

German pronunciation guide – for St Matthew Passion

Vowels

ä (as in 'ärgern') = /eh/ (wider mouth position – like the vowel sound in 'air')

e (as in 'wen') = /ay/ (/v-ayn/)

ei (as in 'frei') = /eye/

ie (as in 'wie') = /ee/

ö (as in Töchter) = /uh/ (drop lower lip, forward 'rounded' vowel sound) – this is like the /er/ sound in the English word 'her'.

ü (as in für) = longer /ooh/ sound. Lips pushed forwards (like a fish!) – The basic premise of this is your mouth and tongue are in the position for the /ee/ sound, but your lips are rounded.

Consonants

/ch/ - pronounced (mostly) like a short cat's hiss – often at the back of the throat. Like the sound at the beginning of the word 'human'.

/s/ - at the beginning of words (as in 'seht') = more of a /z/ sound.

/s/ - unless at the beginning = more of a /ts/ sound.

ß (Scharfes Ess – double s) - /ss/

Qu (as in Quell) – always a /kv/ sound – eg. Quellen = /kvel-en/

/v/ - always a /f/ sound - eg: Volk = /fol-k/

words beginning with 'ver-' – /v/ sounds more like an /f/ = /fair-/

Other words of note

Angst - /**ank**-st/

Aufbruch - /**owf**-roo-uh/

b'hüte – less stress on the /b/ – focus on the /h/ (like a breath out) = /p-**hoo**-tuh/

befiehl - /buh-**feel**/

bin's - /**bin**-s/

Blitze - /**bli**-ts-uh/

Blut - /**bloo**-t/ - small mouth, relatively relaxed.

Bräutigam - /**broi**-ti-gam/

büßen - /**booh**-sen/ - lips pushed forwards (like a fish!)

daß – long /ah/ sound (like you're relaxing in a hot bath) = /**dah**-s/

dem - /**day**-m/

den – /**day**-n/

den'n – (short for denen) - /**day**-n/

denn - /**den**/

drum - /**druhm**/ (roll the /r/!)

erduldet – /er-**doohl**-det/

für - /**fooh**-er/ (like you are saying “ooh err”!)

Fuß – /**foohs**/

G'dicht - /**g[d]**icht/ (the /g/ and the /d/ sound run together, but as we are singing it on one note, best to focus on the /g/ sound.)

Geduld - /geh-**dool**-d/

gegrüßet - /geh-**grooh**-set/

hätte - /**het**-uh/

Herr - /**hairrr**/ (roll the /r/!)

Herzliebste - /herts-**leeb**-stuh/

höchst - /**hurch**-st/

Holz - /**hol**-ts/

Huld - /**hoold**/

ich's - /**ichs**/

ihn – long /ee/ sound = /**een**/

Jesu – /**yey**-soo/

Judenkönig - /**yoo**-den-kuh-nig/

Knechte - /**knech**-tuh/ (the /k/ and the /n/ sound are squashed together)

Kreuz - /**krroi**-ts/ (roll the /r/!)

Lamm – longer /ah/ sound = /**lah**-m/

laßt - /**lasst**/

mancher - /**man**-chair/

mögen - /**mur**-gun/

Nacht - /**nah**-cht/

plötzlicher - /**plurts**-lich-ur/

schönste - /**shurn**-stuh/

Schuld - /**shoold**/

schuldig - /**shool**-dig/

Seelen - /**zayl**-un/

sehet - /**zay**-et/

seht - /**zayt**/

stehlen - /**shtay**-len/

suchen - /**zoo**-chun/

Sünden - /**zooun**-den/

Todesstoß - /**toh**-dus-shtos/

übel - /**oouh**-bel/ (lips rounded and out)

unsre - /**uhnz**-reh/

Ursach - /**ooer**-zach/

Urteil - /**ooer**-tile/

Veräter - /feh-**ray**-tair/

vergnügt - /fer-**knoo**-kt/ (both instances of the /g/ sound are squashed together with the following /n/ and /t/ sounds.)

verschwunden - /fair-**shvun**-den/

Volk - /**fol**-k/ (unlike in English – pronounce the /l/)

von - /**fon**/

was - /**vas**/

Weibern - /**vai**-bearn/

wen - /**veyn**/

wie - /**vee**/

wohin - /voh-**hin**/

Wolken - /**vol**-ken/

wozu - /voh-**tsoo**/

Wut - /**vocht**/

zerschelle - /tsair-**shell**-uh/

zertrümmre - /tsair-**troom**-ruh/

zu - /**tsoo**/

If you have any questions, feel free to drop me an email at: lorenfaye97@gmail.com.

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