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The Many Facets of Madeleine Marshall: A Historical and Cultural Perspective of Madeleine "Graham Jones" Marshall Simon (1899–1993), Author of *The Singer's Manual of English Diction*

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Abstract

Madeleine Marshall Simon (1899–1993), a pianist turned vocal coach, enjoyed wide acclaim as an expert in English diction through her teaching career at The Juilliard School (1935–1986) and particularly after publication of her book, *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* (first published in 1953). By means of primary source materials, including an early version of her textbook containing her handwritten notes, personal correspondence from her time at Juilliard, and a handwritten phonetic transcription for Lily Pons, this historical investigation explores Marshall's life and career with specific attention to the cultural and professional contexts that informed her work. The argument advanced is that *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* endured due to Marshall's social and professional connections coupled with her comprehensive knowledge of the subject of diction.

Keywords

Madeleine Marshall, English diction, diction textbook, The Juilliard School of Music

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The capacity audience at the Metropolitan Opera's Performance on May 24, 1936, "roared approval" of a new English translation of F. Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* by Graham Jones. Jones, librettist, replaced Kecal's line "I have a honey with lots of money" with "I know a honey with lots of money, I have a tootsie, sweet tootsie, wootsie." The singers had also been coached to enunciate the new libretto with clarity and intelligibility.[1]

"Graham Jones" was Madeleine Marshall (1899-1993), a pianist, vocal coach and recently hired diction teacher at the Juilliard School of Music (see figure 1). Marshall chose the pseudonym after staring at a box of crackers. In 1951 she authored one of the most enduring books ever published on English diction.

Figure 1. Madeleine Marshall's publicity photograph, courtesy of Juilliard School Archives.

This historical investigation tells the story of the genesis of Marshall's book, the *Singer's Manual of English Diction* by examining the historical, cultural and professional factors that contributed to Marshall's career, and two other English diction books, *English Diction for Song and Speech* by Clara Kathleen Rogers and *English Diction for Singers and Speakers* by Louis Arthur Russell, both in use when Marshall's book was published. By so doing, this investigation advances the argument that while Marshall's social and professional connections assisted in making the publication of the *Singer's Manual of English Diction* possible, the textbook has endured due to Marshall's expertise and ability to present a set of guidelines that "[produced] a standard of English intelligible to any audience."[2]

Marshall's Early Life

Madeleine Marshall was born October 26, 1899 in Syracuse, New York into an affluent and socially prominent Jewish family. Madeleine's mother, Ida Strauss Marshall (1873-1951), was a first-

[1] Article, "Bartered Bride Repeated," *New York Times,* May 24, 1936.

[2] Madeleine Marshall. *The Singer's Manual of English Diction*. Boston, MA: Schirmer, 1951.

generation American, born and raised in New York City. Ida's father immigrated to the United States from Germany and her mother hailed from Alsace-Lorraine, France.[3]

Benjamin Marshall (1873-1911), Madeleine's father, was the son of Jewish immigrant parents and grew up in Syracuse, New York. The failed revolutionary movement of 1848 provided the impetus for Benjamin's father to leave Germany and settle in New York City. Later he moved to Syracuse, New York, where he met his future wife. As a rapidly growing manufacturing, transportation and financial hub in the 1840s, Syracuse provided Benjamin's father with an opportunity to start what became a very prosperous hide, fur and leather business.[4]

Benjamin's siblings included one older brother and four younger sisters. Benjamin learned to speak German first, which he spoke exclusively to his mother. His brother Louis (1856-1929) moved to New York City and became a renowned constitutional lawyer and defender of Jewish and minority rights. Benjamin remained in Syracuse and became a partner in his father's company, Jacob Marshall & Son. The Marshall family maintained a strong presence in the Syracuse Community through Benjamin's business affairs and Ida's community involvement.[5]

Ida Marshall's activities included her role as a director of the Council of Jewish Women, leading a chorus at the Jewish Communal Home, and volunteering at the Goodyear-Burlingame School.[6] After the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment granting women's voting rights in 1920, the Republican Committee elected her as one of the first women delegates to the Republican unofficial State convention in New York City.[7]

The Marshalls parented two children, Madeleine and her younger sister Helen (1902-2001), both recipients of benefits inherent to a wealthy family.[8] The Marshall family employed two live-in servants (Helen Yuschewitz and Agnes Kennedy), and provided their daughters with a private education and music lessons.[9] Madeleine and Helen attended the Goodyear-Burlingame School for Boys and Girls, a private school in Syracuse known for its good college placement record (figure 2). A school brochure from 1911 listed the school's goals as providing routine knowledge and awakening students' minds to broad culture through systematic guidance. The school curriculum considered mind and body equally important. Students completed courses in geography, gymnastics, articulation, diction, and lessons in German and French. A laboratory with plants and animal life provided an active learning environment for the sciences. Known for its high standards, the French senior proficiency examination required students to present a play spoken entirely in French.[10]

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[3] United States Census Bureau, 1900 Census, Syracuse, New York.

[4] Adler, Cyrus, "Louis Marshall: A Biographical Sketch," *American Jewish Year Book, 1930-31, p. 21.*

[5] Article "Impressive Services At Marshall Home, A Gift to Societies," *Post-Standard, Syracuse,* November 25, 1910.

[6] Articles, "Jewish Women Elect Officers for Year," *Syracuse Herald*, May 6, 1919, "Outline Plans for Community Choruses Here," *Syracuse Herald Sun*, April 1, 1917.

[7] Article, "Onondaga G.O.P. Elects Ten Women Delegates to State Convention," *Syracuse Herald Sun,* February 8, 1920.

[8] United States Census Bureau, 1900 and 1910 Census, Syracuse, New York.

[9] John Simon, son of Madeleine Marshall, interview by author, New York City, NY, March 22, 2012.

[10] http://www.mph.net/alumni/goodyear (accessed April 23, 2012).

Figure 2. Photograph of The Goodyear - Burlingame School for Boys and Girls, from *The Triangle*, 1948, courtesy of Manlius Pebble Hill School.

The Marshalls supplemented their daughters' French language education by inviting a native French-speaking teacher to dine with the family once a week, speaking only in French. Madeleine loved "all things French" and her predilection for both the French language and its people evolved from her exposure to the French language both at school and at home.[11] The two sisters spoke French fluently. Madeleine conversed in German as well.

The nature of the Marshall family changed abruptly in 1911 when Benjamin Marshall fell seriously ill at the age of fifty-one. He passed away a year later from a cerebral hemorrhage, leaving his wife Ida to raise the two young girls herself. His obituary described Benjamin as "kind, affable and as square as a die-one whose smile was always as radiant as his hand-grip was cordial."[12]

Education remained a constant focus in the Marshall sisters' lives even after the death of their father. Both girls took weekly piano lessons, and Madeleine's talent soon became evident. Records from Syracuse University list her first enrollment date as 1912, presumably to take piano lessons. Madeleine first performed in public at the age of eleven years when she provided piano accompaniment at a service commemorating the donation of her grandparents' home to the Council of Jewish Women and the Young Men's Hebrew Association.[13]

Madeleine's private education with courses in articulation, diction and foreign language, combined with private French instruction and piano lessons, provided Madeleine with a solid basis for her future career. The Marshall family's wealth and status made these opportunities available and helped set the stage for Madeleine's future successes.

[11] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

[12] Obituary of Benjamin Marshall, *Syracuse Herald*, September 14, 1911.

[13] Article "Impressive Services At Marshall Home, A Gift to Societies," *Post-Standard, Syracuse,* November 25, 1910.

While Madeleine showed promise at the piano, her sister Helen blossomed as a singer. Helen adopted the stage name, "Wendy Marshall The Toy Lady." As a children's entertainer, she performed throughout New York City, often accompanied on the piano by her sister, Madeleine. Helen's success and acclaim resulted in an invitation to the White House in 1933 to entertain Sistie and Buzzie Dall, grandchildren of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.[14] Helen, aka The Toy Lady, dressed in costume (figure 3). She sang children's songs while depicting twenty different storybook characters. Madeleine provided accompaniment on a gold piano. The successful event earned the two sisters a return trip to the White House 1936 for a repeat performance.[15]

Figure 3. Newspaper Photograph of "Wendy Marshall The Toy Lady" from the *Syracuse Herald*, December 29, 1933.

Professional Training

Madeleine began full-time collegiate music studies at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York in 1916. Less than seven percent of the female population attended college at that time.[16] Upon her graduation in 1919, Madeleine received the Music Departments' First Prize Award. The award entitled

[14] Article, " 'Toy Lady,' Former Syracuse Student, Gives Program for 60 Children," *Syracuse Herald*, December 29, 1933.

[15] Article, "Former Syracusan Will Help Entertain Roosevelt Grandchildren on Christmas," *Syracuse Herald*, December 24, 1936.

[16] "Women of Courage Profiles," St. Lawrence County, New York Branch of the American Association of University Women, 1989.

