

# Vocabulary for all Music Students

## COMPLETE ALPHA LIST

La Habra High School – HiARTS

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STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**2s and 3s** – the pattern of black keys on a piano keyboard; the white note just to the left of the two black keys is the note C

**88** – the total number of keys on a full-sized piano keyboard


**a cappella** – (*lit. for the chapel*) vocal music sung without accompaniment; also *acapella*




**a niente** – (to) nothing

**a piacere** – (*lit. at pleasure*) the performer may choose and alter the tempo at will

**a tempo** – in tempo, usually follows a *ritardando*, *rallentando*, or *ritenuto*

**accelerando** – (*accel.*) gradually increase the tempo

**accent** – () strong emphasis on a note

**accidentals** – symbols used to raise or lower a pitch, or in the case of a natural sign, to return to the original pitch; flats () , sharps () and naturals ()

**accompanist** – a musician who plays accompaniment (often piano) for a choir or soloist

**acoustics** – study of the properties of sound

**adagio** – slowly

**ad libitum** – (*ad lib.*) at will; freely

**aeolian** – 1-2-b3-4-5-b6-b7-1 from MAJOR; another term for **natural minor scale**

**agitato** – agitated or restless

**agogic accent** – the accenting of a note by lengthening, i.e. if all notes in a passage are quarter notes, then a single half note would sound accented

**alla marcia** – like a march

**allegretto** – fast but not as fast as *allegro*


**allegro** – fast and lively

**allegro assai** – very fast and lively

**allegro con brio** – fast and lively with brilliance

**allegro con spirito** – fast and lively, with spirit

**alto** – lower treble voice (lower than soprano)

**alto clef** – () also known as C-clef, it shows the middle line of a staff to be middle C

**andante** – at a walking pace





**andantino** – less than *andante* (faster or slower?)








**animato** – animated and lively

**antecedent** – the opening phrase of a melody, it ends with a need to continue on (like a question in speech) and is followed by a *consequent* phrase

**appoggiatura** – a melodic embellishment; in counterpoint, the line jumps into a dissonance on a strong beat and then moves in the opposite direction by step

**anacrusis** – upbeat or pick-up

- arco** – play with the bow
- aria** – (*lit. air*) an opera solo
- arranger** – a musician who takes previously existing music and creates a new version of it
- articulation** – particular ways to perform notes, such as staccato or accented
- arpeggio** – a “broken chord” where each note is played successively instead of simultaneously
- atonal** – music characterized by the lack of a tonic or home tone
- attacca** – move immediately to the next section (also **segue**)
- augmented 5<sup>th</sup>/diminished 4<sup>th</sup>** – also called TRITONE, it is 3 whole (6 half) steps
- augmented triad** – a triad that is two major thirds stacked upon each other; Ex. 1-3-#5
- bar** – the space between two bar lines; another name for **measure**
- bar line** – vertical line that divides measures of music
- baritone** – voice part between tenor and bass
- bass** – the lowest (usually male) voice
- bass clef** – () also known as F-clef, it shows the 4<sup>th</sup> line from the bottom of a staff to be F
- baton** – tool a conductor uses to lead an ensemble
- beam** – (Ex. ) horizontal lines that connect notes smaller than a quarter note
- beat** – the underlying pulse of the music
- Bel Canto** – (*lit. beautiful singing*) 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian style of singing that emphasizes beautiful vocal color and technique
- bell** – the flared end of a brass or woodwind instrument where the sound exits
- bocca chiusa** – (*lit. mouth closed*) used for choir hums
- brass** – metal instruments that use the player lips, along with valves, to create pitch
- bridge** – the contrasting middle section of a song, sometimes called the **middle eight**
- bridge** – the part of a guitar that transfers string vibrations to the body of the instrument
- cadence** – a series of chords that bring a phrase to a pause or an end; also a “street beat” played by the percussion section of a marching band for the entire group to march to
- cadenza** – unaccompanied section of virtuosic display played by a soloist
- caesura** – () a grand pause
- canon** – when two or more instruments present an imitated melody in overlapping succession at various “intervals of imitation” (in follow-the-leader fashion)
- cantabile** – in a singing style
- cantor** – a singer who leads the singing in a religious ritual
- capo** – a device used on a guitar to shorten the strings, thereby raising the pitch (used for transposing)
- chamber music** – music created for and performed by smaller groups of performers
- chant** – as in Gregorian chant, music with no time signature that follows the rhythm of the text, often written in original square notation
- chorale** – a four-part harmonization of a melody; another name for a choir
- chorus** – also called a **refrain**, it is the repeated section of a song that usually follows each verse; (also another name for choir)
- chromatic** – notes that are not from the original given scale; “color” notes
- chromatic scale** – a 12-note scale that uses all half-steps from one note to the next same letter note  
Ex. C-C#-D-D#-E-F-F#-G-G#-A-A#-B-C
- circle of fifths** – musician’s tool, arranged like a clock beginning with C at 12:00 and moving in perfect 5ths clockwise until C is reached again (Opposite direction is the **circle of fourths**!)
- clef** – symbols that indicate the letters names of the staff lines and spaces
- coda** – () a “tag” added to the ending of a composition
- common time** – four-four time (a very common time signature)

