

Dictionary of musical terms

Signs:

#	sharp (in the Standard Notation)
(3#)	example: 3 sharps in TN: Key of A Major or F-sharp minor
b	flat (in the Standard Notation)
(5b)	example: 5 flats in TN: Key of D-flat Major or B-flat minor
8va	The part besides the dashed line should be played one octave <i>higher</i>
8vb	The part besides the dashed line should be played one octave <i>lower</i>

Accelerando	Becoming faster
Adagio	Slowly
Ad Libitum	As you please
Agitato	Excited
Allegretto	Lively, somewhat fast
Allegretto moderato	Moderately fast
Allegro	Fast
Andante	Slow, quiet
Andantino	Little faster than Andante
Animato	Full of soul
Arpeggio	Breaking or detaching the tones of a chord
Assai	Very
A tempo	In regular time
BPM / bpm	Tempo in Beats Per Minute
ben	well
Cadenza	Brilliant flourish before the close of a piece.
Calando (cal.)	Getting slower and soften
Calmat	Calmed down, quiet.
Cantabile, Cantando	In a singing style, song-like
Comodo	Without haste
Colla parte	The accompaniment should follow the tempo of a soloist or leading singer or player.
Crescendo (dim.)	Increasing in loudness
Da Capo (D.C.)	From the beginning
Dal Segno (D.S.)	From the sign
D.C. sin' al Fine	Play from the beginning until "Fine"
Decrescendo	Decreasing in loudness
Diminuendo	Decreasing in loudness
Dolce	Softly
Energico	With energy and power.

f	Forte, loud
fff	Fortissimo, as loud as possible



Grazioso	Gracefully
Largo	Slow, protracted; slower than Adagio.
Largamente	Slow, broad; keep beats far apart from one other (40-60 BPM)
Larghetto	Not as slow as Largo.
Legato	Tied, bound, connected
Legatissimo	Very much bound
Leggiero	Light
Leggermente	Lightly
Lento	Slow
L'istesso Tempo	The same tempo or time.
Loco	Play the notes as printed (used to Indicate the end of of 8va)
Maestoso	With majesty, dignified
Marcato (marc.)	Made prominent ; accented.
Melanconico	Sad
Mezzo	Half
mf	Mezzoforte, moderately loud
mp	Mezzopiano, moderately soft
Mezza voce (m.v.)	With suppressed voice
Moderato	Moderately.
Molto	Very much, many
p	Piano, Softly
pp	Pianissimo, Very soft
ppp	As softly as possible
Pizzicato	Picking the strings as on the guitar
più	More, e.g. più forte = louder
Poco, un poco	A little
pf	Pocoforte, somewhat loud
Presto	Quick
Prestissimo	Very quick
Prima	First
Quaver	Eighth of a whole note
Rallantando (rall.)	Retarding the tempo
Ritardando (ritard.)	Retarding, slower by degrees
Ritenuto (riten.)	Holding back
Scherzando (scherz.)	Gay, playful
Scherzo	A lively composition
Semplicità	Simply, plainly
Sempre	Always
Seconda	Second
Simile	Similar, continuing in the same manner
Smorzando (smorz.)	Dying away, both volume and speed
Sonore	Resonant



Sostenuto (sosten.)	Sustained
Sotto voce	Softly, as if in an undertone
Spiritoso	With spirit, lively
Staccato (stacc.)	Cut off suddenly; short tones
Stringendo	Played with an accelerating tempo or hastening the time, as to a climax.
Tempo di marcia	In march tempo
Tenuto (ten.)	Held
Tutti	All
Valse	Waltz; a dance
Vivace	Vivo, lively