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Student Music Dictionary

definitions • abbreviations
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Thanks, Caleb and Jason

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- I** The major “one” chord. The first diatonic chord of the major scale.
- ii** The minor “two” chord. The second diatonic chord of the major scale.
- iii** The minor “three” chord. The third diatonic chord of the major scale.
- IV** The major “four” chord. The second diatonic chord of the major scale.
- V** The major “five” chord. The fifth diatonic chord of the major scale.
- V7** The major “five-seven” chord. The fifth diatonic chord of the major scale with an added seventh.
- vi** The minor “six” chord. The sixth diatonic chord of the major scale.
- vii°** The diminished “seven” chord. The seventh diatonic chord of the
- 2/4** A standard time signature. The two means each measure should get two beats. The four means a quarter note should get the beat.
- 20th Century** The European musical period 1900-1999. (See also, *Appendix 1 – Musical Periods.*)
- 3/4** A standard time signature. The three means each measure should get three beats. The four means a quarter note should get the beat.
- 4/4** A standard time signature. The first (top) four means each measure should get four beats. The second (bottom) means a quarter note should get the beat. 4/4 time is also called *common time*.
- 6/8** A standard time signature. The first (top) four means each measure should get four beats. The second (bottom) means a quarter note should get the beat.
- 8va** When placed above the staff, *8va* means then notes below it should be played an octave higher than written. When below the staff the notes should be played an octave lower than written.
- 8vb** Means the notes above should be played an octave lower than written.

A

- a** At, by, for, with.
- A** 1.) The sixth note of the C major scale. 2.) A scale with A as the keynote. 3.) The first section of a multi-part form.
- A440** The note A at 440 Hz. Concert standard tuning.
- a cappella** Without accompaniment.
- a piacere** At the discretion of the performer.
Rubato.
- a tempo** Return to the original rate of speed.
- a tonal** Not in a definite key.
- accelerando** Quickening.
- accent** Play with emphasis.
- accidentals** Sharps, flats and natural signs used to raise or lower the pitch of a note.
- accompaniment** A supporting musical part.
- ad lib** See *ad libitum*.
- ad libitum** At liberty. Left to the performer.
- adagietto** Slightly faster than *adagio*.
- adagio** Slowly.
- adagissimo** Extremely slowly.
- Aeolian**
- afflitto** Sad, melancholy.
- affettuoso** Tenderly.
- affrettando** Hurrying.
- agitato** In a restless manner.
- air** A melody without words.
- Alberti bass** A left hand accompaniment for the piano in which broken chords are played bottom, top, middle, top. Named for Domenico Alberti.
- al** 1.) To the. 2.) In the style of.
- al fine** Play to the word *Fine*.
- al niente** Dying to nothing.
- alla** According to; like a.
- alla breve** According to the breve. Cut time.
- allargando** Broadening and slowing.
- allegretto** Quickly, but slower than *allegro*.
- allegro** Quickly.
- allemande** A German dance.
- alto** 1.) A low female singing voice. 2.) The second part in a 4-part hymn or chorale.
- amoroso** Lovingly.
- andante** Walking tempo.
- andantino** Slightly faster than *andante*.
- anima** See *animato*.
- animato** Animated, lively.
- appassionato** Passionately.
- appoggiatura** An small ornamental note usually above the melody note.
- arco** Played with the bow. (See also, *pizzicato*.)
- arpeggio** Notes of a chord are played one after the other rather than together.
- assai** Very.
- atonal** Music in which all pitches are equally important.
- attacca** Beging the next section immediately, without pause.

augmented Made larger. As in intervals, chords or phrases.

B

B 1.) The seventh note of the C major scale. 2.) A scale with B as the keynote. 3.) The second section of a multi-part form.

bagatelle A light composition, often for piano.

bar Measure.

bar line A horizontal line on the staff used to mark measures.

barre In guitar playing, fretting all of the strings with one finger.

baritone A male singing voice with a range between a tenor and a bass.

baroque “extravagant, flamboyant” The European musical period 1600-1760. (See also, *Appendix 1 – Musical Periods.*)

bass 1.) A low male singing voice. 2.) The lowest part in a 4-part hymn or chorale.

basso Bass.

beat The pulse of a piece of music.

ben Well; Good.

binary Two part.

binary form A-B form.

bis Repeat the marked passage.

