

**DICTIONARY**  
**OF THE**  
**PRINCIPAL MUSICAL TERMS.**



A COMPENDIOUS  
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A.

**ACCENT.** A modulation of the voice, or a management of an instrument, so as to express the passions which are the subject of the composition. In common time, the beginning and middle of a bar, are generally accented. In triple time, in notes by three, the first and third are accented, but chiefly the first.

**Adagio.** The slowest time except *grave*. See in this work, what is said on *Pendula*.

**Affettuoso, Amoroſo,** and such terms, mean a tender and moving manner, rather slow; but such appellations, applied to practice, are not quite clear of the *ridiculous*.

**Allabreve.** Two semibreves, four minims, or eight crotchets in a bar.

**Alla Siciliana.** Shepherd's dance.

**Allegro.** Played in a lively manner, devoid of hurry. See what is written on *Pendula*. The common six divisions in succession are, *grave, adagio, largo, vivace, allegro,* and *presto*. *Piu* quickens, and *poco* renders allegro slower.

**Allegro assai.** Brisk.

**Allemand.** Grave music of a full and moving measure.

**Andante.** From *andare*, to go; a distinct playing of the notes, and slow.

**Appogiatura.** Explained, already, by examples in the work.

**Assai.** Sufficiently quick, or slow; but not too much.

B.

**Bag-Pipe.** An ancient Scythian instrument; the *Tibia Utricularis* of antiquity.

**Bass.** The principal part of a concert.

**Breve.** A square in figure, and equal to four minims.

**Brio.** With spirit.

C

**Cadence.** A series of notes, generally three, striking the ear agreeably at the end of a song, &c. It terminates on a chord or note expected by the ear, like a period in writing. It is called imperfect, when the ear expects a continuance of the music, and a fundamental cadence. It is derived from *cadencia*, a *fall*, or conclusion of continued harmony.

**Canon.** A rule determining the intervals of notes.

**Cantata.** A song or composition mixed with airs and recitatives.

**Canto.** The highest part of a piece, and the first treble.

**Canzone.** A song where little fugues are introduced.

**Canzonetta.** Vaudevilles, ballads, and frequently jiggs, or songs.

**Capricia.** Phantasia, pieces where fancy is humoured.

**Chord.** The notes of their aliquot parts, are fully explained in the work.

**Chromatic.** Note, or semitone, because the ancients marked them with a colour called *chroma*.

**Clef.** Kinds explained in this work; from *clavis*, a key.

*Coda.* A tail, or conclusion repeated, and terminating fugues, &c.

*Comma.* Explained in the work.

*Concinnous.* }  
*Conchord.* } Explained in the work.  
*Consonance.* }

*Con spirito.* With life. *Spirituoso*, means much the same.

*Contrapunto.* } So called, because the notes were originally points opposite to points. It is now  
*Counterpoint.* } termed the art of composition.

## D.

*Da Capo.* The song or composition is to end with the first part, after having been begun again.

*Descant.* The art of composing in several parts.

*Diatonic.* }  
*Chromatic.* } Sufficiently explained in the work.  
*Enharmonic.* }

*Diesis.* A division less than a semitone, marked like an X.

*Discord.* }  
*Dissonance.* } Alluded to in the work.

*Dolce.* Soft, sweet, agreeable.

*Doppio.* Double, as *Basso Doppio*.

*Duo, Duetto.* A composition for two instruments, or voices.

## E.

*E. and Ed.* As *allegro ed andante*, brisk and distinctly.

## F.

*F. Forté.* FF.; *Forté Forté*.

*Fin, Finale.* The close, or last note. A perfect final is on a fifth descending, and a fourth rising. An imperfect, the reverse.

*Fugue.* When the different parts repeat consecutively. They are simple, double and counter. In the simple, the leading part flies before the others, which follow with the same or similar notes. In double fugues, two or more parts move together, alternately mixed and interchanged with the several other parts. Counter fugues proceed contrary to each other.

## G.

*G.* The treble clef is marked on its line, the lowest but one.