- composer** – a musician who writes the music
- compound interval** – an interval that is greater than an octave (8)
- concert master** – lead musician of an orchestra, usually the 1st violinist
- concerto** – large work for soloist(s) and orchestra
- concert pitch** – standard pitch is A = 440 cycles per second
- conductor** – a musician who leads other musicians in performance
- con fuoco** – with fire
- consequent** – the closing phrase of a melody, it follows an *antecedent* phrase (like an answer)
- consonance** – pleasing or relaxed combinations of notes; relatively simple vibrational ratios between notes
- contour** – the shape of a melody
- contralto** – lowest treble voice part, lower than alto
- countermelody** – a second melody performed against the main melody
- counterpoint** – art of combining melodies together, often one note at a time, “note against note”
- counter tenor** – a male voice trained to sing in the range of an alto or soprano
- crescendo** – (*cresc. or* ) gradually louder
- crusis** – downbeat
- cut time** – two-two time; time signature twice as fast as four-four (common in Jazz)
- da capo (D. C.)** – (*lit. to the head*) return to the beginning of a piece
- dal segno (D. S.)** – (*lit. to the sign*) return to the sign and continue playing from there
- dampener pedal** – the farthest right piano pedal, also called **sustain pedal**. It keeps all struck notes sounding until you release the it.
- decelerando** – (*decel.*) gradually lessen the tempo
- decrescendo** – (*decresc. or* ) gradually softer
- diaphragm** – the sheet of muscle between the lungs and the intestines that allows one to control breathing
- diatonic** – music that uses only notes from the given scale
- diminished 4<sup>th</sup>/augmented 5<sup>th</sup>** – also called **tritone**, an interval of 3 whole steps (6 half steps)
- diminished (octotonic) scale** – 8-note scale made up of alternating whole and half steps (major and minor 2nds); can begin with a whole OR a half step; Ex. C-D-Eb-F-F#-G#-A-B-C
- diminished triad** – a triad that is two minor thirds stacked upon each other, Ex. 1-b3-b5
- diminuendo** – (*dim. or* ) gradually softer
- dissonance** – clash or harsh combinations of notes; complex vibrational ratios between notes
- divisi** – a line of music that was in unison now divides
- dolce** – sweet
- dominant** – the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important note or chord in any key, five scale degrees above the tonic; the triad built on the dominant; Ex. G-B-D in the key of C.
- dominant seventh chord** – the main 4-note structure of a key, starting on the 5<sup>th</sup> or dominant note, and containing stacked thirds: major 3<sup>rd</sup>, minor 3<sup>rd</sup>, minor 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Ex. In the key of C, the dominant triad is G-B-D and the dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord is G-B-D-F.
- dorian** – 1-2-b3-4-5-6-b7-1; like NATURAL MINOR with a raised 6
- dot** – () adds half of what it is next to (note, rest, or other dot) to the original note's value
- double bar line** – two vertical lines at the end of a measure or bar showing “the end”
- double dot** – () adds more value to a note; equals half of the dot that it is next to
- double-flat** – () lowers a note by a whole-step
- double reed** – two pieces of bound wood that create pitch on some woodwind instruments
- double sharp** – () raises a note by a whole-step