Madeleine to a year's postgraduate work in the College of Fine Arts. In addition, she received an all around scholarship for the highest general grade point average in the music department. While at Syracuse, Marshall's primary interest was piano and she was a student of Alfred Goodwin. She also studied organ with Harry L. Vibbard.[17] She studied with pianist Ernest Hutcheson, who later became Dean and then, in 1937, President of the Juilliard School of Music (see figure 4).[18] Madeleine continued her interest in the French language, performing a role in a play acted in French by the *Cercle France Amèrique* in "*Touts Arrange.*"[19]

Madeleine on the Move

After Madeleine's graduation in 1919, she remained in Syracuse until 1922 when she and her family moved to New York City. Several factors probably contributed to the family's decision to relocate, including Madeleine's boredom with the Syracuse music scene and her desire to take advantage of the musical opportunities offered in a larger city. Due to her father's death eleven years prior, no family business interests kept the Marshall family in Syracuse. Madeleine's mother, Ida, may have felt it was time to move on. Ida's sister, Stella Loewenthal, had recently lost her husband and their mother, Rose Strauss, also a widow, already resided with the Marshalls in Syracuse. The three widowed women decided to combine households and moved to 41 West 89th Street in New York City. It proved to be a fortuitous move for Madeleine, both personally and professionally.[20]

Madeleine Meets Robert

Robert A. Simon (1897-1981), a young man of moderately wealthy Jewish background, lived with his family at 57 West 89th Street, about one block away from the residence of Madeleine and her family. Madeleine and Robert met on West Eighty-ninth Street.[21] *The New York Times* announced their engagement on February 18, 1924.[22] The couple wanted a simple civil ceremony at the courthouse, but Madeleine's aunt and grandmother had other ideas. They promised Madeleine a 6' 4" Steinway Grand Piano if they were to have a formal wedding. The offer proved too good to pass up, especially for a concert pianist, and Madeleine and Robert married later that year in a ceremony held in the Marshall home on Eighty-ninth Street.[23] The couple had two children, John G. Simon (b.1928) and Peggy Simon Traktman (1932-2000).

The marriage of Robert and Madeleine united them not only as husband and wife, but also merged two influential and talented families. Robert's background was similar to Marshall's, in that he too was from a well-to-do, widely acquainted Jewish family. Simon's grandparents were German, having

[17] Madeleine Marshall, Biographical Information, Juilliard School of Music, Dec. 8, 1952.

[18] Madeleine Marshall, Personal Information from Juilliard School of Music, October 28, 1943.

[19] Article, "Cercle France Amerique Meeting," *Syracuse Herald,* April 22, 1918.

[20] Simon Interviews, March 20, 2012.

[21] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

[22] *New York Times*, February 18, 1924.

[23] *New York Times*, February 18, 1924.

immigrated to the United States in the late 19th century. His family employed live-in help, including a German nanny who raised him and taught him his first language, German. Simon graduated from Columbia University, where he won an award in journalism as an undergraduate student. He worked in the broadcast department of the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency where he wrote broadcast scripts and record liner notes for several clients, including RCA. Later, he joined WOR-AM Radio, part of the Mutual Broadcasting System where he worked as the Continuity Editor.[24] He excelled as a writer, penning librettos for American operas and musical comedies.[25]

Robert's abilities also included musical knowledge. In 1925, he became the first music critic for the *New Yorker Magazine*. When the owner of the *New Yorker Magazine* offered the position to Robert, Madeleine remarked that he might go ahead and take the job, because in her words, "That funny little magazine won't last more than three weeks anyway." When Simon, weary of working two jobs, tried to quit in the 1930s, the editor, Harold Ross, wrote him a note that said, "Dear Bob, Don't talk divorce. Think of the children." It must have influenced Simon to stay because he held that position until 1948.[26]

The accomplishments of the Simon family extended to Robert's first cousin Richard and his family. Richard co-founded the Simon and Schuster Publishing Company in 1924. The company's inaugural publication consisted of an original crossword puzzle book written at the request of Richard's aunt.[27] Marshall contributed to the company's publications in 1927 when she co-authored a book of 50 puzzles entitled *Guggenheim*. The book was fashioned after the game of "Categories," and Marshall had tried all the puzzles out on friends and acquaintances, listing their scores at the top of the puzzle. Among the scores were those of her famous uncle, Louis Marshall, as well as family friend and philosopher Will Durant, whose book *The Story of Philosophy* became a best seller for the publishing house.[28]

The children of Robert's cousin, Richard Simon, displayed the family's drive for success as well. Richard's three daughters enjoyed musical fame, with oldest daughter, Joanna, as an opera singer in New York City; daughter Lucy Simon, as a Broadway composer (most notably for her Tony nominated work, *The Secret Garden*)*;* and his youngest daughter, Carly Simon, for her work as a folk singer/writer.[29]

[24] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

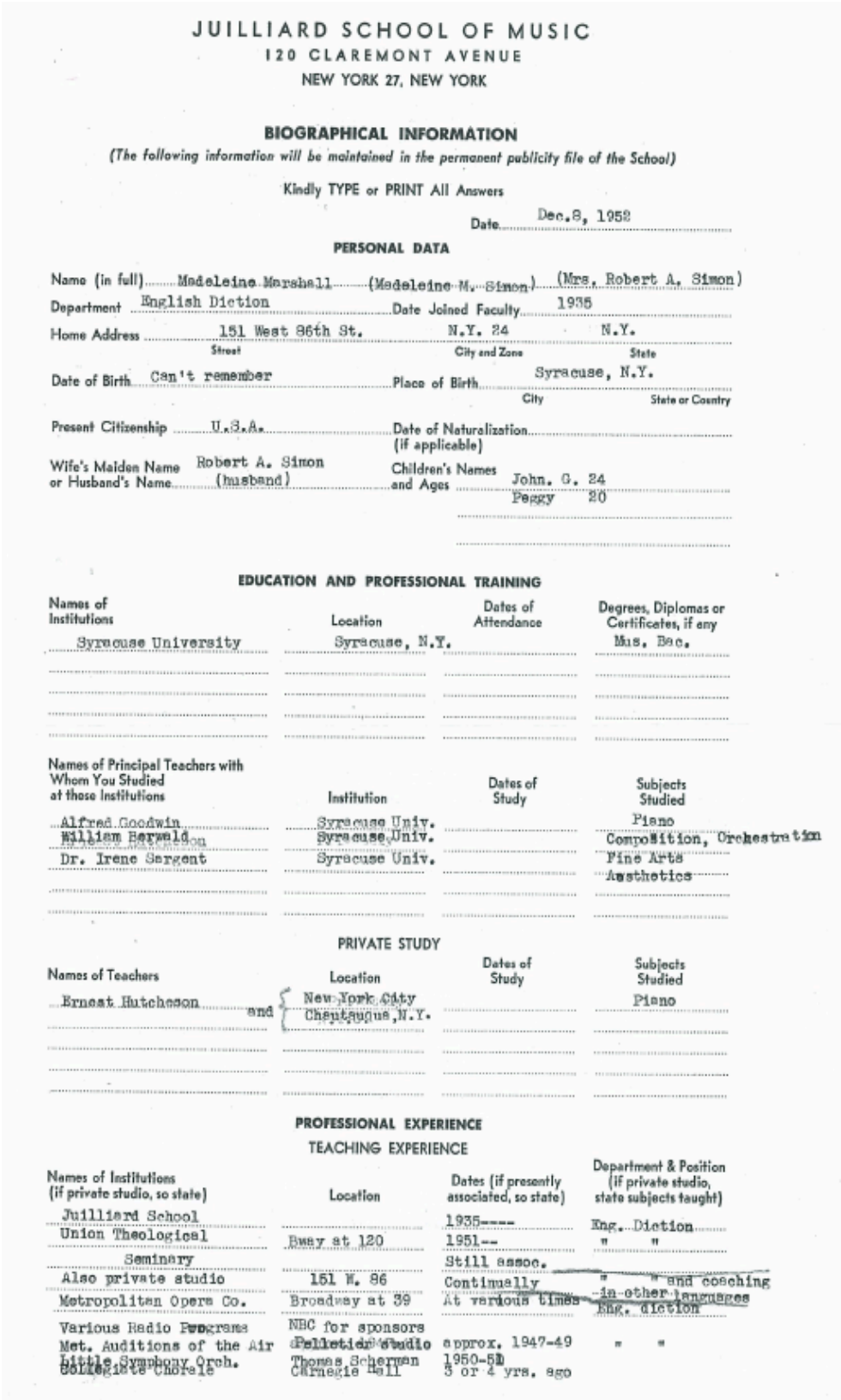
[25] Obituary of Robert A. Simon, New York Times, April 28, 1981.

[26] Claire Simon, daughter-in-law of Madeleine Marshall, interview by author, New York City, NY, March 22, 2012.

