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Transcribing Scandinavian Song Texts into IPA

Challenges when aiming for a higher degree of uniformity in the IPA transcription of the three Scandinavian languages: Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish

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[Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish] all have great strength, subtlety, and flexibility and all have been the vehicle of great works of literature. The languages of Ibsen, Strindberg, and Hans Christian Andersen deserve to be better known than they are.¹

PREFACE

In recent years, there has been an increase in scholarship regarding the phonetics and singing diction of Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish, although much of it has focused on singing in Swedish. Resulting articles and books often include a collection of song texts transcribed into the IPA by non-native diction teachers and/or singers, some of whom are of Scandinavian descent. Resources published by Scandinavian phoneticians and diction pedagogues are few, and with the growing interest in Nordic vocal repertoire outside Scandinavia, it is crucial that non-native singers and teachers have access to more detailed resources on pronunciation produced by native singers and teachers.

In the existing resources on Scandinavian singing diction, there are inconsistencies in chosen IPA symbols and differences in transcription presentation. There is no denying that systemizing the transcription of Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish is a challenging task, requiring close collaboration between native speakers of each language; perhaps this is why native speakers of the Scandinavian languages have not published many works on the subject.

The authors of the present article argue that, in establishing a system of transcribing the vowels and consonants of Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish into the IPA, the following criteria should be met:

1. The process involves the cooperation of native speakers from all three countries.
2. The working group of native speakers consists of phoneticians and singing/diction teachers.
3. Non-native singers and teachers who will need and use this material will provide feedback during this systemizing process to result in clearer transcriptions.

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4. Established and familiar transcription traditions form the foundation of this work, and since these languages are Germanic in nature, the standard IPA transcription practices for German seem ideal.

Since there is currently no apparent way to present sounds within and across the boundaries of these three languages, decisions regarding transcription must include consideration of the following: simplification of the system for application to singing as opposed to speech, accuracy, phonetic/phonological features, singing techniques, and transcription traditions.

INTRODUCTION

Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish are historically related to Old Norse and are Germanic in nature; therefore, these Scandinavian languages share many structural and grammatical characteristics. Despite inherent (and apparent) similarities when written, however, these three Scandinavian languages differ significantly in regard to pronunciation. World languages such as French, German, Italian, and English (British and American) have a long tradition of a standardized pronunciation that has been described in phonetics books and transcribed into the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). To a large degree the pronunciation of these languages in classical singing has been presented in diction books for singers with transcriptions of a selection of song texts. Singers unfamiliar with many foreign languages may profit immensely from these transcriptions, assuming they know how to read and interpret IPA. English speakers do not learn to speak many foreign languages, and this likely is the reason that teaching and learning IPA is so widespread in the preparation of singers in English-speaking countries. Unlike Italian, French, German, or English, the three Scandinavian languages do not possess a fully standardized system of transcribing words into IPA for singing.

There has been some work published in recent years on Swedish and Finnish singing diction. However, it is important to note that Finnish is technically not a Scandinavian language as it belongs to the Finno-Ugric family of languages. Articles on Norwegian and Danish singing diction are appearing more frequently, and publications on Scandinavian language and diction are valuable contributions to the classical singing community.

In recent scholarship, however, unequal attention has been paid to the three Scandinavian languages, with the majority of Scandinavian diction sources focusing on Swedish. Still, many developments regarding Swedish IPA transcriptions and possible pronunciation variants remain under consideration. Likewise, while some songs texts of Grieg and other Norwegian Romantic composers have been transcribed into the IPA, much regarding pronunciation of these texts has yet to be explained, challenged, and developed, especially given that Norwegian includes three branches, Bokmål, Danish-Norwegian, and Nynorsk. Danish, by far, is the most underrepresented of these three languages, both in scholarship and in IPA transcription guides for singers.

The present authors recognize the need to systemize and simplify the practice of transcribing the three Scandinavian languages while maintaining the distinctive qualities and fine points of each. We use the standard IPA transcription practices for German as a foundation for our transcriptions, because most singers are familiar with German diction rules and, as mentioned previously, these languages are Germanic in nature. It is important to acknowledge that native speakers and singers of a given language are the ultimate authorities in making decisions regarding an IPA transcription system for their own language, and singers who do not speak these languages should consult native diction pedagogues, phoneticians, and singers for guidance. Furthermore, it is useful for diction pedagogues and phoneticians to cooperate when approaching a task such as IPA transcription, as both bring special and specific knowledge to the table. In Denmark, two experts are now working together to find transcription solutions for singing in Danish—a language with unique pronunciation and transcription challenges—one is a native singing pedagogue and the other a native phonetician.² The two authors of this article are experts in different fields: Ophaug is a native Norwegian and a phonetician who has specialized in the phonetics of singing; Jordheim is an American singer of Norwegian and Danish descent with a special interest in the phonetics and singing diction of the Scandinavian languages. A foreign singer, she also represents the third criterion specified in the Preface. We are in close contact with the aforementioned Danish experts and

have also consulted Swedish singers and pedagogues, including Håkan Hagegård.³

The aim of the present article is to explore commonalities among the three Scandinavian languages and to discuss transcription and pronunciation challenges and solutions. Studying the close relationships between Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish can bring about a more comprehensive understanding of each of these languages. Before exploring the specific challenges encountered when transcribing these languages into the IPA, it is necessary to provide brief historical background on the development of these three languages from their roots in Old Norse.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The close historical relationships between Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and their resulting influences on one another, cannot be ignored. As Ellingboe explains, both Norway and Sweden were under Danish rule for a brief time soon after the great plagues of the 14th century; however, while Sweden became quickly independent from this union, Norway continued to be under Danish rule for approximately 450 years.⁴ Therefore, Norway's official and literary language during this time was Danish, but dialects that developed from Old Norse were still spoken in rural areas. Norway declared independence from Denmark on May 17, 1814, but due to Sweden's strength and Denmark's relative weakness in the Napoleonic wars, the Swedish king was given rule over Norway.⁵ Norway broke free from Swedish rule in 1905 and has been independent ever since. Norway's new-found independence resulted in an impassioned sense of nationalism and the desire to establish a national language, something the country had never before possessed.⁶ Even today, because of Norway's long and arduous journey to independence, Norwegian as a standard language is very different from standard Swedish and Danish in that there are two national languages in Norway. One of these is Bokmål, the official and formal literary language of Norway. While related to Danish in its written form, Bokmål is related more closely to Swedish in its pronunciation. The second national language of Norway is Landsmål, also known as Nynorsk, and is based on dialects.⁷

Like English, German, and Dutch, the roots of the Scandinavian languages can be traced back to the now extinct Primitive (or Proto-) Germanic language.⁸ Walshe explains the gradual differentiation of the Scandinavian languages.

After the end of the Viking period the comparative unity of Old Norse gradually disintegrated. Slowly but surely the separate languages of Icelandic, Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish began to go their separate ways. Even the interrelations between Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish underwent a change . . . The comparative isolation of Danish as opposed to Norwegian and Swedish was doubtless most apparent in the pronunciation. Danish lost its musical accent and presumably by this time [after 1370] began to develop the characteristic *stød*, or glottal stop . . .⁹

While Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish still share certain sounds at present, over time each language developed distinctive linguistic and phonemic elements. These elements, especially the phonemic, are of paramount importance to us in our mission to systematically transcribe these languages phonetically in a clear, concise, and practical manner.

