

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

FRENCH LYRIC DICTION WORKBOOK

A graded method of phonetic transcription that employs frequently occurring words from French art song literature

Fourth Edition

Cheri Montgomery

S.T.M. Publishers

Nashville, TN

PREFACE

The *French Lyric Diction Workbook* was created from the lyrics of more than 1,200 art songs. Lyric words were organized in order of frequency of occurrence. The most frequently occurring words are short in length and appear in the enunciation exercises. Other commonly occurring lyric words are introduced in graded order and categorized according to French speech sounds as defined by the International Phonetic Alphabet. A study of articulatory phonetics is provided. It includes consonant and vowel charts for student application and definition of terms.

Consecutive units highlight specified sets of symbols by providing transcribed art songs, enunciation instructions, enunciation exercises, rules for transcription, group assignments, individually assigned word lists, and transcription and singing quizzes. Units progress in cumulative order culminating with exercises that allow students to transcribe and enunciate short phrases from French art song literature.

The fourth edition provides clarified enunciation instructions, transcribed art songs that contain a frequent occurrence of the highlighted sound, and singing quizzes that contain phrases with a frequent occurrence of the highlighted sound. These enhancements allow the instructor to emphasize the sung application of accurate transcription.

Proficiency of memorized rules is assessed through in-class enunciation of assigned word lists. This course challenges students to become familiar with the many spellings of the French language with corresponding IPA transcriptions. Additional space is provided for the entire class to fill in IPA symbols during individual evaluation.

This text would not be possible without the generous help of many individuals. I am grateful to be a part of the voice faculty at Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music. This gift has given me the opportunity to work with a number of fine young singers. Our diction students' input and their willingness to be the test group prior to publication is a vital part of the developmental process. Credit is due to my first class who became the test group for this book with special mention to student editors Gioia Fazzini and Laura Rogers for their diligent work. I cannot thank Verlan Kliewer enough for creating the tools needed to organize words from art song lyrics into lists of frequently occurring words. His expertise is of inestimable value. Cecile Moreau is the French language and translation editor. Her hours of work in finalizing this text are much appreciated.

The *Lyric Diction Workbook Series* was created to make the lyric languages accessible to singers. Familiarity is gained as numerous words are encountered. The format makes grading easier for instructors. Accurate transcription and proficiency of memorized rules is assessed through in-class enunciation. The *French Lyric Diction Workbook* organizes the many rules of the French language and offers an incremental study using a basic lyric vocabulary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Introduction to Frequently Occurring Words from Art Song Lyrics	Terms	2
		Pronunciation guide	3
		Classification of symbols	6
		Application of rules	7
		Individual exercises	8
		Singing quiz	14
		Answer key	272
2	Closed front vowel [i] and the [j] glide	Listening assignment	16
		Enunciation exercises	17
		Rules for transcription	18
		Application of rules	19
		Individual exercises	20
		Singing quiz	26
		Answer key	273
3	Closed front vowel [e]	Listening assignment	28
		Enunciation exercises	29
		Rules for transcription	30
		Application of rules	31
		Individual exercises	32
		Singing quiz	38
		Answer key	275
4	Open front vowel [ɛ]	Listening assignment	40
		Enunciation exercises	41
		Rules for transcription	42
		Application of rules	43
		Individual exercises	44
		Singing quiz	50
		Answer key	277
5	Bright vowel [a]	Listening assignment	52
		Enunciation exercises	53
		Rules for transcription	54
		Application of rules	55
		Individual exercises	56
		Quiz: Units 1 – 5	62
		Answer key	280
6	Dark vowel [ɑ]	Listening assignment	64
		Enunciation exercises	65
		Rules for transcription	66
		Application of rules	67
		Individual exercises	68
		Singing quiz	74
		Answer key	283

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
7	Open back vowel [ɔ], consonants	Listening assignment	76
		Enunciation exercises	77
		Rules for transcription	78
		Application of rules	80
		Individual exercises	81
		Answer key	285
8	Closed back vowel [o]	Listening assignment	88
		Enunciation exercises	89
		Rules for transcription	90
		Application of rules	91
		Individual exercises	92
		Singing quiz	98
		Answer key	288
9	Closed back vowel [u]	Listening assignment	100
		Enunciation exercises	101
		Rules for transcription	102
		Application of rules	102
		Individual exercises	103
		Singing quiz	109
		Review: Units 2 – 9	110
		Quiz: Units 2 – 9	116
		Answer key	290
10	Closed mixed vowel [y]	Listening assignment	118
		Enunciation exercises	119
		Rules for transcription	120
		Application of rules	120
		Individual exercises	121
		Answer key	298
11	Closed mixed vowel [ø]	Listening assignment	128
		Enunciation exercises	129
		Rules for transcription	130
		Application of rules	131
		Individual exercises	132
		Singing quiz	138
12	Open mixed vowel [œ]	Listening assignment	140
		Enunciation exercises	141
		Rules for transcription	142
		Application of rules	143
		Individual exercises	144
		Quiz: Units 2 – 12	150
		Answer key	303