blue note 1.) A lowered 3rd, 5th, or 7th scale step. 2.) A note bent lower by a microtone.

blues scale A form of the minor scale that also includes the tritone. The C blues scale is made of C, E♭, F, F#, G, B♭, C. (See also, *major blues scale.*)

bourrée A French dance in two.

bpm An abbreviation for *beats pre minute*. An indication of the speed of a piece.

brace A curved bracket used to connect multiple staves.

bravo An exclamation of appreciation.

bravura Great technical ability and flair.

breit Broad and slow.

breve Half note.

broken chord A figure in which chord tones are played one after another rather than together.

brillante Brilliant, sparkling.

brio Vigor, spirit.

buffo In a comic style.

C

C 1.) The first note of the C major scale. 2.) A scale with C as the keynote. 3.) The third section of a multi-part form.

cadenza An (often improvised) ending.

calando Becoming softer.

calcando Increasing in tempo.

calmato Calm, quite.

canon A type of counterpoint that employs restatements of the original melody. Often the later voices are versions of the original played backward (retrograde), upside down (inverse) or at a different tempo.

cantabile As singing. Flowing.

cantando Singing style.

cantata A vocal and instrumental composition usually with several movements.

cantilena Song.

capo A movable clamp for transposing a guitar or other fretted instrument.

capriccio A lively, often technical, free-form instrumental piece.

caprice Another term for *capriccio*.

chaconne A set of variations on a repeated chord progression.

chamber music Music for a small group usually

chromatic 1.) Proceeding by half steps. 2.) Containing notes outside the diatonic scale.

chromatic scale A scale ascending or descending by half steps.

chorale A hymn of the Lutheran church.

chord (See Major Chord and Minor Chord.)

chord progression

church modes

Classical The European musical period 1730-1820. (See also, *Appendix 1 – Musical Periods.*)

clef The symbol used at the beginning of the staff to indicate which lines and spaces represent which notes. (See also, *bass clef* and *treble clef.*)

col With.

coll With.

colla With; with the.

colla parte Perform freely.

colla voce Perform freely.

come prima, come primo

come sopra Same as above.

comodo Comfortable.

comp Accompany.

con With.

consonant Harmonious and pleasing.

coda An ending. (See also, *D. C. al Coda* and *D. S. al Coda*.)

coda sign

codetta 1.) A linking passage. 2.) A small coda. (See also, *coda*.)

common time 4/4 time.

comodo A comfortably fast tempo.

concert pitch The actual pitch sounded by a transposing instrument.

concertante

concertino

concerto A work for soloist and orchestra with three contrasting movements.

contra Low, under.

contrary motion In opposite directions.

corda String.

counterpoint A musical style in which several independent musical lines sound simultaneously.

courante A French dance in three.

crescendo Gradually louder. (See also, *decrescendo*.)

crotchet A flag.

cut time 2/2 time. Count "one" for each half note.

D

D 1.) The second note of the C major scale. 2.) A scale with D as the keynote.

D. C. See *da capo*.

D. C. al Fine Repeat from the beginning, stopping at the *Fine*.

D. S. Abbreviation for *dal segno*.

D. S. al Coda Return to the D. S. sign and then take the coda.

D. S. al Fine Return to the D. S. sign, stopping at the *Fine*.

da capo The top. Return to the beginning.

dal segno "from the sign" Return to the D. S. symbol.

dampner Felt blocks that stop the ringing of the strings on a piano.

dampner pedal The right pedal. Pressing it raises the dampers and allows the strings to ring freely.

deceptive cadence A dominant chord followed by a chord other than the tonic.

decrescendo Gradually softer. (See *diminuendo* and *crescendo*.)

degree A scale tone as numbered beginning with tonic as "one."

di Of, with, to.

diatonic 1.) Naturally occurring within a given key. 2.) Anything based on the major scale, the minor scale or the church modes.

dim. Abbreviation of *diminuendo*.

dimin. Abbreviation of *diminuendo*.

diminished Made smaller. Chords, intervals, or phrases can be diminished.

diminished chord A chord made of a root, a minor third, and a diminished fifth.

diminished fifth The interval from the root to the flatted fifth. From C to G \flat , for example.

diminuendo Gradually softer. See *decrescendo*.

dissonant Unpleasant, clashing.

div. Divisi.

divisi A direction to divide a section into separate parts.

dolce Sweetly.

dolcissimo Very sweetly.

dolente Sorrowfully, mournfully.

doloroso Plaintive, mournful.

dominant The fifth scale degree or the chord built on that note.

doppio Double.

doppo movimento Play twice as fast.

dot 1.) A dot placed after a note adds half the notes value to the note. 2.) A dot placed above a note indicates *staccato*.

double flat A symbol that lowers the pitch of a note by two half steps.

double sharp A symbol that raises the pitch of a note by two half steps.

droite Right.

drone A continuously sounded note.

duet A composition to be performed by two musicians.

dur Major.