HOW AND WHAT TO TRANSCRIBE

Because these languages share Germanic roots, and English-speaking singers generally are familiar with the German IPA system and German singing diction, the foundation of our selection of IPA symbols for the translation of Scandinavian language texts is the German IPA tradition. However, because the "placement" of sounds (especially vowels, but also consonants) varies across these languages, indicating placement by employing diacritics poses an important question: How many symbols and corresponding diacritics are really necessary in order to produce an accurate, readable, and approachable IPA transcription? De'Ath states that "the amount of allophonic detail applied to a phonetic transcription should, if anything, be greater for a non-native speaker than for one who is fluent, regardless of the language of the text."¹⁰ However, he also points out that an overly detailed phonetic transcription "looks cumbersome" and may overwhelm the reader with "information fatigue syndrome." In order to decide upon appropriate IPA symbols and inclusion of diacritics, a study of the phonemes and corresponding allophonic variations of these three languages is essential.

“Norwegianizing” Danish Texts and Consequent Controversy

As mentioned earlier, Norway’s official and literary language was Danish during the years that Norway was ruled by Denmark. After Norway became independent, the language developed into a sort of hybrid: Danish-Norwegian, which applies a Norwegian pronunciation to Danish words. Thus, many of the songs from the Romantic period have purely Danish or Danish-Norwegian texts and are set by Norwegian composers (the songs of Alnæs and Grieg are prime examples). This poses a challenge for the singer, and possible solutions depend on whether the singer and the majority of his or her audience are Danish, Norwegian, or from neither country. For instance, it is possible to have a Danish text (e.g., Ludvig-Holstein) set by a Danish composer (e.g., Carl Nielsen); a Danish text (e.g., H. C. Andersen) set by a Norwegian composer (e.g., Edvard Grieg); or a Danish-Norwegian text (by a Norwegian poet, like Theodor Caspari) set by a Norwegian composer (e.g., Eyvind Alnæs). What would a Norwegian singer do in each of these situations in terms of pronunciation? What about a Danish singer? Lastly, what would a singer from neither country—someone with little experience in either language—do? To gain more insight into this issue, we sent a questionnaire electronically to Norwegian and Danish singers, as well as to singers who are neither Norwegian nor Danish, to solicit their views on pronunciation in each of these situations. For each of the situations described above, recipients were instructed to provide one of four answers: 1) Danish pronunciation; 2) “Norwegianize” the pronunciation (meaning to change some of the Danish words to those of the same meaning in Norwegian, and/or to change the pronunciation from Danish to Norwegian); 3) depends on the audience; 4) not sure. While the results varied slightly, the majority of the recipients concurred in their choice of solution for each situation. In the first case (Danish poet/poem set by a Danish composer), the singer should aim for a Danish pronunciation. In the second case (Danish poet/poem set by a Norwegian composer) and the third case (Danish-Norwegian poem set by a Norwegian composer), the singer should “Norwegianize” the text in a conservative manner, applying the changes carefully and judiciously so as to be understandable to Norwegian ears.

It is important to consider how the composer would have interpreted and read his or her chosen text; thus, the nationality of the composer has much to do with a singer’s decisions regarding pronunciation. However, it can also be strongly argued that the nationality of the poet rather than the composer should influence more heavily a singer’s decision regarding pronunciation. A similar study could be useful on the issue of Finnish-Swedish and pronunciation in singing. Is it advisable, for example, to pronounce a poem by a Finnish-Swedish poet (e.g., Johan Ludvig Runeberg) in a Finnish-Swedish manner if it is set by a Finnish composer such as Sibelius? On the other hand, how should a singer pronounce a poetic text of Runeberg when set by a Swedish composer such as Tor Aulin? Ultimately, decisions regarding pronunciation are the singer’s responsibility, and it is crucial to apply pronunciation choices consistently within a song, cycle, or larger work while always aiming to communicate the text clearly and compellingly to the audience.

Suprasegmentals

A suprasegmental feature (also called a prosodic feature) in phonetics is a speech feature that is added over, or accompanies, consonants and vowels. These features are not limited to single sounds, but often extend over syllables, words, or phrases. Relevant examples of suprasegmentals in the Scandinavian languages include tonemes, *stød*, and word/sentence stress.

Tonemes, Stød, and Stress

Tonemes are pitch-glides on certain syllables or from one syllable to the next in spoken language. Swedish and Norwegian are tone languages, and two such tone patterns exist in each: toneme 1 and toneme 2. In both languages, these two tonemes are realized differently in regard to specific tone movement, and the meaning of a word can change (sometimes significantly) when one toneme is exchanged for the other. The number of word pairs with tone distinction is more plentiful in Norwegian than in Swedish due to the fact that Norwegians do not pronounce the <t> in the suffix <-et> in the definite singular form of a noun (such as <huset> (house)), whereas Swedes (and Danes) do pronounce this ending <t>. An example of one of the many Norwegian word pairs is the noun <huset> (pro-

nounced [ˈhʌ:sə]) and the verb in its infinitive form, <huset> (meaning “to house” and also pronounced [ˈhʌ:sə], but with a different toneme). Norwegian and Swedish tonemes are used only in words with more than one syllable and in primary syllable stress. In singing, of course, tonemes as well as sentence intonation have been replaced by the composer’s melody.

A striking characteristic of spoken Danish is the distinctive “stød” (often referred to as a glottal stop), a feature which is supposed to have developed as a replacement for tonemes. This distinctive feature differentiates the meaning between two words that are otherwise the same in pronunciation; the meaning of these words is indicated by the presence or absence of the “stød.” An example of this would be the words <far> (father) and <far!> (the imperative form of the verb <fare> (go!)); the first word does not utilize the “stød” but the second does. The “stød” should not be used in singing, as it is incongruous with legato and lyricism. (Of course, glottal stops may be used judiciously by the singer to indicate word separation—especially between adjacent words that end and begin with vowels—and stress in all three of these Scandinavian languages; however, it may not be necessary to notate these instances in an IPA transcription.) The Danish “stød” and Norwegian and Swedish tonemes are suprasegmental features of spoken language that are not realized in singing. As a result, misunderstanding of certain words in the text may occur in performance.

While there is no need to indicate the tonemes or “stød” in an IPA translation, word stress is marked. Stress is the dynamic prominence of some syllables over others and can be marked as a vertical bar before the stressed syllable. In compound words, the practice is to distinguish between primary stress and secondary stress; the primary stress is transcribed [ˈ], while the secondary stress is transcribed [ˌ]. Ophaug indicates this stress pattern in transcriptions of Norwegian words as follows: <løftebringende> [ˈlœftəˌbrɪŋəndə] (promise bringing), <sommerlys> [ˈsɔm:mərˌly:s] (summer light),¹¹ and so does Hersey: <kärlek> [ˈkæ:rˌle:k] (love).¹² Ellingboe does not mark the secondary stress in his Norwegian song transcriptions, even in a compound of three words such as: <solskinsdag> (sol-skinsdag) [ˈsu:lʃɪnsda:g] (sunshine day).¹³

All words, monosyllabic or polysyllabic, have the potential to be stressed for emphasis in a sentence or phrase. Important words in a sentence are often stressed, especially lexical words such as verbs, nouns, adverbs, and adjectives. Word stress in a sung phrase is, to a certain degree, set in the music by the composer’s rhythmic pattern, but in some cases it is left to the singer’s discretion. Should song transcriptions contain markings for all the words and syllables believed to be important for the recitation of the text, or should just the stressed syllables in compound or multisyllabic words be marked? Should transcribers of texts allow the singer to decide which words to stress (for emphasis) in phrases? These questions are of significance to the singer who does not possess an innate understanding of the language.

