



GLOSSARY OF MUSICAL TERMS



A

- a, á (It): At, by, for, with.
- A 440: The note A above middle C, with frequency of 440 vibrations per second. The note which orchestras and music ensembles universally tune with.
- a cappella (It): Without accompaniment.
- accelerando: Becoming faster.
- accent (Eng): To emphasize or stress a note, indicated by the symbol “ > ”. The three main kinds of accents are agogic, dynamic, and tonic.
- accidental: Sharps, flats or natural signs; used to raise, lower or return a note to its normal pitch.
- accompaniment: Secondary musical material, supports more important material.
- acoustic: An instrument that produces sound without the use of electronic amplification.
- acoustics 1: The science of sound. 2: The physical properties of an instrument or room as related to sound.
- adagietto (It): A little faster than adagio.
- adagio (It): “At ease.” A slow tempo between *largo* and *andante*.
- à demi-voix (Fr): With half the voice, whispered.
- à deux, a due (Fr, It): For two instruments or voices (to be played or sung in unison).
- ad libitum, ad lib. (Lat.): “At will.” the performer improvises freely and may vary the tempo.
- Aeolian: A medieval mode whose half- and whole-step pattern is that of playing A to A on the white keys of the piano (same as the natural minor scale).
- affrettando (It): Hurrying.
- agitato (It): Agitated, excited, hurried, restless.
- agogic accent: Emphasis is given to a note by making it longer than normal.
- air: A song or melody.
- al, all’, alla, alle (It) 1: “To the.” 2: In the style of (e.g., *alla valse*, “in a waltz style”).
- al coda (It): “To the coda.”
- al Fine (It): To the end.
- alla breve (It): A duple time signature, usually 2/2.
- allargando (It): Growing broader and slower.
- allegretto (It): A cheerful fast tempo, a little slower than *allegro*.
- allegro (It): “cheerful.” A lively, fast tempo: *allegro assai*, very fast; *allegro di bravura*, fast, bright and spirited; *allegro moderato*, moderately fast.
- alphorn: A wooden horn up to 10 feet long, curved slightly at the end with an upturned bell; from Switzerland.
- al segno (It): Return to the sign (see *dal segno*).
- alt (It): “High.” the notes from G to F that fall above the fifth line of the *treble clef*.
- alteration: The raising or lowering of a note with an *accidental*.
- altered chord: A chord in which a note(s) has been raised or lowered chromatically.
- altissimo (It): “Most high.” The highest notes; the octave above the *alt*.
- alto (It): “High.” the highest male singing voice and lowest female singing voice.
- alto clef: The C clef on the third line of the staff. Used by the viola.
- alto flute: See *flute*.
- alto saxophone: See *saxophone*.
- amabile (It): Amiable, gentle.
- anacrusis (Gr.): *Pickup* or upbeat or preparatory beat.
- andante (It): “Going.” A moderate tempo between *allegretto* and *adagio*.
- andantino (It): Originally a tempo a little slower than *andante*, but now indicates a tempo a bit faster than *andante*.
- animato, animoso (It): Animated, energetic or spirited.
- anticipation: Nonharmonic note or notes played before the chord in which it belongs.
- antiphonal: Alternating singing or playing by separate groups of performers; originally separated also by distance.
- appassionato (It): Passionately.
- appoggiatura (It): An accented nonharmonic note that resolves stepwise to a harmonic note.
- arcato (It): “Bowed.” For string instruments, indicates to use the bow.
- archet, archetto (Fr): For string instruments, the bow; to bow.
- arco (It): “Bow”. For string instruments, indicates to use the bow.
- arpeggio (It): The notes of a chord played in succession; a broken chord.
- arraché (Fr): Strong *pizzicato*.
- arrangement: A different version of a composition.
- arsis (Gr.): The upbeat.
- articulation: The degree to which notes are separated or connected, such as *staccato* or *legato*.
- assai (It): Very, extremely.
- a tempo (It): Return to the original tempo.

atonal: Music lacking a tonal or key center.

attacca (It): Go on, proceed immediately to next section. *Segue*.

attack: The beginning of a note or phrase.

a 2: For 2 instruments or voices.

augmentation: A lengthening of the duration of notes in a *theme*.

augmented: Raised, enlarged.

augmented chord: A triad composed of a root, major third, and augmented fifth.

augmented sixth chord: A chord with the interval of an augmented sixth resolving upward to an octave.

augmented interval: A major or perfect *interval* raised by a *half step*.

authentic cadence: A cadence with a progression from the dominant (V) chord to the tonic (I) chord.

B

back beat: Used with drums, emphasis on beats 2 and 4.

balance: the harmonious adjustment of volume and sound quality between instruments and/or voices.

bar: A *measure*; the space between two bar lines. Also, the *bar line* itself.

baritone: A male singing voice higher than bass but lower than tenor.

baritone horn: A brass instrument similar to the *euphonium*, but with 3 valves and smaller bore.

baritone saxophone: see *saxophone*.

bar line: Vertical line through a staff to separate measures or bars.

barre (Fr): Used for guitars; playing several strings with a single finger across the fretboard.

bass 1: The lowest male singing voice. 2 The lowest part in music. 3 Electric bass, bass viol, upright bass.

bassa (It): Low.

bass clef: The clef which names the 4th line of the staff as *F*.

basso continuo (It): Used in the baroque era; an accompaniment usu. improvised with numbers indicating the harmony.

bassoon: A double-reed instrument with low pitch.

baton: Conductor's wand.

beam: A horizontal line used in place of flags to connect short notes.

beat 1: A rhythmic unit of time. 2: To mark time.

beats: pulses caused by sound waves of slightly different frequency.

bebop: A form of jazz invented by Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker; uses improvisation, complex rhythms and harmonies.

bend: A change in pitch, usu. a half or whole step. Used with voice, guitar, harmonica and other instruments.

big band: Jazz band playing dance music. Popular in '30's and 40's, experienced a renaissance in late '90's.

bitonal: A composition using two keys at the same time.

bluegrass: Folk music, usu. fast tempo with banjo, fiddle, bass, mandolin, and other instruments.

blue notes: Notes played/sung below intended pitch (usu 3rd, 7th, 5th). Used in blues music.

blues: the basis of jazz. Originated from African vocal music; minor 3rd and 7th of scale. Form is 12 bars long.