*Gamut.* Guido Aretine, the inventor, added a note to the gravest note of the ancients, called *Proslambanomenos*. This he denoted by the Greek *Gamma*: hence *Gamut*.

*Gavotta.* A brisk and lively dance of two parts, not unlike a reel, under a different arrangement of notes. It is generally marked  $\frac{6}{8}$  or  $\frac{12}{8}$ .

*Grave.* The slowest movement. See what is written on *Pendula*.

*Groupe.* Four or more notes tied together.

*Guida.* The leading voice, or instrument in music in parts.

## H.

*Harmonical sound.* Is where certain notes, called *Harmonics*, make a certain determinate number of vibrations, during one vibration of the fundamental tone. This is explained in the work.

*Harpsichord.* Called by the Italians *clave cymbala*; and by the Latins, *grave cymbalum*, or the deep cymbal. It has been succeeded by a more perfect instrument termed *Piano Forté*, as uniting power and softness, added to more variety of tone, and addition of compass.



## I.

*Inganno.* Tromperie; cheat; is when a *tacet* is made, where a prepared close was expected by the ear.

*Interval.* The difference between two sounds, as to acuteness and gravity. They are divided into simple and compound, which last includes lesser intervals.

## K.

*Key.* A fundamental note, to which the whole piece refers; on which it generally commences; and with which it always terminates. It resembles the keeping some leading circumstance, or person, constantly prominent in a well adjudged oration.

## L.

*Largetto.* Somewhat quicker than *largo*.

*Legato.* Notes tied, or slurred in playing.

*Leggiardo.* Lively, brisk. *Leggiardamente*, the same.

*Lento.* *Lenté*, are both, in time, similar to *largo*.

## M.

*Measure.* See what is written on the pendulum, as a measure of time.

*Men.*  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Forté.} \\ \textit{Allegro.} \\ \textit{Presto.} \end{array} \right\}$  Means a diminution of these, or of any other mentioned times.

*Mezzo.* The half of any subject, or effect to which it is applied.

*Minor.* And major, explained in the work: as also *mode*, *modulation*.

*Molle.* A flat sound, in reference to a sharp.

*Monochord.* The harmonical canon, or rule to measure intervals, experimentally.

*Music.* Described, in some degree, in the work. See the works of Smith, Taylor, Malcolm, &c. &c. on the subject.

## N.

*Nona.* The ninth, a dissonant interval, being properly the second doubled. It has generally an octave placed near it, being resolved by descending to the octave.

*Notes.* As used, instead of points, are ascribed to Guido; as are lines, ledger-lines, letters, clefs, sharps, and flats. Johannes de Muris, Doctor of Paris, was the first who assigned shapes to notes, expressive of different times.

## O.

*Octave.* Called diapason, as containing all the intervals, or simple tones. Des Cartes, from finding that an over-blown whistle, or organ-pipe, gave an octave, concluded that the fundamental note is always accompanied by an acute octave. See what is here written on *harmonics*, and experiments made on strings.

*Organ.* Invented in the eighth century. St. Jerom mentions one heard at the distance of a mile. There is one at Ulm, ninety-three feet high, and twenty-eight broad. It has sixteen pair of bellows. The largest pipe is thirteen inches in diameter.

*Organo.* Generally means thorough-bass.

## P.

*Pastoral.* Airs in imitation of the melody of the music of Shepherds.

*Pause.* Demi, or general; a cessation partial, or total; in order to strike forcibly; and, as in oratory, to recommence, after this silent appeal.

*Phonics.* Acoustics ; the science of sounds.

*Piano.* Soft and sweet.

*Pianissimo.* Very soft, so as that the sound may appear, as it were, distant.

*Pizzicato.* Passages or notes played by the *finger*, in lieu of the *bow*. The bow must be thrown suddenly out of action, and the notes to be *pizzicatoed*, are to be sounded with the middle finger, in preference to the first of the right hand.

*Poco.* A little less, as *Piu* means a little more, or *poco piu*.