It is impossible to discuss the issue of stress without discussing consonant and vowel length. On a phonemic level, Scandinavian language vowels are either short or long; consonants may be spelled double, but this is to indicate that the preceding vowel is short. Concerning phonetics, however, in Norwegian and Swedish (not in Danish or German) there is an interrelation between vowels and consonants in regard to length; consonants are “long” after short vowels and “short” after long vowels. An example of this in Norwegian would be the minimal pair of “bane” [ˈbɑ:nə] (court), and “banne” [ˈbɑ:nə] (swearing). The transcription of “banne” brings up the problem of indicating the length of double consonants in these languages. Since the Scandinavian languages are not Italianate, the Italian IPA tradition of indicating consonant length might give the singer the wrong impression of how to pronounce the long consonants in Norwegian or Swedish. In Italian, the double consonant extends beyond the syllable boundary; therefore, the IPA syllable is written twice—once on either side of the length mark. This can be illustrated with the minimal pair of <caro> [ˈka:ro] (dear), and <carro> [ˈkar:ro] (wagon) in Italian. In the Scandinavian languages, these double consonants are not as energetic as those of Italian. Given this difference, we would argue that it is perhaps better to indicate the length of a double consonant in the Scandinavian languages with just the length mark following the consonant phoneme as in the following example of the Norwegian word <sommer> [ˈsɔm:ər] (summer). Furthermore, in particular situations certain consonants are omitted in pronunciation, especially

in Norwegian and Danish. An example of this from Norwegian would be <under> [ʰn:ər] (under); in pronunciation the /d/ is omitted and the /n/ is prolonged in replacement. Lastly, there is the question of indicating half-length for long vowels in the secondarily stressed syllable. Perhaps this is getting too detailed, especially since the musical setting may not allow this distinction. If this were to be implemented, however, along with our notion regarding consonant length, a transcription of <sommerlys> (summer light) would look like this: [sɔm:ər,ly:s]. Double consonants are found in German and Danish spelling, but these languages do not contain the phonetic long pronunciation of double consonants. Ophaug suggests the use of length marks also after consonants (following a short vowel) also in German song transcriptions, since a prolonging of such a consonant may help identifying the vowel as short, especially when sung on notes of longer duration.¹⁴ Would this be appropriate also for transcription of Danish song texts? If so, this would mean that the word <sommer> [sʌmɐ] would be transcribed [sʌm:ɐ].

Phonemes and Allophonic Variation

Books and articles focusing on singing diction rarely include information regarding the distinction or relation between phonemes and allophones, but such information is abundant in resources focusing on phonetics. It is worth mentioning briefly the issue of phonetic versus phonemic brackets and their usage. One must be mindful of consistency when notating sounds in brackets, and this consistency should be present whether the usage applies to diction or phonetics. Such consistency is more commonly discussed in phonetic resources than in diction resources. In diction resources, sounds are presented in phonetic brackets, [], and/or phonemic brackets, / /, and spelling is housed in the following brackets: < >. However, an explanation about what these different brackets mean is often absent in diction resources. It is important to take note of the various phonetic, phonemic, and spelling brackets because they indicate the specific meaning of the symbols enclosed.

As previously mentioned, De'Ath suggests that the presentation of sounds for singers should not be too phonologically (or theoretically) complicated.¹⁵ Nonetheless, it is essential that enough detail is provided in an IPA transcription to ensure that the song text is

representative of the spoken language. Since sustained, lyric singing generally lacks the speed of speech and the resulting co-articulation, not all the variations (or allophones) used in speech will occur in performance (of course, certain instances of recitative and patter song are exceptions). Consequently, sung pronunciation will emphasize the phonemic element or the prototype vowel articulation over the allophonic variation found in speech.

As these spoken Scandinavian languages evolved into written languages, they became largely phonemic/phonetic in their spelling, meaning that nearly every letter corresponds to a sound (phoneme/allophone). While the pronunciation of a language changes significantly over time, the written language mainly stays the same with some changes in spelling occurring to reflect pronunciation developments. Danish has changed in pronunciation much more so than Swedish or Norwegian, which is why there is a significant discrepancy today between written and spoken Danish. Of all the Scandinavian languages, Swedish bears the closest correlation between pronunciation and the written language. Norwegian pronunciation, too, resembles the written form of the language more closely than does Danish. The remarkable difference between Danish pronunciation and the written language indicates that the language contains many allophones for each phoneme; herein lies the challenge of transcribing Danish.

Changes over time in language pronunciation cause the phonemes and the relationships between those phonemes and their allophonic variations to change accordingly. In Danish, these relationships are a bit ambiguous, at least at present. For instance, the word <og> (and) and the first syllable in the word <over> (over) in Danish sound like a diphthong ([ɔw]), despite the <g> and <v> in their respective spellings. Does Danish maintain the phonemes /o/, /g/, and /v/ in these cases? Is the pronunciation of the /g/ and /v/ ([w]) an allophonic variation, or is [ɔw] a new phoneme—a diphthong? Should the [w] be used in the transcription because it replaces a consonant in spelling, or could this sound combination be described as a real diphthong, perhaps as [ɔʊ] or [ɔʊ]? We are leaning toward [ɔʊ], but arguments for any of these choices can be made persuasively, and ultimately, native Danes should be the ones to decide.

ISSUES REGARDING CONSONANTS

Plosives

Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish all employ the unvoiced plosive phonemes /p/, /t/, /k/, and the voiced plosive phonemes /b/, /d/, /g/. However, Wells claims that in Danish, /b/, /d/, and /g/ are always voiceless.¹⁶ If this is true (which it seems to be, based on our discussions with Thaysen and Schachtenhaufen),¹⁷ how should we transcribe these sounds? We believe that it is important to relate to the phoneme when transcribing words into the IPA. Therefore, if given the word <vugge> (cradle) in Danish, we would transcribe this as [ˈvʊ̯ɡ̊ːə] rather than [ˈvʊ̯kːə] (note the double consonant notation as described above). The unvoiced /g/ is nearly identical to an unaspirated /k/, but using the [ɡ̊] symbol with the voiceless diacritic relates more directly to the phoneme /g/. The same argument applies for the word <lukke> (close), which we would transcribe as [ˈlʊ̯k̊ːə] rather than [ˈlʊ̯ɡ̊ːə]. It seems that the use of aspiration in connection with unvoiced plosives is the same in all three Scandinavian languages (as in German, but unlike French and Italian), and aspiration is found in an initial position in stressed syllables/words. If a consonant is aspirated, then diacritics to indicate this could be employed; for example, <korn> (grain) would be transcribed as [kʰoɹ̥n]. The question is whether or not it is necessary to transcribe such aspiration in a transcription. It is not a tradition to indicate aspiration like this in German transcriptions, so it could be argued that it is not necessary in Scandinavian language transcriptions. However, the issue of aspiration should at least be mentioned here to assist foreign singers (especially those who are French or Italian) who do not use this aspiration in their own mother tongue.