Boehm system: System of keys used with woodwind instruments perfected by Theobald Boehm.

bones 1: Percussion instrument of African origin, a pair of sticks/bones held between the fingers and clicked in rhythm. 2: Slang for trombones.

bore: The diameter and shape of the tube of a wind instrument.

bow: The device drawn across the strings of string instruments like violin, cello, etc. A stick ~3 ft. long with horsehair stretched between the ends.

brace: A curved line which connects the staves for instruments which use more than one staff.

bracket: A straight line with curved ends which connects staves for different instruments playing simultaneously.

break 1: The point at which a voice shifts from the chest register to the head (falsetto) register. 2: The change in woodwind instruments (esp. clarinet) from the lower register to the higher register.

breve: Originally a short note, has come to mean a long note equalling two whole notes.

bridge 1: A transitional section in a piece of music. 2: A piece of wood that supports the strings and holds them away from the body of the instrument.

brillante (It): Brilliant.

brio (It): Vigor, spirit. *Con brio*.

broken chord: Notes of a chord played in succession rather than simultaneously.

brushes: Thin wire brushes used on percussion instruments, esp. in jazz.

bull roarer: An instrument originating in aboriginal Australia consisting of a thin piece of bone or wood of special shape tied to rope and whirled vigorously about one's head. Makes a very loud roaring sound.

BWV (abbr.): "Bach-Werke Verzeichnis." A method of cataloguing Bach's work.

C

cabasa (Sp): Percussion instrument. A gourd covered with beads; a cylinder of metal covered with beads of metal.

cacophony: Dissonant sound. Usu. loud and unpleasant.

cadence: The ending of a piece or section, usu. applied to chord progression (e.g. *deceptive cadence*, *perfect cadence*, etc.).

cadenza: An unaccompanied solo passage usually near the end of a piece. Either ad lib or written by composer.

- caesura: A sudden pause or break, shown by the symbol //.
- calma, calmando (It): Calming, quiet, tranquil.
- calypso: A type of rhythm or song originating in Trinidad.
- cancel: Another name for the natural sign used to remove the affect of an accidental.
- canción (Sp): Song.
- cantabile (It): In a singing style.
- capo 1: The head, beginning, or top. 2: A device placed across the strings of an instrument to raise the pitch.
- capriccio: A piece played in a free, playful style.
- castrato (It): An adult male singer with a soprano or alto voice.
- catgut: Formerly used as material for string instruments. Actually sheep or goat intestines.
- C clef: A moveable clef indicating middle C.
- celere (It): Quick, rapid.
- chalumeau (Fr): The low register of a clarinet.
- changes: Slang for chord changes.
- chanson (Fr): Song.
- chart: The score or parts of an instrumental ensemble, usu. pop or jazz.
- chest voice: the low register of the voice.
- choir: A group of singers of sacred music.
- choke cymbal: 1: The hi-hat cymbals on the drum set. 2: Verb meaning to silence a cymbal quickly.
- chops: Slang for a player's ability.
- chord: Three or more tones sounding simultaneously.
- chorus: 1: The *refrain* of a song. 2: A group of singers of secular music.
- chromatic: Moving by half steps.
- chromaticism: Melodic or harmonic use of tones other than those of the diatonic scale.
- chromatic scale: A scale made up of 12 half steps in succession.
- circle of fifths: The succession of keys progressing by fifths.
- circular breathing: A technique used by wind players in which air is expelled from the mouth while inhaling through the nose.
- clam: Slang for a wrong note.
- classical 1: Music of a "serious" (non-pop) nature. 2: The time period from the late 1700's to the early 1800's.
- claves: Percussion instrument from Cuba; round hardwood sticks hit against each other.
- clef: A symbol at the beginning of a piece of music which shows the names of the lines and spaces of the staff.
- close harmony: Harmony with the chord tones as close together as possible.
- cluster: group of notes with the interval of a second.
- coda (It): Closing section of a piece. In written music a separate section to after repeating a previous section (e.g. D.C. al Coda; D.S. al Coda). Indicated by the symbol Φ .
- col legno (It): Playing with the wood part of the bow.
- combo (abbr.): Short for combination. A small group of instrumentalists, used in jazz.
- comma: Breath mark (').
- common chord: Triad. Chord with root, third and fifth.
- common time: Four beats to a measure, quarter note gets one beat. 4/4.
- common tone: A note that remains the same between two chords.
- còmodo (It): Comfortable.
- complete cadence: I-IV-V-I.
- compound interval: An interval larger than an octave (9th, 11th, 13th).
- compound meter: A time signature in which the basic beat is divisible by 3 (6/8, 9/8, etc.).
- con (It): With.
- con anima (It): With spirit.
- con brio: With animation.
- concertmaster: First-chair violinist in an orchestra.
- concerto: a composition for soloist and orchestra.
- concert pitch 1: The pitch for C instruments (e.g. flute, oboe, trombone, violin, etc.). 2: International tuning pitch of A440 or A442.
- con fuoco (It): With fire.
- con gusto (It): With gusto.
- consonance: Sounds pleasing to the ear.
- con sordini (It): With mutes.
- con sordino (It): With mute.
- contra (It): In the octave below normal (e.g. contra bassoon).
- contralto: The lowest female voice, a.k.a. *alto*.
- contrary motion: Term used in *counterpoint* for two voices moving in opposite directions.

cor (Fr): Horn.

corona: *Fermata*.

count: The pulse or beat.

counterpoint: The combination of two or more melodic lines occurring simultaneously.

countertenor: The highest male singing voice.

cover: Slang for the performance of a song written by someone other than the performer.

cowbell: A metal bell struck with a drumstick.

crescendo: Gradually becoming louder.

cross rhythm: Different rhythms played at the same time.

crotchet: British name for quarter note.

cue **1**: A gesture made by a conductor for a performer to make an entrance. **2**: Small notes indicating another instrument's part.

cut time: 2/2 time signature.

cymbals: Percussion instruments of circular brass plates. May be struck together (crash cymbals), with a mallet (suspended cymbal), or mechanically (hi-hat).

D

da capo, D.C. (It): Direction in a piece of music to return to the beginning.

da capo al coda, D.C. al Coda (It): Direction to return to the beginning, play to the Coda sign, then to skip to the Coda and finish the piece.

da capo al fine, D.C. al Fine (It): Direction to return to the beginning of a piece and play to the "Fine" sign.

dal (It): "From the," or "by the."

dal segno, D.S. (It): Direction to return to the point marked by the sign S .

dal segno al coda, D.S. al Coda (It): Direction to return to the sign S , play to the coda sign C , then skip to the coda.

dal segno al fine: Direction to return to the sign S and play to the "Fine" sign.

dB (abbr.): Decibel. Measurement of loudness.

decrescendo: Gradually becoming softer.

degree: a note of a scale.

delicato (It): Delicately.

demiquaver: British term for sixteenth note.

demisiquaver: British term for thirty-second note.

détaché (Fr): Short, detached bowing strokes.

di (It): Of, with.

diatonic: The tones of any major or minor scale.

didgeridoo: Australian aboriginal horn made of wood hollowed by termites, played with the lips and breath.

diminished: Lowered.

diminished interval: A minor or perfect interval lowered a half step.

diminished seventh chord: A chord with root, minor third, diminished fifth, and diminished seventh.

diminished triad: A triad with root, minor third, and diminished fifth.

diminuendo (It): Growing gradually softer.

diminution: Shortening the length of notes in a *theme*.

discord: Dissonant sounds or sounds unpleasant to the ear.

disjunct: Moving by intervals larger than a second.

dissonance: Sounds unpleasant to the ear.

divisi, div. (It): Indication for separate parts written on one staff. To be played by two or more performers.

do: The first note (*tonic*) of a diatonic scale.

dodecaphonic: Twelve-tone music.

doit: A jazz technique used on brass instruments where a note is bent upwards.

dominant: Fifth degree of a major or minor scale.

doppio (It): Double.