E

e And.

E 1.) The third note of the C major scale. 2.) A scale with E as the keynote.

eighth note A note with a value of 1/2 count in 4/4 time.

elegy A funeral song.

elision The overlapping of phrases.

en pressant Hurrying.

en retenant Gradually slower.
encore An extra piece at the end of a program.
energico Energetically, with energy.
enharmonic Notes that are spelled differently but sound the same (C# and D♭).
espr. Abbreviation for *espressivo*.
espress. Abbreviation for *espressivo*.
espressivo Expressively.
etude A piece to improve technique.
etwas Somewhat.
espressione Expression.
exposition The first statement of a theme.

F

F 1.) The fourth note of the C major scale. 2.) A scale with F as the keynote.
f Abbreviation for *forte*.
ff Abbreviation for *fortissimo*.
fff Abbreviation for *fortississimo*.
ffff Abbreviation for *fortissississimo*.
f clef The bass clef.
facile In a light, effortless style.
fermata A sign indicating that the notes longer or under the sign be held longer.
finale The final movement or ending.
Fine End.
flag A symbol added to the stem of a note that halves the value of that note.
flat A symbol that lowers the pitch of a note by a half-step.
four-four time
forte Loud. Abbreviated *f*.
fortepiano 1.) The keyboard instrument that became the modern piano. 2.) A dynamic mark indicating a loud attack followed by an immediate reduction in volume.
fortissimo Very loud. Abbreviated *ff*.
fortississimo Very, very loud. Abbreviated *fff*.
fortissississimo Very, very, very loud. Abbreviated *ffff*.
forza Perform robustly.
forzando Perform with emphasis.
free Unstructured.
frequency Vibrations per second.
fugato In the style of a fugue.
fugue A compositional form built on distinct voices that weave together to form a musical tapestry.
fundamental 1.) The main pitch. 2.) The pitch on which a chord is built.
fuoco Perform with fervor.

furioso Perform furiously.

G

G 1.) The fifth note of the C major scale. 2.) A scale with G as the keynote.
G. P. Abbreviation for *generalpause*.
galante In a bold, elegant style.
galliard Merry dance in triple meter.
gauche Left.
gavotte A dance in 2 often with a drone.
generalpause A note that the performer should wait for moment before going on. (Abbreviated *G. P.*)
grand pause A *generalpause*.
gigue A lively English dance. Often in 6/8 time.
giocoso Perform merrily.
giojoso Joyous.
giusto Perform evenly.
glissando Sliding from one note to another. Usually referring to an instrumental performance. (See also, *portamento*.)
grace note A short note used to embellish a melody.
grandioso Grandly, majestically.
grave Very, very slowly.
grazia Grace.
grazioso Gracefully, elegant.
ground bass A short bass line repeated throughout a piece.

H

H The letter used in Germany for the note B natural.
half note A note with a value of 2 counts in 4/4 time.
half rest A rest with a value of 2 counts in 4/4 time.
half step In western music, the distance from any note to the next nearest note. Also called a *minor second*.
harmonic motion The speed at which the chords change.
harmony Pitches sounded together to produce chords.
hertz Pitch as expressed in cycles per second.
humoresque A humorous instrumental piece.
hymn A song of praise often arranged for four vocal parts.
Hz An abbreviation of *hertz*.

I

-issimo A suffix indicating “to a greater degree” or “very.”

immer Always.

impetuoso Fervent.

in two Musical pulse felt in groups of two beats, as in 2/4 time.

in three Musical pulse felt in groups of three beats, as in 3/4 time.

in four Musical pulse felt in groups of four beats, as in 4/4 time.

incalzando Pressing.

inquieto Restless, agitated.

interval The distance between notes. Measured as a half step, whole step, 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc.

intonation Accuracy of pitch.

inverse Played with opposite intervals. As in, down a fourth instead of up a fourth.

inversion A chord in which a note other than the root is the lowest sounding pitch.

