

GERMAN PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

BRAHMS – *GERMAN REQUIEM*

German pronunciation is fairly similar to English. Once you have learned the relationship between spelling and pronunciation, you should be able to work out how most words are pronounced, since there are very rarely any exceptions to the rules. There are no silent letters or unpredictable combinations of letters. The examples below are all words taken from Brahms's *German Requiem*.

VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

		German	English			German	English
a	short	Hand, Statt	cat	au	Haupt, Haus	house	
	long	da, tragen	<u>ba</u> rgain				
ä	short	no examples		eu	Freude, euch	voice	
	long	Tränen, säen	train, say				
e	short	denn, des	den, mess	ei	Leid, Fleisch	light, fly	
	long	selig, gehen, Regen	gay, ray				
i	short	sind, hin, ist, ich	hissed, din	ie	die, sie, wie	Dee, lee	
	long	mir, ihr	mere, ear				
o	short	sollen, kommen	comma	ee	Seele	sailor	
	long	Toten, Trost, gross	go, gross				
ö	short	plötzlich	<u>o</u> ther, shovel				
	long	trösten, Vorhöfen	purr				
u	short	geduldig, und	<u>oo</u> mpah				
	long	Blume, nun	bloom, noon				
ü	short	erfüllet	as French 'u' -				
	long	Brüder, rühret, über	eg 'mur'				

CONSONANTS – mainly as in English, but note the following:

b	Blume, Garben Leib	as English 'b' : bloom, harbour but unvoiced (like 'p') when final : ripe
ch	sicher, Frucht, köstlich	like the Scottish sound in the word 'loch'
d	das, denn, deine, Freude Leid, sind, seid	as English 'd' : den, cider but unvoiced (like 't') when final : light, hint
g	Gras, tragen, Tage selig, geduldig	as English 'g' : got, glide but like 'ch' at the end of a word : loch
j	ja, jauchzen	like English 'y' : year
qu	Qual	like English 'k' + 'f'
r	rühret, Trost, verdorret	(in singing) like the rolled Scottish 'r'
s	selig, sind, sie, Posaune Gras, Geheimnis, Preis Statt, Stachel, spricht	like English 'z' at start or middle of word : zing like English 'ss' when final : grass, price sh + next consonant : shplendid (à la Sean Connery!)
ss, ß	müssen, wissen, großen	as English 'ss' : hissing, grosser
sch	Fleisch, Menschen	like English 'sh' : flesh, mention
v	vor, verlanget, davon	like English 'f' : for, fair, coffee
w	wie, wir, weinen, Wonne	like English 'v' : veer, vine
z	Herz, jauchzen, Zion	like English 't' + 's'