Dorian: A medieval mode with the half- whole-step pattern from D to D on the white keys of the piano.

dot **1**: Written above or below a note indicates *staccato*. **2**: Written after a note, the dot increases the length by half its original value.

double bar: Two bar lines on a staff that show the end of a section or piece.

double bass: Lowest member of the violin family, tuned E, A, D, G.

double concerto: A concerto for two instruments.

double dot: Increases a note's length by 3/4 of its original value.

double flat: Written before a note, it lowers the note a whole step.

double horn: A French horn comprised of two different horns (one in F, one in Bb), with valve to switch between the two. Better intonation and greater range.

double reed: Two thin pieces of cane bound together at one end which vibrate to produce sound for *oboe*, *English horn*, and *bassoon*.


double sharp: Written before a note, it raises the pitch of the note a whole step.

double stop: For violin family instruments, playing two notes at once.
 double time: Twice as fast.
 double tonguing: On brass and flute instruments, a method of rapidly articulating notes, alternating with the front and back of the tongue (ta-ka-ta-ka).
 downbeat: the first beat of a measure given with downward stroke by the conductor.
 drone: A note of the same pitch which continues for a long time. Used by instruments like bagpipes, 5-string banjo and hurdy-gurdy.
 drum kit, drum set: A set of drums several drums, usu. consisting of: snare drum, bass drum, hi-hat, ride cymbal, crash cymbal, hi- middle- and low tom toms.
 duet or duo: Musical composition for two performers.
 duple meter: A time signature with two beats to a measure (e.g. 2/4 or fast 6/8).
 duration: The length of a note or rest.
 dynamic accent: Emphasis given a note by louder articulation than normal.
 dynamic markings: Symbols which indicate different levels of loudness or softness (e.g. *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*).
 dynamics **1**: The level of loudness or softness. **2**: The symbols for dynamics.

E

8va: Ottava altus. One octave higher.
 8vb: Ottava bassus. One octave lower.
 ear training: A technique of learning to hear music and write it down.
 eighth: An octave.
 eighth note, eighth rest: A note/rest with one eighth the length of a whole note, and half the length of a quarter note. Half of a beat in 4/4 time.
 eleventh: Diatonic interval from the first to the eleventh note. Same letter name as the 4th.
 embellishment: An *ornament* added to music.
 embouchure: The position and use of lips, tongue, and teeth when playing a wind instrument.
 English horn: An alto *oboe* with a pitch a fifth lower. Same conical shape but with a bulbous bell.
 enharmonic: Two notes of the same pitch with different names (e.g. Ab and G#).
 ensemble: A group of performers.
 entr'acte (Fr): A piece played between acts of an opera, ballet, or musical.
 equal temperament: A tuning system which divides the octave into equal intervals.
 espressivo (It): Expressive, with emotion.
 estinto (It): Very soft, almost inaudible.
 -etto (It): A suffix meaning "little."
 étude: A piece of music studied to improve technique.
 euphonium: A brass instrument similar to the *baritone horn* but with a larger bore.
 eurhythmics: A system which teaches rhythm by using body movement.
 expression marks: Directions or symbols for musical expression and interpretation, like *dynamics*, *tempo*, *articulation*, and mood.

F

f (abbr.): Forte. Loud dynamic.
 fa: 4th Degree of a *diatonic* scale.
 fake: Slang for improvisation. "If you can't make it, fake it."
 fake book: A song book containing chord changes, lyrics, and melodies for many songs.
 false cadence: see *deceptive cadence*.
 falsetto (It): A high voice used for notes above the normal vocal range.
 fanfare: A short piece of music for brass to attract attention.
 F clef: The bass clef centered on the 4th line of the staff and naming that 4th line as F below middle C.
 feminine cadence: A *cadence* ending on a weak beat.
 fermata (It): A symbol indicating a hold or pause. 
 festoso (It): Happy or merry.
 ff (abbr.): *Fortissimo*.
 fff (abbr.): *Fortississimo*.
 f-hole: On violin family instruments it's the *f*-shaped sound holes on top of the instrument. Also on some guitars.
 fiddle: A violin used for folk- or bluegrass music; it usu. has a flatter *bridge*, uses metal strings and a *tuner* on each string.
 fiero (It): Bold.
 fife: A high, keyless flute.
 fifth: The interval of 5 diatonic scale degrees.
 fine: The end.
 fingerboard: The surface of the neck on string instruments where the fingers press down on the strings.
 fixed do: A singing system in which the note C is always do. Compare to *moveable do*.

flag: A curved line extending from the right side of the stem of a note. Used on eighth notes and smaller notes.

flam: A drum rudiment. Small grace note before the main note.

flamenco: A Spanish dance/song usu. played on guitar and including rhythmic clapping and stomping of the dancer.

flat **1**: The symbol used to lower a note by one half step. **2**: To be below normal pitch.

flip: A jazz technique, usu performed on brass instruments. Note is raised in pitch and then glissed down to the next note.

flügelhorn: A brass instrument in the trumpet family with a wider bell than trumpet, a conical bore, and more mellow tone.

flute: A woodwind instrument of wood or metal in the shape of a cylinder closed at one end. Sound is produced by blowing across a hole near the closed end (see also: *alto flute*, *bass flute*).

flutter tonguing: A wind instrument technique of very rapid tonguing, produced by rolling the tongue saying trrrrrrr.

form: The structure or organization of a piece of music.

forte (It): Loud.

fortissimo (It): Very loud.

fortississimo (It): Very very loud. Officially the loudest dynamic marking.

forzando, forzato (It): Forced. Strongly accented.

fourth: An interval of 4 diatonic degrees.

fourth chord: A chord with intervals of a fourth.

French horn: A brass instrument with a conical bore, valves, highly flared bell, and many coils of tubing.