J

jig A lively dance.

K

key The scale on which a piece is based. It is shown by the key signature.

keynote Tonic.

key signature The sharps or flats at the beginning of a piece showing the scale on which the piece is based.

L

L. H. Left hand.

L. P. Long pause.

l'istesso tempo Keep the same speed. An indication that the pulse remains the same even though the meter changes.

lamentoso Lamentable, mournful.

languendo Grow faint, dying away.

largamente Broad, full.

largo Rather slowly.

largo Very slowly.

leading tone The seventh scale step of the major scale.

legato Smoothly connect. See *slur*.

ledger lines Short lines used to extend the range of the staff.

legatissimo Very smoothly connected.

legato Smoothly connected.

leggiero Delicately.

lent Slow.

lento Slowly, though faster than *largo*.

lesto Lively, quickly.

lied Song.

lieder Songs.

lieder ohne worte Song without words.

lilting A rhythmic swing.

loco As written.

lyre An attachment to hold sheet music.

lyric 1.) The words of a song. 2.) A light, bright soprano voice.

M

M. D. Abbreviation for *main droite*. Right hand.

M. G. Abbreviation for *main gauche*. Left hand.

M. M. “Mälzel’s Metronome” for Johann Nepomuk Mälzel, the inventor of the metronome. Now understood to indicate “metronome marking.”

ma But.

maestoso Majestically, dignified.

main Hand.

major blues scale A major version of the blues scale. The C major blues scale is made of C, D, D#, E, G, A, C. (See also, *major blues scale*.)

major scale A scale with the pattern W, W, H, W, W, W, H (W=Whole Step, H=Half Step). C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, for example.

major chord A chord based on scale steps 1, 3 and 5 of a major scale. (See *Appendix 2 – Chord Symbols*.)

major key A major scale.

mancando Decreasing volume, dying away.

mano The hand.

mano destra Right hand.

mano sinistra Left hand.

marcato Stressed.

march A style of music in 4/4 time originally written for military bands.

marcia March.

mazurka A Polish national dance.

measure A group of beats separated on the staff by bar lines.

Medieval The European musical period 476-1400. (See also, *Appendix 1 – Musical Periods.*)

menuet See *minuet*.

meno Less.

meno mosso Less motion. Slower.

mesto Sad.

metronome A device that keeps a steady beat. Metronomes identify the tempo in beats per minute.

mezza voce In a restrained manner.

mezzo forte Moderately loud.

mezzo piano Moderately quiet.

mf Abbreviation for *mezzo forte*.

microtone An interval smaller than a half step.

middle C The note on one ledger line between the treble and bass clefs.

minor

minor scale (See also *relative minor, natural minor, harmonic minor* and *melodic minor*.)

minuet A classical era dance in 3/4 time.

misterioso Mysterious.

misura 1.) Bar, measure. 2.) In strict time.

mit With.

mm or **MM** See M. M.

modal Music based on a *mode* rather than a being strongly diatonic and often with less harmonic motion than other types of music.

mode See *church modes*.

moderato Moderately.

moll Minor.

molto Much.

mordent An ornament that consists of principle note, lower note, principle note.

morendo Dying away.

mosso Motion.

motive The smallest self-contained musical idea. A motive can be as small as two notes.

moto Motion.

movement A self-contained section of a larger work.

mp Abbreviation for *mezzo piano*.

M. S. Abbreviation for *mano sinistra*.

musette A French dance in cut time.

muta Change.

N

N. C. No chord.

natural sign A symbol placed before a note to cancel an earlier sharp or flat.

nicht Not.

no chord A note indicating that a melody should be played without accompaniment.

nobilmente Noble.

non Not.

note A written musical symbol.

notehead The round part of a note.

notation The symbols used to represent pitches and rhythms.

O

obligato An instrumental part distinct from the melody and

octave 12 half-steps. The distance from any note to the next higher or lower of the same name.

octave sign Play eight notes higher than written.

opera 1.) A musical drama in one of more acts. 2.) Plural of *opus*.

Op. Opus.