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
13	Schwa [ə]	Listening assignment	152
		Enunciation exercises	153
		Rules for transcription	154
		Application of rules	155
		Individual exercises	156
		Singing quiz	162
		Answer key	308
14	Dark nasal vowel [ã]	Listening assignment	164
		Enunciation exercises	165
		Rules for transcription	166
		Application of rules	167
		Individual exercises	168
		Singing quiz	174
		Answer key	310
15	Closed back nasal vowel [õ]	Listening assignment	176
		Enunciation exercises	177
		Rules for transcription	178
		Application of rules	178
		Individual exercises	179
		Answer key	314
16	Open front nasal vowel [ẽ]	Listening assignment	186
		Enunciation exercises	187
		Rules for transcription	188
		Application of rules	189
		Individual exercises	190
		Singing quiz	196
		Answer key	317
17	Open front mixed nasal vowel [œ̃]	Listening assignment	198
		Enunciation exercises	199
		Rules for transcription	200
		Application of rules	201
		Individual exercises	202
		Quiz: Units 13 – 17	208
		Answer key	321
18	Semiconsonants [j], [w] and [ɥ]	Listening assignment	210
		Enunciation exercises	211
		Rules for transcription	212
		Application of rules	213
		Individual exercises	214
		Singing quiz	220
		Answer key	325
19	Consonants	Listening assignment	222
		Enunciation exercises	223
		Rules for transcription	225
		Application of rules	226
		Individual exercises	227
		Answer key	328

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
20	Liaison and Elision	Listening assignment	234
		Rules for transcription	235
		Application of rules	236
		Individual exercises	237
		Answer key	332
21	Forbidden and Compulsory Liaison	Listening assignment	250
		Rules for transcription	251
		Application of rules	252
		Individual exercises	253
		Quiz: Units 2 – 21	265
		Answer key	335
		French Vowel Chart	268
		Summary of Rules	270
		Bibliography	346

UNIT 2:

Closed front [i] and the [j] glide

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Listening assignment	16
Enunciation exercises	17
Rules for transcription	18
Application of rules	19
Individual exercises	20
Singing quiz	26
Answer key	273

Art songs with a frequent occurrence of closed front [i] and the [j] glide

Provide English translations diagonally above the French text. See pages 384 and 444 of *Exploring Art Song Lyrics* by Jonathan Retzlaff and Cheri Montgomery (Oxford University Press, New York 2012).

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Arpège, op. 76 no. 2

Albert Victor Samain (1858–1900)

L'âme d'une flûte soupire
[lamə dynə flytə supirə]

Au fond du parc mélodieux;
[o fɔ̃ dy park melodiø]

Limpide est l'ombre où l'on respire
[lɛ̃pid ε lɔ̃br u lɔ̃ respirə]

Ton poème silencieux.
[tɔ̃ pœmə silüsiø]

Nuit de langueur, nuit de mensonge,
[nũi də lɑ̃gœr nũi də mɑ̃sɔ̃ʒə]

Qui poses, d'un geste ondoyant,
[ki pozə də ʒɛst ɔ̃dwãjɑ̃]

Dans ta chevelure de songe
[dɑ̃ ta ʃœvɔlyrə də sɔ̃ʒə]

La lune, bijou d'Orient.
[la lynə biʒu dœriɑ̃]

Sylva, Sylvie et Sylvanire,
[silva silvi e silvanirə]

Belles au regard bleu changeant,
[belə o rɛgar blø ʃɑ̃ʒɑ̃]

L'étoile aux fontaines se mire,
[letwal o fɔ̃tenə sə mirə]

Allez par les sentiers d'argent,
[ale par le sɑ̃tje darʒɑ̃]

Allez vite, l'heure est si brève,
[ale vitə lœr ε si brɛvə]

Cueillir au jardin des aveux,
[kœ̃jir o ʒardɛ̃ dəz avø]

Les cœurs qui se meurent du rêve
[le kœr ki sə mœrə dy rɛvə]

De mourir parmi vos cheveux!
[də murir parmi vo ʃœvø]

Ernest Chausson (1855-1899)

Le colibri, op. 2 no. 7

Leconte de Lisle (1818–1894)

Le vert colibri, le roi des collines,
[lə vɛr kɔlibri lə rwa də kɔlinə]

Voyant la rosée et le soleil clair
[vwajɑ̃ la roze e lə sɔlɛj klɛr]

Luire dans son nid tissé d'herbes fines,
[luirə dɑ̃ sɔ̃ ni tise dɛrbə finə]

Comme un frais rayon s'échappe dans l'air.
[kɔm œ̃ frɛ rɛjɔ̃ seʃapə dɑ̃ lɛr]

Il se hâte et vole aux sources voisines,
[il sə at e vɔl o sursə vwazinə]

Où les bambous font le bruit de la mer,
[u lə bɑ̃bu fɔ̃ lə brujɑ̃ də la mɛr]

Où l'açoka rouge aux odeurs divines
[u lasɔka ruʒ oz ɔ̃dœr divinə]

S'ouvre et porte au cœur un humide éclair.
[suvr e pɔrt o kœr œ̃n ymid eklɛr]

Vers la fleur dorée, il descend, se pose,
[vɛr la flœr dɔrɛ il desɑ̃ sə pozə]

Et boit tant d'amour dans la coupe rose,
[e bwa tɑ̃ damur dɑ̃ la kupə rozə]

Qu'il meurt, ne sachant s'il l'a pu tarir!
[kil mœr nə saʃɑ̃ sil la py tarir]

