

ARMA Glossary of Selected Terms and Concepts

A

- a cappella** Vocal music without instrumental accompaniment. The term derives from the diminutive of the Italian word for chapel, *cappella*, and denotes the church style. In modern usage, *a capella* refers to any music for voices alone.
- absolute music** In contrast to program music, absolute music is based on strictly formal structure without reference to a textual narrative.
- accelerando** Gradually quickening in pace.
- accidental** A music symbol that denotes a change by half-step and marked with a sharp, flat, or natural.
- adagio** Tempo marking. A slow pace that is slower than *andante* but not as slow as *lento*.
- agitato** An expression marking meaning agitated.
- air** A song or melody with or without words, for voice or instrument. Also spelled ayre.
- alla breve** Cut time. The half note gets the beat, rather than the quarter note.
- allargando** Tempo marking. Gradually becoming slower.
- allegretto** Tempo marking. Lively, but not as fast as *allegro*.
- allegro** Tempo marking. Quicker than *allegretto*, but not as fast as *presto*.
- alto** Lower range of female voices, and also a high, sometimes falsetto, male voice.
- andante** Tempo marking. Moderately slow; a “walking” pace.
- animato** Expression marking. Animated, with spirit, and quickening the tempo.
- answer** A response to the subject in a fugue that is a restatement of the subject at another pitch level. The answer can be tonal or real, depending on the specific details of the subject. While much more details explanations can be provided tonal answers are often in the key of the piece; real answers preserve the exact intervals of the subject and may involve accidentals, depending on the fugue-subject.
- anthem** A form of sacred vocal work of the Anglican church, composed with or without accompaniment. A full anthem is written for voices alone and a verse anthem includes sections for soloists and instruments. Anthems can be composed in multiple sections, usually two, with some pieces in this genre by William Byrd.
- appoggiatura** This ornament is a non-chord tone a step away (usually above) the main pitch.
- aria** A vocal solo in an opera or oratorio. Aria can indicate an instrumental piece in the lyrical style of an aria, as with the “Aria” in Bach’s Goldberg Variations, BWV 988.
- arpeggio**. Playing the tones of a chord separately in succession, like a harp; a sonority played this way is arpeggiated.
- a tempo**. Tempo marking. Return to the main tempo.
- atonal** In contrast to tonal music, atonal music uses the chromatic scale to move away from the relationships associated with diatonic music
- augmentation** Using longer durations to repeat a melody or theme. Opposite of diminution.
- augmented chord** A sonority consisting of two superimposed major thirds; for example, D–F-sharp–A-sharp.
- authentic cadence** A chord progression that denotes the conclusion of a music idea with the dominant (V) chord moving to the tonic (I).
- auxiliary tone** A non-harmonic pitch occurring above or below a principal harmonic note.

B

ballad A narrative song that tells a story usually using strophes that have the same meter and rhyme schemes.

ballade One of the *formes fixes* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the *ballade* has the poetic structure ababbcbC ababbcbC ababbcbC bcbC, with the musical structure essentially AAB (bar form). The other *formes fixes* are *rondeau* and *virelai*. In the nineteenth century the piano ballade offered composers the opportunity of composing lyrical music for the instrument in a variety of musical structures.

bar In British usage, the equivalent of measure in American usage. It derives from the graphic of the vertical line used to distinguish measures.

baritone A male voice with a range between tenor and bass. Also, a valved brass instrument with approximately the same range as the trombone.

bass clef The clef placed on the fourth line of the staff to indicate the pitch F below middle C.

beat The basic time unit of rhythm.

bel canto Translated as "beautiful singing," *bel canto*'s florid vocal lines are essential to opera arias in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

bis Meaning "encore" or "again," *bis* indicates playing a piece or section twice.

blue note In blues, the blues notes are usually lowered pitches, usually the third or seventh scale degrees of the major scale.

bowing In instrumental music, the indication to use a bow, rather than to pluck, string instruments, with the distinction often between down bows (▣), moving the bow away from the player and up bows (∨), moving the bow towards the player.

breve A single note comprised of two whole notes (semibreves).

brio Lively. The word usually appears in the expression *con brio*, that is, with life (lively).

buffo (buffa) Comic or comedic, usually referring to the type of work, like *opera buffa*, often used in contrast to *seria*, with *opera seria* often having tragic elements.