In keeping with the unpredictable nature of spoken and sung Danish, many plosives in this language are not pronounced. In spoken Danish, the plosive phoneme /t/, for example, can be affricated [tʰ] as in the word <tanke> (thought, idea). To indicate this affrication, Hersey uses this transcription practice.¹⁸ Thaysen and Schachtenhaufen, on the other hand, claim that this articulation is not used in sung Danish.¹⁹ We believe that transcribing the initial /t/ as [tʰ] in <tanke> could lead non-Danish singers astray and encourage them to use too much of the /s/, thus obscuring the /t/ phoneme

(e.g., the affricate /ts/ as in the German word <Zeit> (time)). We conclude that it makes sense to transcribe the initial /t/ in a word like <tanke> as [t].

Retroflexes

A retroflex consonant is a coronal consonant for which the tongue exhibits a flat, concave, or even curled shape, and is articulated between the alveolar ridge and the hard palate. In Norwegian, Swedish, and German (but not in Danish), there are retroflex sounds in speech. They do not represent phonemes, but are allophonic variations of the articulation when /r/ precedes the consonants /t/, /d/, /n/, /l/, and /s/. In such cases, the /r/ is not pronounced and merges with the following consonant, thus changing the consonants into /t/, /d/, /n/, /l/, and /s/. The retroflex pronunciation phenomenon occurs in Norwegian words such as: <kort> [kɔ̯t] (short), <sverd> [ˈsvæːd] (sword), <stjerne> [ˈstjæːɲə] (star), and <perle> [ˈpæːlə] (pearl). The /r/ + /s/ is special in that it is not a true retroflex, although it is counted as being one. In this combination of phonemes, the /r/ is omitted as with the other retroflexes, but the /s/ is changed to [ʃ], as in the Norwegian word <første> [ˈføɹ̥stə] (first). In spoken Norwegian and Swedish, retroflex consonants happen not only within words, but also across word boundaries. Norwegian examples include: <har tid> [hɑː ˈtʰiːd] (has time) and <for sent> [fɔ̯ ˈfɛːnt] (too late). Swedish singers today, more so than Norwegian singers, are increasingly incorporating retroflex pronunciation in singing. In other words, they are using a modernized pronunciation for present-day audiences.

Roland-Silverstein uses all of the aforementioned combinations of retroflex in her Swedish transcriptions; examples include: <stjärnglans> [ˈʃæːŋ ɡlanːs] (star shine), <svärd> [svæːd] (sword), <mörkers> [ˈmœɹ̥kəʃ] (darkness'), and <härligt> [ˈhæːlɪgt] (lovely). In words such as <älskarns> [ˈɛːlːskarns] (lover's) and <pionerna> [piːuːnærna] (the peonies), however, retroflex is not transcribed.²⁰ In contrast, Hersey does not use retroflexes at all in her Swedish transcriptions,²¹ and neither does Ophaug.²² Ophaug claims that in Norwegian retroflexes have traditionally not been used in classical singing; however, there are tendencies among young singers from the Oslo area, who have an extended use of these variants in speech, to incorporate them also in singing.²³ Retroflexes are not used in Nynorsk.

Retroflexes are indicated only within words rather than across word boundaries in these authors' transcriptions. Native singers are not yet frequently incorporating retroflex across word boundaries in singing—perhaps it is only a matter of time until they do.

Some Fricatives

Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish share most of the fricatives, but they are not all identical in pronunciation across language boundaries, and there are disagreements among authors as to how to transcribe them.

The most important fricatives are those that might be viewed as corresponding to the German *ich-Laut* [ç] and the German *sch-Laut* [ʃ]. The [ç] is found in the German words <Milch> [mɪlç] (milk) and <Mädchen> ['mɛ:tçən] (girl), and the [ʃ] in words like <schön> [ʃø:n] (beautiful) and <stolz> [ʃtɔltʰs] (proud), and they represent different phonemes. Additionally, the *ich-Laut* is in allophonic variation with *ach-Laut* [x], found in the German word <Dach> [dax] (roof). Høyem and Zickfeldt claim that the [ç], a voiceless palatal fricative, is also used in Norwegian in words like <kjole> ['çu:lə] (dress) and <bikkje> ['bɪçə] (dog) and that the sound has the same quality in the two languages.²⁴ The same authors claim that the /ʃ/, a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, does not have quite the same color in German as in Norwegian.²⁵ The German /ʃ/ is darker than in Norwegian, and this is an auditory quality often linked to lip protrusion and/or the tongue body being placed farther back than when pronouncing the corresponding Norwegian sound. Often, the symbol [ʂ] is used for the Norwegian variant, the “so-called” retroflex variant, which could be an appropriate solution because this sounds less dark than the German [ʃ]. Ophaug uses the symbols [ç] and [ʃ] in transcriptions of Norwegian song texts in accordance with German IPA practice,²⁶ as does Ellingboe in words such as: <kysste> ['çʏstə] (kissed), <kjær> [çæ:r] (dear), and <sjaeleglad> ['ʃe:lə,glɑ:d] (“soul happy,” delighted).²⁷

Swedish also possesses consonant sounds related to the German sounds [ç] and [ʃ], but the Swedish sounds do not have the same quality or use the same IPA symbols in transcription. Instead, Swedish utilizes [ç̥] and [ʃ̥]. The [ç̥] is an alveo-palatal fricative according to the IPA's presentation of this symbol, which means that it has a slightly more fronted articulation than the palatal

Norwegian (and German) [ç]. Roland-Silverstein, however, describes the [ç̥] as being formed farther back than the German [ç].²⁸

The [ʃ̥] is a distinctive Swedish sound and is articulated as [ʃ] and [x] simultaneously. Roland-Silverstein states that this sound should not be used when singing Swedish *romanser* and that a singer should replace the [ʃ̥] sound with [ʃ]. Hersey claims that both [ç̥] and [ʃ̥] should be substituted by [ʃ] to avoid excessive air loss in singing.²⁹ While replacing the Swedish [ʃ̥] sound with [ʃ] makes sense, replacing both [ç̥] and [ʃ̥] with [ʃ] would neutralize the phoneme distinction between /ç̥/ and /ʃ̥/ and create confusion among words such as <chock> [ʃɔk] (shock) and <tjock> [çɔk] (thick, fat).

Norwegian and Danish words bear striking similarities when written; however, in words where Norwegian pronunciation would utilize the [ç] sound, a [k] sound is used in Danish. The orthographic spelling of Danish words reflects this pronunciation difference by the presence of the letter <k> in words like <kære> ['kæ:ɹ] (dear),³⁰ which can be compared to the word's Norwegian equivalent, <kjære> ['çæ:rə]. Danish uses only the fricative [ç̥], and the sound is used in words that, were they pronounced in Swedish or Norwegian, would use [ʃ]. For example, in the Norwegian word <sjel> and in the Swedish word <själ> (soul), the <sj> cluster is pronounced [ʃ]; thus, in Danish, the <sj> cluster in the word <sjæl> (soul) is pronounced [ç̥].

There are many opinions on how to transcribe these fricatives both within and across these language boundaries. Different symbols and patterns in transcriptions can be found in existing sources, and this creates confusion both for native and non-native singers. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a consensus regarding how to transcribe these fricative sounds consistently in Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish.