- downbeat** – the 1<sup>st</sup> beat of a measure which is stronger than the other beats
- d. s. al coda** – return to the sign (⌘) then continue on until you see a coda marking (⦿) and then jump to the coda
- d. s. al fine** – return to the sign (⌘) then play until you reach the *fine*
- duet** – a performance by, or composition for, two musicians
- dynamics** – louds and softs in music
- embellishment** – melodic decoration (also **ornamentation**)
- embouchure** – (*Fr.*) the position of the mouth when playing brass and woodwind instruments
- encore** – (*Fr.*) again, yet, besides; a “bonus” piece after a concert is over
- engraver** - a musician who prepares written scores for publication or performance
- enharmonic equivalents** – two notes that are spelled differently, but refer to the same general pitch; Ex. F# and Gb
- ensemble** – (*Fr., lit. together*) a group of performers, often referring to a small group
- equal temperament** – a system of tuning whereby each half-step of the chromatic scale is tuned in equal distances from each other, despite the actual overtone tunings
- espressivo** – expressively
- fake book** – a large book with many songs in lead sheet form
- falsetto** – highest part of a male voice range that does not use the entire length of the vocal folds; sometimes likened to Mickey Mouse, it is also called “false voice”
- fermata** – (◡) hold
- fifth** – the fifth note above the tonic, it is usually a perfect 5<sup>th</sup>; the 3<sup>rd</sup> note of a triad
- figured bass** – a system of musical shorthand where Arabic numerals and symbols below a bass line indicate chords
- finale** – a closing piece of a larger work; a big finish
- fine** – the finish
- first and second ending** – in music with a repeated section, play the bracketed 1<sup>st</sup> ending the first time, and perform the 2<sup>nd</sup> bracketed ending (skipping the 1<sup>st</sup>) the second time
- flag** – flag-like symbol attached to the stem of note to shorten its duration
- flat** – (♭) a sign that lowers a note by half-step
- forte** – (*f*) loud
- forte-piano** – (*fp*) loud then immediately quiet
- fortissimo** – (*ff*) very loud
- fortississimo** – (*fff*) very, very loud
- frequency** – the number of cycles of sound waves happening every second when a sound is produced; frequency determines pitch
- fret** – metal divisions of a guitar’s fingerboard
- fretboard** – where a guitar player frets or stops the strings to create different pitches
- fugue** – a polyphonic work where several melodies based on an original melody enter at different times and then continue to the end of the piece
- fundamental** – the lowest note of an overtone series. (It generates all of the overtones.)
- glissando** – (*gliss.*) gliding from one note to the next, playing every note in between
- grand staff** – the treble and bass clef staves combined, centered on middle C
- grave** – gravely slow
- grazioso** – with grace
- just intonation** – a system of tuning whereby one tunes to the actual vibrational ratios of the overtone series
- half-step** – from one note to the very next note in the chromatic scale