French sixth: A type of *augmented sixth chord* with a major third, augmented fourth, and augmented sixth above the root.

fret **1**: On many string instruments, a strip usu of metal placed across the fingerboard to give a specific note when fretted. **2**: The act of pressing the fingers down on the fingerboard.

fretboard: The *fingerboard* of instruments with frets.

frog: The end of the *bow* which is held in the hand.

fugue: A piece in which two or more parts are built upon a recurring theme.

full score: An instrumental score in which appear all the parts for the instruments.

fundamental: The lowest note in a *harmonic series*.

funk: A rhythmic style with much syncopation.

furioso (It): Furiously, wildly.

fusion: A combination of rock and jazz beginning in the early '70s.

fz (abbr.): *Forzando*, *sforzando*.

G

gapped scale: A scale made from a complete scale by leaving out some notes. The pentatonic scale is a gapped scale.

G clef: The treble clef, centered on the second line of the staff, giving that line the pitch G above middle C.

German flute: The standard flute.

German sixth: A type of *augmented sixth chord* with a major third, perfect fifth, and augmented sixth above the root.

Gestopft (Ger.): Muting a horn with the hand.

ghost bend: A guitar technique in which a note is pre-bent before sounding the string.

ghost note: A jazz technique in which the note indicated by parentheses is barely played.

gig: A musician's slang for a job.

giocoso (It): Humorous.

glass harmonica: An instrument invented in the 1700s made of various sizes of glass bowls played by rubbing around the rim with a wet finger.

glee: Unaccompanied vocal music for three or four parts.

glee club: A group that sings glees.

glide: A smooth change in pitch from one note to another.

glissando: A fast scale produced by sliding the hand finger rapidly from one note to another.

gong: A percussion instrument from Asia made up of a heavy circular metal plate and struck with a soft mallet.

G.P. (abbr.): Grand Pause. A pause in a piece of music.

grace note: An ornamental note played quickly before the main note.

grandioso (It): Grand, grandiose.

grand pause: A pause for the entire group of musicians.

grand staff: Both the treble and bass clef staves. Piano music is written on a grand staff.

grave (It): Slow. Solemn.

grazia, grazioso (It): Grace, graceful.

groove: Slang for when music is perfectly in synch.

grosso (It): Great, large.

growl: A rough sound produced by growling in the back of the throat. Often used in jazz.

gruppetto (It): An ornamental group of notes like a *turn*, *shake*, or *trill*.

gusto (It): Enjoyment, gusto.

H

H 1: German for B natural. **2:** Letter used with a number for the works of Haydn, after the cataloguer “Hoboken.”

half cadence: see *imperfect cadence*.

half note, half rest: A note/rest equal to half the length of a whole note/rest or two quarter notes/rests. Two beats in 4/4 time.

half step: The smallest *interval* in Western music. One twelfth of an *octave*.

harmonic minor: A *natural minor* scale with a half step between the 7th and 8th degrees of the scale.

harmonic progression: Movement from one chord to another.

harmonics **1:** The pure individual tones which make up a complex tone. **2:** On string instruments, a tone produced by touching the strings at the harmonic nodes.

harmonic series: A series of notes produced above a *fundamental* and having a specific order.

head voice: The upper *register* of the voice.

heidimisemiquaver: British name for a sixty-fourth note.

hexachord: A six-note scale.

hi-hat cymbals: Used in the drum kit; a pair of cymbals facing each other and struck together with a mechanical device operated by the foot.

hold: A *fermata* or pause.

horn **1:** The brass instrument with conical tube wound round itself. Another name for French horn. **2:** Musician’s slang for his or her instrument.

Hungarian minor scale: A harmonic minor scale with a raised 4th.

hyper-: Prefix meaning above or over.

hypo-: Prefix meaning below.

I

ictus (Lat.): Stress, or an accent.

imitation: The restatement of a musical idea in another part. Used in counterpoint.

improvisation: Music composed on the spot.

incomplete cadence: A cadence in which a note other than the *key note* is in the top voice of the I chord.

interlude: A short piece used to bridge the acts of a play.

interrupted cadence: A cadence in which the dominant chord (V) moves to a chord other than the tonic (I).

interval: The distance between two notes.

Intonation: The accuracy of pitch.

inversion, chordal: A chord with a bass tone other than its root.

inversion, melodic: The change of an ascending interval to its corresponding descending interval.

Ionian: A medieval mode whose whole and half steps correspond to the major scale. C to C on the white keys of the piano.

istesso (It): The same. *l’istesso tempo*.

Italian sixth: A type of *augmented sixth chord* containing a major third and an augmented sixth above the bass.

J-K-L

jam: Slang for a gathering of musicians to play or improvise.

jazz: A style of music with African-American roots and using *blue notes*, *improvisation*, and strong rhythms.

jazz combo: A small jazz group usu consisting of piano, drums, bass, and a solo instrument.

jazz ensemble: A group of musicians (usu rhythm section, brass, and woodwinds) who play various styles of *jazz*.

K: Used to catalogue Mozart’s works; represents Köchel. (e.g. K 201)

kettledrum: A percussion instrument with a tunable head. Also called *timpani*.

key **1:** The tonal center of a composition, based on the tonic of the scale. **2:** A lever pressed by the finger on an instrument (e.g. piano, flute).

keynote: The first note of the scale of a *key*. Also called the *tonic*.

key signature - accidentals at the left side of the staff between the clef and the time signature which indicate what key the piece is in.

kick: In jazz, a rhythmic accent or cue applied by the rhythm section.

la: The sixth degree of a diatonic scale.

lacrimoso (It): Tearful, mournful.

largamente (It): Broadly.

largando (It): Slowing down.

largetto (It): A little faster than *largo*.

Largo (It): Broad. A very slow tempo.

leading note/tone: The seventh degree of a diatonic scale; leads the ear to the *tonic* note.

lead sheet: Melody line, lyrics and chord for a song. A *fake book* is made up of lead sheets.

leap: A skip of more than a 2nd.

ledger line, leger line: A short line drawn for a note above or below the staff.

legato (It): Smooth.

leggero, leggiero (It): Lightly.

leno (It): Faint.

lento (It): slow.

lesto (It): Lively.

licks: Slang for a short musical idea or phrase.

ligature 1: A metal device used by woodwind instruments to secure the reed to the mouthpiece. 2: A curved line over a group of notes to be sung on the same syllable.

lip: A verb meaning to adjust the pitch of a note slightly up or down.

lip trill: A technique used by brass players; an upward trill without use of valves.

l'istesso (It): The same.

loco (It): Return to the normal place. Used after playing 8va or 8vb.

Locrian: a medieval mode which starts on the seventh degree of a diatonic scale. B to B on the white keys of a piano.

lungo (It): Long.

Lydian: A medieval mode beginning on the 4th degree of a diatonic scale. F to F on the white keys of a piano.