Opp. Plural of *opus*.

opus A number assigned to a work as a classification.

opuses Plural of *opus*.

oratorio An opera-like performance, but without scenery, costumes, and acting.

ossia Or. An alternate form of a passage.

ostinato A repeated musical pattern.

P

p Abbreviation for *piano*.

pp Abbreviation for *pianissimo*.

ppp Abbreviation for *pianississimo*.

pppp Abbreviation for *pianissississimo*.

parallel keys Major and minor keys that share the same tonic.

parallel motion Moving in the same direction.

parlando Singing is a speaking style.

partita A suite.

passacaglia A form of variation written over a continuous bass pattern and in triple meter.

passepied A Baroque dance.

pastoral Representing rural life.

patetico Pathetic.

pavan A slow, stately dance.

Ped. An instruction to use the damper pedal.

pedal A mechanism operated with the feet.

pedal tone A repeated or sustained note.

perdendosi Dying away by getting gradually slower and quieter.

pesante Heavy.

phrase A complete musical thought. Phrases are often four or eight bars.

phrasing Interpretation. The musical shape.

pianissimo Very quiet. Abbreviated *pp*.

pianississimo Very, very quiet. Abbreviated *ppp*.

pianissississimo Very, very, very quiet. Abbreviated *pppp*.

piano Quiet. Abbreviated *p*.

pianoforte 1.) The keyboard instrument that became the modern piano. 2.) A dynamic mark indicating a quite attack followed by an immediate increase in volume.

pitch The highness or lowness of a note.

pizz. Pizzicato.

pizzicato Plucked with the fingers. (See also, *arco*.)

più More.

plus More.

poco Little.

poco a poco Little by little.

polytonal Using two or more keys at the same time.

portamento Sliding from one note to another. Usually referring to a vocal performance. (See also, *glissando*.)

ponticello The bridge.

portato Carried. An articulation between staccato and legato.

prelude An instrumental piece often intended as an introduction of a larger work.

presto Fast.

prestissimo Very fast.

prima volta First time.

primo The first, or main part. The upper party in a piano duet.

pue Little.

Q

quarter note A note with a value of 1 count in 4/4 time.

quarter rest A rest with a value of 1 count in 4/4 time.

quasi In the style of.

quaver Eighth note.

quieto Calm, peaceful.

R

R. H. Right hand.

rall. Abbreviation for *rallentando*.

rallentando Becoming slower.

recapitulation The return of the main them after a section of development or other material.

recitative A spoken song used to advance the story in an opera or oratorio.

relative keys Major and minor keys that share the same key signature.

Renaissance The European musical period 1400-1600. (See also, *Appendix 1 – Musical Periods*.)

repeat A symbol noting that a section of music should be played again.

replica Repeat.

reprise 1.) A repeated section. 2.) A short ending song taken from earlier in a show or concert.

requiem A composition to honor the dead.

rest A symbol indicating that a n

retrograde Played backward.

reveille A wake-up call for bugle.

rf Rinforzato.

rfz Rinforzando.

rhapsody A free composition.

rhythm A beat pattern.

ribattuta A trill in an uneven, dotted rhythm.

ricercare A prelude, often very free in nature.

riff A repeated music pattern.

rigaudon A French dance in duple meter.

rigore Strict attention to the composer's wishes.

rinforzando Accent.

rinforzato Accent.

rip. Abbreviation of *ripieno*.

ripieno Played by the whole orchestra.

riposo Calm, tranquil.

risoluto Resolutely. Determinedly.

rit. Ritardando.

ritard. Ritardando.

ritardando Gradually slowing.

riten. Ritenuto.

ritenuto Hold back, more suddenly than ritardando.

ritornello A reoccurring instrumental section.

Romantic The European musical period 1815-1910. (See also, *Appendix 1 – Musical Periods*.)

romanza Romance. A song without words.

root The *tonic* or note on which a chord is built.

root position A chord in which the tonic is the lowest sounding note.

round A simple type of canon where voices enter at different times singing the same melody.

rubato Not in strict time.

S

S. P. Abbreviation for *sostenuto pedal*.

sarabande A dance in triple meter. Often with the rhythm: quarter note, half note.

