

University of South Carolina School of Music

REVIEW SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DICTION PROFICIENCY EXAM

For Voice and Opera Majors

After completing the written portion of the exam, each person will also need to complete the oral portion of the exam by recording yourself reciting specific texts on your phone and emailing or texting them to Prof. Lynn Kompass (information will be provided). A video recording is preferred.

Suggested Sources to consult:

Italian:

Colorni, Evelina (1970). *Singers' Italian*. New York: Schirmer Books.

German:

Lanzrein, Valentin and Richard Cross (2018). *The Singer's Guide to German Diction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

And/or

Johnston, Amanda (2016). *English and German Diction for Singers*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

French:

Grubb, Thomas (1979). *Singing in French*. New York: Schirmer Books.

Format of the Examination:

There will be a written and oral component to the Diction exam.

1] Written component – will be divided into 3 sections (Italian, German, and French). Within each section, questions will focus on the fundamental rules governing the pronunciation of each language in singing - rules regarding vowels, consonants, stress, and broader issues as they relate to each individual language (for example, phrasal diphthongs in Italian, elisions and liaisons in French, glottals in German, etc). There will also be a short text to IPA for each language.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- **What prepalatal semi-consonant is unique to the Italian language?**
- **In German, where does the stress normally occur within a word? What are some exceptions?**
- **What is a mixed vowel? How can one practice the formation of mixed vowels? Which mixed vowels are present in French?**
- **What is a fricative?**
- **How are nasal vowels formed?**
- **What is a diphthong?**
- **What sounds can be produced by the spelling *ch* in German?**

2] Oral component – there will be excerpts from 4 poems (English, Italian, German, and French) which everyone will recite individually. The recitations should be recorded (video is preferable) and emailed or texted to the instructor within an hour of leaving the exam. Grading of the recitations will be based on accuracy of sounds, fluidity of language, clear points of stress, and overall shaping of the text. Translations will be provided.

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REVIEW SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DICTION PROFICIENCY EXAM

For Choral Conducting Majors

After completing the written portion of the exam, each person will also need to complete the oral portion of the exam by recording yourself reciting specific texts on your phone and emailing or texting them to Prof. Lynn Kompass (information will be provided). A video recording is preferred.

Suggested Sources for Study:

German and Latin:

Moriarty, John (1975). *Diction*. Boston: E.C. Schirmer Music Company.

Additional German:

Lanzrein, Valentin and Richard Cross (2018). *The Singer's Guide to German Diction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Italian:

Colorni, Evelina (1970). *Singers' Italian*. New York: Schirmer Books.

French:

Grubb, Thomas (1979). *Singing in French*. New York: Schirmer Books.

Format of the Examination:

There will be an oral and a written component to the Diction exam.

1] Written component – will be divided into 5 sections.

- **Ecclesiastical Latin**
- **Italian**
- **German**
- **French**
- **English**

Within each section, questions will focus on the fundamental rules

governing the pronunciation of each language in singing - rules regarding vowels, consonants, stress, and broader issues as they relate to each individual language (elisions and liaisons in French, glottals in German, diphthongs in English, etc.) There will also be a short text to IPA for each language.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

- **In Latin, when does the letter *C* produce the sound [tʃ]?**
- **In German, where does the stress normally occur within a word?**
- **What is a mixed vowel? How can one practice the formation of mixed vowels? Which mixed vowels are present in French?**
- **How are nasal vowels formed?**
- **What is a diphthong?**
- **What sounds can be produced by the spelling *ch* in German?**

2] Oral component – there will be 5 texts (one in each language) which everyone will recite individually. The recitations should be recorded (video is preferable) and emailed or texted to the instructor within an hour of leaving the exam. Grading of the recitations will be based on accuracy of sounds, clear articulation, fluidity of language, clear points of stress, and overall shaping of the text. Translations will be provided.