[27] http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Simon-amp;-Schuster-Inc-company-History.html (accessed April 19, 2012.

[28] "Syracusan Is Inventor of Mental Game," *Syracuse Herald*, August 11, 1927.

[29] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.



JUILLIARD SCHOOL OF MUSIC
120 CLAREMONT AVENUE
NEW YORK 27, NEW YORK

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(The following information will be maintained in the permanent publicity file of the School)

Kindly TYPE or PRINT All Answers

Date Dec.8, 1952

PERSONAL DATA

Name (in full) Madeleine Marshall (Madeleine M. Simon) (Mrs. Robert A. Simon)

Department English Diction Date Joined Faculty 1935

Home Address 151 West 86th St. (Street) N.Y. 24 (City and Zone) N.Y. (State)

Date of Birth Can't remember Place of Birth Syracuse, N.Y. (City) (State or Country)

Present Citizenship U.S.A. Date of Naturalization (if applicable)

Wife's Maiden Name or Husband's Name Robert A. Simon (husband) Children's Names and Ages John. G. 24
Peggy 20

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Names of Institutions	Location	Dates of Attendance	Degrees, Diplomas or Certificates, if any
Syracuse University	Syracuse, N.Y.		Mus. Bac.

Names of Principal Teachers with Whom You Studied at those Institutions	Institution	Dates of Study	Subjects Studied
Alfred Goodwin	Syracuse Univ.		Piano
William Berwald	Syracuse Univ.		Composition, Orchestration
Dr. Irene Sargent	Syracuse Univ.		Fine Arts
			Aesthetics

PRIVATE STUDY

Names of Teachers	Location	Dates of Study	Subjects Studied
Ernest Hutcheson	New York City and Chautauqua, N.Y.		Piano

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Names of Institutions (if private studio, so state)	Location	Dates (if presently associated, so state)	Department & Position (if private studio, state subjects taught)
Juilliard School		1935----	Eng. Diction
Union Theological Seminary	Bway at 120	1951--	" "
Also private studio	151 W. 86	Still assoc. Continually	" " and coaching in other languages
Metropolitan Opera Co.	Broadway at 39	At various times	Eng. diction
Various Radio Programs	NBC for sponsors	approx. 1947-49	" "
Met. Auditions of the Air	Pelletier Studio	1950-51	
Little Symphony Orch.	Thomas Scherman	3 or 4 yrs. ago	
Collegiate Chorale	Carnegie Hall		

Figure 4. Biographical Information, Juilliard School of Music, Dec. 8, 1952, courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives.

Madeleine and the New York Music Scene

The music scene in New York City evidenced dramatic change during the early 1900s. Young composers, such as George and Ira Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Duke Ellington, Arnold Schoenberg and Virgil Thomson, brought new thoughts and sounds to their musical creations. Music performances transitioned from events for the wealthy and socially elite to finding a home with listeners from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Radio connected more listeners to a variety of music genres. In 1931, for the first time, NBC Radio aired a complete live opera performance.[30]

Marshall encountered this vibrant and thriving atmosphere when she arrived in New York City. Already established as a pianist and accompanist in Syracuse, she quickly became ensconced in the city's exciting music environment. Soon she accompanied prominent singers such as Metropolitan Opera Contralto Sigrid Onegin, Helen Traubel, Hans Kindler, Lawrence Strauss, Claire Alcee, Rosalie Wolf, and Clara Bloomfield.[31] After a concert by Bloomfield in New York at Aeolian Hall, the *New York Times* recognized Marshall by reporting; "Particular praise must be given to Madeleine Marshall Simon for her sympathetic accompaniments."[32]

Marshall did not consider herself a concert pianist. Nonetheless, she performed as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and played under the direction of conductors Toscanini, Mengelberg, Hadley and Schelling. The New York Times reviewed her favorably for her work as one of the solo pianists in Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals* and again as one of four pianists in the *Vivaldi-Bach Concerto in A Minor*.[33]

One of her most interesting and enduring collaborations occurred with performer Angna Enters (1897-1989). Enters possessed many talents and worked as a mime, dancer, painter and writer. In the environment of the early twentieth century, male artists dominated the majority of the show space in major New York art galleries, with the unwritten rule that women painters show their work in less prestigious studios. Georgia O'Keefe and Angna Enters proved exceptions to this rule, exhibiting their works at many of the major New York City galleries.[34]

Enters' creative abilities also extended to her work as a dancer, costume designer and entrepreneur. She developed a solo program, "*The Theater of Angna Enters,"* and rented various New York City Broadway theatres in which to stage her show. She reached the height of her popularity in the 1920s and 1930s with Marshall providing off-stage accompaniment. Enters eventually ran afoul of the Local 802 Musician's Union when she did not comply with union mandates to hire at least five orchestra members.

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[30] Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music* (New York: W. H. Norton and Company, 1973), 676-679.

[31] Display Ad, "Philharmonic," *New York Times*, October 25, 1925; "Programs of the Week," *New York Times*, March 10, 1929; Article, "Lawrence Strauss Heard," *New York Times*, October 18, 1929.

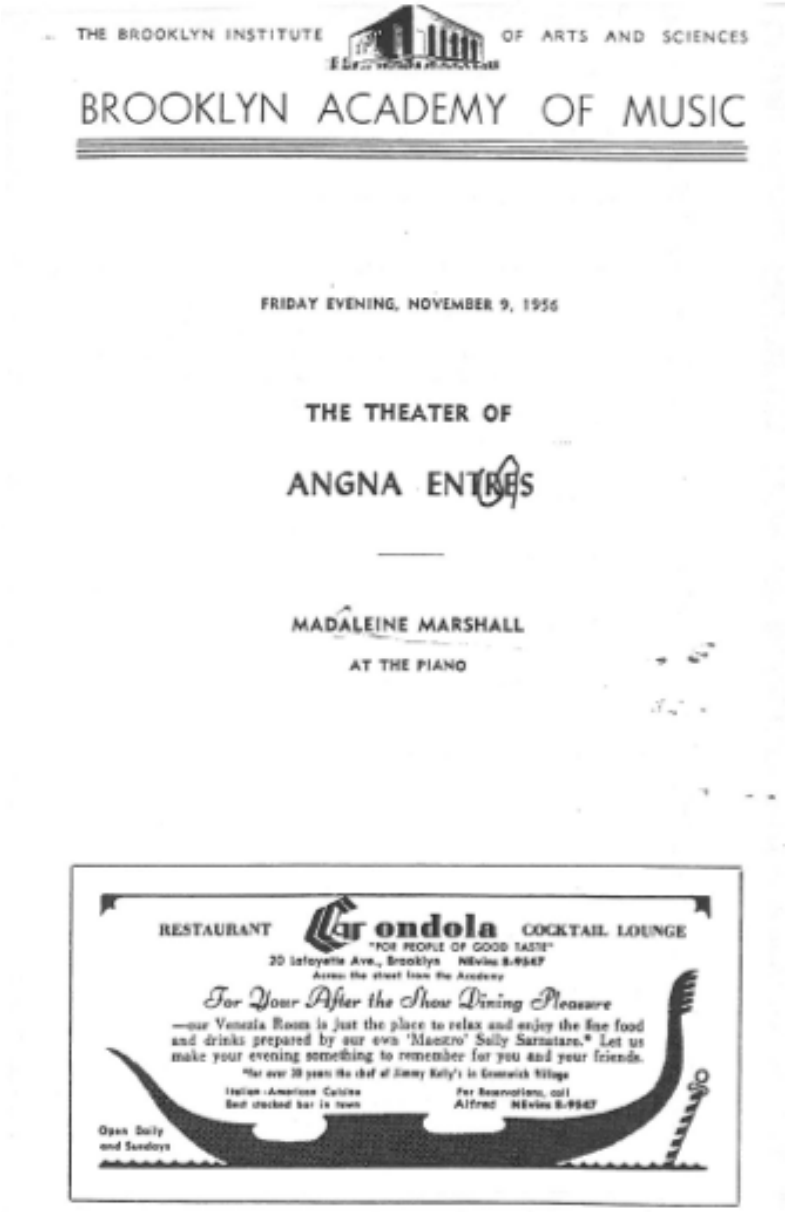
[32] Music Review from *New York Times*, Dec. 15, 1925.

[33] Article, "Composer Chadwick Guest," *New York Times*, January 15, 1923; Olin Downes, "Toscanini and Orchestra, in Matchless Form, Hailed in Performances of Classic and Modern Composers," *New York Times,* October 14, 1932.

[34] Susan Ware, editor, *Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary, Volume* 5 (USA, President and Fellows of Harvard University, 2005) 196-198.