M

ma (It): But. Allegro ma non troppo.

maestoso (It): Majestically.

maggiore (It): Major.

major: Used in music theory to describe *intervals*, *chords*, and *scales*.

major chord: A triad consisting of a root, major third, and perfect fifth.

major scale: A diatonic scale with half steps between from the third to fourth degrees and seventh to eighth degrees.

marcato (It): Stressed or accented.

marcia (It): March.

mariachi (Sp): A Mexican folk group with 2 violins, guitar, guitarron and maybe rhythm instruments.

martelé, martellato (Fr): Play with short detached bow strokes without lifting the bow from the strings.

masculine cadence: A *cadence* in which the last chord is on the strong beat.

measure: The space between two bar lines.

mediant: The third degree of a scale.

melisma: Several notes sung on the same syllable.

melismatic: Song that uses melismas.

melodic minor: A natural minor scale with the sixth and seventh degrees raised ascending, and lowered descending.

melody: A sequence of single notes.

meno (It): Less.

meter: The rhythmic structure of a piece determined by number of beats, time values and accents. *Simple meters* are divisible by two; *compound meters* are divisible by 3.

metronome: A mechanical or electronic device used for sounding beats per minute. Invented c. 1812.

mezza voce (It): Half voice. Quiet.

mezzo (It): Half or medium (e.g. mezzo forte).

mezzo forte (It): Medium loud.

mezzo piano (It): Medium soft.

mezzo soprano (It): A female voice between soprano and alto.

mf (abbr.): Mezzo forte.

mi: The 3rd degree of a *diatonic* scale.

middle C: The note C in the middle of the *grand staff* and near the middle of the keyboard.

minim: British name for the *half note*.

minim rest: Half rest.

minor: Used to describe *intervals*, *chords*, and *scales*. Means lesser.

minor scale (natural): A *diatonic* scale in which the 3rd, 6th and 7th degrees are lowered a half step from the *major scale*. See also *harmonic minor*, and *melodic minor*.

misterioso (It): Mysteriously.

mit (Ger.): With.

Mixolydian: A Medieval mode starting on the 5th degree of a diatonic scale. G to G on the white keys of a piano.

M.M. (abbr.): Stands for Maelzel's *metronome*, the man who invented the device.

mode: A type of scale with a certain arrangement of intervals. See *Ionian*, *Dorian*, *Phrygian*, *Lydian*, *Mixolydian*, *Aeolian*, and *Locrian*.

moderato (It): A moderate tempo.

modulate: To change from one key to another.

moll (Ger.): Minor.

molto (It): Very.

monotone: An unvaried pitch.
 mordent: A melodic ornament consisting of the alteration of the written note with the note directly below (lower ~) or above (upper ~) it.
 mouthpiece: On a brass or woodwind instrument, the part responsible for making the vibrations, placed on the player's lips or in the mouth.
 moveable do: A system of singing using syllables in which the first note of any diatonic scale is *do*. See *fixed do*.
 movement: A self-contained piece of music within a larger piece of music.
 mp (abbr.): *Mezzo piano*.
 music theory: The study of how music is written down and put together.
 music therapy: The use of music as a healing agent for physical and psychological problems.
 muta (It): Direction to change keys, usu. found in timpani and horn parts.
 mutes: Devices used to muffle, soften, or change the sound of an instrument.

N

natural: The symbol which indicates a note is neither sharp nor flat, and when the symbol is in front of the note, it cancels any previous accidental.
 natural horn: A horn with no valves or slides.
 natural minor: A diatonic scale with the whole-half step pattern of WHWWHWW. A to A on the white keys of the piano.
 Neopolitan sixth: A chord constructed on the fourth degree of a *diatonic* scale with a minor third and a minor sixth above the bass.
 neck: The long slender part on a string instrument to which the fingerboard is attached.
 neumes: The signs and symbols used for musical notation in the Middle Ages.
 ninth: The interval of nine *diatonic* notes. An octave and a second.
 ninth chord: Root, third, fifth, seventh, and ninth.
 node: A point of lowest amplitude in the wavelength of a string. These points are where *harmonics* are produced on a string instrument.
 non (Fr): No or not.
 nonet: A piece for 9 musicians.
 nonharmonic notes: Notes not a part of the chord structures around them.
 non-transposing: instruments pitched in the key of C (e.g. flute, trombone, bells).
 notehead: The main, bulbous part of a note.

O

O 1: The symbol for diminished. 2: The symbol for an open string. 2: When using the plunger mute, a symbol for "open."
 obbligato (It): An optional part contrasting the melody. Originally meant an obligatory part.
 oblique motion: Two melodic lines, one of which moves while the other remains stationary.
 oboe: A *double-reed* woodwind instrument with a conical bore.
 oboe d' amore: Slightly larger than the normal oboe and with a more bulbous bell. Pitched a minor third lower.
 octave - the interval between the first and eighth degrees of a *diatonic* scale.
 octet 1: Eight performers. 2: A piece of music for eight performers.
 odd meter: A meter with an odd number grouped with an even number of beats per measure, like 7/4 (3+4) and 5/8 (2+3).
 oliphant: A medieval horn made from an elephant's tusk.
 Op. (abbr.): Opus.
 open: Not stopped or muted.
 open fifth: A triad with no third.
 open harmony: When notes of a chord aren't played as closely together as possible. See *close harmony*.
 open notes 1: On string instruments, the open, unfretted strings. 2: Notes on wind instruments played without the use of valves or keys.
 open triad: Triad without the third.
 Opus (Lat.): Means "work"; used with a number which shows the order in which a composer's work were composed.
 ornamentation: The addition of *ornaments* to a melody.
 ornaments: Melodic embellishments. May be written in or improvised. Some ornaments: *acciaccatura*, *appoggiatura*, *arpeggio*, grace notes, mordent, trill, turn.
 ossia (It): Indicates a passage which is an alternative version.
 ostinato (It): A repeated musical phrase, rhythmic pattern, or motive, usu. occurring in the bass.
 ottava (It): Octave.
 ottava alta (8va) (It): An octave higher.
 ottava bassa (8vb) (It): An octave lower.
 overblow: A technique of blowing harder used in brass instruments when *harmonics* are produced above the *fundamental*.
 overtone series: The same thing as the *harmonic series*, but without the fundamental.