SATB A four-part vocal arrangement for soprano, alto, tenor and bass.

scale An arrangement of notes in a specific pattern of whole and half steps.

scherzo Joke.

scherzando Joking.

schnell Quickly.

schneller Quicker.

sciolto Light, free.

sec Dry, unornamented. Non legato.

seconda volta Second time.

secondo The second part.

sehr Very.

segue 1.) Continuing in the same way. 2.) Without stopping.

semplíce A direction to play in a simple, plain way.

sempre Always.

senza Without.

senaz cedere

senza misura

senza sordini

sequence The repetition of a musical idea at a different pitch.

serial A method of composition in which a set of tones are played in a chosen order without regard to traditional harmony.

seventh

sixteenth note A note with a value of 1/4 counts in 4/4 time.

sf

sforzando A sudden accent. Notated *sfz*.

sforzato

sfz Sforzando.

sharp A symbol that raises the pitch of a note by a half-step.

simile An indication to continue in the same way.

sinistra Left.

skip Any interval larger than a whole step.

slargando Slow gradually.

slur A curved line connecting two or more notes of different pitches indicating legato performance.

smorzando Fading.

soave Gently, softly.

soft pedal The left piano pedal. Pressing it creates a gentler sound.

solí Performed by an entire section rather than a solo.

solmization The assigning of syllables to the various pitches. (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do is a major scale.)

solo A single performer.

sonata An instrumental, rather than vocal, piece.

sonata da camera Chamber sonata.

sonata da chiesa Church sonata.

sonatina A piece shorter and less technical than a sonata

sopra Over. Cross hands over.

soprano 1.) A high female singing voice. 2.) The top part in a 4-part hymn or chorale.

sordino Mute.

sospirando Subdued, sighing.

sostenuto Sustained.

sotto Below, under.

sotto voce Half voice. Quietly.

spendendosi Fading away.

spianato Even, smooth.

spiccato Detached, separated.

spirito Spirit, energy.

spiritoso With spirit, animated.

staccatissimo More detached than staccato.

stacc. Staccato.

staccato Indicates a note be played with detached phrasing, indicated by a dot over or under the note.

staff A set of five lines on which musical notation is made.

stave A *staff*.

stem A vertical line attached to a notehead.

stentando Holding back.

step The distance from one scale degree to the very next. A second.

stop A lever on an organ that controls

strepitoso Noisy, animated..

stringendo Pressing forward, accelerating.

subito Suddenly.

suite A set of dances.

sul At, on, over.

sus Abbreviation for a suspended chord. (See also, *Appendix 2 – Chord Symbols*.)

suspended chord A chord in which the 3rd is replaced by the 4th or sometimes the 2nd. (See also, *Appendix 2 – Chord Symbols*.)

suspension When a note is held while the harmony changes so it then becomes dissonant. The dissonant note then moves to become consonant again.

symphony 1.) A composition for orchestra. 2.) An orchestra.

syncopation A shifting of the accent to a weak beat.

system Two or more staves joined by a brace.

T

tacet Be silent. A direction to stop playing.

tanto So much.

tarantella A fast dance in 6/8 time.

tempo The speed of a piece.

tempo I Return to the original rate of speed.

tempo giusto Perform in strict time.

tempo primo Return to the original tempo.

ten. Abbreviation for *tenuto*.

teneramente Tenderly.

tenerezza Tenderly.

tenor 1.) A high male singing voice. 2.) The second lowest part in a 4-part hymn or chorale.

tenuto To hold a note for its full value. Emphasize slightly.

ternary A three part form with the structure A - B - A.

tessitura The range in which the majority of notes happen in a given piece.

tetrachord Four notes with the pattern whole step, whole step, half step.

theme The first or main melody of a piece.

theme and variations A composition in which a melody is modified with each new presentation.

three-four time See *3/4*.

tie A curved line connecting two or more notes of the same pitch. The values of tied notes are added together.

timbre The character of a sound (as opposed to the volume or pitch).

time 1.) The rhythmic pattern of a piece of music. 2.) In correct tempo.

time signature An indication of rhythm at the beginning of a piece. The upper number gives the number of beats per measure while the lower shows the type of note getting the beat.

toccata A piece meant to show off a performer's technique.

toccatina A small toccata.

tonal Music based on major or minor scales.

tonal center The note of most importance in a scale.

tonality The western system of organizing pitches into major and minor scales around a center (*tonic*).

tone poem A piece that suggests a scene or mood.

tonic The first scale degree or the chord built on that note. The *tonal center*.

tosto Swiftly, rapidly.

