



Singing and Communicating in English: A Singer's Guide to English Diction

Kathryn LaBouff

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From the Foreword by Renee Fleming: "Kathryn LaBouff has developed an approach to singing in the English language which is wonderfully user-friendly, and which has surely saved much wear and tear on my voice. It is a technique that has empowered me with the knowledge and skills to bring a text to life and to be able to negotiate all of the sounds of the language with the least amount of effort. I have found her clever and extremely creative use of substitute consonants or combinations of consonants in creating clear diction utterly delightful because they are surprising and because they work. These techniques have been equally useful when singing in foreign languages. We sopranos are not usually known to have good diction, particularly in our high range. I found that working with Kathryn improved my ability to be understood by an enormous percentile of the audience with much less vocal fatigue than I would have experienced if left to my own devices. I have often told my colleagues enthusiastically of her interesting solutions to the frustrating problems of diction. I am thrilled that her techniques are now in print for all to benefit from them."

In *Singing and Communicating in English*, internationally renowned diction coach Kathryn LaBouff provides singers with an accessible guide to the principles of English diction they need to communicate the text successfully. Her thorough and much sought-after technique clarifies the physiology of speech, emphasizes the studied practice of careful and articulate pronunciation, and focuses on the study of English cadence. Covering aspects of phonetics from vowels to diphthongs to fricatives, the book includes multiple practical exercises in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) transcriptions, helpful diagrams, and pronunciation drills, each chosen from the most essential English art song and operatic repertoire. In addition to standard American and British English, a variety of regional dialects and accents are covered in depth. A companion website features a full range of vowel/consonant drills, poems read aloud by the author and by theater and voiceover actor John Keating, as well as an exercise answer key, and publishers' lists to help the singer locate a vast array of English language works for performance.

This book is an invaluable resource for all vocalists (both professional and aspiring), diction instructors, teachers, and coaches, and choral directors.

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Stephen Hancock:

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