P

p 1: (It) *Piano*; soft dynamic. 2: (Sp) Pulgar, which is the thumb of the right hand in guitar music.
 parallel chords: The movement of specific chords up and down the scale.
 parallel fifths, fourths, octaves: Two parts moving in the same direction at the same time a fifth, fourth or octave apart.

parallel intervals: Movement of two or more parts of the same interval in the same direction.

parallel keys: Major and minor keys which have the same *tonic*.

parallel motion: The movement in two or more parts in the same direction with the same intervals.

passing notes: Scalewise notes which connect two notes of the harmony, but are not part of the harmony themselves.

pause: A rest of variable length. A fermata.

pedal point: An organ term used for a note, usu. in the bass, around which other notes move.

pedal tone: A “false” note below the fundamental on a brass instrument.

pentachord: The first five notes of a diatonic scale.

pentatonic scale **1**: Any scale with five notes. **2**: The major scale without the 4th and 7th degrees. The black keys on a piano.

percussion family: Instruments of indefinite pitch which resonate when struck or shaken. Drums, maracas, bells, gongs, and xylophones.

perfect cadence: A cadence moving from the dominant chord (V) to the tonic chord (I).

perfect interval: Octave, fifth, and fourth without alterations.

perfect pitch: The ability to identify any note by ear.

period: A segment of music consisting of two or more phrases and a cadence.

pesante (It): Heavy.

pf (abbr.): Soft then loud.

phrase: A musical “sentence” or idea.

Phrygian: A medieval mode beginning on the third degree of a diatonic scale. E to E on the white keys of a piano.

pianissimo (It): Very soft.

pianississimo (It): Very, very soft.

piano (It) **1**: Soft. **2**: Short for “pianoforte,” a keyboard instrument.

piano quartet: Violin, viola, cello, and piano.

piano trio: Violin, viola, and piano.

Picardy third: A minor piece ending on a chord with a major third.

piccolo (It): A member of the flute family which sounds an octave higher than written. Smaller than the normal flute.

pitch: The highness or lowness of a tone.

pitch pipe: A small wind instrument used for tuning.

pivot chord: A chord used when modulating which is the same for both keys.

pizzicato: Plucking the strings of an instrument that uses a bow.

placido (It): Calm, placid.

plagal cadence: A cadence which moves from the subdominant chord (IV) to the tonic chord (I).

poco a poco (It): Little by little.

polychords: Chords resulting from two triadic units.

polymetric: The simultaneous use of different meters.

polyphony: Music which combines two or more melodic lines.

polytonal: The simultaneous use of different key signatures.

pomposo (It): Pompous.

ponticello (It): The bridge of a string instrument.

portamento: A smooth glide from one note to another.

portado (It): An articulation halfway between staccato and legato.

pp (abbr.): pianissimo.

ppp (abbr.): pianississimo.

prebend: To bend a string before playing on a string instrument, esp. guitar.

preciso (It): Exact.

prélude (Fr): An introductory piece or movement.

preparation: The use of a consonant note before playing that same note as part of a discord.

prestissimo (It): Very, very fast. The fastest tempo.

presto (It): Very fast.

prima donna (It): The most important woman in an opera.

primary chords: The tonic (I), subdominant (IV), and dominant (V) chords of a key.

prime **1**: Unison. **2**: The first note of a scale.

principal: The section leader.

program music: Music that tells a story or paints a picture. As opposed to absolute music.

progression: Movement from one chord to another.

pronto (It): Prompt.

pulgar (Sp): Thumb. Used specifically in guitar music for the thumb of the right hand.

pull-off: A technique used by string players in which a fretted note is plucked while it’s released which sounds the note below.

pulse: The beat.

Pythagorean scale: The earliest known scale comprising an octave. Whole and half step arrangements are the same as the major scale, but the ratio of whole and half steps is different.

Q

Quadrat (Ger.): A natural sign.

quadruple meter: A time signature with four beats in a measure.

quadruplet: Four notes to be played in the space of three notes of equal value.

quarter note, quarter rest: A note/rest one fourth the length of a whole note and half the length of a half note. Equal to one beat in 4/4 time.

quartet **1**: A composition for four performers. **2**: Four performers.

quasi (It): Almost, as if.

quaver: British term for an eighth note.

quintet **1**: A composition for five performers. **2**: Five performers.

quintuple meter: A time signature with five beats per measure (e.g. 5/4 time).

quintuplet: five notes to be played in the time of four notes of equal value.

R

racket: **1**: A double-reed instrument of the Renaissance period. **2**: The sound a beginning alto saxophone player makes.

ragtime: The earliest form of jazz from the early 1900s.

rallentando (It): Decreasing speed gradually.

range: The notes from lowest to highest that an instrument or voice is capable of producing.

rattenuato (It): Slowing down.

re: The second note of a diatonic scale.

reduction: The arrangement of a piece for a smaller number of parts.

reed: A vibrating strip of cane which vibrates at high frequency when blown.

refrain: A section of a composition that occurs several times.

register: A certain range of an instrument or voice.

relative keys: Major and minor keys with the same key signature (e.g. A minor and C major).

Renaissance (Fr): Meaning "rebirth." The musical era from the mid 1400s through the end of the 1500s.

resolution: A progression of chords or notes from dissonance to consonance.

rest: A period of silence. Types of rests: whole rest, half rest, quarter rest, eighth rest, sixteenth rest, thirty-second rest.

retardation: Gradually slowing.

retrograde: Playing a melody line backwards.

rhythm: A pattern of long and short in music.

rhythm section: In jazz and pop music, the piano, bass, guitar and drums. Provides the harmony and rhythm.

riff: Repeated melodic idea.

ritardando (It): Gradually decreasing speed.

ritenuto (It): Immediately slower.

rolled chord: A chord in which the notes are played in rapid succession, much like an arpeggio.

romantic: The musical era from ~1820 to 1900.

root: The fundamental note of a chord or scale.

rubato (It): A free tempo which speeds up and slows down at the conductor's or performer's discretion, but without changing the basic pulse.

rudiments: Basic sticking patterns used for drums.

run: A fast scale passage.

S

S. (abbr.): Segno, senza, sign, sol, solo, soprano, sordini, subito.

SA (abbr.): Used in choral music to indicate soprano, alto.

SAB (abbr.): Used in choral music to indicate soprano, alto, baritone.

sackbut (Ger.): The ancestor of the trombone. German for push-pull.

saltato, saltando (It): a bow technique in which the bow is bounced lightly on the string.

SATB: Used in choral music to indicate soprano, alto, tenor, bass.

saxhorn: Brass family instruments consisting of valved bugles invented by Adolphe Sax.

saxophone: A woodwind family instrument of keyed brass, conical bore, and single reed. Types of saxophones: Eb soprano; Bb soprano; Eb alto; Bb tenor; Eb baritone; Bb bass.

scale: An ascending or descending series of tones related to a certain chosen fundamental tone.

scale degrees: The names and numbers for notes in a scale.

scat singing: A form of vocal jazz improvisation in which the performer makes up the melody with nonsense syllables.

scherzando (It): Playful and light-hearted.

scherzo (It): Literally "joke." A piece with a lively tempo.