- hammer** – a felt covered wooded device that strikes the strings inside a piano
- hammer-on** – guitar technique where you first strike the string, and then hammer down a finger to create a new pitch
- harmonic minor** – 1-2-b3-4-5-b6-7-1 (from MAJOR)
- harmonic progression** – a series of chords in a song
- harmonic rhythm** – the speed at which the chords or harmonies change
- harmonics** – a technique that dampens off the fundamental tone of the guitar string and allows the higher overtones to ring
- harmony** – any combination of two or more notes sounding together
- hemiola** – 2 against 3
- homophony** – homophonic music is characterized by a single melody with other parts providing an accompaniment with the same rhythm, such as in a hymn or a barbershop song
- hyphen** – in vocal music, as in a dictionary, it shows syllabification of text
- ionian** – 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-1; another name for major
- improvisation** – performing music on the spot without written notes
- interval** – the distance between two notes, including both notes;  
Ex. second C-D, third C-E, fourth C-F, fifth C-G, sixth C-A, seventh C-B, octave C-next C
- intonation** – being in tune
- instrumentalist** – a musician who plays an instrument
- introduction** – a preparatory section of a song or composition
- key** – a way to describe the most important note, or tonic, of a piece of music, and the notes that are used along with it
- keyboard** – an instrument that uses keys to trigger hammers that strike strings and create pitch
- key signature** – arrangement of accidentals at the beginning of a line of music indicating the key
- langsam** – (*Gr.*) a slow tempo
- largo** – a very slow tempo
- larynx** – the vocal mechanism in the neck; made of cartilage, it houses the vocal folds.
- lead sheet** – a score that shows melody and chords only
- leading tone** – the seventh note of a scale when it is a half-step below the tonic
- leap (or skip)** – a melodic jump to from one note to another
- lento** – slow
- ledger line** – short line that allows us to extend a staff upwards or downwards in pitch
- legato** – smooth and connected
- leggerio** – lightly
- libretto** – the book or story that is used for the text of an opera
- lied** – German song
- ligature** – the mechanism that holds or binds a reed to a mouthpiece
- locrian** – 1-b2-b3-4-b5-b6-b7-1; a 20<sup>th</sup> century mode, like PHRYGIAN with a flat 5
- luthier** – one who makes their own guitars and guitar-like instruments
- lydian** – 1-2-3-#4-5-6-7-1; like MAJOR with a #4
- madrigal** – a vocal work based on a secular poem, sung a cappella, and popular in the Renaissance
- maestoso** – majestically
- maestro** – a very distinguished musician, especially an orchestra conductor
- major 2<sup>nd</sup>** – one whole-step
- major 3<sup>rd</sup>** – an interval containing 4 half-steps
- major 6<sup>th</sup>** – an interval containing 9 half-steps
- major 7<sup>th</sup>** – an interval containing 11 half-steps; an inverted minor 2<sup>nd</sup> (half-step)
- major scale** – 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-1; w w ½ w w w 1/2
- major triad** – major third plus a minor third as in 1-3-5

- mallet** – wooden or plastic stick (with a rounded head) used to play percussion instruments
- manuscript paper** – paper with staff lines printed on it
- marcato** – marked or accented
- mass** – a vocal music work based on five texts of the Catholic Mass: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus/Benedictus, and Agnus Dei
- measure** – the space between two bar lines; another name for **bar**
- melisma** – melismatic vocal lines are characterized by two or more notes to one syllable of text
- meno mosso** – less motion (slower tempo)
- melodic minor** – 1-2-b3-4-5-6-7-1 ascending, then 1-b7-b6-5-4-b3-2-1 descending (from MAJOR)
- melody** – the tune of the music
- messa di voce** – vocal exercise where one holds a single note and crescendos half-way and decrescendos the other half
- meter** – the organization of accented and unaccented notes in a measure
- metronome** – a device that keeps a steady beat, expressed in beats-per-minute; sometimes marked as M.M. (Maelzel's Metronome) for the man its invention is attributed to
- mezzo** – (*m*) medium
- mezzo-soprano** – in opera, the voice part between soprano and contralto
- middle C** – the C that is closest to the middle of the keyboard (often near the name of the piano); sitting in the middle of the grand staff, it is an important reference note for all musicians
- middle eight** – another name for the **bridge** of a song, so named because it is often 8 bars long
- minor 2<sup>nd</sup>** – an interval of one half-step
- minor 3<sup>rd</sup>** – an interval containing 3 half-steps
- minor 6<sup>th</sup>** – an interval containing 8 half-steps
- minor 7<sup>th</sup>** – an interval containing 10 half-steps; an inverted major 2<sup>nd</sup> (whole step)
- minor scale (natural)** – scale that is a flat 3, flat 6, and flat 7 from MAJOR; also called **aeolian**
- minor triad** – minor third plus a major third; Ex. 1-b3-5 or C-Eb-G
- misterioso** – mysteriously
- mixolydian** – 1-2-3-4-5-6-b7-1; like MAJOR with a flat 7
- mode** – series of notes used in a composition, another name for scale
- moderato** – a moderate tempo
- modulation** – a change in key or tonic
- molto** – very
- morendo** – dying away
- motet** – a short piece of sacred choral music, sung a capella, that was popular in the Renaissance
- motive** – the smallest melodic idea
- mouthpiece** – the plastic, metal, or wooden piece of an instrument that an instrumentalist blows air through to create pitch
- movement** – a section of a multi-movement work
- musical** – a dramatic stage production, usually in a more “pop”/less “classical” style, and usually with spoken dialogue between the songs
- mute** – a device that changes and quiets the natural sound of an instrument
- natural** – (♮) symbol used to cancel a sharp or a flat
- natural minor** – 1-2-b3-4-5-b6-b7-1
- (a) niente** – (to) nothing
- neume** – in chant, a symbol that showed pitch; eventually became our modern notes
- non-chord tone (NCT)** – also called a non-harmonic tone (NHM), it is a note that does not belong to the defined harmony of the moment
- non troppo** – not too much
- note** – symbol used to represent the pitch and rhythm of a sound