The Realization of the /r/-Phoneme

The phoneme /r/ has a plentiful number of allophones—both free and combinatory allophones—within and across language boundaries (the term “combinatory allophones” refers to the different realizations of a phoneme depending on the phonetic environment of the phoneme). Because there are so many, it is a challenge to describe and identify correctly these allophonic variations, as well as to select appropriate IPA symbols

for transcription. In classical singing, the apical trill [r], for example, is still prevalent and is often characterized as being a very intelligible variant not in conflict with established and accepted singing techniques. However, the apical trill [r] can be reduced to a tap [ɾ] (often called “flipped” <r>). In Italian, these two <r> sounds are different phonemes: /r/ and /ɾ/, which means minimal pairs of words can be found: <caro> /'karo/ (dear) and <carro> /'karo/ (wagon).

In Swedish and Norwegian, the only two <r> variants are phonetic variations of the same /r/ phoneme: [r] and [ɾ]; however, when should either variation be used when singing in Swedish or Norwegian? According to Ellingboe the decision as to whether to roll (trill) or flip an <r> in Norwegian is subjective.³¹ He also argues that the singer may reverse the decision indicated in his transcription if doing so will help with articulation or phrasing. We have found that there is a tendency to use the trill in stressed positions, especially in the nucleus of important lexical words (such as nouns and verbs and adjectives), and the tap in unstressed words (especially in grammatical word endings as in the present tense of verbs or the plural of nouns: <elsker> ['ɛlskər] (loves) and <skog> ['sku:gər] (forests)). Determining a system for when to use [r] and when to use [ɾ] is a challenge and perhaps unattainable when studying conflicting sources. Ellingboe most often chooses the [r] in an initial position before a vowel and the [ɾ] in both an intervocalic position and after voiced and voiceless plosives; he uses the tap more often than the trill in his transcriptions. Roland-Silverstein states that, in Swedish, there are no hard and fast rules for when to roll or when to flip the /r/, but she suggests [r] after the plosives /p/, /t/, and /k/, and [ɾ] between vowels.³² Does this mean that an /r/ should not be rolled after the voiced plosives?

Roland-Silverstein most often uses the [ɾ] in her transcriptions in almost all positions: after voiced plosives, between vowels, and in an initial position before vowels. Only occasionally does Roland-Silverstein use the [r]. Hersey presents two symbols for the /r/ in her tables and surveys for Swedish: [ɾ] and [r:].³³ The length mark behind the second symbol can be argued unnecessary; the allophone [r] is naturally long in that it requires the tongue to touch the alveolar ridge two or more times. In Hersey's transcription examples, the long trill is found only in connection with /r/ following short vowels

(<korta> ['kɔ:r:ta] (short)). Hersey chooses to use the [ɾ] after all plosives, both voiced and voiceless; she chooses the tap more often than the trill.

How should one transcribe the /r/ in Norwegian and Swedish? Do situations and considerations regarding the /r/ apply consistently across both languages? Is it true that we use the tap more often than the trill? And what about other languages in which the apical /r/ can be used in singing, such as German; is only the trill used, as shown in the transcriptions of Coffin, Errolle, Singer, and Delattre,³⁴ or is the tap used as well?³⁵ Since there is a lack of consistent rules for when to use the trill and the tap in Norwegian and Swedish and no published comparative study of these two languages yet exists to reveal whether or not the same rules apply to both, is it best to use only one symbol for the /r/? Is it necessary to point out that the /r/ is mainly a tap in Norwegian and Swedish, especially if we are not certain of this? If it is decided to use only one symbol for /r/ throughout a song text, should the other possible sound be presented if needed or wanted by the singer? Presenting the pronunciation options available to singers could be to their benefit as they are then better able to make informed choices.

Danish, unlike both Swedish and Norwegian, does not use the apical /r/ in speech or in singing. There has been a trend in some Western languages to change the apical r-variants to different back variants in speech. This has happened in French, German, Dutch, Danish, and in dialects of Norwegian and Swedish. Even though the apical trill is still prevalent in singing in most of these languages, there is a growing tendency to emulate spoken language in singing. Ophaug has shown this development in German speech and singing.³⁶ Even with the possibility of using the more archaic apical variants in German, many young singers opt for a more “modern” distribution of r-variants in singing, thereby emulating spoken German. These variants comprise the dorso-uvular fricative [ʁ], the dorso-uvular trill [R], the dorso-uvular approximant [ʀ], and the vocalized [ɐ]. According to Ophaug, over 50 years ago, the famous German lied interpreter and singer Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau utilized apical trills nearly exclusively in his singing. As his career progressed, Fischer-Dieskau changed his pronunciation by introducing speech-variants in his singing more frequently, first including the vocalized [ɐ] and later including the velar/uvular approximant [ʁ]. Other sing-

ers have exhibited this trend, and among young singers today, the “speech-like pattern” of r-variants seems to be most common. Ophaug argues that the reason why the fricative has not yet been introduced to German singing might be because of its hard and “noisy” sound. Even though there are more “modern” ways of treating the /r/ in German classical singing, there are still numerous German singers who prefer the apical variant. A foreign singer performing in German will have to choose either the “old-fashioned” or the “modern” pronunciation; the “modern” pronunciation being rather challenging since it requires knowing which variant to use in certain positions (known as “combinatory variants”).

In Danish, there is no such choice regarding /r/. All /r/s in this language are back variants both in speech and in singing; there are no apical trills. This means that a Dane uses a back variant in positions in words where a German would use an apical trill (German <rot> [ro:t] (red), <bringen> [ˈbrɪŋən] (bring); Danish <rød> [ˈʁøð] (red), <bringe> [ˈbʁɛŋə] (bring)).³⁷ Hersey claims that the /r/ in Danish singing is pronounced [ʁ] and that it is uvular.³⁸ [ʁ] is the IPA symbol of a voiced uvular fricative. After listening to spoken and sung Danish, we are doubtful that this fricative is used in Danish. Danish r-sounds, both in speech and singing, sound very soft and without friction. Could it be that the Danish /r/ sounds are approximants, meaning that there is a lowering of the tongue resulting in no turbulent noise (friction)? If that is the case, a diacritic should be added to the symbol: [ʁ̠] (the [̠] symbol referring to the lowered nature of the tongue and resulting sound). This lowering symbol is used by Kohler³⁹ and Ophaug⁴⁰ in their German speech transcriptions to indicate an approximant, and as a result, Ophaug has introduced this symbol to her transcriptions of German song texts.⁴¹