John Simon, Marshall's son, recalled turning pages for his mother backstage while five union musicians sat silently alongside them without playing a single note.[35]

Although Enters' shows continued into the 1950s (figure 5), the advent of World War II signaled a significant decline in her audiences. Upon her death, Marshall's son John inherited three Enters works (an oil painting and two portrait sketches) from his mother believed to have been payment for her services as an accompanist.[36]


THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC

FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 9, 1956

THE THEATER OF

ANGNA ENTERS

MADALEINE MARSHALL

AT THE PIANO

Figure 5. Proof copy of Angna Enters program, courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives.

[35] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

[36] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

While Marshall worked on stage, her husband remained busy in the audience in his second job as music critic. The widely acquainted couple became a dynamic pair in the culture of early twentieth century New York City. Robert's work in radio and broadcast, combined with his work as a music critic, made him very attuned to articulation. Robert and Madeleine frequently discussed performances and sometimes had great fun imitating accents they heard.[37]

It was Marshall's desire to clearly hear and comprehend the lyrics on stage that helped shape her future role as a coach, particularly for non-native English speakers. Already a sought- after accompanist, her work quite naturally evolved into aiding singers with their diction. She quickly assembled an impressive list of coaching students, including Leontyne Price, Lorenzo Fuller, Lily Pons, George Britton, Norman Scott, and many others. Marshall's expertise in diction aided modification of Price's Mississippi accent. However, it may have been her work with Lily Pons that propelled her toward her future work in diction.[38]

Pons (1898-1976), a French-born coloratura soprano, debuted with the Metropolitan Opera on January 3, 1931. She immediately became a box office draw and remained with the Met for twenty-nine years. When Pons moved to the United States in 1930, she spoke no English. Marshall, fluent in both French and English, became Pons' coach and taught her to make her English understandable to audiences.

Marshall wrote English phonetic translations into Pons' scores, including *"The Man I Love"* (figure 6). The translation combined elements of both the French language and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Marshall was true to IPA when translating "I" to [aI] and "me" to [mi]. However, she used the French accents grave and circumflex when transcribing "mellow" to "mèl-lô" and "dream" to "drîme". Although not IPA transcriptions, the use of the French symbols probably contributed to Pons' understanding of the pronunciation.[39]

Pons and Marshall became close friends through their work together. Marshall's friends also included composer George Gershwin who at that time was a rising star in the New York City music world. Marshall decided to try her hand at matchmaking by introducing Pons and Gershwin. Keeping with the custom of the time, Gershwin arrived at Pons' apartment with a large bouquet of flowers in hand. Unbeknownst to Gershwin, Pons had a rather unusual pet in her apartment. When Pons opened the door, Gershwin saw a chain with a pet jaguar at the end of it. Gershwin took one look at the animal, handed Pons the flowers, turned on his heel, and retreated. Thus ended a potential relationship between singer and composer, as well as Marshall's matchmaking career.[40]

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[37] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

[38] Robert Jones, "Stranger than Diction," *Sunday News*, November 16, 1975.

[39] http://www.omniglot.com/writing/ipa.htm IPA is the International Phonetic Alphabet with one symbol for one sound. It was developed in 1888 by French language teachers under the direction of Paul Passy.

[40] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

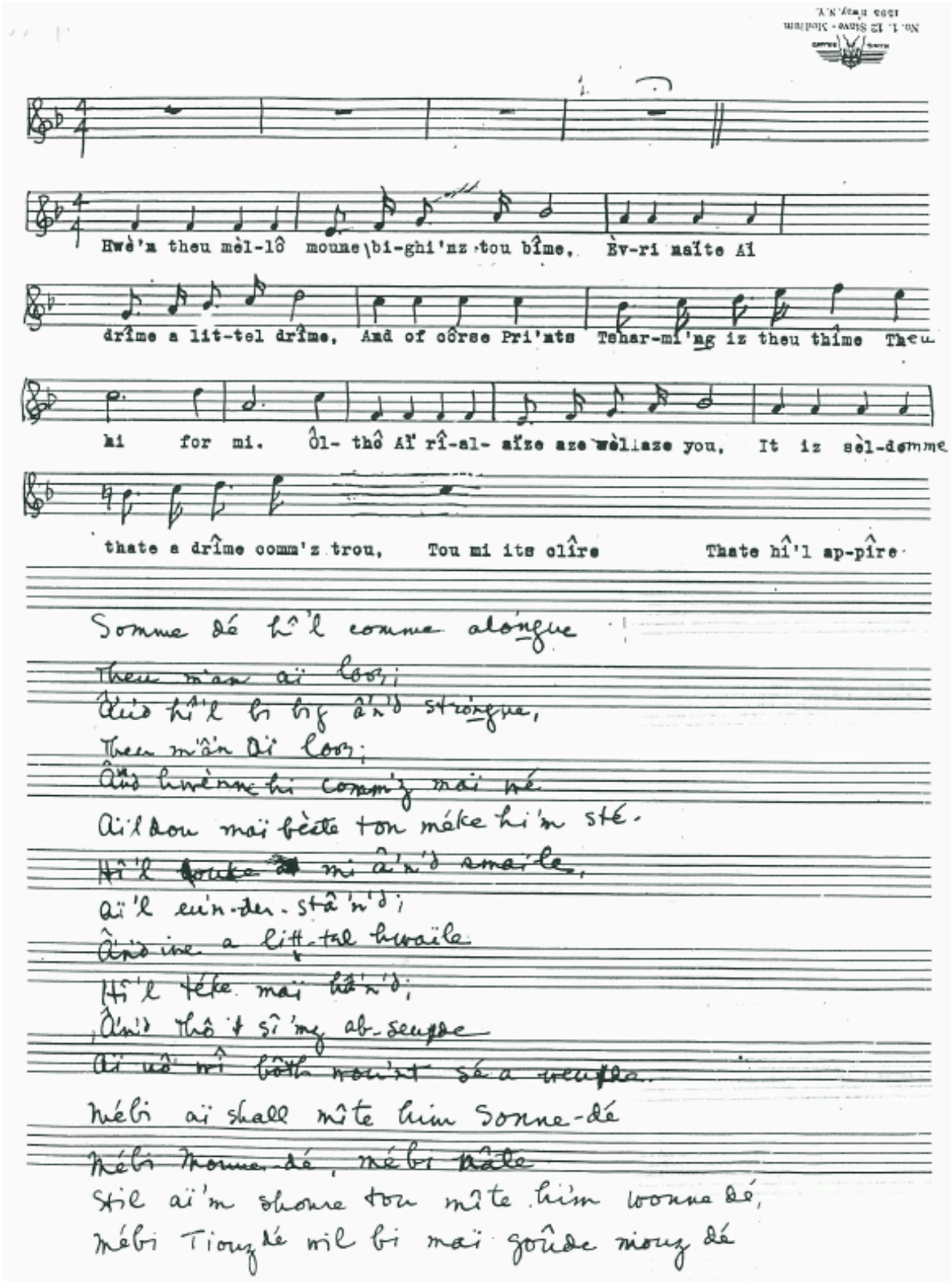


Figure 6. Madeleine Marshall's phonetic version of "The Man I Love" written for Lily Pons.

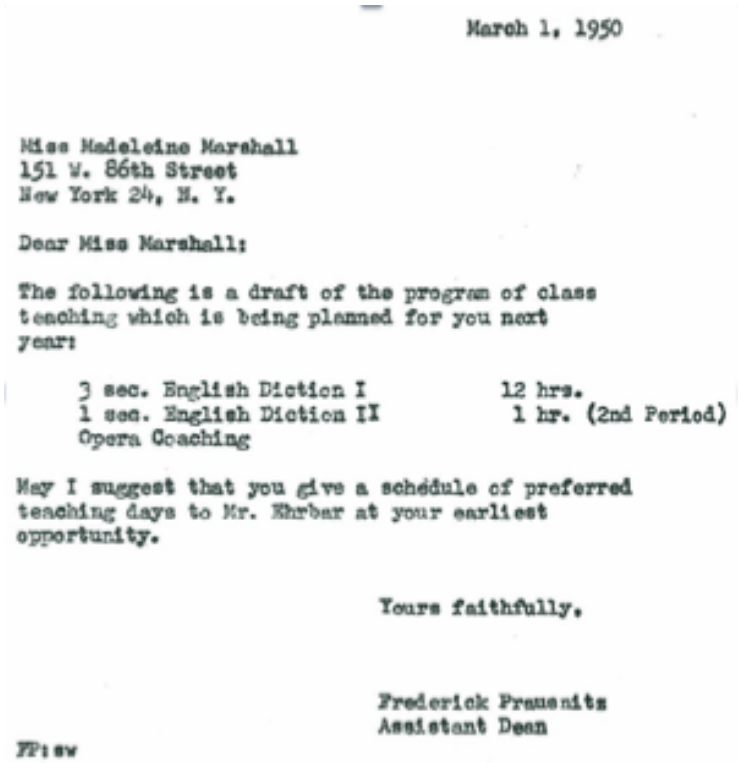
Teaching at Juilliard

Madeleine Marshall joined the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music in 1935. Details of how the job offer came about remain unclear, but by this time Marshall had established herself in the New York music circle. Ernest Hutcheson, then Dean at Juilliard and Marshall's former piano teacher, obviously knew Madeleine and her abilities well. Marshall taught the first English Diction Course offered at Juilliard. She remained at Juilliard for fifty-one years, until 1986 (figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7. Juilliard Faculty Photograph, March 1936. Marshall is seated and is first on the left side. Photograph courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives.