**nut** – the ridge on the guitar at which the strings pass over to the fretboard and begin to vibrate

**octave** – distance of 12 half-steps; eight notes from one letter to the next same letter;

Ex. C up to the next C

**octotonic (diminished) scale** – 8-note scale made up of alternating whole and half steps (major and minor 2nds); can begin with a whole OR a half step

Ex. C-D-Eb-F-F#-G#-A-B-C

**opera** – a dramatic stage production set to music, usually with no spoken dialogue but only sung

**opus** – (*lit. work*) numbers that are used to catalog a composer's work in order

**orchestration** – the art of using different instruments

**orchestrator** – a musician who writes out music for orchestral instruments

**ornamentation** – melodic decoration (also **embellishment**); the art of embellishing

**ostinato** – a repeated line or idea, often in the bass, that stays the same and repeats over and over while the music around it changes.

**overtone** – a note that automatically sounds as a result of, and above, a fundamental tone's vibrations

**overture** – the introductory song of a stage show

**partial** – any overtone including the fundamental (original) note

**pedal point** – a long sustained note around which changing harmonies or chords occur

**pentatonic** – a five-note scale, Ex. C-D-E-G-A-C in major or A-C-D-E-G-A

**percussion** – an instrument that needs to be struck or shaken to create sound; some have definite pitch (Ex. xylophone) and some have indefinite pitch (Ex. snare drum)

**perfect 4<sup>th</sup>** – 5 half-steps

**perfect 5<sup>th</sup>** – distance of 7 half-steps; Ex. C-G or B to F#

**pesante** – heavily

**phonation** – the setting of the vocal cords in motion (with air) to create sound

**phrase** – a natural division of a melodic line (like a clause in speech)

**phrygian** – 1-b2-b3-4-5-b6-b7-1; like MINOR with a flat 2

**pianissimo** – (*pp*) very quiet

**pianississimo** – (*ppp*) very, very quiet

**piano** – (*p*) quiet

**piano-forte** – the soft-loud; the original name for the grand piano since it could play soft and loud (developed in the late 1700's)

**picardy third** – when a piece in the minor mode ends on a major tonic triad

(a) **piacere** – (*lit. at pleasure*) the performer may choose and alter the tempo at will

**pick-up** – note or notes that begin before a downbeat

**pitch** – vibrational frequency of a sound; one of the two elements of music (other is *rhythm*)

**più mosso** – more motion (faster tempo)

**pizzicato** – (*pizz.*) plucking instead of bowing

**poco** – a little

**poco a poco** – little by little

**polyphony** – polyphonic music is characterized by two or more melodies with different rhythms happening simultaneously, as in a round, canon or fugue

**portamento** – (*port.*) a vocal glissando

**presto** – a very fast tempo

**prestissimo** – as fast as possible

**prime (unison)** – (*lit. one sound*) two or more performers on the same note or line

**pull-off** – guitar technique where you hold your finger down, strike the string, and then pull your finger off to play a new pitch