German has a vocalized /r/ ([ʁ̠]), as does Danish. These sounds are similar across language boundaries and resemble a dark [ɑ]. In *Dansk Ordbog* there are two vocalized versions of /r/: [ʁ̠] and [ʁ̠̠]; the former found after long vowels in words like <mor> [mu:ʁ̠] (mother), and the latter in the <-er>-ending in the present tense as in <elsker> [ˈɛlskʁ̠̠] (loves).⁴² The difference in quality between these two sounds is not readily apparent, and perhaps the main reason to use different symbols for the Danish vocalized /r/ is a functional one: [ʁ̠̠] is used syllabically and [ʁ̠] nonsyllabically (the diacritic under

the second symbol indicates nonsyllabic function). But are two different symbols necessary? Hersey uses only the [ʁ̠] when transcribing Danish vocalized r-sounds, but uses the distinction between syllabic [ʁ̠] and nonsyllabic [ʁ̠̠].⁴³ We find her way of treating the vocalized /r/ in Danish very useful, simple, and in accordance with the German tradition with which singers are generally familiar. However, Hersey also transcribes this variant in positions where the /r/ is preceded by a short vowel and is followed by another consonant, such as <stjerne> [ˈsdjæʁ̠nə] (star), in accordance with *Dansk Ordbog* (online). The /r/ in this position in German would, according to Kohler⁴⁴ and Ophaug,⁴⁵ be an approximant: <Stern> [ʃtɛʁ̠n] (star). The approximant and the vocalized /r/ are diametrically different in regard to tongue position; the approximant involves raising the tongue, but not close enough for friction noise to be created and the vocalized /r/ involves lowering the tongue to a low vowel position (that of an [ɑ]). In our opinion, the German and the Danish r-qualities sound very similar in these positions. Would it be possible to transcribe the Danish /r/ in <stjerne> as an approximant ([ˈsdjæʁ̠nə]) rather than a vocalized /r/ as shown above? Likewise, would it be possible to transcribe the German /r/ in <Stern> as a vocalized /r/ ([ʃtɛʁ̠n]) rather than an approximant as shown above? It would, indeed, be possible; however, in order to maintain consistency in transcription across these language boundaries, the same symbol—either the vocalized /r/ or the approximant /r/—should be used for both instances.

ISSUES REGARDING VOWELS

When studying and transcribing the vowel system of a language, it is critically important to distinguish between phonemes and allophones. There can be numerous allophonic variations of a phoneme, especially in spoken language. Therefore, if one is unsure which sounds belong to a certain phoneme, it is possible to be easily confused by the IPA symbols representing the sounds. In classical singing, it is advised to stay closer to “the idea of a phoneme,” or a prototype pronunciation of a vowel phoneme; thus, the phonemes are important guidelines for singers.

The three Scandinavian languages present various vowel qualities, and the same phoneme is pronounced differently across these language boundaries. However,

TABLE 1. Danish vowels and their representation in spelling, both as phonemes and as allophonic variations (based on information in Nina Grønnum’s *Rødgrød med Fløde* [København: Akademisk Forlag, 2007], 148–151).

Spelling < >	i	i	e	e i	æ	e æ	a	a	y	y
Phonemes //	i:	i	e:	e	ɛ:	ɛ	a:	a	y:	y
Allophones []	i:	i	e: æ:	e æ	ɛ: æ:	ɛ ɒ a æ	æ: ɑ:	a ɑ	y:	y
Spelling < >	u	u	ø	ø y	ø	ø	o	o	o	o
Phonemes //	u:	u	/ø:/	/ø/	/œ:/	/œ/	/o:/	/o/	/ɔ:/	/ɔ/
Allophones []	u: ɒ:	u ɒ	ø: œ	ø ʌ	œ: œ:	œ œ œ	o:	o ɔ	ɔ: ɒ:	ʌ ɒ

TABLE 2. Norwegian vowels and their representation in spelling, both as phonemes and as allophonic variations.

Spelling < >	i e	i	e æ	e	a	a	y	y	u o	u o	ø	ø	å	å o
Phonemes //	i:	i	e:	e	a:	a	y:	y	u:	u	/ø:/	/ø/	/o:/	/o/
Allophones []	i:	i (ɪ)	e: æ:	e (ɛ)	ɑ:	ɑ	y:	y (ɣ)	u: ɒ:	u ɒ	ø:	ø	o:	o (ɔ)

because of the close relationship between these three languages, one might expect them all to be similar in the quality and number of vowel phonemes. This is true regarding Norwegian and Swedish, but less true for Danish. Danish is more complex than Norwegian and Swedish in that (as with English) the orthographic spelling does not enable predictable and certain pronunciation. Sources disagree on how many different vowels and vowel phonemes are present in Danish, but they range from eleven to thirty. Table 1 presents the vowel phonemes suggested by Grønnum, and they are listed and linked according to spelling and number of allophones.⁴⁶ This table makes apparent that there are many allophonic variations for each phoneme in Danish, as well as many spelling possibilities for each.

Norwegian and Swedish are less difficult to organize into phonemes, and the allophones in both languages are less numerous than in Danish. Norwegian and Swedish contain fourteen phonemes, and most phonemes present two allophonic variations. There is also in Norwegian and Swedish a close relationship and correspondence between the orthographic spelling and the phonemes. This is shown for Norwegian in Table 2.

A comparison of Figures 1 through 5 and the locations of each vowel quality in the vowel charts makes clear that vowels and their qualities vary across these three

languages. When choosing an IPA symbol to represent a certain vowel, it is standard procedure to select the symbol on the IPA chart that is closest to the vowel in question (see Figure 6). This means that the same symbol could be used to represent vowels that sound different across language boundaries. How is it possible to know that a particular symbol—[ɛ], for instance—represents differing sounds in different languages? To describe how a vowel is different across language boundaries in an IPA transcription, it is possible to employ diacritics to indicate that a certain vowel is slightly raised ([ɛ̟]), lowered ([ɛ̠]), advanced ([ɛ̟̟]) or retracted ([ɛ̠̠]); however, this could lead to an overload of information in the transcription. Perhaps it is preferable for the singer/reader to become familiar with a language’s vowel chart and sound tendencies. If the singer/reader is familiar with a language’s distinctive vowel qualities, she or he could determine how to alter the quality of a certain vowel in a particular language—for instance, how to distinguish the quality of a Swedish [ɛ] from its German equivalent.

The differences in quality between long and short vowel pairs are of phonetic, not phonemic, importance in the three Scandinavian languages. In singing, the value of the note will determine the duration of a vowel, and thus, the phonemic distinction between long and short vowels may be obscured. For better vowel

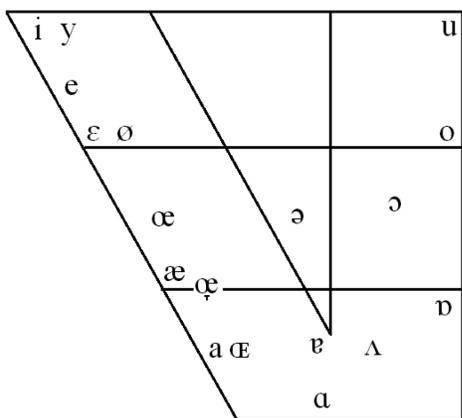


Figure 1. The Danish vowel qualities (after Nina Grønnum, *Rødgrød med Fløde* [København: Akademisk Forlag, 2007], 138).

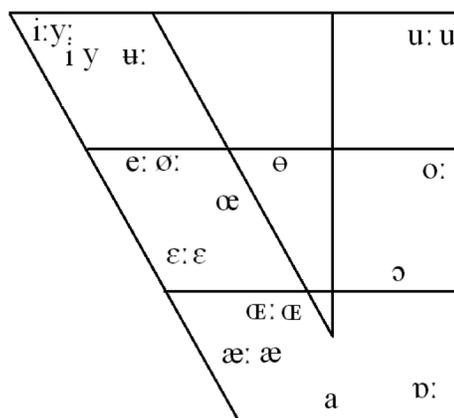


Figure 4. Swedish vowels (after Anna Christine Hersey, “Swedish Art Song. A Singer’s Handbook to Diction and Repertoire.” [Doctoral thesis. Florida: University of Miami, 2012], 18).