Sur ta lèvre pure, ô ma bien-aimée,
[syr ta lɛvrə pyrə o ma bjɛ̃n (e)mœə]

Telle aussi mon âme eut voulu mourir,
[tɛl osi mɔ̃n am y vuly murir]

Du premier baiser qui l'a parfumée.
[dy prɛmjɛ b(e)ze ki la parfymeə]

UNIT 2: Closed front [i] and the [j] glide

Guidelines for Enunciation

Front vowels

The term *front vowel* refers to tongue arch. Closed front [i] maintains the most forward arch of the tongue (the degree of fronting is almost as forward as an Italian *gli* formation). The tongue arch for [i] and [e] is virtually the same. Open front [ɛ] maintains a progressively taller space between the articulators. In speech, front vowels are enunciated with the lips spread. There is less resonance in the speaker's formation. The singer must learn to release the jaw and form front vowels with the tongue arch. Front vowels are also called tongue vowels.

Closed front [i]

Enunciation: Find the space of *ah*. The tongue tip touches the lower front teeth, the front of the tongue arches *far* forward, and the sides of the tongue contact the length of the upper molars (to the eye teeth). Raise the soft palate and direct vocalized tone toward the upper front teeth.

Warning: Form [i] with the arch of the tongue (*not* by spreading the lips). Do not replace [i] with [ɪ]. Avoid the medial of the English [i]. Do not mask the brilliance of [i] by making it dark or covered. Avoid a nasalized tone. Do not weaken the quality of [i] in unstressed syllables. Do not articulate a glottal stop before initial [i].

The [j] glide and the [ɥ] glide

See enunciation instructions for semiconsonants on page 211.

Enunciate the following frequently occurring lyric words that contain [i]:

1. qui [ki]	(which)	bruit [brɥi]	(noise)	ville [vilə]	(city)
2. il [il]	(it)	voici [vwasi]	(here)	ami [ami]	(friend)
3. si [si]	(if)	y [i]	(there)	pris [pri]	(taken)
4. nuit [nɥi]	(night)	parmi [parmi]	(among)	ici [isi]	(here)
5. lui [lɥi]	(him)	dire [dirə]	(to say)	pitié [pitje]	(pity)
6. qu'il [kil]	(that it)	pays [peɪ]	(country)	mille [milə]	(thousand)
7. vie [vi]	(life)	brise [brizə]	(breeze)	filles [fijə]	(girls)
8. suis [sɥi]	(am)	fil [fis]	(son)	lys [lis]	(lilies)
9. dit [di]	(say)	vivre [vivrə]	(to live)	brille [brijə]	(shines)
10. ni [ni]	(nor)	depuis [dəpɥi]	(since)	soupir [supir]	(sigh)
11. puis [pɥi]	(then)	oui [wi]	(yes)	musique [myzikə]	(music)
12. triste [tristə]	(sad)	vite [vitə]	(fast)	ruisseau [rɥiso]	(brook)

RULES FOR TRANSCRIPTION

CLOSED FRONT VOWEL

[i̇]

*Single *i*, *y*, *î*: *triste* [tristə] *lys* [lis] *île* [ilə]
(except when nasalized)

In hiatus, vowel + *i*: *naïf* [naif]

Final *-ie*: *amie* [ami] *vie* [vi]

SEMICONSONANTS

[j]

Spelling *i*, *y*, *ï* + vowel: *ciel* [sjɛl] *yeux* [jø] *glaiеuls* [glajœl]
(Syllabified [j]: a *j* glide is pronounced as an [i] when set on a separate note)

[ɥi̇]

u + *i*: *nuit* [nɥi]

(Syllabified [ɥ]: a [ɥ] glide is pronounced as an [y] when set on a separate note)

* A single vowel is one vowel that stands between consonants, an initial vowel followed by a consonant, or a final vowel preceded by a consonant: *dit*, *il*, *si*

CLASSWORK #2: Closed front [i] and the [j] glide

Indicate [i] or [j] within the IPA:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. aile (wing)
[ɛ_lə] | 10. luire (to shine)
[lɥ_rə] |
| 2. naïves (naive)
[na_və] | 11. violette (violet)
[v_ɔlɛtə] |
| 3. sentiers (paths)
[sɑ̃t_e] | 12. zéphyr (zephyr)
[zef_r] |
| 4. Lydie (Lydie)
[l_d_] | 13. paraît (appears)
[parɛ_] |
| 5. rois (kings)
[rwa_] | 14. mystérieuses (mysterious)
[m_stɛrjɔzə] |
| 6. chevalier (knight)
[ʃəval_e] | 15. choisie (chosen)
[ʃwaz_] |
| 7. hivers (winters)
[_vɛr] | 16. dormir (to sleep)
[dɔrm_r] |
| 8. fleuri (flowering)
[flœr_] | 17. vraiment (truly)
[vrɛ_mɑ̃] |
| 9. île (island)
[_lə] | |

WORKSHEET #2: Closed front [i] and the [j] glide

Indicate [i] or [j] within the IPA:

#1

ciel	(heaven)
[s_ɛl]	
j'ai	(I have)
[ʒe_]	
île	(island)
[_lə]	
puis	(then)
[pɥ_]	
pourquoi	(why)
[pɔrkwa_]	
lyre	(lyre)
[l_rə]	
maître	(master)
[mɛ_trə]	
fidèle	(faithful)
[f_dɛlə]	
amie	(friend)
[am_]	
immense	(immense)
[_mmãsə]	
seize	(sixteen)
[sɛ_zə]	
l'espoir	(the hope)
[lɛspwa_r]	
c'était	(it was)
[setɛ_]	
puissance	(power)
[pɥ_sãsə]	
syrinx	(syrinx)
[s_rɛks]	
poésie	(poetry)
[pœz_]	
naïf	(naive)
[na_f]	

#2

viens	(come)
[v_ɛ̃]	
†haïr	(to hate)
['a_r]	
baiser	(to kiss)
[be_ze]	
gîtes	(lodgings)
[ʒ_tə]	
voir	(to see)
[vwa_r]	
mis	(put)
[m_]	
tristesse	(sadness)
[tr_stesə]	
naître	(to be born)
[nɛ_trə]	
mystère	(mystery)
[m_stɛrə]	
maison	(house)
[me_zõ]	
dieux	(gods)
[d_ø]	
tandis	(while)
[tãd_]	
folie	(madness)
[fɔl_]	
suisant	(following)
[sɥ_vã]	
supplie	(begs)
[sypl_]	
myrte	(myrtle)
[m_rtə]	
doit	(must)
[dwa_]	

WORKSHEET #2: Closed front [i] and the [j] glide

Indicate [i] or [j] within the IPA:

#11

pieds	(feet)
[p_e]	
haleine	(breath)
[alɛ_nə]	
gât	(to lie)
[ʒ_]	
oiseau	(bird)
[wa_zo]	
neige	(snow)
[nɛ_ʒə]	
Thaïs	(Thais)
[ta_s]	
l'hiver	(the winter)
[l_vɛr]	
voiles	(veils)
[vwa_lə]	
adieux	(good-byes)
[ad_ø]	
fuit	(flees)
[fɥ_]	
soupire	(to sigh)
[sup_rə]	
puissant	(powerful)
[pɥ_sã]	
connaîtra	(will know)
[kɔnɛ_tra]	
cygne	(swan)
[s_ɲə]	
fleurie	(flowered)
[flœr_]	
génie	(genius)
[ʒɛn_]	
cyprès	(cypress)
[s_prɛ]	

#12

baisers	(kisses)
[be_ze]	
naïves	(naive)
[na_və]	
air	(air)
[ɛ_r]	
pied	(foot)
[p_e]	
sourit	(smiles)
[sur_]	
voile	(veil)
[vwa_lə]	
assîmes	(sat)
[as_mə]	
gloire	(glory)
[glwa_rə]	
coursier	(dispatch rider)
[kurs_e]	
visage	(face)
[v_zazə]	
aujourd'hui	(today)
[oʒurdɥ_]	
chaînes	(chains)
[ʃɛ_nə]	
fui	(fled)
[fɥ_]	
hymne	(anthem)
[_mnə]	
affaiblie	(weakened)
[afebl_]	
Myrtil	(Myrtil)
[m_rtil]	
infinie	(infinite)
[ɛf_n_]	

Intone the following phrases that contain a frequent occurrence of [i]:

1. *Nuit d'étoiles* Banville/Debussy

sad lyre that sighs,
Triste lyre qui soupire,

$\frac{6}{8}$ ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♪ (suggested rhythm for exercise)
[tri - stə li - rə ki su - pi - rə]

2. *Dans un bois solitaire* Motte/Mozart

he says, to the feet of Sylvie,
dit-il, aux pieds de Sylvie,

$\frac{4}{4}$ — ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ (suggested rhythm for exercise)
[dit il o pje də si - lvi - ə]

3. *Le spectre de la rose* (Les nuits d'été) Gautier/Berlioz

wrote: "Here lies a rose
Écrivit: "Ci-gît une rose

$\frac{6}{8}$ ♩ ♪ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ (suggested rhythm for exercise)
[e - kri - vi si ʒi(t) y-nə ro - zə]

4. *Quel galant!* (Cinq mélodies populaires Grecques) Calvocoressi/Ravel

Say, Lady Vassiliki?
Dis, dame Vassiliki?

$\frac{2}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩
[di da - mə va - si - li - ki]

5. *Asie* (Shéhérazade) Tristan Klingsor/Ravel

Asia, Asia, Asia,
Asie, Asie, Asie,

$\frac{4}{4}$ — ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩
[a - zi a - zi a - zi]

6. *Arpège* Samain/Fauré

Sylva, Sylvie and Sylvanire,
Sylva, Sylvie et Sylvanire,

$\frac{6}{8}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
[si - lva si - lvi e si - lva - ni - rə]

UNIT 13:

Schwa [ə]

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Listening assignment	152
Enunciation exercises	153
Rules for transcription	154
Application of rules	155
Individual exercises	156
Singing quiz	162
Answer key	308

Art songs with a frequent occurrence of schwa

Provide English translations diagonally above the French text. See pages 390 and 409 of *Exploring Art Song Lyrics* by Jonathan Retzlaff and Cheri Montgomery (Oxford University Press, New York 2012).