- schmaltz (Yid): Excessively sentimental.
- score: The notation of a composition which shows all its parts arranged horizontally and aligned rhythmically.
- secco (It): Means "dry." Unornamented.
- second: The interval between two consecutive degrees of a diatonic scale.
- secondary dominant: A dominant chord (V) built upon the fifth degree of a chord other than the tonic.
- secular music: Any music not sacred.
- segno (It): Sign. 
- segue: To continue without a break.
- semibreve: British name for whole note.
- semiquaver: British name for a sixteenth note.
- semitone: One half step.
- sempre (It): Always.
- senza (It): Without. Senza sordino.
- septet **1**: A composition for seven performers. **2**: Seven performers.
- septuplet: Seven notes played in the time of four or six notes of equal value.
- seventh: The interval between the first and seventh degrees of a diatonic scale.
- seventh chord: A chord containing a root, third, fifth, and seventh.
- sextet **1**: A composition for six performers. **2**: Six performers.
- sextuplet: Six notes played in the time of four notes of equal value.
- sharp **1**: The symbol indicating to raise a note one half step. **2**: To be slightly above normal pitch.
- sightreading: Playing a piece of music without studying it.
- sightsinging: Singing a piece of music without studying it.
- signs: Symbols which tell a performer articulation, bowing, breathing, dynamics, fingering, ornamentation and other musical effects.
- similar motion: The movement of two or more parts in the same direction.
- simile, sim. (It): To continue in a similar style.
- simple meter: A time signature whose pulse is divisible by 2 (e.g. 2/4, 3/4, 4/4). See compound meter.
- sin' al fine (It): To the end.
- single reed instruments: Instruments which use only one reed attached to a mouthpiece of some sort.
- six-four chord: A triad in the second inversion with a sixth and a fourth above the bass note.
- sixteenth note, sixteenth rest: A note/rest one sixteenth as long as a whole note and half the length of an eighth note. In 4/4 time, 1/4 of a beat.
- sixth chord **1**: A triad in the first inversion, with a sixth and a third above the root. **2**: A chord with an added sixth.
- skip: Melodic movement of more than a whole step.
- slide **1**: To move smoothly from one note to another with a constant sound. **2**: The movable part on a trombone which is used to change the pitch by lengthening the instrument.
- slur: A curved line connecting two notes of different pitch; to be played as legato as possible.
- smorzando (It): Fading away.
- so, sol: A solfege syllable for the fifth degree of the diatonic scale.
- solfege: A system used for eartraining which uses syllables (do, re, mi, etc.) for the degrees of the scale.
- solo (It): Means "alone." To perform alone or as the most important part.
- sopra (It): Over, above.
- soprano: The highest female singing voice.
- soprano clef: The C clef that puts middle C on the first line of the staff.
- sordino (It): Mute.
- sostenuto (It): Sustained.
- sotto voce (It): Quietly, beneath the voice.
- Sousaphone: A tuba made for John Phillip Sousa's band which encircles the player.
- spacing: The vertical placement of the notes of a chord.
- spezzato (It): Divided.
- spiccato (It): A bow technique in which the middle of the bow is bounced on the string at a moderate speed.
- SSA: Used in choral music to indicate soprano, soprano, alto.
- SSAA: Used in choral music to indicate two sopranos, two altos.
- staccato (It): Means "detached." Short separated notes indicated by a small dot over or under the note head.
- staff, staves: The horizontal lines on which music is written.
- stem: A vertical line extending from a note head.
- step: Movement melodically of one or two semitones.
- stesso (It): Same. L'stesso tempo.
- stick **1**: The wooden part of the bow. **2**: A conductor's baton.
- sticking: The hand pattern for drums.
- stringendo (It): Hurrying the tempo to increase tension.

string quartet: Two violins, viola, and cello.
 string quintet: Two violins, two violas, and cello.
 string trio: Violin, viola, cello.
 subdominant: The fourth degree of a diatonic scale.
 subito (It): Suddenly.
 submediant: The sixth degree of a diatonic scale.
 subtonic: A flatted seventh degree of a diatonic scale, one whole step below the tonic.
 suite: A collection of short instrumental movements.
 sul (It): On the.
 sul ponticello (It): Bowing on or next to the bridge to produce a high-pitched eerie sound.
 sul tasto: On the fingerboard.
 superdominant: The sixth degree of the diatonic scale. Same as submediant.
 supertonic: The second degree of a diatonic scale.
 sur (Fr): On, over.
 suspension: A counterpoint technique in which a consonant note is sustained while the other voices move which results in a dissonance which is then resolved.
 sussurando (It): Sussurating, whispering.
 swing **1**: A style of jazz featuring big band dance music. **2**: A treatment of the eighth note which gives it a lilting triplet feel of long-short.
 symphony **1**: A large orchestra. **2**: A piece composed for an orchestra, usu. in 4 movements.
 syncopation: Rhythmic accents on weak beats, or weak parts of the beat.
 system: Two or more staves connected.

T

t. (abbr.): Tempo, trill, tre, tutti.
 T. (abbr.): Tenor, tonic.
 TAB (abbr.): Tablature. A method of notation developed for lute and guitar in which the lines of the staff represent the strings and numbers represent the frets. Developed in 1500s.
 tacet (Lat.): Means “be silent.” Direction in a part to not play or sing.
 tactus (Lat.): Used in the 1400s to measure the length of a beat. Precursor to bar lines.
 tag: The end of a piece, the *coda*.
 taking 4s/8s: A jazz term. Player takes a solo, usu. improvised, 4 or 8 bars long.
 talking drum: Ancient drum of western Africa, beaten with a curved stick. A waisted drum, the pitch controlled by squeezing at the waist which tightens the skin membrane thereby raising the pitch.
 tardo, tardando: Become slower.
 tanto (It): Much.
 temperament: A system of tuning, esp. of pianos, in which pure intervals are altered slightly to enable playing in different keys.
 tempestoso (It): Tempestuous, stormy.
 tempo: Means “time.” The speed of music.
 tenor: A high male voice, the range between alto and baritone.
 tenor clef: A C clef falling on the fourth line of the staff.
 tenor saxophone: Of the saxophone family, in the key of Bb.
 tenor trombone: The regular trombone.
 tenth: An interval of an octave and a third.
 tertian harmony: Usual harmony, based on thirds.
 tessitura (It) **1**: The average highness and lowness of a piece. **2**: The usable range of a voice or instrument.
 tetrachord: The first four notes of a scale.
 texture: The number of voices in a piece: *monophonic*, *homophonic*, and *polyphonic*.
 theme: The musical subject of a piece, the main idea.
 thesis (Gk): The strong beat, usu. the downbeat.
 third: An interval of three diatonic scale degrees.
 thirty-second note, thirty-second rest: A note/rest one thirty-second as long as a whole note, and half as long as a sixteenth note.
 ti: The seventh degree of a diatonic scale. The leading tone.
 tie: A curved line which connects notes of the same pitch indicating they are to be played as one continuous note.
 timbre: Sound quality or color.
 time: A synonym for meter.
 time signature: The meter. Numbers at the beginning of a piece of music, after the clef. Top number is beats per measure, bottom number is which note receives one beat.
 tonal: Relating to key.
 tone: A sound of particular quality. The basis of music.