tranquillo Tranquil, quiet.

transpose To move a series of notes by an constant interval. For example, C-E-G transposed up a major second becomes B \flat - D-F.

transposing instrument An instrument whose actual pitch is different from the pitch notated and played.

traurig Sad, mournful.

tre corde Release the soft pedal.

trem. Tremolo.

tremolo A rapid repetition of the same note.

triad A three-note chord build in thirds. (See also, *Appendix 2 – Chord Symbols*.)

trill A rapid alternation between a given note and note a second above.

triple meter Having three beats to a measure.

triplet The division of one or two beats into three.

tritone The even division of the octave. The distance from C to F \sharp .

trois Three.

troppo Too much. Moderately.

turn An ornament consisting of the notes above, on, below and back to the main note.

tutti All voices or instruments together.

twelve-tone A compositional process treating all tones equally without a tonic.

U

un A.

una corda The soft pedal.

unis. Unison.

unison The same pitch.

upbeat The last beat of a measure.

V

V. S. Volti subito.

valse Waltz.

variation A modification of a previously stated melody. See *theme*.

veloce Very quickly.

verse A group of lines in a song making up a unit. Often a single song contains several verses all with the same rhyme and rhythmic scheme.

vibrato A rapid variation in the pitch of a note.

vif Lively.

vigoroso With emphasis, spirit.

vite Quickly.

vivace Lively. A fast tempo.

vivacissimo Lively, brisk.

vivo Lively.

voca Voice.

vocal With the voice.

vocalize A vocal exercise without words.

voce Voice.

voice 1.) Sound created by the human vocal folds. 2.) A single, distinct melodic line.

volta Time. See *prima volta* and *seconda volta*.

volti To turn.

volti subito Turn the page quickly.

voluntary An composition for organ to be performed in a church service.

W

waltz A dance with 3 beats per measure.

walzer Waltz.

wenig Little.

whole note A note with a value of 4 counts in 4/4 time.

whole rest A rest with a value of 4 counts in 4/4 time.

whole step The interval of two half steps.

whole tone The interval of a *whole step*.

whole-tone scale A scale made entirely of whole steps. The C major whole tone scale is C, D, E, F#, G#, A#, C.

Z

zart Perform tenderly.

zu Indicates the number of musicians to play a unison part.

Appendix 1 - Musical Periods

Medieval	476-1400
Renaissance	1400-1600
Baroque	1600-1760
Classical	1730-1820
Romantic	1815-1910
20 th Century	1900-1999

Appendix 2 – Chord Symbols

CHORD SYMBOL	CHORD TYPE	SCALE STEPS
C	Major	1, 3, 5
Cm, Cmin, C-	Minor	1, b3, 5
C+, Caug	Augmented	1, 3, #5
C°, Cdim	Diminished	1, 3, b5
CM7, CMaj7	Major seventh	1, 3, 5, 7
C7	Dominant seventh	1, 3, 5, b7
Cm7	Minor seventh	1, b3, 5, b7
Cø, Cø7	Half-diminished seventh	1, b3, b5, b7
C°7	Fully-diminished seventh	1, b3, b5, bb7
Cm(Maj7)	Minor-major seventh	1, b3, 5, 7
Csus, Csus4	Suspended 4th	1, 4, 5
C2	Two	1, 2, 5
C add2, C add9	Add two, add nine	1, 2, 3, 5
C5, C no 3rd	No third	1, 5
C6	Six	1, 3, 5, 6
C6/9	Six-nine	1, 3, 5, 6, 9
C9	Dominant ninth	1, 3, 5, b7, 9
CMaj9	Major ninth	1, 3, 5, 7, 9
11	Eleventh	1, 3, 5, b7, 9, 11
13	Thirteenth	1, 3, 5, b7, 9, 11, 13

ADDITIONAL MODIFYING SYMBOLS

b, -	Lower the note given by a half step.
#, +	Raise the note given by a half step.
Add	Add the given scale step.
N. C.	No chord.
/	C/G. C is the chord. G is the bass note.

Appendix 3 – Internet Links

For more in-depth definitions, or for entries that go beyond the scope of this Student Music Dictionary visit some the sites listed below. The music.vt.edu site lets you hear the pronunciation of each word.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musical_terms
<http://www.music.vt.edu/musicdictionary/>
<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Category:Music>