Learning Diction
Using the Textbook and Listening Labs

Excerpt from the textbook: Diction for Singers, 2nd Edition

The single letter e unstressed

Usually pronounce unstressed *e* as [e]. (See "The Letter e in Unstressed Syllables" on page 79.) In the following words, pronounce each unstressed *e* as close [e].

LL 2.3.11 Read aloud.

legato	[le 'ga to]
beccare	[bek 'ka re]
amore	[a 'mo re]
befana	[be 'fa na]
credere	['kre de re]
arme	['ar me]
madre	['ma dre]
arretrarsi	[ar re 'trar si]
venire	[ve 'ni re]
regale	[re 'ga le]
legale	[le 'ga le]
fedele	[fe 'de le]

When unstressed *e* is followed by *l, m, n, r* and another *consonant*, usually pronounce it as [ɛ].

LL 2.3.12 Read aloud.

beltade	[bɛl 'ta de]
gentile	[dʒɛn 'ti le]
tempesta	[tem 'pɛ sta]
versare	[vɛr 'sa re]
entrare	[ɛn 'tra re]
mercè	[mɛr 'tʃɛ]

Note: For a memory "tickler," you can remember this rule as the "lemoner plus another consonant" rule (because the consonants *l, m, n,* and *r* are used in the word *lemoner*).

The single letter e stressed

When the letter *e* ends a stressed syllable, usually pronounce it as [e].

LL 2.3.13 Read aloud.

pe-na	['pe na]	
se-gno	['se ɲo]	

Lessons from the online interactive Listening Labs