**quartet** – a performance by, or composition for, four musicians

**rallentando** – (*rall.*) gradually lessen the tempo

**range** – the distance between the highest and lowest note of an instrument or passage of music

**recitative** – in vocal music, especially opera, a lightly accompanied recited singing style

**reduction** – when an orchestral or vocal score is reduced to a piano score

**reed** – a shaped piece of wood that vibrates against a mouthpiece to create pitch on a woodwind instrument

**register** – the range of one section of an instrument's notes

**repeat sign** – two dots next to a double bar line that indicate a repeated section

**requiem** – (*lit. rest*) a choral mass for the dead

**resolution** – movement from dissonance to consonance

**resonance** – the reverberating quality of sound

**rest** – a symbols that represent a period of silence in music

**rhythm** – durational organization of music; one of the two elements of music (other is *pitch*)

**rhythm section** – piano, bass, and drums in a combo; may also include guitar or vibes

**rinforzando** – suddenly increasing in power

**risoluto** – with resolve

**ritardando** – (*rit. or ritard.*) gradually lessen the tempo

**ritenuto** – (*riten.*) holding back the tempo

**root** – the name of a chord, and the bass note when the chord is in root position

**round** – a vocal canon at the unison or octave; Ex. “Row, row, row your boat...”

**rubato** – (*lit. robbed time*) a tempo characterized by slowing and speeding up the tempo, borrowing time from one beat to another

**sargam** – an Indian method of learning the notes of a scale. SA-RE-GA-MA-PA-DHA-NI-SA

**SATB** – music written in 4-part harmony: soprano, alto, tenor, bass

**scale** – a series of notes used to create a composition

**scherzando** – in a playful or joking manner

**schnell** – (*Gr.*) quickly

**score** – written music

**segue** – move without interruption to the next song (also **attacca**)

**semplice** – simply

**sempre** – always

**senza** – without

**sequence** – a melodic or harmonic repetition at successively higher or lower pitch levels

**seventh** – the seventh note above the tonic; the fourth note of a seventh chord

**seventh chord** – a four note structure built by stacking three thirds above the root; Ex. 1-3-5-b7 or C-E-G-Bb

**sforzando** – (*sfz.*) sudden accent

**sharp** – ( $\sharp$ ) a symbol that raises a note by half-step

**simile** – in the same manner or style as previously marked

**skip (or leap)** – a melodic jump to from one note to another

**slur** – curved line that shows that notes are to be played or sung as a group (not to be confused with a tie)

**solfeggio/solfège** – an Italian method of learning the notes of the scale. DO-RE-MI-FA-SOL-LA-TI-DO

**solo** – a single performing voice or instrument


**sonata** – multi-movement work for a solo instrument with piano accompaniment (or just piano)

**sonority** – a chord, particularly when speaking of non-traditional harmonies

**soprano** – the highest treble voice

**sostenuto** – slow and sustained

**sotto voce** – half-voice; sing in a whispered style

**staccato** – () short and detached



**staff** – the lines and spaces that we write notes upon

**stanza** – a verse

**stem** – a vertical line attached to a note head

**step** – moving from one note to another that is right next to it

**stringendo** – gradually increasing the tempo; stringing the notes together

**string quartet** – multi-movement work for 2 violins, 1 viola, and cello

**strings** – instruments that have strings that need to be bowed, plucked or strummed to create pitch

**sub-dominant** – the note or chord that is a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> BELOW the tonic

**subito** – (*sub.*) immediately, as in subito piano (*sub. p*)

**sustain pedal** – the farthest right piano pedal, also called **damper pedal**. It keeps all struck notes sounding until you release the it.

**swing rhythm (swing eighths)** – in Jazz, two eighth notes in one beat are performed as a long-short rhythm even though they look even on the page