Claude Achille Debussy (1862–1918)

Ariettes Oubliées, Song Cycle

Paul Verlaine (1844–1896)

3. L'ombre des arbres

L'ombre des arbres dans la rivière embrumée
[lɔ̃brə dəz arbrə dā la rivjɛr ɑ̃brymɛə]

Meurt comme de la fumée,
[mœr kɔmə də la fyɛmɛə]

Tandis qu'en l'air, parmi les ramures réelles,
[tɑ̃di kɑ̃ lɛr pɑ̃mi lɛ rɑmyrɔ̃ rɛɛlə]

Se plaignent les tourterelles.
[sɛ plɛ̃jɑ̃ lɛ turtərələ]

Combien ô voyageur, ce paysage blême
[kɔ̃bjɑ̃ ɔ̃ vwaʒɑ̃zœr sɛ peizaʒə blɛmɛə]

Te mira blême toi-même,
[tɛ mira blɛmɛ twa memɛə]

Et que tristes pleuraient dans les hautes feuillées,
[e kɑ̃ tristɛ plœrɛ dā lɛ otɑ̃ fœjɛə]

Tes espérances noyées.
[tɛz ɛspɛrɑ̃sɛ nwaʒɛə]

Claude Achille Debussy (1862–1918)

Proses lyriques, Song Cycle

2. De grève [də grɛv]

Sur la mer les crépuscules tombent,
[syr la mɛr lɛ krepyskylɔ̃ tɔ̃bɑ̃]

Soie blanche effilée.
[swa blɑ̃ʃ ɛfilɛə]

Les vagues comme de petites folles
[lɛ vagɔ̃ kɔmɑ̃ də pətitɔ̃ fɔlə]

Jasent, petites filles sortant de l'école,
[ʒɑzɔ̃ pətitɔ̃ fijɛ sɔ̃rtɑ̃ də lɛkɔlə]

Parmi les froufrous de leur robe,
[pɑ̃mi lɛ frufru də lœr rɔbɔ̃]

Soie verte irisée!
[swa vɛrt irizɛə]

Les nuages, graves voyageurs,
[lɛ nyaʒə gravə vwaʒɑ̃zœr]

Se concertent sur le prochain orage,
[sɛ kɔ̃sɛrtɔ̃ syr lɛ pʁɔʃɛn ɔraʒə]

Et c'est un fond vraiment trop grave
[e sɛt ɑ̃ fɔ̃ vʁɛmɑ̃ tʁo gravə]

À cette anglaise aquarelle.
[a sɛt ɑ̃glɛz akwərələ]

Les vagues, les petites vagues,
[lɛ vagɔ̃ lɛ pətitɔ̃ vagɔ̃]

Ne savent plus où se mettre,
[nɛ savə plyz u sɛ mɛtʁə]

Car voici la méchante averse,
[kar vwasi la mɛʃɑ̃t ɑvɛrsə]

Froufrous de jupes envolées,
[frufru də ʒypɔ̃z ɑ̃vɔlə]

Soie verte affolée.
[swa vɛrt ɑfɔlə]

Mais la lune, compatissante à tous!
[mɛ la lynɔ̃ kɔ̃patisɑ̃t a tus]

Vient apaiser ce gris conflit,
[vjɛt ɑpeze sɛ gri kɔ̃fli]

Et caresse lentement ses petites amies
[e karesə lɑ̃tɛmɑ̃ sɛ pətitɔ̃z ami]

Qui s'offrent comme lèvres aimantes
[ki sɔfrɔ̃ kɔmɑ̃ lɛvrɔ̃z ɛmɑ̃tɔ̃]

À ce tiède et blanc baiser.
[a sɛ tjɛd e blɑ̃ beze]

Puis, plus rien. . .
[puɪ ply rjɛ̃]

Plus que les cloches attardées des flottantes églises,
[ply kɑ̃ lɛ klɔʃɔ̃z atɑrdɛə də flɔtɑ̃tɔ̃z ɛglizɔ̃]

Angélus des vagues,
[ɑ̃ʒɛlys də vagɔ̃]

Soie blanche apaisée!
[swa blɑ̃ʃ ɑpezeə]

UNIT 13: The schwa [ə]

The syllabified schwa

The schwa symbol represents an undefined vowel sound in an unstressed syllable. It is extended for singing and always pronounced as an [œ] vowel for French art song repertoire.

The shadow vowel

The schwa is pronounced as a shadow vowel in specified cases. Refer to pages 48 – 52 of *Singing in French* by Thomas Grubb for a thorough discussion of the rules governing the musical setting of the shadow vowel.

Warnings

1. **Do not assume that the schwa represents a universal sound.** Each language possesses a unique pronunciation of schwa. German and English maintain various pronunciations of schwa. The assigned pronunciation of the French schwa is [œ]. See pp 42 – 46 of *Singing in French* by Thomas Grubb.
2. **Do not replicate the schwa of conversational French.** The schwa of conversational French is abbreviated or dropped. When enunciated, the schwa varies in its pronunciation. The schwa needed for lyric diction is extended. Borrowing pronunciation from conversational speech patterns does not enhance the lyricism or legato of the text. Recordings by Pierre Bernac with Poulenc and Ravel provide the authoritative source for authentic pronunciation of the schwa for French lyric diction.
3. **Do not weaken the syllabified schwa.** Some sources contend that the syllabified schwa is weaker or less weighted than the surrounding vowel sounds. In German and English, stress is established by a weighted accentuation. In French, however, stress is established by vowel length (not by weight nor lack thereof). The composer's setting provides a clear indication of the equality of weight required for unstressed syllables in French.