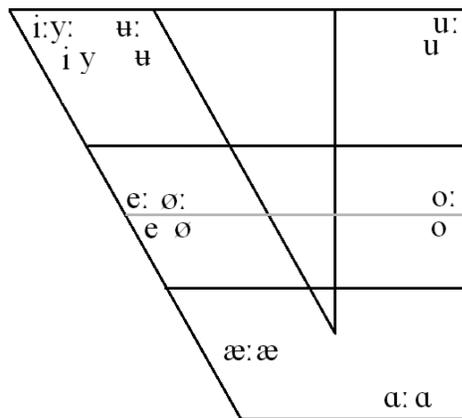


Figure 2. Norwegian vowel, version 1.

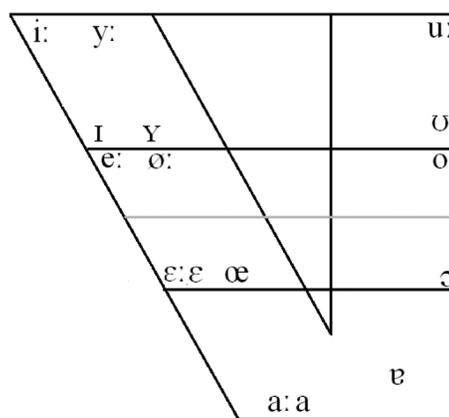


Figure 5. German vowels (after Wencke Ophaug, *Sangfonetik* [Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2010], 174).

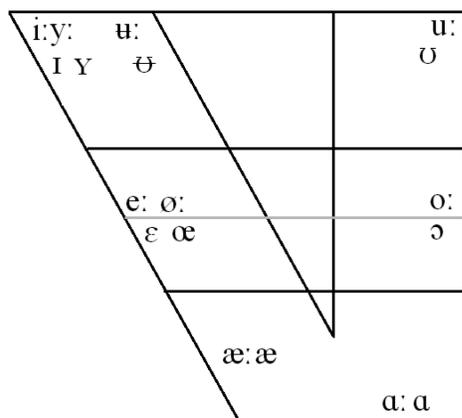


Figure 3. Norwegian vowels, version 2 (after Wencke Ophaug, *Sangfonetik* [Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2010], 175).

phoneme identification in singing and increased text intelligibility, the phonetic quality must be maintained whenever possible (this is more challenging, of course, when singing high pitches).⁴⁷ For instance, it is important to distinguish between the [e:] in <beten> (pray) and the [ɛ] in <Betten> (beds) in German, as well as the [e:] in <heta> [ˈhe:ta] (to be called) and the [ɛ] in <hetta> [ˈhet:a] (heat) in Swedish.

Norwegian, as compared to German and Swedish, contains fewer differences in phonetic quality between the long and the corresponding short vowels. Two vowel charts for Norwegian—version 1 and version 2 (Figures 2 and 3)—are presented in this article. In both versions, the location of the vowels is the same, but the IPA sym-

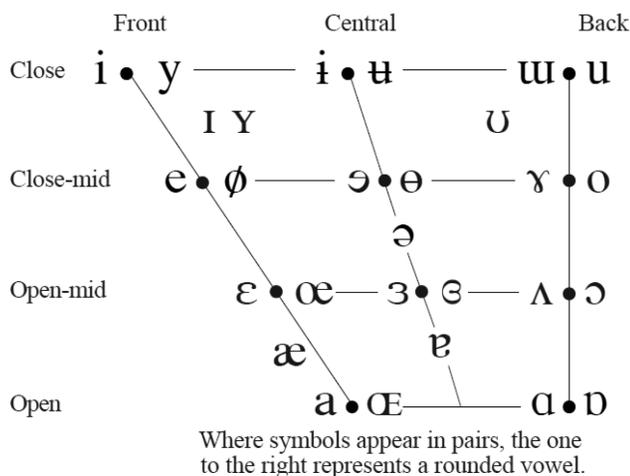


Figure 6. The official IPA vowel chart.

bols for short vowels differ. Because the difference in quality of the initial /e/ vowel in words such as <lete> [ˈle:tə] (search) and <lette> [ˈlet:ə] (light, opposite of heavy) in Norwegian is not audible, is it better to transcribe the initial /e/ in both words with the same symbol and only mark the difference in length ([e:] [e] or [ɛ:] [ɛ])? Ophaug argues that it is useful in singing to make a more significant quality distinction between the long and the short vowels than is present in speech to bring about clearer vowel identification (short versus long) on notes with longer duration.⁴⁸ She therefore chooses to transcribe all vowel pairs, both long and short, with different IPA symbols as is done frequently in German.

Danish presents the most challenges when choosing symbols to represent vowel sounds. The Danish symbols are shifted farther forward on the vowel chart than those of Norwegian and Swedish, and this is particularly apparent when comparing the upper left portion of the vowel charts. Schachtenhaufen and Thaysen explain that this is a result of increased vowel phonemes and far more allophonic variations in Danish; therefore, there are not enough IPA symbols provided by the International Phonetic Association to indicate every distinctive Danish vowel sound.⁴⁹ Simplifying the transcription of Danish for singing poses a significant challenge, given these many vowel phonemes and allophonic variations.

Since issues regarding vowels could serve as the subject of an entire article, only a select few will be presented here.

Vowel Lowering in the /r/-Neighborhood

Vowels are often lowered when followed by /r/. This is found in German in words like <Herz> (heart) and <Herr> (mister), in which the short [ɛ] has a somewhat lower tongue position than in the German word <Bett>. Before /r/ the e-sound resembles [æ] in German, yet there is no tradition to transcribe the sound with this vowel symbol.

In Norwegian, the short e-sound is clearly lowered before /r/. The Norwegian words <herre> (lord) and <kjerre> (wagon) are transcribed with [æ], and in the word <være> (be), the long /æ:/ reflects the orthographic spelling (this is also found in Swedish, except instead of <æ> the letter <ä> is used). In Swedish, the <ö>-vowel is also lowered before /r/, resulting in three variations in vowel quality: [ø], [œ], and [ɕ]; examples of words include: <söt> [sø:t] (sweet), <sött> [sœ:t] (sweet, neutral gender), and <öra> [ˈœ:ra] (ear).

In Danish, the lowering of vowels in connection with /r/ is more complicated. Briefly, most non-high vowels are more open before and/or after /r/.⁵⁰ In Table 1, all bold allophone symbols refer to a pronunciation of an /r/ phoneme in the direct neighborhood of the vowel (meaning the /r/ phoneme precedes or follows the vowel). To present the Danish vowel system here would require far too much space, but it is a topic for further exploration and publication.

Is it possible to form a system of transcribing all the vowels in the three Scandinavian languages, in which one symbol could represent the same vowel quality across language boundaries? If the same symbol is used across language boundaries, should differences in quality between the languages be shown via diacritics? How can the author of a transcription assist the reader in identifying the phoneme behind a special allophonic pronunciation (for instance, the Danish word <brik>, in which the spelled vowel <i> corresponds to the phoneme /e/ but is pronounced with the allophone [æ]: [bʁæŋ] (piece)?⁵¹ Using footnoted explanations and employing some diacritics in the transcription can aid in further defining specific vowel sounds across language boundaries. In many cases, and especially in Danish, such clarification would be of great help to non-native singers.