*Point.* Simple counterpoint, when a note below corresponds with one above ; and *figurate*, when there is a syncopation, or holding on of a note. Points are still used ; as a pointed semibreve equal to three minims.

## R.

*Rattle.* Aristotle writes that Archytas invented this *musical instrument*, to amuse his children, and to prevent their deranging his articles.

*Recitativo.* The art of declaiming musically, by voice and instruments.

*Repieno.* Parts played to *fill up*, occasionally, or to increase the effect.

*Rondeau.* Applied to pieces that end with the first strain.

*Rostrum.* An instrument for ruling music paper.

## S.

*Saraband.* A dance or measure derived from the Saracens.

*Soprano.* The first treble, or Canto.

*Sostenuto.* To hold a note steadily through one, two, or more bars.

*Staccato.* Notes struck in a smooth, but distinct manner.

*Supposition.* Two consecutive notes, one a discord, and the other a concord to a third note.

*Syncopation.* A breaking of the time into different contiguous notes. It means, also, when a note of one part terminates in the middle of a note of another part. It also connects the last note of a bar, with the first of the next.

## T.

*T.* Means frequently Tutti, or all playing simultaneously.

*Tacet.* Let it be silent, or let the whole, or such and such instruments stop. It often conveys a similar meaning to the pause.

*Tasto.* The touch. It means the finger-board, or keys of an instrument. *Tasto solo* frequently means a gentle holding on of one note, till more mixed accompaniment is indicated.

*Temperament.* A term applied to all instruments whose notes, or sounds, are fixed. It means an amelioration of the imperfect concords, by adding to them a part of the beauty of those that are perfect. From this the Italians call it *participatione*; and it is also called *bearing*, because it bears away a small portion of one note, to enlarge another. *Bontempi* (See *Historia Musica*) found that the *fifth* could bear a diminution, to give a greater extent to the *fourth*. Nature herself, in some degree, meant this *systema temperato*; for the harmonic fourth of the fourth octave, is even now sharper than in keyed instruments. Though the exact mathematical ratio between notes is deranged by *temperament*, it is unquestionable that a cultivated ear deems it indispensable. It may be a proof, probably, that *nothing on this side of time must be deemed perfect*; for, even now, opinions are divided on the degree of *temperament*.

*Tenore.* Means, in its true sense, the ordinary pitch of the voice.

*Third.* An imperfect concord. It has two intervals, and three terms, or sounds, which are rendered nearly equal by the application of *temperament*. The great third is brisk, gay, and sprightly, in rising ; but soft, tender, or rather heavy and melancholy, in falling. The minor third maintains the opposite character.

*Time.* In music, is derived from the *tempi staccate* marked by the hand, or foot, first in Italy.

*Tirata.* Tirate of notes moving in succession, ascending or descending, and generally with a small rest preceding; and ending with a note of greater value.

*Tone.* A greater tone,  $8 : 9$  = difference between a fourth and fifth. A lesser tone,  $9 : 10$  = difference between a flat third and fourth; or between a fifth and sharp sixth;— $15 : 16$  = difference between a great third and fourth. These proportions are affected by *temperament*.

*Transposition.* The moving of music from one key to another, with similar intervals of notes, and a prefixure of the chromatic signs required by the new key. To convert an air set for the violin to a bass clef, so as that the air shall begin on the violoncello in the *same situation* as on the violin; raise the whole one note, and prefix the character of the key. Suppose a tune in C natural on the violin; raise it one note, and it will be in the key of F in the bass, with one flat; and F is the fourth note from C: or in other words, the new key will derive its name from the fourth note above the violin key-note. The Scotch Reel annexed to Number 18, is an instance of this species of transposition, or rather of conversion. The violin tune was in the key of C, and began with the fourth note on the fourth string. The same tune begins on the fourth note, F, of the fourth violoncello string. Though the tune is in the same apparent situation on both instruments, there is actually a difference of pitch of eleven notes between the notes of the same air played on the two instruments. The rule and its converse are, however, of ready utility for converting a treble into a bass clef; and for adapting violin music to the violoncello, if necessary.