Enunciate the following frequently occurring lyric words that contain schwa:

(Note: form the rounding for the schwa early, even before articulation of the preceding consonant)

1.	de	(of)	retour	(return)	souvenirs	(memories)
	[də]		[rətur]		[suvəniʁ]	
2.	le	(the)	sera	(will be)	chevalier	(knight)
	[lə]		[səra]		[ʃəvalje]	
3.	je	(I)	celui	(that)	revenir	(to return)
	[ʒə]		[səlɥi]		[rəvəniʁ]	
4.	que	(that)	revoir	(to see again)	monsieur	(gentleman)
	[kə]		[rəvwar]		[məsjø]	
5.	ne	(not)	secret	(secret)	regrets	(regrets)
	[nə]		[səkrɛ]		[rəgrɛ]	
6.	ce	(this)	repose	(peace)	lever	(to lift)
	[sə]		[rəpozə]		[ləve]	
7.	se	(itself)	fenêtre	(window)	demi	(half)
	[sə]		[fənɛtrə]		[dəmi]	
8.	me	(me)	venir	(to come)	debout	(standing)
	[mə]		[vəniʁ]		[dəbu]	
9.	te	(you)	sereine	(serene)	reflet	(reflection)
	[tə]		[sərenə]		[rəflɛ]	
10.	regard	(look)	première	(first)	dehors	(outdoors)
	[rəgar]		[prəmjerə]		[dəɔʁ]	
11.	petit	(small)	cela	(that)	l'avenir	(the future)
	[pəti]		[səla]		[lavəniʁ]	
12.	genoux	(lap)	cheval	(horse)	demande	(request)
	[ʒənu]		[ʃəval]		[dəmɑ̃də]	

RULES FOR TRANSCRIPTION

Schwa [ə]

Review: final *-e* and *-es*

In the following sequence:

consonant + *e* + consonant + vowel: *chevelure* [ʃəvølyʁə]
(*re-* may be a prefix as in *regrets* [ʁəgrɛ])

Verb ending *-ent*: *chantent* [ʃɑ̃tə] (sing)

Spelling *fais* + vowel: *faisait* [fəzɛ]

Exceptions: *monsieur* [mɔ̃sjø] *secret* [sɛkrɛ] *dessous* [dəsu] *dessus* [dəsy]

More about open [ɛ]

Review: *e* + two or more consonants

Spelling: *e* + final *c, f, l, t*

avec [avɛk] *chef* [ʃɛf] *nouvel* [nuvɛl] *bouquet* [bukɛ]

mer/ver words

Final *-mer(s)* [mɛʁ] and *-ver(s)* [vɛʁ] = [ɛʁ]:

mer(s) [mɛʁ] *amer(s)* [amɛʁ] *vers* [vɛʁ] *divers* [divɛʁ]
envers [ɑ̃vɛʁ] *hiver(s)* [ivɛʁ] *travers* [travɛʁ] *univers* [ynivɛʁ]

Other [ɛʁ] words

cher(s) [ʃɛʁ] *enfer* [ɑ̃fɛʁ] *éther* [etɛʁ] *fer(s)* [fɛʁ] *fier* [fjɛʁ] *hier* [jɛʁ] *sers* [sɛʁ]

CLASSWORK #13: Schwa [ə]

Provide IPA:

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| 1. jeter | (to throw) | 10. gouttelettes | (droplets) |
| 2. destinée | (destiny) | 11. souvenir | (memory) |
| 3. premier | (first) | 12. avenir | (future) |
| 4. nouvel | (new) | 13. divers | (various) |
| 5. cercle | (circle) | 14. lierre | (ivy) |
| 6. routes | (roads) | 15. duvet | (cover) |
| 7. colliers | (collars) | 16. refouler | (hold back) |
| 8. dames | (ladies) | 17. chef | (chief) |
| 9. rebec | (medieval stringed instr.) | | |

WORKSHEET #13: Schwa [ə]

Provide IPA:

#1

secours	(help)
fermés	(closed)
devenir	(to become)
qu'avec	(that with)
coursiers	(dispatch riders)
donnerais	(would give)
perfide	(treacherous)
détresse	(distress)
réel	(reality)
repartie	(retort)
pastel	(pastel)
frêles	(frail)
serpolet	(wild thyme)
cher	(dear)
refuser	(to refuse)
fierté	(pride)
douces	(soft)

#2

sel	(salt)
redit	(repeated)
bergère	(shepherdess)
ciel	(heaven)
amer	(bitter)
espérer	(to hope)
venus	(come)
muguet	(lily of the valley)
désespoir	(despair)
rester	(to remain)
petite	(small)
chênes	(oaks)
souvenez-vous	(remember)
chevet	(bedside)
vastes	(vast)
semaine	(week)
guerriers	(warriors)

Intone the following phrases that contain a frequent occurrence of [œ] and schwa:

Note: the assigned pronunciation for the French schwa is [œ]

1. *Forêt* (Le vieux coffret) Gourmont/Caplet

the color of leaves, the color of bark, the color of dreams.

