

Spanish Transcriptions & Translations

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) Castilian transcriptions used on this site correspond in the most part with Nico Castel's *A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction* (Castel, Nico. *A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction*. New York: Excalibur Pub, 1994.) Sadly, this excellent resource, selling for just \$15.95 just a few years ago, is out of print.

Joaquín Rodrigo, like other Spanish composers, was drawn to the poetry found in the great cancioneros (song books) of the Renaissance period. Timothy McGee's *Singing Early Music* was indispensable to my work for transcribing these ancient texts. (McGee, Timothy J., A. G. Rigg, and David N. Klausner. *Singing Early Music: The Pronunciation of European Languages in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.)

Latin American IPA transcriptions were created with the "Spanish Diction for Singers" guide by Arden Hopkin, published in Kathleen Wilson's *The Art Song in Latin America*. (Wilson, Kathleen L., et al. *The Art Song in Latin America: Selected Works by Twentieth-Century Composers*. Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1998.)

Translation aids include the following resources:

Galimberti Jarman, Beatriz, Roy Russell, Carol Styles Carvajal, and Jane Horwood. *The Oxford Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English/English-Spanish*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

García-Pelayo y Gross, Ramón, and Micheline Durand. *Gran Diccionario Moderno Larousse: Español/Inglés, English/Spanish*. Marsella, México: Ediciones Larousse, 1984.

Harper Collins Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English, English-Spanish. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998.

Castillo, Carlos, Otto Ferdinand Bond, David A. Pharies, María Irene Moyna, and Gary K. Baker. *The University of Chicago Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English, English-Spanish*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

An excellent online resource is Spanish Dict at <http://www.spanishdict.com/>

Differences between Castilian (SES [Standard European Spanish]) and Latin American (SAS [Standard American Spanish])

Vowels

The open and closed –e and –o

Nico Castel in his *A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction* uses only the open [ɛ] and [ɔ] in Castilian diction (SES). This transcriber follows his example, as in:

Corazón	[kɔ.ra.'θɔn]
Tengo	['tɛŋ.ɔ]
Esperanza	[ɛs.pe.'ran.θa]

In Latin American diction (SAS), Arden Hopkin in his "Spanish Diction for Singers" uses both open and closed vowels ([ɔ] [ɛ] and [o] [e]). Hopkin writes:

A(n) **open** syllable ends in a vowel, while a **closed** syllable ends in a consonant. The distinction between open and closed may affect the pronunciation of the **e** and **o** vowels in such syllables...

...In open syllables, use the long **e** [e]; in closed syllables, use the short **e** [ɛ].
In open syllables, use the long **o** closed [o]; in closed syllables, use the short **o** [ɔ]... (p.10)

...[e] and [o] are used “in all open syllables except when the **e** or **o** combines with a trilled **r**. These vowels also occur in closed syllables ending in **d**, **m**, **n**, or **s**... (p. 12, 13)

Corazón	[ko.ra.'son]
Tengo	['teŋ.go]
Esperanza	[es.pe.'ran.sa]

Other vowels

[a], [i], and [u] are pronounced similarly in SAS and SES.

Consonant differences between Castilian and Latin American Spanish

Ceceo and Seceo

When Castilian Spanish left the motherland for the “New World,” some pronunciation changes evolved just as British English underwent changes in the American and Australian colonies. *Ceceo* [θɛ.'θɛ.ɔ] (the soft lisp sound associated with SES), for example, occurs when **c** is followed by **e** or **i** as in *gracias* ['gra.θjas]. Also in SES, the letter **z**, except when followed by a voiced consonant in a word or word group, is also pronounced as [θ] as in *zapato* [θa.'pa.tɔ].

In SAS, *seseo* [se.'se.o] is the standard pronunciation as in *gracias* ['gra.sjas]. The letter **z** is always voiceless [s] as in *zapato* [sa.'pa.to].