Figure 8. Juilliard Alumni Reunion, October 12, 1984. Marshall welcomes former Diction class students. Photograph courtesy of Peter Schaaf Photography and The Juilliard School Archives.

Correspondence from Assistant Dean Frederick Prausnitz to Marshall in March of 1950 detailed her proposed course load for the upcoming school year. The list included three sections of English Diction I, one section of English Diction II, and Opera Coaching. In another letter from Prausnitz, the assistant dean addressed Marshall's concerns about offering English Diction as a first year subject (figures 9 and 10).



March 1, 1950

Miss Madeleine Marshall
151 W. 86th Street
New York 24, N. Y.

Dear Miss Marshall:

The following is a draft of the program of class teaching which is being planned for you next year:

3 sec. English Diction I	12 hrs.
1 sec. English Diction II	1 hr. (2nd Period)
Opera Coaching	

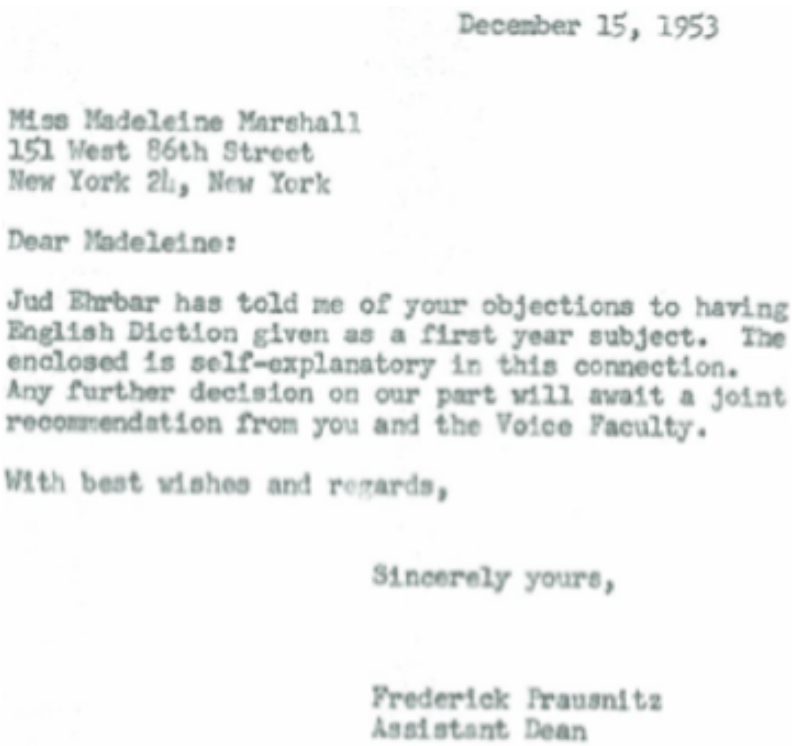
May I suggest that you give a schedule of preferred teaching days to Mr. Ehrbar at your earliest opportunity.

Yours faithfully,

Frederick Prausnitz
Assistant Dean

FP:sw

Figure 9. Letter from Assistant Dean Frederick Prausnitz to Madeleine Marshall dated March 1, 1950. Courtesy of The Juilliard School of Music Archives.



December 15, 1953

Miss Madeleine Marshall
151 West 86th Street
New York 24, New York

Dear Madeleine:

Jud Ehrbar has told me of your objections to having English Diction given as a first year subject. The enclosed is self-explanatory in this connection. Any further decision on our part will await a joint recommendation from you and the Voice Faculty.

With best wishes and regards,

Sincerely yours,

Frederick Prausnitz
Assistant Dean

Figure 10. Letter from Assistant Dean Frederick Prausnitz to Madeleine Marshall dated December 15, 1953. The enclosure was not available. Courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives.

In addition to teaching at Juilliard, she taught diction at the School of Sacred Music, Union Theological Seminary, starting in 1951. At that time, the two schools, Juilliard and Union, were across the street from each other, which made it very convenient for Marshall. Her son, John, recalls his mother expressing some concern about working at the School Of Sacred Music where she would be working with choirs rather than soloists. It appears her concerns were unwarranted as she held that post for twenty years. Along with her many other duties, she worked with Robert Shaw and the Robert Shaw Choral Organization to make sure his singers were easily understood.[41]

Marshall's diction coaching expanded to preparing both student singers in the Juilliard opera program and professional singers in the New York Metropolitan Opera (figure 11). Although very good in her role as opera coach, Marshall did not enjoy the work that much, saying the orchestra made it difficult to hear the singers. She noted that the performers often seemed preoccupied with how they looked in their costumes rather than how they sounded on stage.[42]

Figure 11. Juilliard Opera Production of L*'heure Espagnole*, March 29-April 1, 1939. Madeleine Marshall, far right, is pictured with students and faculty. Picture courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives.

The 1930s were a time of transition for the "Met" due to the financial depression in the country. The opera company's top managers knew they could no longer rely solely on audience receipts, and they sought new funding sources, including radio broadcasts. NBC offered the Met $5,000 to broadcast a live opera, and the struggling opera company accepted. Christmas Day 1931 marked the first live radio transmission of Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*. The $5,000 from the broadcast combined with the company's box office take of $4233.50 more than doubled the Met's total profits.[43]

[41] Obituary, Madeleine Marshall Simon, *New York Times*, July 2, 1993.

[42] Robert Jones, "Stranger than Diction," *Sunday News*, November 16, 1975.

[43] New York Metropolitan Opera, Historical Archives. http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/history/index.aspx (accessed November 2, 2012).

The broadcasts continued and thereby contributed to making opera accessible to a wider audience. It became even more crucial than ever that audiences understand what was being sung because radio audiences could not see the performers.

The move to translate operas into English signaled another move to appeal to a wider audience base. While coaching the opera singers, Marshall found many of the English translations stilted and began substituting her own words. The original English translation of the *Bartered Bride* by Smetena was full of phrases that were unsingable and cumbersome. Marshall, along with principals Muriel Dickson, George Rasely, Norman Cordon, and John Gurney, began making changes to the text. Soon, the entire libretto was re-written.

The Met continued to promote its series of operas translated into English during the 1937 spring series. Lee Pattison, Metropolitan Director, expressed the desire to produce one opera a week in English during the four to five week spring season. Marshall joined forces with George Mead to translate the libretto for Rabaud's *Marouf*, featured in the third week of the season.[44] *New York Times* Reviewer Olin Downes, (May 22, 1937), described the audience as delighted by the English version of *Marouf*.

Marshall's conviction that music be accessible to and understood by all listeners continued, and in 1953 she collaborated with Boris Goldovsky and Sarah Caldwell to produce a new English translation of Verdi's *Falstaff*. This new English version closed the Boris Goldovsky's Opera Theatre's seventh Boston Season in February of 1953.[45]

By all reports, Marshall brought precision and exacting standards to all aspects of her work, both on stage and in the classroom. Marshall, described as a perfectionist, did not tolerate mediocrity, from herself or her students, and remained very firm with details. A letter to Assistant Dean Prausnitz at the Juilliard School exemplifies her expectations for students.

> Dear Dean Prausnitz,
> (Student name) skipped a coaching lesson, again, today (Mar. 16 10-11 AM)
> He did not call up or make any excuse. Just silence. The opera opens on Ap 2.
> (Student name) has already skipped countless lessons and classes.
>
> Sincerely,
> Madeleine Marshall
>
> *(on the back of the letter)*
> Last week I gave a short quiz-announced in advance, on a word list. (Student name) handed in a blank paper, saying he hadn't studied it. This is exactly what he has done at previous quizzes.[46]

Marshall also had a keen wit and a great sense of fun. In response to a request from Assistant Dean Prausnitz that a student be allowed to skip class due to a conflict with an opera rehearsal, Marshall wrote,

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[44] "Dozen New Artists for Spring Operas," *New York Times,* April 19, 1937.

[45] Ross Parmenter, "The World of Music: Casals Festival Certain," *New York Times*, February 22, 1953.

[46] Madeleine Marshall, letter to Assistant Dean Prausnitz, March 16, 1954. The Juilliard School Archives.