Couleur de feuilles, couleur d'écorces, couleur de rêves.

[ku - lœr də fœj ku - lœr de - kœrs ku - lœr də rœ - vœ]

2. *De rêve* (Proses lyriques) Debussy

weep their beautiful leaves of gold!

pleurent leurs belles feuilles d'or!

[plœ - rœ lœr bœ - lœ fœ - jœ dœr]

3. *Je me suis embarqué* (L'horizon chimérique) Mirmont/Fauré

I want only the sea, I want only the wind

Je ne veux que la mer, je ne veux que le vent

[ʒœ nə vø kœ la mœr ʒœ nə vø kœ lœ vœ]

4. *De grève* (Proses lyriques) Debussy

The waves like silly little girls

Les vagues comme de petites folles

[lœ va - gœ kœ - mœ də pœ - ti - tœ fœ - lœ]

5. *Testament* Silvestre/Duparc

Leaf that the abyss reclaims,

Feuille que le gouffre réclame,

[fœ - jœ kœ lœ gu - frœ rœ - kla - mœ]

6. *J'ai presque peur, en vérité* (La bonne chanson) Verlaine/Fauré

that I love you, that I love you!

Que je vous aime, que je t'aime!

[kœ ʒœ vuz œ - mœ kœ ʒœ tœ - mœ] (suggested rhythm for exercise)

ANSWER KEY

CLASSWORK #2: Indicate [i] or [j] within the IPA:

1. aile	[ɛ_lə]	(wing)
2. naïves	[na_i və]	(naive)
3. sentiers	[sɑ̃t_j e]	(paths)
4. Lydie	[l_i d_i]	(Lydie)
5. rois	[rwa_]	(kings)
6. chevalier	[ʃəval_j e]	(knight)
7. hivers	[i_v eʀ]	(winters)
8. fleuri	[flœr_i]	(flowering)
9. île	[i_lə]	(island)
10. luire	[l_i rə]	(to shine)
11. violette	[v_j ɔlɛtə]	(violet)
12. zéphyr	[zef_i r]	(zephyr)
13. paraît	[parɛ_]	(appears)
14. mystérieuses	[m_i stɛrjɔzə]	(mysterious)
15. choisie	[ʃwaz_i]	(chosen)
16. dormir	[dɔrm_i r]	(to sleep)
17. vraiment	[vrɛ_mɑ̃]	(truly)

WORKSHEET #2: Indicate [i] or [j] within the IPA:

#1

ciel	[s_j ɛl]	(heaven)
j'ai	[ʒɛ_]	(I have)
île	[i_lə]	(island)
puis	[pɥ_i]	(then)
pourquoi	[purkwa_]	(why)
lyre	[l_i rə]	(lyre)
maître	[mɛ_trə]	(master)
fidèle	[f_i dɛlə]	(faithful)
amie	[am_i]	(friend)
immense	[i_m mɑ̃sə]	(immense)
seize	[sɛ_zə]	(sixteen)
l'espoir	[lɛspwa_r]	(the hope)
c'était	[setɛ_]	(it was)
puissance	[pɥ_i sɑ̃sə]	(power)
syrinx	[s_j i rɛks]	(syrinx)
poésie	[pɔɛz_i]	(poetry)
naïf	[na_i f]	(naive)

#3

Dieu	[d_j ø]	(God)
abîmes	[ab_i mə]	(abysses)
jamais	[ʒamɛ_]	(never)
bruit	[brɥ_i]	(noise)
oiseaux	[wa_zo]	(birds)
y	[i]	(there)
fraîche	[frɛ_fə]	(fresh)
souvenir	[suvən_i r]	(to remember)
fontaine	[fɔ̃tɛ_nə]	(fountain)
étoile	[ɛtwa_lə]	(star)
maïs	[ma_i s]	(corn)
combien	[kɔ̃b_j ɛ̃]	(how much)
patrie	[patr_i]	(fatherland)
fuis	[fɥ_i]	(flee)
frémit	[frɛm_i]	(quivers)
sylphe	[s_j i lfə]	(sprite)
mélodie	[melɔd_i]	(melody)

#2

viens	[v_j ɛ̃]	(come)
†haïr	[ʰa_i r]	(to hate)
baiser	[be_zɛ]	(to kiss)
gîtes	[ʒ_i tə]	(lodgings)
voir	[vwa_r]	(to see)
mis	[m_i]	(put)
tristesse	[tr_i stɛsə]	(sadness)
naître	[nɛ_trə]	(to be born)
mystère	[m_i stɛrə]	(mystery)
maison	[me_zɔ̃]	(house)
dieux	[d_j ø]	(gods)
tandis	[tɑ̃d_i]	(while)
folie	[fɔl_i]	(madness)
suivant	[sɥ_i vɑ̃]	(following)
supplie	[sypl_i]	(begs)
myrte	[m_i r tə]	(myrtle)
doit	[dwa_]	(must)