Lleísmo and yeísmo

Lleísmo [ʎɛ.'iz.mɔ] and *yeísmo* [dʒɛ.'iz.mo] refer to the pronunciation of the digram **ll** (the *el/ye*) in Spanish in words such as *llama* or *llorar*. In SES *lleísmo*, the digram **ll** is pronounced as [ʎ], as in *yes*.

Llama	['ʎa.ma]
Llorar	[ʎɔ.'rar]

A minority of transcribers use [lj] for this symbol. Joan Wall in *Diction for Singers* (Wall, Joan. *Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French, and Spanish Pronunciation*. Dallas: Pst, 1990.) states that both [ʎ] and [lj] are acceptable pronunciations. (p. 242)

In SAS, an initial ll is pronounced as [dʒ] as in gentle. If initial in a word group, the pronunciation is:

Llama	[^l dʒa.ma]
Llorar	[dʒo.'rar]

Within a word or word group, this double consonant in SAS is transcribed as [ʃ] and is pronounced with a slightly more tensed tongue than [ʎ]. The pronunciation is:

Llama	[^l ʃa.ma]
Llorar	[ʃo.'rar]

Other differences in SAS and SES

	SES	SAS
c before e, i	[θ] (<u>th</u> ank)	[s] (<u>c</u> ertain)
g before e, i	[x] (Ba <u>ch</u>)	[ç] (<u>h</u> uge)
j	[x] (Ba <u>ch</u>)	[ç] (<u>h</u> uge) before e, i [x] (Ba <u>ch</u>) before a, o, u
ll	[ʎ] (<u>y</u> es) always	[dʒ] (<u>g</u> entle) at beginning of phrase [ʃ] (slightly more tense than [ʎ]) within a phrase
n + f	[ŋ] (similar to <u>si</u> ng with m, not n)	[nf] as in <u>e</u> nfant
y if initial	[j] (<u>y</u> es)	[dʒ] (<u>g</u> entle)
y if interior	[j] (<u>y</u> es)	[ʃ] (slightly more tense than [ʎ])
y + n, l	[dʒ] (<u>g</u> entle)	[dʒ] (<u>g</u> entle)
y as a conjunction	[i]	[i]
y as a glide	[j]	[j]
z if initial	[θ] (<u>th</u> ank)	[s] (<u>c</u> ent)
z if interior or final	[θ] (<u>th</u> ank)	[s] (<u>c</u> ent)
z + voiced consonant	[z] (<u>e</u> ase)	[s] (<u>c</u> ent)

Other considerations

Ladino, the fossilized language of the Sephardic Jews forced into exile from Spain in the late fifteenth century, maintains the soft interior consonants of [β], [ð], and [ɣ]. The letters c and g before e and i are always [s] and [dʒ] respectively. The letter j is pronounced [dʒ]. The double consonant ll is pronounced [j], as in some parts of South America. The letter s is always voiced [z] except when initial in a word group. The letter z is [z], never [θ]. The letter x is always [ʃ] and, unlike SES, the letter v is always [v], never [β].

Differences in Spanish pronunciation in North and South America, the Caribbean islands, and Central America are not included here as these differences are outside the scope of this project. Just as there are many dialects spoken in peninsular Spain, there are many more grammatical and pronunciation variables in the vast land masses of Latin America.

Vernacular pronunciation, an entirely different issue, is generally avoided in art song repertoire.

Books and resources for Spanish diction

Harper Collins Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English, English-Spanish. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998.

Castillo, Carlos, Otto Ferdinand Bond, David A. Pharies, María Irene Moyna, and Gary K. Baker. The University of Chicago Spanish Dictionary: Spanish-English, English-Spanish. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Wilson, Kathleen L., et al. The Art Song in Latin America: Selected Works by Twentieth-Century Composers. Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1998.

Castel, Nico. A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction. New York: Excalibur Pub, 1994.

Wall, Joan. Diction for Singers: A Concise Reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French, and Spanish Pronunciation. Dallas: Pst, 1990.

(Literal translation and IPA transcription © by Suzanne Rhodes Draayer–IPA Source, LLC)