

PRINCIPAL TERMS USED IN MUSIC

1

A	To, in, or at: a tempo, in time
Accelerando (accel.) . .	Gradually increasing the speed
Accent	Emphasis on certain parts of the measure
Adagio	Slowly; leisurely
Ad libitum (ad lib.) . .	At pleasure; not in strict time
A due (a 2)	To be played by both instruments
Affettuoso	With feeling
Agitato	Restless, with agitation
All or Alla	In the style of
Alla Marcia	In the style of a march
Allegretto	Diminutive of allegro; moderately fast, lively; faster than andante, slower than allegro
Allegro (All°)	Lively; brisk; rapid
Allegro assai	Very rapidly
Amoroso	Affectaneously
Andante	A slow movement; moderately slow
Andantino	Diminutive of andante; strictly, slower than andante, but often used in the reverse sense
Anima, con }	With animation
Animato	
A piacere	At pleasure; equivalent to ad libitum
Appassionato (Appass)	Impassioned
Arpeggio	A broken chord
Assai	Very; Allegro assai, very rapidly
A tempo	In the original tempo
Attacca	Attack or begin what follows without pausing
Ben	Well; rather
Bis	Twice; repeat the passage
Brillante	Showy, sparkling; brilliant
Brio, con	With much spirit
Cadenza (cad.)	An elaborate florid passage introduced as an embellishment
Cantabile	In a singing style
Capriccio a	At pleasure; ad libitum
Coda	A supplement at the end of a composition
Col or con	With
Con fuoco	With fire
Crescendo (cresc.) . .	Swelling; increasing in loudness
Da or dal	From
Da Capo (D. C.) . . .	From the beginning
Dal Signo (D. S.) . . .	From the sign
Decrescendo (decresc.)	Decreasing in strength
Diminuendo (dim.) . .	Gradually softer
Divisi (div.)	Divided. Each part to be played by a separate instrument.
Dolce (dol.)	Softly; sweetly
Dolcissimo	Very sweetly and softly
Duet or Duo	A composition for two performers
E	And
Elegante	Elegant; graceful
Energico	With energy; vigorously
Enharmonic	Alike in pitch, but different in notation
Espressivo (Espress) . .	With expression
Fine	The end

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Forte (f)	Loud
Forte-piano (fp)	Accent strongly, diminishing instantly to piano
Fortissimo (ff)	Very loud
Forzando (fz >)	Indicates that a note or chord is to be strongly accented
Forza	Force of tone
Glocoso	Joyously; playfully
Giusto	Exact; in strict time
Grandioso	Grand; pompous; majestic
Grave	Very slow and solemn
Grazioso	Gracefully
Key note	The first degree of the scale, the tonic
Largamente	Very broad in style
Larghetto	Slow, but not so slow as Largo; nearly like Andantino
Largo	Broad and slow; the slowest tempo-mark
Ledger-line.	A small added line above or below the staff
Legato	Smoothly; the reverse of staccato
Leggiero	Lightly
Lento	Slow, between Andante and Largo
L'istesso tempo	In the same time (or tempo)
Loco	In place; play as written, no longer an octave higher or lower
Ma	But
Ma non troppo	But not too much so
Maestoso	Majestically; dignified
Maggiore	Major key
Marcato	Marked
Meno	Less
Meno mosso	Less quickly
Mezzo	Half; moderately
Mezzo-piano (mp) . .	Moderately soft
Minore	Minor key
Moderato	Moderately - Allegro moderato, moderately fast
Molto	Much; very
Morendo	Dying away
Mosso	Equivalent to rapid; piu mosso, quicker
Non	Not
Notation	The art of representing musical sounds by means of written characters
Obbligato.	An indispensable part
Opus (Op.)	A work
Ossia	Or; or else - generally indicating an easier method
Ottava (8va)	To be played an octave higher
Pause ()	The sign indicating a pause or rest
Perdendosi	Dying away gradually
Piacere, a	At pleasure
Pianissimo (pp)	Very softly
Piano (p)	Softly
Piu	More
Piu Allegro.	More quickly
Poco or un poco	A little
Poco a poco	Gradually; by degrees; little by little

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3

Poco piu mosso	A little faster
Poco meno	A little slower
Poco piu	A little faster
Pomposo	Pompous; grand
Prestissimo	As quickly as possible
Presto	Very quick; faster than Allegro
Primo (1 mo)	The first
Quasi	As if; in the style of
Rallentando (rall.)	Gradually slower
Replica	Repetition; Senza replica, without repeats
Rinforzando (rfz.)	With special emphasis
Ritardando (rit.)	Gradually slower and slower
Risoluto	Resolutely; bold; energetic
Ritenuto	In slower time - not <i>gradually</i> slower
Scherzando	Playfully; sportively
Segue	Follow on; in similar style
Semplice	Simply; unaffectedly
Senza	Without. Senza sordino, without mute
Sforzando (sf.)	Forcibly; with sudden emphasis
Simile	In like manner
Smorzando (smorz.)	Diminishing in sound. Equivalent to Morendo
Solo	For one performer only. Soli, for all
Sostenuto	Sustained; prolonged
Sotto	Below; under. Sotto voce, in a subdued tone
Spirito	Spirit. Con Spirito, with spirit
Staccato	Detached; separate
Stentando	Dragging or retarding the tempo
Stretto or stretta	An increase of speed. Piu stretto, faster
Stringendo	Gradually faster
Tacet	"Is silent." Signifies 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 (ten.)	Held for the full value
Tonic	The key-note of any scale
Traquillo	Quietly
Tremolando, Tremolo	A tremulous fluctuation of tone
Trio	A piece of music for three performers
Triplet	A group of three notes to be performed in the time of two of equal value in the regular rhythm
Troppò	Too; too much. Allegro, ma non troppo, not too quickly
Tutti	All; all the instruments
Un	A; one; an
Variatione	The transformation of a melody by means of harmonic, rhythmic and melodic changes and embellishments
Veloce	Quick; rapid; swift
Vivace	With vivacity; bright; spirited
Vivo	Lively; spirited
Volti Subito (V.S.)	Turn over quickly