

Baruch Skeer's two-letter method of Hebrew transliteration for singers

<u>transliteration</u>	<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>pronunciation</u>
ee	אָ	<i>e</i> as in <i>feet</i> ²
ay	אֵ	<i>e</i> as in <i>they</i> ²
eh	אֶ, אֵי	<i>e</i> as in <i>pet</i> ²
oo ¹	אָ, וֹ	<i>oo</i> as in <i>soon</i> ²
ah	אָ, אַ	<i>a</i> as in <i>father</i> ²
aw	אָ, אַ	<i>o</i> as in <i>cord</i> ²
oh	אָ, וֹ	<i>o</i> as in <i>go</i> ³
ih or '	אִ	<i>i</i> as in <i>hit</i> ³ or silent ^{2,4}
ai	אֵי	diphthong <i>i</i> as in <i>ice</i> ³
ch	כּ	<i>ch</i> as in <i>loch</i> ⁵

For example, **יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם**, commonly transliterated *Yisroayl B'Mitzroyim*, is rendered "Yees'-raw-ayl Bih-Meetz'-rah-yeem." Individuals unfamiliar with the Hebrew may pronounce the *i* of the first word, *i* as in *his* and the English *Israel*, the first and second *i* in the second word, *i* as in *ritz* and *him*, and the *o* in the second word, *oy* as in *boy* or *o* as in *go*. Also, Modern Hebrew uses Sephardic pronunciations, so singers fluent in Hebrew may have different pronunciations. This results in different choruses and/or different individuals within a single chorus singing the same text in different ways. With this transliteration system, the composer's intentions are clarified.

¹In some scores, "ooh"

²From *Ben-Yehuda's Pocket English-Hebrew Hebrew-English Dictionary*, Ehud Ben-Yehuda, Editor, David Weinstein, Associate Editor, Washington Square Press, 1961, 1964; citation of *Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary*, G. & C. Merriam Co., 1947, 1951.

³Examples from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1999; Ashkenazic pronunciation as learned by the composer

⁴But rendered as a short stop or breath, as in music notation

⁵Guttural *chaph* is rare in English, except as imported from Yiddish, as in *chutzpah*, or German, as in the phrases *ich dien* and *nicht wahr?*