Mon cher Dean,

> Conflict is the cause of most of the world's troubles, and the opportunity to resolve one without resort to even remote violence is indeed a happy happenstance.
>
> Let us assume that (student name) is dematerialized at the time of her class on Thursday March 21, and that therefore no conflict with the special rehearsal exists. I shall be happy to have (student name) rematerialized at the earliest convenience thereafter.
>
> I am told that when there is a projected double booking for an instrumentalist the situation is known as a confliction. I should not like to think of (student name) or the Opera in such an overlatinized predicament.
>
> So the girl's excused.
> Cordially,
> Madeleine[47]

Madeleine's *Lessons*, A Precursor to *The Manual*

The combination of Marshall's high standards, subject knowledge, wit and easy style of writing was such that her book, the *Singer's Manual of English Diction*, would offer both effective and enjoyable instruction. Much like the evolution of Marshall's work with solo singers, her book evolved from a handbook she wrote for her students at Juilliard. The original handbook, titled *Lessons in English Diction*, consisted of twenty-five typewritten pages with copyright dates of 1946 and 1947. The manual contained a very straightforward set of rules for diction, beginning with consonants and proceeding to vowels. On page one of the manuscript, Marshall dictated rules for the pronunciation of the letter "R". Marshall insisted that, "R should be pronounced by one flick of the tongue—one only. It should never be trilled or rolled. Even two flicks are excessive."[48]

On page eighteen of her handbook (figure 12), Marshall wrote in International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols for vowels. She discussed diphthongs on page nineteen (figure 13), employing both phonetic pronunciations as well as IPA symbols. Unlike her published book, there were few examples of song texts. Moreover, she did not demonstrate the chatty style that is often associated with Marshall's final product. In discussing the ending of –TURE to a word, Marshall cautions, "… avoid singing RAPCHURE, which is coarse."[49]

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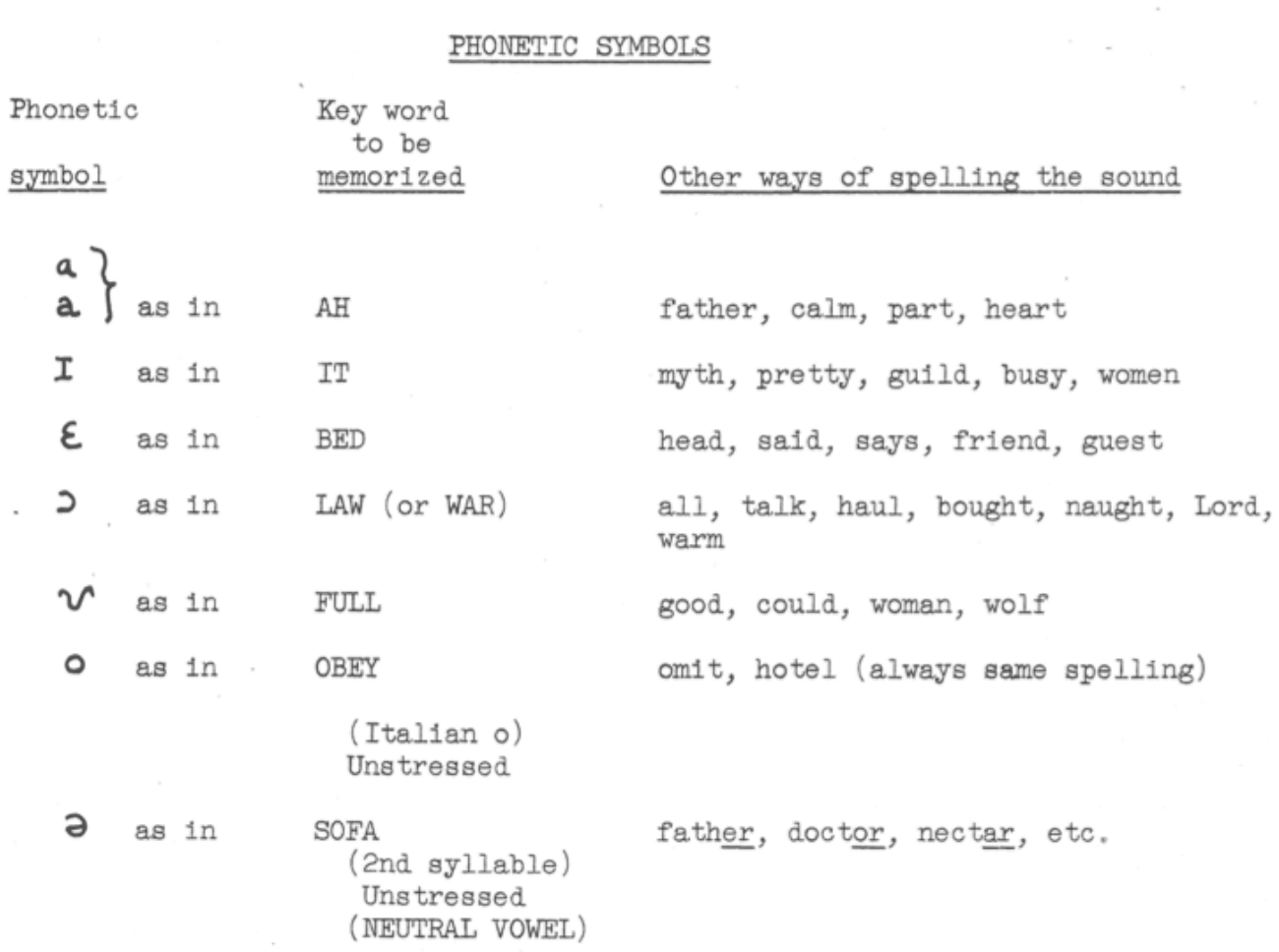
[47] Madeleine Marshall, letter to Assistant Dean Prausnitz, February 28, 1955, The Juilliard School Archives, New York, NY.

[48] Madeleine Marshall, *Lessons in English Diction*, pre-publication copy, pages 18-19, The Juilliard School Archives, New York, NY.

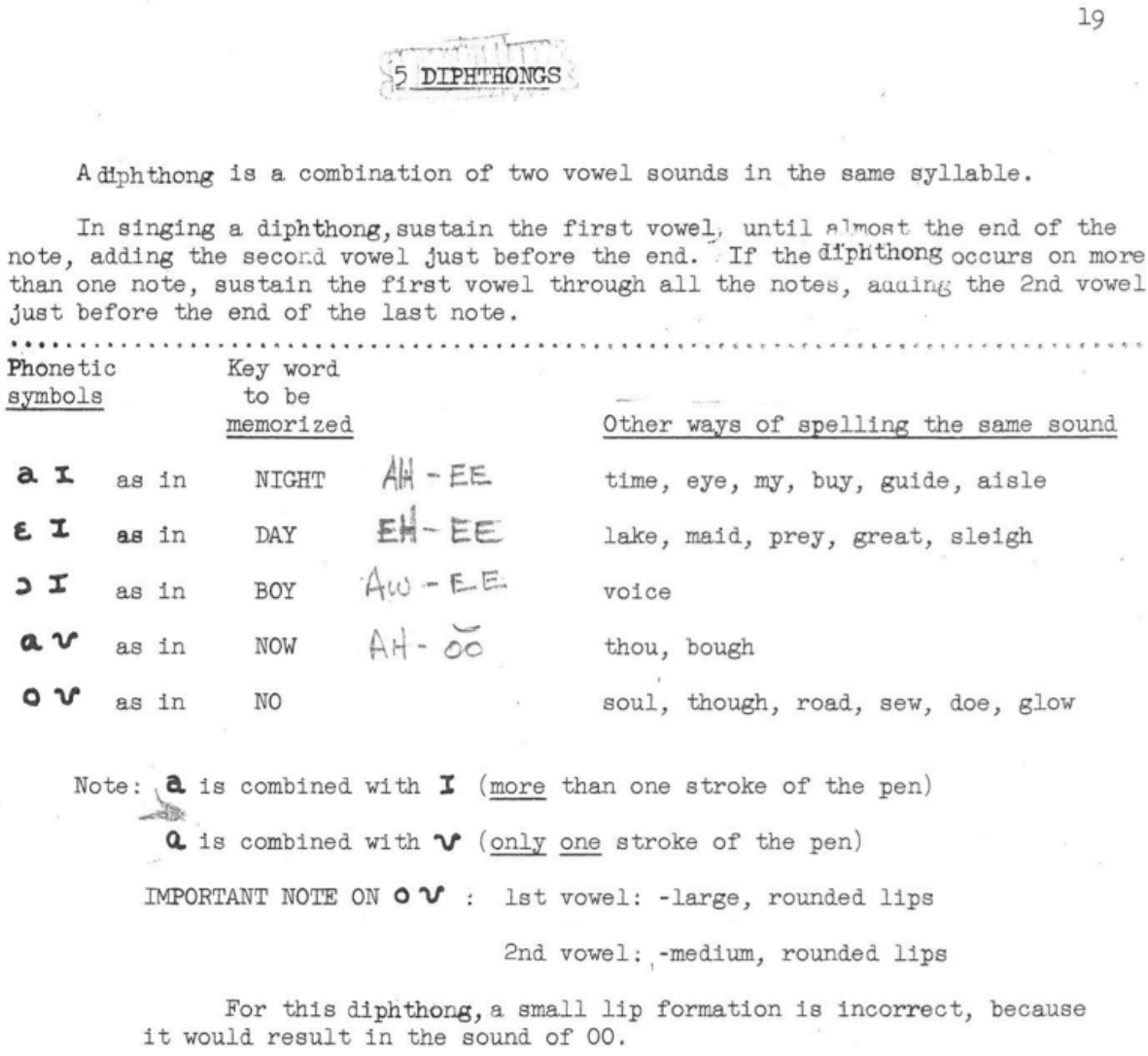
[49] Madeleine Marshall, *Lessons in English Diction*, pre-publication copy, pages 18-19, The Juilliard School Archives, New York, NY..



