

Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp

summer camp international exchange program public radio

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TO: Alumni Choir members
FROM: Carole Ott, Music Director
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SUBJ: "Quick and Dirty" guide to German pronunciation

This guide to German Diction is meant for singers who have very little or no experience singing in the language. These guidelines will be made clearer throughout the rehearsal process. Just like English, there are exceptions, and we will be sure to cover these as a group. For now, this will help you as you look through the German text in preparation for April.

Vowels

A = Ah as in father

E = before one consonant (i.e. der) is closed (VERY closed "ay" without the diphthong...think "The Fonz"), before two consonants (i.e. denn) is open (as in "eh"), at the end of the word is neutral (a schwa)

I = usually open (ih) unless followed by an h (i.e. ihm) in which case it is closed ("eee")

O: Closed (like a Minnesota "oh") before one consonant (Tod) or an "h" (ohne), open before two consonants (Sonne)

U: Closed (like ooooo) before one consonant, open (like "book") before two consonants

Ä = most often like "eh"

Ö = the most closed O (Tod) + eee

Ü = oooo + eeee

Vowel Combinations

IE = EE (as in seen)

EI = AE (the sound of the "i" in mine) (ex: deine)

EY = same as EI

Consonants

B = B at the beginning of word, P at the end of a word

C = K (Café) OR ts (before I or y...Cymbal)

CH = K (sometimes sh) at the beginning of a word, (elsewhere like air through the back of the throat)

D = d at the beginning of a word (der), t at the end of a word (niemand)

G = g at the beginning of a word (Grab), k at the end of a word (lag)

H = h at the beginning of a word or element (Hand), or silent (ihr)

J = mostly like a y

K = K

L = L

N = N

P = P

Qu = kv

R = rolled r or "uh (schwa)"

S = Z at the beginning of a word (sie), S at the end of a word

SCH = sh

Sp = Generally (though not always) = "shp"

ß = ss

st = "sht" at the beginning of a word or element, "st" at the end

T = T

TH = T

V = F

W = V

X = "ks"

Z = "ts"