

Nitschmann Middle School

# Music Dictionary

Principal Words and Symbols used in Modern Music

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8va Play the notes indicated up one octave (eight notes higher).

8vb Play the notes indicated one octave lower (eight notes lower).

# A

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Accerlerando Gradually increasing in speed, to slowly get faster

Accent Emphasis on certain parts of a measure 

Adagio Slowly, leisurely

Ad libitum (*ad lib.*) Not in strict time

A due (*a 2*) To be played by both instruments

Agitato Restless, with agitation

Al or Alla In the style of

Alla Marcia In the style of a March

Allegretto Slower than allegro, moderately fast, faster than andante

Allegro Lively, brisk

Allegro assai Very rapidly

Amoroso Affectionately

Andante In moderate slow time

Andantino Strictly slower than andante

Anima, con Animato With animation

A piacere At pleasure; Equivalent to *ad libitum*

Appassionato Impassioned

Arpeggio A broken chord

Assai	Very,
A tempo	In the original tempo
Attacca	Attack or begin what follows without pausing


## B

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Barcarolle	A Venetian boatman's song
Bis	Twice, repeat the passage
Bravura	Brilliant; bold, spirited
Brio, con	With much spirit


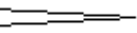

## C

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Cadenza	An elaborate, florid passage introduced as an embellishment
Cantabile	In a singing style
Canzonetta	A short song or air
Capriccio a	At pleasure, ad libitum
Cavatina Capo	An air, shorter and simpler than the aria, and in one division without Da Capo
Chord	The harmony of three or more tones of different pitch produced simultaneously
Coda	A supplement at the end of a composition 
Col or con	With
Col legno	Playing with the wood (bow-stick) part of the bow.

# D

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Da or dal	From
Da Capo ( <i>D.C.</i> )	From the beginning
Dal Segno ( <i>D.S.</i> )	From the sign 
Decrescendo	Decreasing in volume 
Diatonic	Major scale
Diminuendo	Gradually getting softer
Divisi	Divided, each part is to be played by a separate instrument or person
Dolce	Softly, Sweetly
Dolcissimo	Very sweetly and softly
Dominant	The fifth tone of the diatonic scale
Down Bow	On a bowed string instrument, the note is played while drawing the bow downward 
Duet or Duo	A composition for two performers


# E

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E	And
Elegante	Elegant, graceful
Energico	With energy, graceful
Enharmonic	Alike in pitch, but differently in notation
Espressivo	With expression

# F

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Fermata	The sign indicating a pause or rest 
Finale	The concluding movement
Fine	The end
Forte	Loud <i>f</i>
Forte-piano	Accent strongly, diminishing instantly to piano <i>fp</i>
Fortissimo	Very loud <i>ff</i>
Forsando	Indicates that a note or chord is to be strongly accented <i>sfz</i>
Forza	Force of tone
Fuoco, con	With fire, with spirit

# G

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Giocoso	Joyously; playfully
Giusto	Exact; in strict time
Grandioso	Grand; pompous; majestic
Grave	Very slow and solemn
Grazioso	Gracefully

# H

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Harmony	In general, a combination of tones, or chords, producing music
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# K

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Keynote                      The first degree of the scale, the tonic

# L

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Largamente                Very broad in style

Larghetto                    Slow, but not as slow as Largo; nearly like andantino

Largo                         Broad and slow, the slowest tempo mark

Legato                        Smoothly, the reverse of staccato

Ledger Line                A small added line above or below the staff



L'istesso tempo            In the same time or tempo

Lento                         Slow, between Andante and Largo

Loco                         In place. Play as written, no longer, an octave higher or lower

# M

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Ma                             But

Ma non troppo             lively, but not too much

Maestoso                    Majestically; dignified

Maggiore                    Major key

Marcato                     Marked, short accent



Meno	Less
Meno mosso	Less quickly
Mezzo	Half; moderately
Mezzo-piano	Moderately soft <i>mp</i>
Minore	Minor key
Moderato	Moderately. <i>Allegro moderato, moderately fast</i>
Molto	Much
Morendo	Dying away
Mosso	Equivalent to rapid. <i>Piu mosso- quicker</i>
Moto	Motion; <i>Con moto-with animation</i>


## N

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Non	Not
Notation	The art of representing musical sounds by means of written characters


## O

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Obbligato	An indispensable part
Opus	A work; <i>Op.</i>
Ossia	Or; or else. Generally indicating an easier method
Ottava	To be played an octave higher 