PHONETIC SYMBOLS

Phonetic symbol		Key word to be memorized	Other ways of spelling the sound
ɑ, a	as in	AH	father, calm, part, heart
I	as in	IT	myth, pretty, guild, busy, women
ɛ	as in	BED	head, said, says, friend, guest
ɔ	as in	LAW (or WAR)	all, talk, haul, bought, naught, Lord, warm
ʊ	as in	FULL	good, could, woman, wolf
o	as in	OBEY (Italian o) Unstressed	omit, hotel (always same spelling)
ə	as in	SOFA (2nd syllable) Unstressed (NEUTRAL VOWEL)	father, doctor, nectar, etc.

Figure 12. Page 18 from Madeleine Marshall's original handbook, *Lessons in English Diction,* courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives.



19

5 DIPHTHONGS

A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds in the same syllable.

In singing a diphthong, sustain the first vowel, until almost the end of the note, adding the second vowel just before the end. If the diphthong occurs on more than one note, sustain the first vowel through all the notes, adding the 2nd vowel just before the end of the last note.

Phonetic symbols		Key word to be memorized		Other ways of spelling the same sound
a ɪ	as in	NIGHT	AH - EE	time, eye, my, buy, guide, aisle
ɛ ɪ	as in	DAY	EH - EE	lake, maid, prey, great, sleigh
ɔ ɪ	as in	BOY	AW - EE	voice
a ʊ	as in	NOW	AH - OO	thou, bough
o ʊ	as in	NO		soul, though, road, sew, doe, glow

Note: a is combined with ɪ (more than one stroke of the pen)

a is combined with ʊ (only one stroke of the pen)

IMPORTANT NOTE ON o ʊ : 1st vowel: -large, rounded lips

2nd vowel: -medium, rounded lips

For this diphthong, a small lip formation is incorrect, because it would result in the sound of OO.

Figure 13. Page 19 from Madeleine Marshall's original handbook, *Lessons in English Diction,* courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives.

Her book, the *Singer's Manual of English Diction*, published in 1953, exhibited a very personal style of writing. She began with a chapter titled "Conference," in which she stated that before the singing begins, "Let's have a little friendly gossip about singers."[50] She went on to discuss types of singers and some of the "blops," as she categorized them, they have sung on stage. "I am yawning for your love" and "I hear you hauling me" were among the entertaining examples she used.[51]

[50] Marshall, *Singer's Manual*, 1.

[51] Marshall, *Singer's Manual*, 2.

Marshall offered this advice to her readers:

> In this manual, there is presented a neutral, standard English, free of regional accents, intelligible to any audience. It is an English that has long been accepted as a norm on the stage and in other public usage. The recommendation of this English for singing is, of course, no criticism of the English spoken in any given area. Our aim is to sing one English. If this standard pronunciation differs from your speech at home, don't worry. Your personal speech is your own prerogative, like your preference in clothing.[52]

John Simon, son of Robert Simon and Madeleine Marshall, recalled his mother and father working together on her book in the evenings. As his mother wrote new pages, John remembered his father would edit them, often telling Marshall, "That's not quite right." The couple exchanged numerous corrections as Marshall's book progressed. [53]

Schirmer Books published the *Singer's Manual of English Diction*, even though Robert's first cousin, Richard Simon, owned the firm of Simon and Schuster. Two issues probably contributed to the choice of publisher: the Simon family had a tradition of not asking for favors within the family, and Schirmer Books had an established reputation in music publishing.[54]

Marshall's book received positive critiques, most likely aiding its success. Virgil Thomson, known for his acerbic writing, wrote glowingly about the book and the knowledge it imparted to readers. Said Thomson, "Her handbook must henceforth be part of every English singer's working equipment. And every composer's, too, who wishes to make with the English language music".[55]

John Bryden, in his 1954 review of Marshall's book for the *Journal of Research in Music Education*, concluded, "All in all, the book is a very good one, and Miss Marshall seems well justified in presenting conclusions reached on the basis of her wide teaching experience." He finished his critique by recommending the book to anyone who wishes to know more about singing the English language.[56]

Marshall's book is used in university diction courses today and is often cited as an authoritative guide to English diction.[57] Lewis Gordon compared the manual to a bible for singers and choral directors.[58] The Music Teacher's National Association (MTNA) endorsed Marshall's book in its 2002 list of recommended books for a music teacher's library.[59] Cheri Montgomery, Voice Lecturer at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University, compiled *The Lyric Diction Workbook Series* with the English section based on the principles from Marshall's book. This workbook review remains in use in over 100 conservatories and music schools across the United States.[60]

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[52] Marshall, *Singer's Manual*, 3.

[53] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

[54] Simon Interviews, March 22, 2012.

[55] Virgil Thomson, "For Singing English," Music and Musicians, *New York Herald Tribune*, November 15, 1953.

[56] John Bryden, The Singer's Manual of English Diction, *Journal of Research in Music Education* 2 (1954): 66.

[57] The following schools are among those that suggest Marshall's book in their English Diction Syllabus: Brigham Young University, Kansas University, University of Florida and University of Texas at Arlington.

[58] Lewis W. Gordon, "Singing in English (Monograph no. 5), by Richard Cox," *Choral Journal* 41:1 (August 2000): 71.

[59] Gary L Ingle, "Music Teacher's Library" *American Music Teacher 52*:3 (December 2002-January 2003): 46.

[60] Cheri Montgomery, *Lyric Diction Workbook Series*, published by S.T.M. Publishers.

Diction Textbooks

In John Bryden's 1954 review of Marshall's book, he referred to Marshall's knowledge of several works of the same genre by Louis A. Russell, Henry H. Hulbert, and Clara Kathleen Rogers.[61] Hulbert penned a book about vocal production, while Russell and Rogers wrote diction texts. The two diction textbooks, *English Diction for Song and Speech* by Clara Kathleen Rogers and *English Diction for Singers and Speakers* by Louis Arthur Russell have not fared as well as Marshall's. Plimpton Press printed Rogers' book for the author in 1912 and it is currently available only through Google's digitized collection. Russell's book, published in 1905, was digitized and is available through Google Books and the University of Michigan Library. Rogers' and Russell's copyrights expired while Marshall's copyright was renewed in 1975. A comparison of the three books begins first with a brief background of Rogers and Russell.

Clara Kathleen Rogers (1844-1931) was a gifted singer, composer and writer. Born in London, she made her stage debut in Turin as a teenager singing the role of Isabella in Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Roberto il diavolo*. She continued to sing professionally in London and Italy for the next five years. In 1871, she came to the United States with the Parepa-Rose Opera Company. Her stage career ended in 1878 when she married Henry Munroe Rogers (1839-1937). Although her performing career ended, Clara worked actively as a teacher, writer and composer. She wrote three books on diction and became a voice faculty member of the New England Conservatory of Music in 1902. She taught there for twenty-nine years until her death in 1931. Her work at the conservatory inspired her writings on diction and vocal technique.[62]

Louis Arthur Russell (1854-1925) taught voice and worked as director of the Newark New Jersey College of Music and the Metropolitan Schools of Musical Art at Carnegie Hall. Born in Newark, New Jersey, he studied voice with the English voice pedagogue and tenor, William Shakespeare (1849-1931). Russell wrote numerous books on the art of singing, including *English Diction for Singers and Speakers* in 1905.

Rogers and Russell approached their books from a singer's viewpoint, offering breathing techniques and exercises. By contrast, Marshall clearly stated that her book would not give instruction on *how* to sing but rather on how to sing the *words*. Rogers devoted a chapter to the connection between breathing and perfect diction, while Russell discussed how vocal cord vibrations caused by breath issuing from the lungs produced vowels.

Rogers and Russell categorized vowel sounds into long and short sounds. Marshall, on the other hand, avoided all discussion of short and long vowels by using the International Phonetic Alphabet. All three authors, however, agreed about the importance of vowel pronunciation to beautiful legato singing (see table 1).

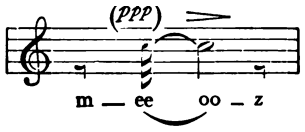
[61] John Bryden, The Singer's Manual of English Diction, *Journal of Research in Music Education* 2 (1954): 66.