#4

vient	[v_j ɛ̃]	(comes)
était	[ɛtɛ_]	(was)
caïque	[ka_i kə]	(caïque)
crois	[krwa_]	(believe)
nuits	[nɥ_i]	(nights)
pitié	[p_i tje]	(pity)
vais	[ve_]	(go)
lieu	[l_j ø]	(place)
froid	[frwa_]	(cold)
venir	[vən_i r]	(to come)
gîte	[ʒ_i tə]	(lodging)
sylvain	[s_j i lvɛ̃]	(forest dweller)
chérie	[ʃɛr_i]	(darling)
renaître	[rənɛ_trə]	(to reappear)
s'enfuit	[sɑ̃fɥ_i]	(flees)
oublie	[ubl_i]	(forgets)
zéphyr	[zef_i r]	(zephyr)

CLASSWORK #13: [ə] Provide IPA:

1.	jeter	[ʒəte]	(to throw)
2.	destinée	[dəstineə]	(destiny)
3.	premier	[prəmje]	(first)
4.	nouvel	[nuvəl]	(new)
5.	cercle	[sɛrklə]	(circle)
6.	routes	[rutə]	(roads)
7.	colliers	[kɔljɛ]	(collars)
8.	dames	[damə]	(ladies)
9.	rebec	[rəbɛk]	(medieval stringed instr.)
10.	gouttelettes	[gutələtə]	(droplets)
11.	souvenir	[suvənir]	(memory)
12.	avenir	[avənir]	(future)
13.	divers	[divɛr]	(various)
14.	lierre	[ljɛrə]	(ivy)
15.	duvet	[dyvɛ]	(cover)
16.	refouler	[rəfule]	(hold back)
17.	chef	[ʃɛf]	(chief)

WORKSHEET #13: [ə] Provide IPA:

#1			#2		
	secours	[səkur]	sel	[sɛl]	(salt)
	fermés	[fɛrmɛ]	redit	[rədi]	(repeated)
	devenir	[dəvənir]	bergère	[bɛrʒɛrə]	(shepherdess)
	qu'avec	[kavɛk]	ciel	[sjɛl]	(heaven)
	coursiers	[kursje]	amer	[amɛr]	(bitter)
	donnerais	[dɔnəɛ]	espérer	[ɛspɛrɛ]	(to hope)
	perfide	[pɛrfidə]	venus	[vəny]	(come)
	détresse	[dɛtrɛsə]	muguet	[mygɛ]	(lily of the valley)
	réel	[rɛɛl]	désespoir	[dezɛspwar]	(despair)
	repartie	[rɛpartɪ]	rester	[rɛstɛ]	(to remain)
	pastel	[pastɛl]	petite	[pətɪtə]	(small)
	frêles	[frɛlə]	chênes	[ʃɛnə]	(oaks)
	serpolet	[sɛrpələ]	souvenez-vous	[suvənevʊ]	(remember)
	cher	[ʃɛr]	chevet	[ʃəvɛ]	(bedside)
	refuser	[rɛfyzɛ]	vastes	[vastə]	(vast)
	fierté	[fjɛrtɛ]	semaine	[səməne]	(week)
	douces	[dusə]	guerriers	[gɛrje]	(warriors)
#3			#4		
	herbe	[ɛrbə]	bonnet	[bɔnɛ]	(bonnet)
	reposer	[rəpozɛ]	promenade	[prɔmənədə]	(walk)
	joues	[ʒuə]	extrême (x is [ks])	[ɛkstremə]	(extreme)
	cerf (silent f)	[sɛr]	sachet	[sɑʃɛ]	(sachet)
	légers	[ləʒɛ]	palmiers	[palmje]	(palm trees)
	castel	[kastɛl]	fera	[fɛra]	(will make)
	grenade	[grənədə]	souveraine	[suvərəne]	(sovereign)
	esprits	[ɛspri]	brises	[brizə]	(breezes)
	émeraude	[ɛmərodə]	devenu	[dəvəny]	(become)
	nef	[nɛf]	grec	[grɛk]	(Greek)
	élevé	[eləvɛ]	j'espère	[ʒɛspɛrə]	(I hope)
	secoue	[səkuə]	pierre	[pjɛrə]	(stone)
	promet	[prɔmɛ]	rivages	[rivaʒə]	(shores)
	muses	[myzə]	serait	[sərə]	(would be)
	tels	[tɛl]	hiver	[ivɛr]	(winter)
	squelette	[skələtə]	appel	[apɛl]	(call)
	chers	[ʃɛr]	déserte	[dezɛrtə]	(deserted)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bernac, Pierre. *The Interpretation of French Song* Praeger Publishers, New York 1970.
- Davis, Eileen. *Sing French* Éclairé Press, Columbus, Ohio, 2003
- Du Mont, Francis M. *French Grammar* Barnes and Noble, Inc., New York 1960.
- Girard, Denis. *Cassell's French Dictionary* Macmillan Publishing Co., New York 1981.
- Grubb, Thomas. *Singing in French* Schirmer Books, New York 1979.
- Janes, Michael, Dora Latiri-Carpenter, and Edwin Carpenter, eds. *Oxford French Dictionary & Grammar* Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.
- Nitze, William, and Ernest Wilkins. *A Handbook of French Phonetics* Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York 1961.
- Retzlaff, Jonathan with IPA transcriptions by Cheri Montgomery. *Exploring Art Song Lyrics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012
- Robert, Paul. *Le petit Robert [electronic resource]: de la langue française Nouvelle édition*, Vivendi Universal Interactive Publishing, France 2001.