

**Singing Early Music: The Pronunciation of European Languages in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance.** Edited by Timothy J. McGee, with A.G. Rigg and David N. Klausner. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. 320 p., 1 compact disc. \$49.95 U.S. ISBN 0-253-32961-2.

*Singing Early Music* is a comprehensive, valuable resource for any collection that supports both teachers, performers and scholars of medieval and renaissance vocal music. Although they do not claim to be the definitive authority on every issue surrounding historical pronunciation, the editors address the interests of historically-informed performers, guiding them through a wide scope of geographical areas and linguistic groups and providing informed recommendations for pronunciation where evidence is blurred or uneven and current scholarship is non-committal.

Each chapter is submitted by an author specializing in a particular region or language and the book divides into five geographical parts with historical linguistic groupings comprising the individual chapters:

Britain: English, 16th-century Scots, Anglo-Latin;  
France: Old French, French Latin, Occitan;  
Iberia: Catalan, Spanish, Spanish Latin, Galician Portuguese, Portuguese Latin;  
Italy: Italian, Italian Latin;  
Germany and the Low Countries: Middle High German, Late Medieval German, and New High German, German Latin, Flemish (Dutch) and Netherlands Latin.

The separate treatment of Latin divided regionally and over the past 1,000 years is of special interest, according to Alison Wray (*Early Music*, 25:1 (Feb. 1997): 133-34), previously having been addressed only in specialized books on historical linguistics such as M.K. Pope's *From Latin to Modern*

*French* (Manchester, rev.ed., 1952) for French and E.J. Dobson's *English Pronunciation, 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1968) for English. Bibliographic materials include modern and historical sources; these are collected at the ends of sections over the course of each chapter.

The editors' decision to adopt the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is an important one with implications for most music scholars and singers who rarely encounter this linguistic tool in singing handbooks. Editor and chapter contributor David Klausner has made a CD recording included with the book that offers consistent phonetic examples across the range of languages covered. Although the delivery is somewhat fast for the novice, use of the CD in combination with the introductory chapter is intended to provide a practical understanding of phonetics that can be applied to the didactic examples in later chapters. (Libraries that purchase this book should be aware that users will need audio support in a designated area where their attempts to match symbol accurately to sound will be tolerated by others.)

Once a fluency with the IPA system is achieved, vocal teachers and students will undoubtedly revisit this book and dip into the different chapters as they explore the many repertoires that *Singing Early Music* illuminates.

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