

# GATEWAY LITURGICAL CONFERENCE ST. LOUIS 2008

## Choral Diction Supports Choral Tone John J. Miller, clinician

### “Sing to the Lord” paragraph #32:

*Choir members, like all liturgical ministers, should exercise their ministry with evident faith and should participate in the entire liturgical celebration, recognizing that they are servants of the Liturgy and members of the gathered assembly.*

1. Relaxation
2. Posture
3. Breathing
  - a. activating the diaphragm
  - b. exhalation
  - c. inhalation
  - d. support
4. Resonance and Placement -- stand up vowel, focus tone
5. Dynamics
  - a. crescendo
  - b. diminuendo
  - c. messa di voce
6. Register Consistency/Mixing
7. Expanding the Vocal Tract
8. Range Extension
  - a. high range
  - b. low range
9. Execution of Leaps
10. Articulation
  - a. legato
  - b. staccato
  - c. martellato
11. Diction/Vowel Modification -- enunciate correctly -- IPA

**Resources:**

Ehman, Wilhelm and Frauke Haasemann. *Voice Building for Choirs*. Hinshaw Music, 1982. Chapel Hill, NC.

Haasemann, Frauke and James J. Jordan. *Group Vocal Technique*. Hinshaw Music, 1992. Chapel Hill, NC.

Marshall, Madeleine. *The Singer's Manual of English Diction*. Macmillian Publishers, 1953. New York.

Moriarty, John. *Diction*. E. C. Schirmer Music Company, Boston.

## VOWELS

IPA Symbol	Example
[a]	<u>t</u> arget
[æ]	ma <u>t</u>
[e]	ma <u>y</u>
[ɛ]	me <u>t</u>
[i]	me <u></u>
[ɪ]	mi <u>t</u>
[o]	mo <u>m</u> ent
[ɔ]	pa <u>w</u>
[u]	mo <u>o</u> n
[ʊ]	fo <u>o</u> t
[ʌ]	fl <u>u</u> ng
[ə]	ta <u>b</u> let
[ɜ]	re <u>m</u> ember

## MIXED VOWELS

IPA Symbol	Example
[ɛ]	Tr <u>ä</u> nen
[ʏ]	T <u>ü</u> bingen
[ʏ]	k <u>ü</u> ssen
[ø]	L <u>ö</u> sung
[œ]	m <u>ö</u> chte

## CONSONANTS

IPA Symbol	Example
[p]	<u>p</u> op
[b]	<u>b</u> aby
[t]	<u>t</u> op
[d]	<u>d</u> o
[k]	<u>k</u> ee <u>p</u>
[g]	<u>g</u> ang
[m]	<u>m</u> othe <u>r</u>
[n]	<u>n</u> ine
[ŋ]	si <u>ng</u> ing
[f]	<u>f</u> our
[v]	<u>v</u> igor
[s]	<u>s</u> iste <u>r</u>
[z]	<u>z</u> ooms
[θ]	<u>th</u> ithe <u>r</u>
[ð]	<u>th</u> e
[ʃ]	<u>sh</u> oes
[ʒ]	fusi <u>o</u> n
[tʃ]	<u>ch</u> arm

## DIPHTHONGS

IPA Symbol	Example
[eɪ]	ma <u>y</u>
[oʊ]	so <u></u>
[aʊ]	bo <u>w</u>
[aɪ]	tie <u></u>
[ɔɪ]	re <u>jo</u> ice

## DIPHTHONGS AND TRIPHTHONGS

IPA Symbol	Example
[əə]	ma <u>r</u>
[eə]	cha <u>ir</u>
[iə]	tea <u>r</u>
[ʊə]	de <u>m</u> ure
[aɪə]	ti <u>r</u> e
[əʊə]	bo <u>w</u> er
[dʒ]	<u>j</u> ustice
[h]	<u>h</u> ere
[w]	<u>w</u> oman
[hw]	<u>wh</u> ither
[j]	<u>y</u> oung
[l]	<u>l</u> ittle
[r]	<u>r</u> ight
[ç]	<u>m</u> ich
[x]	<u>m</u> ach

GERMAN  
only

Vowel	Basic Modification	Other
/i/ (eat)	/i/ mix in space of /a/	use u /y/ to make a warmer sound
/e/ (day)	/ɛ/ (set) pure vowel for men women mix in /i/ (she)	
/ɛ/ (set)	/æ/ (lamb) (sat) pure vowel for men  /i/ (eat) for women	women: add /i/ (eat) for forward placement
/a/ (father)	/ʌ/ (sung) (must) for men using rounding of the lips and the space of /a/  /u/ (soon) for women; in general: sopranos and altos can maintain /a/ extremely high.	basic rule: think /u/ (moon), sing /a/
/ɔ/ (all)	/ʊ/ (foot) for men /a/ (father) for women	
/o/ (boat)	/ʊ/ (foot) for men /u/ (moon) for women	
/u/ (food)	/ʊ/ (foot) for men /a/ (father) for women	

General rule for all voices: open up like /a/ (father) in extremely high range

Vowel modification

for crescendo down:

Major rule: Change a closed vowel to an open vowel

The more you sing down, the more you show two rabbit teeth.

- u (moon) change to ʊ (foot)
- o (moment) change to ʊ (foot)
- a (father) change to ʌ (sung)
- æ (lamb) change to ɛ (set)
- e (may, or german: selig) change to ɛ (set)
- i (keen) change to ɪ (him)