# P

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Pause	The sign indicating a pause or rest	
Perdendosi	Dying away gradually	
Piacere, a	At pleasure	
Pianissimo	Very softly <i>pp</i>	
Piano	Softly <i>p</i>	
Piu'	More	
Piu' Allegro	More quickly	
Piu' tosto	Quicker	
Pizz.	Abbreviation for pizzicato	
Pizzicato	To pluck a string. Abbreviated <i>pizz.</i>	
Poco or un poco	A little	
Poco a poco	gradually, by degrees; little by little	
Poco piu' mosso	A little faster	
Poco meno	A little slower	
Poco piu'	A little faster	
Poi	The, afterwards	
Pomposo	Pompous; grand	
Prestissimo	As quickly as possible	
Presto	Very quick; faster than Allegro	
Primo	The first	




## Q

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Quartet	A piece of music for four performers
Quasi	As if; in the style of
Quintet	A piece of music for five performers

## R

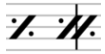

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Rallentando	Gradually slower; <i>rall.</i>
Repeat Signs	Enclose a passage that is to be played more than once. If there is no left repeat sign, the right repeat sign sends the performer back to the start of the piece or the nearest double bar. 
Replica	Repetition, <i>Sensa replica</i> -without repeats
Rinforzando	With special emphasis
Ritardando	Gradually slower and slower; <i>rit.</i>
Risoluto	Resolutely; bold; energetic
Ritenuto	In slower time
Rock	A type of popular music that grew out of rhythm and blues in the 1950's

## S





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Scherzando	Playfully, sportively
Secondo	the second singer, instrumentalist part
Segue	Follow on in similar style
Semplice	Simply; unaffectedly

Senza	Without; <i>senza sordino</i> -without mute
Sforzando	Forcibly; with sudden emphasis <b><i>sfz</i></b>
Simile or simili	In like manner
Simile Marks	Denote that preceding groups of beats or measures are to be repeated. In the examples here, the 1st usually means to repeat the previous bar, and the 2nd usually means to repeat the previous 2 bars
	
Smorzando	Diminishing in sound. Equivalent to <i>morendo</i>
Solo	For one performer only
Soli	For one section only
Sordino	A mute; <i>con sordino</i> -with the mute
Sostenuto	Sustained; prolonged
Sotto	Below; under. <i>Sotto voce</i> , in a subdued tone
Spirito	Spirit; <i>con spirito</i> -with spirit
Staccato	Detached; separate 
Stentando	Dragging or retarding in tempo
Stretto or stretta	An increase of speed. <i>Piu' stretto</i> -faster
Subdominant	The fourth tone in the diatonic scale
Swing	A style of big band jazz music popular in the 1930's and 1940's
Swing Time	to play 8 <sup>th</sup> notes as if they were a triplet consisting of a quarter note and an 8 <sup>th</sup> note.
Syncopation	Change of accent from a strong beat to a weak beat


# T

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Tacet	“Is silent” Signified that an instrument or vocal part, so marked, is omitted during the movement or number in question
Tempo	Movement, rate of speed
Tempo primo	Return to the original tempo
Tenuto	Held for full value; <b>ten.</b> 
Thema or Theme	The subject of the melody
Tonic	The first note (key-note) of the diatonic scale
Tranquillo	Quietly
Tremolo	A tremendous fluctuation of tone 
Trio	A piece of music for three performers
Trill	A rapid alternation between the specified note and the next higher note (according to key signature) within its duration 
Triplet	A group of three notes to be performed in the regular time of two of equal value in the regular rhythm 
Troppo	Too; too much. <i>Allegro ma non troppo-not too quickly</i>
Tutti	All; all the instruments

# U

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Up Bow	On a bowed string instrument, the note is played while drawing the bow upward 
Un	A, one, an

Una corda	On one string
Unison	Two or more performers sounding the same note or melody.

## V

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Variations	The transformation of a melody by means of harmonic, rhythmic and melodic changes and embellishments
Veloce	Quick, rapid swift
Vibrato	A wavering tone effect, which should be sparingly used
Vivace	With vivacity; bright; spirited
Vivo	Lively; spirited
Volta brackets	Denote that a repeated passage is to be played in different ways on different playing ( <b>1st and 2nd endings, or 1st and 2nd time bars</b> ) <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1.</span> <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2.</span>
Volti Subito	Turn over quickly; <b>V.S.</b>