tone row: Used in serial and twelve-tone music. The order of twelve notes chosen by a composer which appear in the composition in that specific order.

tonguing: A technique on wind instruments of articulating notes with the tongue.

tonic: The first degree of a scale (I), or the root of a chord.

tonic accent: A type of accent in which the accented note is significantly higher than those around it.

tr (abbr.): Trill.

trading 4s/8s: Jazz term. Players take turns playing solos, usu. improvised, of 4 or 8 bars.

train wreck: Slang for when an ensemble's playing contains so many mistakes that it breaks down to the point of stopping.

tranquillo (It): Calm, tranquil.

transcription: The writing down of a piece from a recording.


transpose, transposing: Changing a piece from one key to another.

transposing instruments: Instruments whose notes sound at a different pitch than written.

treble clef: The G clef which centers on the second line of the staff, naming it G.

tremolo (It): **1:** A bow technique in which short up and down bow strokes are used on a single note. **2:** The rapid alteration between two or more notes, usu. more than a step apart.

triad: A chord of three notes: a root, third, and fifth.

trill: An ornament. The rapid alteration of one note with another note usu. a step or half step higher than the written note. Indicated by the symbols , and "tr".

trio **1:** A composition for three performers. **2:** Three performers. **3:** The middle section of a march.

triple meter: Meters with three beats per measure, or meters with beats divisible by three.

triple-tonguing: Technique of rapid articulation which uses the front and back of the tongue (t-k-t, or t-t-k, or t-k-t, k-t-k).

tritone: The interval of an augmented fourth or diminished fifth. Considered the most dissonant interval.

tromba (It): Trumpet.

trombone: Member of the brass family. Uses a slide to change pitch. Also called 'bone. Types of 'bones: soprano (also called slide trumpet), tenor, bass.

troppo (It): Too much. (e.g. Allegro non troppo).

troubadour: A wandering minstrel in the Middle Ages of Western Europe.

trumpet: A member of the brass family with cylindrical bore and high pitch and brilliant sound. Types of trumpets: Bb, C, Eb, Bb piccolo.

TTB (abbr.): Used in choral music to indicate tenor, tenor, bass.


TTBB (abbr.): Used in choral music to indicate two tenors, two basses.

tuba: Lowest member of the brass family, conical bore, very large. May be in BB-flat, Eb, or F bass.

tune **1:** A song or melody. **2:** To put an instrument at the correct pitch (in tune).

tuner **1:** A mechanical device which reads pitches and tells the player where it falls in relation to standard intonation. **2:** A small screw near the bridge which allows fine tuning of string instruments.

tuning fork: A device with two tines that, when struck, vibrates to produce a pure single note.

turn: An ornament which "turns" around the principal note, going above it and below it. Indicated by the symbol .

tutti (It): Means "all." Used as an indication for all players to play, usu. comes after a solo or soli section.

twelve-bar blues: A musical form using three chords (I, IV, V) in a specific pattern which is twelve bars long. Characterized by many *blue notes* and improvisation.

twelve-tone scale: A scale using all 12 half steps in an octave organized in a certain order called a *tone row*.

U

ukulele (HI): A Hawaiian instrument in the string family, small with four strings.

unequal temperament: A system of tuning, esp. of piano which allows an instrument to play in several keys.

unison: Two or more voices sounding the same pitch.

un poco (It): A little.

upbeat **1:** The "and" of the beat, the second half of the beat. **2:** A pick-up note or *anacrusis*. **3:** Denotes a fast or happy tune.

up bow: Stroking the bow upward.

up-tempo: Fast.

ut (Lat.): Another name for *do* or C.

V

valve: A device on brass instruments which redirects the air column to produce a different pitch, may be piston or rotary.

vamp: A short, usu. introductory section, which repeats until a performer is ready to enter.

vibrato: A type of ornament which is a fluctuation of pitch. Used almost constantly in violin, flute and voice.

viola: Instrument in the violin family, uses alto and treble clef, sounding lower than violin.

violin family: Instrument of the violin family (imagine that), which uses treble clef, has four strings and a high pitch.

violoncello: A member of the violin family of the tenor range. Held between the knees and uses the bass and treble clefs. Also called cello.

virtuoso: An instrumental performer of exceptional skill.

vivace (It): A very quick tempo.
Vl., Vln (abbr.): Violin.
Vla. (abbr.): Viola.
Vlc. (abbr.): Violoncello.
vocalise: A vocal warm-up exercise using different vowels.
vocal tenor clef: A G clef used for tenor parts in vocal music and pitched an octave below regular treble clef.
voice **1**: An instrumental or vocal part. **2**: The sound of the human voice.
voice leading: The movement of an individual part in *polyphonic* music.
voicing: The arrangement of pitches horizontally in a chord.
voix (Fr): Voice.
volti (It): Turn the page.
volti subito (It): Turn the page quickly.
volume: Loudness.
vox (Lat.): Voice.
V.S. (abbr.): Volti subito.

W

Wagner tuba: Five-valved horns designed by Richard Wagner for use in his opera *The Ring of the Nibelung*.
wah: A brass instrument sound produced when a device (stem of harmon mute or plunger mute) is removed from the bell.
walking bass: A bass line, usu. moving stepwise, in a steady pattern of quarter or eighth notes.
well-tempered: A tuning system in which an instrument, usu. piano, can play in all twelve keys.
whole note, whole rest: A note equal to two half notes/rests, or four quarter notes/rests. Four beats in 4/4 time.
whole step: Two half steps, or a major second.
wind instrument: An instrument on which the sound is produced by the vibration of an air column.
woodwind: An instrument made of wood or using a reed to create vibrations. Also the flute.
woodwind quintet: Flute, clarinet, oboe, French horn, and bassoon.

X-Y-Z

xylophone: A barred pitched percussion instrument, often with resonator tubes extending down from the bars.
yodel: A style of singing in which the voice centers around the break between the normal voice and falsetto. Originated in Switzerland.
Zink (Ger.): Cornett.
zydeco: A style of music mixing Cajun, Afro-Caribbean, and rhythm and blues.