[62] Andrew Adams, "Voicing the Silent Language of the Soul: The Life and Works of Clara Kathleen Rogers (1844-1931)," *Journal of Singing – The Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* 67:3 (January-February 2011): 257-266.

Table 1. Three Pedagogues and their Approaches to Teaching Diction

	Marshall	Rogers	Russell
Instructional Approach	Diction Instruction	Diction and Singing Instruction	Diction and Singing Instruction
Phonetic System	IPA	Author's own Phonetic Transcription	Author's own Phonetic Transcription
Vowel Labels	No labels Referred to IPA	Long and Short	Long and Short
Vowel Production	Does not mention	Long vowels formed at glottis Short vowels formed in the mouth	Vowels produced in the mouth
Diphthongs	First vowel is always longer	If first vowel is short and second is long, emphasize the long vowel	If first vowel is short and second is long, emphasize the long vowel
Consonant Labels	Voiced / Unvoiced	Sonant (voiced, *b,d,g*) Surd (unvoiced) Silent positions (*p,t,k*), Flated unsingable (*f, s,*) Vocals (*l,m,n,r*) Buzzes (*z,v*)	Soft / Mild Hard / Harsh
Consonants	Play a key role in projecting and focusing the voice	Sing consonants before the beat with vowel on the beat to avoid interrupting the vocal tone	Referred to consonants as the joints of speech and vowels as beauty spots of language

All three pedagogues agreed that when singing a diphthong, the first vowel should be sustained and the second added immediately before the final consonant is sung. Marshall was very firm that the first vowel should always be sustained while Rogers and Russell believed if the first vowel was short [ih] and the second vowel long [oo], the emphasis should be on the long vowel. Russell used *dew, new* and *tune* as examples of this diphthong, adding that if the short sound occurred at the beginning of the word and was preceded by a voiced consonant, the short vowel should be attached to the consonant and should be barely voiced. The word *muse* was her example with the first vowel sound of [ee] gliding into [oo], thus:



[63]

Marshall, by contrast, did not categorize *muse* as a diphthong. Rather, she employed her *DANIEL SITTETH* rule to describe its correct pronunciation. When a syllable spelled with either *u* or *ew* follows any of these consonants: d, n, l, s, t, or th, the vowel is pronounced as [*yu*]. *DANIEL SITTETH* provided Marshall's students with a helpful memory aid to remember the affected consonants.[64]

[63] Clara Kathleen Rogers, *English Diction in Song and Speech*: (Norwood, Massachusetts: Printed for the Author by the Plimpton Press, 1912), 37.

[64] Marshall, *Singer's Manual*, 139.

Consonants brought forward another round of opinions, and each author offered his or her own special emphasis. Marshall placed great importance on consonants, addressing them in Part I of her book and before her treatment of vowels in Part II. She explained that singers are familiar with vowels because they vocalize on them, but may not be aware of the role consonants play in projecting and focusing the voice.[65] Rogers instructed her readers to sing consonants before the beat with the vowel on the beat to avoid interruption of the vocal tone.[66] Russell admonished his readers that "The public is awake to the fact that it has for generations been 'tricked' by singers who sang *vowels*, and let *words* go to the winds."[67]

Subject knowledge and social connections played crucial roles when comparing the longevity of the diction books of Marshall, Rogers, and Russell. Rogers and Russell both spent time discussing anatomy in terms of vocal production, but several of their theories are no longer correct. Rogers' statement that all vowels were formed in the glottis was one such example and Russell's assertion that vowels were formed by the vocal cords was another. Marshall discussed diction only in terms of how words were articulated, imparting knowledge that is accurate today.

The terminology used by Rogers and Russell is obsolete and no longer relevant for today's singers. "Flated, sonant, surd, vocal and buzzed" consonants were among terms used when Rogers and Russell wrote but are not in common use today. A more standardized set of terms, "voiced and unvoiced," has been adopted, making diction easier to understand. Marshall used those terms in her book, rendering it still applicable and understandable to today's students.

The lack of a consistent phonetic alphabet in Rogers' and Russell's books provided another stumbling block to longevity. Although both offered a phonetic chart to explain their symbols, neither set of symbols is currently used. The International Phonetic Alphabet simplified diction by assigning one symbol to one sound and Marshall used IPA, at least when she discussed vowels.

Although accuracy and terminology contributed heavily to the demise of Rogers and Russell's books, the key element may have been their lack of social and professional connections. Madeleine Marshall enjoyed numerous social and professional connections that contributed to her book's prominence. Her stature as a teacher at Juilliard, her work with the Metropolitan Opera and the vast array of prominent singers she accompanied and coached made reviewers willing to look at her book. Her name appeared often in the New York newspapers as a performer, accompanist or librettist. Her connection with Simon and Schuster may have given her an entrée to Schirmer Publishing, a leading music and textbook publisher.

Rogers, as a first generation immigrant to the United States, did not have family connections in this country. Although she was a prominent performer in England, she quit performing after her marriage, ending her public exposure as a professional singer. The New England Conservatory of Music was a highly respected school, but Boston did not offer the musical opportunities that New York City did.

Russell, too, lacked Marshall's numerous connections. He did not appear as an active performer, and the schools where he taught, the Newark College of Music and the Metropolitan Schools of Musical Art, lacked Juilliard's prestige.

Madeleine Marshall's Lasting Legacy

Madeleine Marshall's desire to ensure the lyrics being sung on stage were understandable to every audience member became the driving force behind her text, the *Singer's Manual of English Diction*.

[65] Marshall, *Singer's Manual*, 4.

[66] Rogers, *English Diction in Song and Speech, 42.*

[67] Russell, *English Diction For Singers and Speakers*, 50.

Marshall most certainly benefited from the social connections she and her husband had as members of prominent and well-connected New York City families. Robert Simon's connections in the broadcast and publishing businesses probably benefitted Marshall in the publication of her book. He definitely played a major role in the editing of her text.

Marshall also entered the New York City music scene at a time when the tides were shifting and opening up new job opportunities. Classical music, so long the bastion of the wealthy, gained popularity among the middle class, and audiences wanted to understand what was being sung on stage. Opera was heard on the radio for the first time and the need to understand the lyrics became even more important.

Juilliard, one of the most respected schools of music, responded to the need to make singers intelligible by hiring its first ever English diction teacher. Who was better qualified to fill that position than Madeleine Marshall? Already established as a successful accompanist and vocal coach, Marshall was well positioned to take this next step in her career. In addition to having the necessary credentials, Dean Hutcheson, her former teacher, already knew her.

Marshall's method of teaching diction proved effective for non-English speaking singers, native English speaking singers, and student singers alike. Evolving from a twenty-page booklet used in her classroom into a 198-page manual, the *Singer's Manual of English Diction* has endured while two other diction books in use during the same time period have not. Marshall developed a chatty guidebook to singing, that, when followed, produced intelligible singing on stage.

While Marshall's book remains in use and in print, the last twenty-three years have witnessed a new batch of diction textbooks. *The International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers* (1989) by Joan Wall, *Diction for Singers* (1990*)* by Joan Wall, Robert Caldwell, Tracy Gavilanes and Sheila Allen, *American Diction for Singers* (1990) by Geoffrey G. Forward and Elisabeth Howard, and *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008) by Kathryn LaBouff are now in print with the common denominator that they all use the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Amazon.com Bestseller lists provide some insight into current online sales.[68] It should be cautioned, however, that these rankings do not include any sales prior to the company's founding in 1993, a time when Marshall's book may have been at its peak. In 2012, the Amazon Bestseller list ranked the five best-selling English diction texts in the following order (highest sales to lowest): *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008) by LaBouff, *The International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers,* (1989) by Wall, *Diction for Singers* (1990) by Wall et al., *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* (1953) by Marshall and *American Diction for Singers* (1990) by Forward and Howard. While the newer books present ~~a~~ more up to date visual presentations, it remains to be seen if any of these texts will have the staying power of the *Singer's Manual of English Diction,* still a best seller, almost six decades after its first publication.

The many facets of Madeleine Marshall "Graham Jones" Simon combined to create a sought after accompanist and vocal coach, a librettist whose work delighted audiences, a formidable diction teacher, and a successful author whose book is still in use sixty years after its first publication. Madeleine Marshall's ability to impart her knowledge of English diction in a standardized set of guidelines produced singers who could easily be understood, and contributed to make her book a definitive guide on English diction. As Marshall herself said in the closing pages of her book, "If your diction sounds natural - …so that your listener notices only what is being said in text and tone and isn't aware that any diction rules, devices, or suggestions are being used – your diction is good." [69] ❁ IJRCS

[68] http://www.amazon.com/Singers-Manual-English-Diction/dp/00287110009 (accessed November 12, 2012).

[69] Marshall, *Singer's Manual,* 195.

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