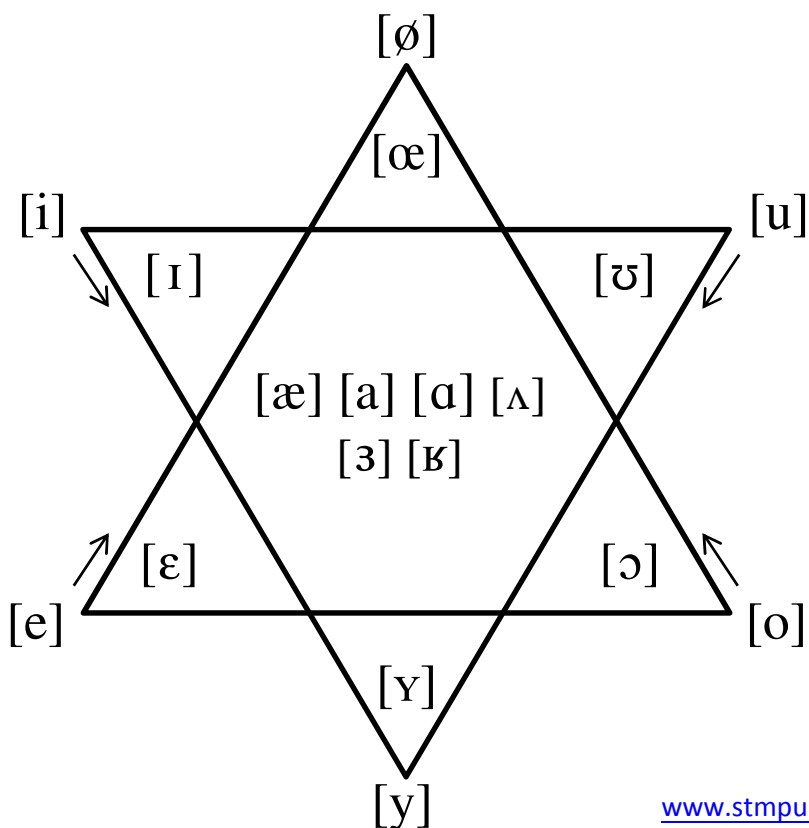
[i] tongue + [u] lip = [y] *früh, une* < [ɪ] tongue + [ʊ] lip = [ʏ] *Glück*
 [e] tongue + [o] lip = [ø] *schön, yeux* < [ɛ] tongue + [ɔ] lip = [œ] *möcht, cœur*

CENTRAL VOWELS do not require lip rounding.

There are four central vowels: dark [ɑ] *father*, bright [a] *voilà*, [æ] *sat*, [ʌ] *up* (optional: [ɒ] *hot*)
 There are two r colored vowels: English [ɜ] *bird*, German [ɝ] *der*

NASAL VOWELS resonate in the height of the yawn space with a small amount of shared resonant space in the nasal cavity. There are four nasal vowels: [ã], [ɛ̃], [õ], and [œ̃].

CHART DESCRIPTION: The front vowels are on the left side of the chart, the back vowels are on the right side of the chart, and the mixed vowels are at the top and bottom (the arrows indicate vowel mixing). The schwa is not included since its pronunciation varies from language to language. The points indicate closed vowels, the broader spaces indicate open vowels, and the center space is reserved for central vowels.



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