The raising of an air in the treble, or violin clef, one note higher, arises from the difference of appearance to the eye relative to any note on the same part of a string of the violin and violoncello. For instance, the lowest note on the violin is G under the five lines, with two ledger-lines through its neck. The lowest note on the violoncello, C, has one ledger-line through the neck, and one through the head. Now, if a piece of treble music set in this key of G, be raised one note, it would be in the key of A on the violin; but when considered as treble converted into bass, it will become a piece of music in the key of C natural in the bass; and will be just eleven notes lower in pitch, than the same piece in the treble, and in the key of G major.

The leading reason why the violoncello notes commence with C, is, that the bass and treble notes may have *some point of common contact* in a note of the *same name*. The lowest treble note is generally reckoned D under the five lines. The real position of this note on the violoncello, places it as the fourth note of the first string; and this may be termed the point of common contact of the two clefs; though some reckon it a note lower, or middle C of the piano. When, however, treble-clef music for the violoncello is not marked *octave*, or *alto*, or 8vo., the above D, &c., is taken an octave lower than the fourth note on the first string of the violoncello. The facility of transposition, by the above simple rule, rendered this explanation indispensable.

There is another species of transposition which the violoncello player ought to be well acquainted with. It is the conversion of treble into bass, so that the piece shall be in the same key, but not, necessarily, in the similar position on the violoncello and violin, as in the last instance. To illustrate this, an example is requisite. Number 26 is a simple and beautiful air, composed originally, we believe, by Purcell. It is termed, "Lost, long lost is my Quiet;" and is in the key C natural. Immediately below, it appears as Number 27, transposed to the same key for the violoncello. The tune on the violin begins on C, the third note of the second string. On the violoncello, it cannot be played in that position on the second string; but must be transposed to the similar situation on the first string, where the third minor on that string is C, in which key Number 27 is set in the bass clef. There is precisely an octave, as to pitch or interval, between Number 26 in the treble clef, and the same tune in the same key, and with the same fingering, in the bass clef, which is the exact situation where the violoncello-player would take it as it appears in Number 26. Number 27 commences unison with C natural, the fourth note of the fourth string of the

violin. This subject of transposition cannot, on account of its utility, be too intimately reflected on by a violoncellist.

*Tremolo.* Not much used; to make several notes on one pitch, by one stroke of the bow.

*Trios.* Are the finest kind of composition. Following octaves, or following fifths, are not admitted of, as producing a sameness. The third must be conspicuous in every bar, in some one or other of the parts. One part makes a third with the bass; and the other a fifth or, octave. A sixth is sometimes admitted, in lieu of the third.—Discords prepared, and resolved, have a fine effect in trios.

*Triple.* Time, derived from *tripla*, or where the greater contains the smaller three times, 3:1; or 9:3.

Bontempi disapproves of simple, compound, and mixed triples; and says the names given to modern triples, are not founded in proper proportions. The subject is familiar in use, but complicated in appearance.

*Tritone.* See Plate, Fig. 1. Finger-board.

*Tune.* Sounds yielded by different bodies, and which bear a proportion either to specific gravity, or quantity of matter. As to strings, the degrees of acuteness of sound are, reciprocally, in strings of the same kind, as the lengths. It is not, however, certain, that the degrees of acuteness answer to the number of vibrations as their true cause. This hardly comes within the reach of experiment, unless that made in this work may lead to farther conclusions. The experiment alluded to, constitutes a curious fact.

*Tutti.* All; opposed to *Soli*, alone.

## V.

*Variation.* A change on a tune, so as to preserve its spirit and character in modulating; and more especially in the close of the parts.

*Voti.* From *voltare*, to turn over.

## W.

*Wire.* The sizes are from  $\frac{1}{20}$  of an inch, to  $\frac{1}{100}$  part. A gold string or wire will sound stronger than a silver one; and those of brass and steel give feebler sounds than those of gold and silver. Steel wires give the weakest sounds. In comparing the strength of sounds, the wires must have the same lengths, tensions, and dimensions, or size.

FINIS.