The Special Case of /y/

According to the IPA system, a rounded counterpart of /i:/ will be transcribed /y:/ (or as short variants: [ɪ] and

[y]). Interestingly, the rounded vowels sound similar in German and Danish.

In Swedish and Norwegian there are two rounded vowels located in the same area in the vowel chart (upper front); /y:/ is more fronted than /ʉ:/, and the short variants of each are /ʏ/ and /ʊ/, respectively. These vowels need to be distinguished from each other since they represent two different phonemes and differ in quality. It is customary in the IPA system to select the /y/-symbol for the more fronted variant and the /ʉ/-symbol for the darker-sounding, more centralized variant. Though the same symbol is used for the Danish and German /y/ and the Norwegian and Swedish /y/, these vowels do not sound the same. In Danish and German, this vowel symbol is associated with a lip posture called “in-rounding” (lips protruded along a horizontal line), and in Norwegian and Swedish, this symbol is associated with a lip posture called “out-rounding” (lips protruded; upper lip pointing upwards and lower lip pointing downwards). On the other hand, an examination of the /ʉ/-quality in Norwegian and Swedish reveals that this symbol is associated with the same lip posture (“in-rounding”) as the German and the Danish /y/. Therefore, the lip posture is the most important feature differentiating these qualities. Because the Danish and German /y/ has the same lip position as the Swedish and Norwegian /ʉ/, the sounds are rather similar, and non-native singers should be made aware of this fact so as not to pronounce the /y/ in Norwegian and Swedish as one would in German and Danish. The /y/ in Swedish and Norwegian is an unfamiliar sound to non-natives. In some diction books, the /y/ in Norwegian and Swedish has been presented as equivalent to the German /y/, while the /ʉ/ has been identified as the unfamiliar, more exotic, variant; rather, it is the other way around.

Dark and Bright /a/

While German has a somewhat fronted, bright /a/ ([a]), as in the words <Tag> [ta:k] (day) and <Nacht> [naxt] (night), Norwegian has a darker sounding /a/ ([ɑ]), as in the corresponding words <dag> [dɑ:g] and <natt> [nat:].

In Swedish, on the other hand, there are both dark (back) and bright (front) variants: the darker quality when the vowel is long and the brighter variant when the vowel is short (dark: <dag> [dɑ:g]; bright: <natt>

[nat:].). It is important that IPA transcriptions reflect these differences. It may also be argued that the Swedish dark /a/ is somewhat darker than the Norwegian /a/, and that the symbol [ɒ] would be more appropriate: <dag> [dɒ:g]. Hersey uses this symbol, as does Roland-Silverstein, while Ophaug does not. Utilizing these different symbols to distinguish between the Norwegian and the Swedish dark /a/ sounds is preferred since there is a clear difference in degrees of “darkness.” That being said, it is important not to confuse the /ɒ:/ vowel phoneme with /o:/, so one can make clear the difference between <har> [hɒ:r] (has) and <hår> [ho:r] (hair).

In Danish, the pronunciation of the /a/ vowel is much less predictable, not only because there are more allophonic variations to this phoneme, but also because the /ɛ/ phoneme and /a/ phoneme can share the same allophones. The long phoneme /a:/ can be pronounced [ɑ:] before and after /r/ in words like <bare> ['bɑ:ɾɑ] (to bare) and <race> ['ɾɑ:sə] (race), or [æ:] in words like <bad> [bʌ:ð] (bath). The short phoneme /a/ can be pronounced [a] before or after /r/, as in words like <rat> [ɾat] (steering wheel) and <park> [paŋ] (park), or as [a] in words like <kat> [kaɔ] (cat).⁵²

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present article is to explore certain challenges that singers, diction pedagogues, and phoneticians encounter when studying the pronunciation and IPA transcription of Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish in speaking and singing. The process of systemizing and simplifying IPA transcriptions is arduous, and cooperation among singers, diction pedagogues, and phoneticians is necessary for a comprehensive and useful result. If only phoneticians were to provide IPA transcriptions for singers, transcriptions could be too meticulously detailed, while the opposite could be true if only diction pedagogues were to provide IPA transcriptions. Either case could result in confusion for the singer. Collaboration between these related disciplines results in more thorough and thoughtful problem solving and, ultimately, makes these languages and repertoire more accessible via concise and comprehensible IPA transcriptions.

Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish are closely related languages, but each possesses distinctive characteristics and obscurities. By comparing the three languages, we discover not only their similarities, but also their

unique differences. Scandinavian vocal music deserves a significant place in the repertoire and awaits discovery by audiences worldwide. Our mission is to further the development of the Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish IPA transcription system and to enable singers all over the world to perform and share this profoundly moving Nordic repertoire.

NOTES

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- Håkan Hagegård is a famous Swedish baritone singer.
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- Wencke Ophaug, “The Challenge of Identifying Vowel Phonemes in Singing, in Teresa Proto, Paolo Canettieri, and Gianluca Valenti, eds., *Proceedings of the Conference on Music, Metrics and Mind* [working title] (Berlin/New York: Peter Lang).
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A native of Appleton, Wisconsin, **Alisa Jordheim** completed her first two years of undergraduate study at Lawrence University and earned her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). She recently completed all requirements for the DMA in voice at CCM with a cognate field of Scandinavian song and diction. Ms. Jordheim was awarded grants from the Fulbright Foundation and the American Scandinavian Foundation for study and research in Scandinavia for the 2013-2014 academic year and was a guest researcher at the University of Oslo during her residency. Described as “vocally resplendent,” “powerful,” and possessing “impeccable coloratura” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2013), Ms. Jordheim is praised for her compelling and vocally assured performances in opera, oratorio, art song, and music theater. She maintains an active performing career while continuing her research and teaching of Scandinavian song and diction.

Wencke Ophaug has had a full time position as an associate professor at the University of Oslo, Norway since 1999, where she teaches German grammar and German phonetics. In addition she has had part time employment at the Norwegian Academy of Music for twenty years and at the Academy of Art, Opera Department, Oslo, for the last six years, teaching general phonetics and German phonetics to students of singing. She holds a PhD in phonetics of singing (1999). She has published a number of articles on diverse topics on pronunciation in classical singing, and her latest achievement is a textbook on the phonetics of singing, just published (*Sangfonetik*, 2010). Ophaug also often works closely together with singers, supervising their pronunciation (Norwegian, German) on CD recordings.

Sweet sounds, o, beautiful music, do not cease!
Reject me not into the world again.
With you alone is excellence and peace,
Mankind made plausible, his purpose plain.
Enchanted in your air benign and shrewd,
With limbs a-sprawl and empty faces pale,
The spiteful and the stingy and the rude
Sleep like the scullions in the fairy-tale.
This moment is the best the world can give:
The tranquil blossom on the tortured stem.
Reject me not, sweet sounds! oh, let me live,
Till Doom espy my towers and scatter them.
A city spell-bound under the aging sun,
Music my rampart, and my only one.

“On Hearing a Symphony of Beethoven,”
Edna St. Vincent Millay

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