**syllabic** – vocal lines characterized by one note per syllable of text

**symphony** – multi-movement work for orchestra

**syncopation** – emphasis on the “up” part of beats rather than the “down”

**table of basic intervals:**

**unison (prime)** – the same note performed by two musicians simultaneously

**minor 2<sup>nd</sup>** – one half-step

**major 2<sup>nd</sup>** – one whole-step

**minor 3<sup>rd</sup>** – 3 half-steps

**major 3<sup>rd</sup>** – 4 half-steps

**perfect 4<sup>th</sup>** – 5 half-steps

**diminished 4<sup>th</sup>/augmented 5<sup>th</sup>** – also called TRITONE, it is 3 whole (6 half) steps

**perfect 5<sup>th</sup>** – 7 half-steps

**minor 6<sup>th</sup>** – 8 half-steps

**major 6<sup>th</sup>** – 9 half-steps

**minor 7<sup>th</sup>** – 10 half-steps; an inverted major 2<sup>nd</sup> (whole step)

**major 7<sup>th</sup>** – 11 half-steps; an inverted minor 2<sup>nd</sup> (half-step)

**octave** – 12 half-steps; eight notes from one letter to the next same letter

Ex. C up to the next C


**tacet** – silent

**(a) tempo** – in tempo; usually follows a ritardando, rallentando, or ritenuto

**tempo** – speed of the music

**tempo primo** – (back to) the first tempo

**tenor** – the highest (usually) male voice

**tenuto** – () held or sustained for full value

**tessitura** – the average range of an instrument or passage of music

**tetrachord** – four notes that are a building block of a scale; two tetrachords make up a 7-note scale

**text** – the words or lyrics of a piece of music

**texture** – the way melodic, rhythmic and harmonic materials are combined in a piece of music in regards to density and range

**theme** – a self-contained musical idea

**third** – the third note above the tonic; the second note of a triad

**tie** – a curved line that adds the value of notes together (not to be confused with a slur)

**timbre** – (*Fr.*) unique quality of a sound determined by prominence of certain overtones

**time signature** – the numbers at the beginning of a piece or measure that define the organization of the meter; bottom number shows the unit of beat, top number shows the number of beats per bar

**tone** – an actual sounding note

**tone** – the quality of an actual sounding note


**tonal** – music characterized by a single most important note called the tonic

**tonic** – the main note (tone) or chord in any key

**tonicization** – a temporary “hinting” at another key or tonic


**tranquillo** – tranquilly

**transpose** – to change music to another key

**treble clef** – () also known as G-clef, it shows the 2<sup>nd</sup> line from the bottom of a staff to be G

**tremolo** – the rapid repetition of one pitch; the rapid repetition of two pitches in succession

**triad** – a three note chord structure built by stacking two thirds above a root; Ex. 1-3-5 or C-E-G

**trill** – () musical ornament where one rapidly alternates the note with another note next to it

**trio** – a performance by, or composition for, three musicians; also a sub-section of a march

**triplet** – three notes in the space of what is normally two

**tritone** – (also **aug. 4** or **dim. 5**) an interval of 3 whole steps (6 half steps)

**tubing** – the metal tubes through which air flows to create pitch in a brass instrument

**tuning** – adjustment to a recognized correct pitch; the exact frequency of vibrations for a pitch

**turnaround** – a chord or chords that lead from the end of a piece back to the beginning, as in the 12-bar blues (G7 in the above example would be the turnaround)

**tutti** – all parts or voices now perform (often seen after the marking **solo**)

**twelve-bar blues** – a basic form for a blues song

Ex. (*chords in 4/4 time*) C – C – C – C – F – F – C – C – G7 – F – C – G7 and back to the top

**upbeat** – the weak beat that precedes a strong downbeat

**unison (prime)** – (*lit. one sound*) two or more performers on the same note or line

**valve** – a mechanism that directs air into various parts of tubing on a brass instrument to create different pitches

**vamp** – simple musical idea designed to be repeated as over and again as necessary

**verse** – a stanza which has new lyrics each time it is presented in a song

**vibrato** – wavering of a tone with an actual pitch fluctuation above and below the note

**virtuoso** – a musician of exceptional ability

**vivace** – a vivacious tempo

**vivo** – with life

**vocalise** – vocal exercise

**vocalist** – a musician who sings

**vocal slur** – in vocal music, it shows which notes belong to which syllable of text

**walking bass** – mostly one note per beat in a smooth on-beat line against which syncopations in other parts can happen

**whole-step** – the distance of two half-steps

**whole tone scale** – 6-note scale made up only of whole steps; Ex. C-D-E-F#-Ab-Bb-C

**woodwind** – a (usually) wooden instrument that has a column of air that is lengthened or shortened by a series of holes and pads to create different pitches

**word extension** – in vocal music, an “underscore” that follows a word or final syllable to the last note of a melisma