C

cadence A concluding chord sequence, as in authentic (V-I) or plagal (IV-I) cadences.

cadenza An improvisatory solo section that demonstrates the facility of a performer, usually occurring near the ends of the first and final movements of concertos.

canon A polyphonic technique, a melody or theme is taken up in subsequent voices exactly and, at times, at different pitch levels; the literal repetition of the intervals gives the effect of an echo that overlaps.

cantata With its origins in the seventeenth century, the cantata can be in various styles, with the texts coming from secular or sacred sources. Many cantatas involve chorus, but the form can also use a solo voice, depending on the needs of the composer.

canto The main, often uppermost voice in music of the Renaissance.

cantus firmus The term *cantus firmus* refers to a pre-existing melodic pattern usually taken from chant that serves as a structural device in motets.

carol Usually associated with the Christmas season, their origins dating back to the Medieval era, carols are songs with religious, often with popular or folk-like association.

chamber music Associated with the music of the common practice era, chamber music includes works for two or more players, rather than large ensembles, with one player for each musical line. Typical groups are the piano trio, piano quartet, string quartet, and string quintet, along with other combinations of instruments.

chanson French for song, the chanson is usually a strophic song for solo voice or, at times vocal ensemble and associated with repertoire from the late medieval and renaissance eras.

chorale A hymn derived from chant and often associated with Lutheran practice and characterized by homophonic textures.

chord A combination of three or more simultaneous pitches.

chromatic Chromatic refers to pitches outside the diatonic major and minor scales and usually invoked with accidentals that indicate the semi-tones (half-steps) that are characteristic of chromatic music.

clef A sign placed at the left side of the staff (and before the key and time signatures) to indicate the pitch and, depending on the symbol, the range involved. Modern clefs include treble (G) and bass (F), as well as alto and tenor; the latter two clefs derive from clefs that were in use with the music of the late medieval and renaissance styles.

coda A coda is a concluding section of a piece and structurally affirms the ending of the music.

common time Four quarter notes to the measure; written 4/4 or indicated by a C.

concerto A concerto is a work for solo instrument or solo instruments with orchestra, usually composed to demonstrate the technical and expressive acumen of the soloists. The work is usually in three movements, fast, slow, fast.

concerto grosso In the Baroque style the concerto grosso's structure juxtaposes music between the soloists (concertino) and the full ensemble (ripieno). Examples of this genre include music by Corelli, Bach, and Handel.

consonance Pleasant sounds, and in use, music involves the placement of consonant intervals separate by dissonant ones. Acceptance of certain intervals as consonant or dissonant has changed according to historical time periods.

continuo A crucial element for Baroque music, continuo refers to the bass part performed by keyboard and strings, with harmonies improvised from the figures, when they occur. Also called a basso continuo or thoroughbass, the continuo is essential to sacred and secular music from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

contralto The lowest female voice; also called alto.

contrapuntal Music that is based on counterpoint, that is, the interplay of two or more melodic lines.

contrary motion Contrary motion is the result of musical lines moving in opposite directions, for example an upward melodic pattern play against a descending bass line.

countertenor A male alto who can sing falsetto. The word is often used interchangeably with alto.

crescendo. Growing incrementally louder.

D

da capo Direction to return to the beginning (the "head"), and often including the designation "al fine," that is the placed designated ending (*fine*)

decrescendo Growing gradually softer and used interchangeably with diminuendo.

degree Degree is the relative ranking of a pitch with regard to the scale or scale pattern in which it occurs In the key of G, A is the second scale degree, to give one example. Scale degrees in major and minor scales have designations from the lowest to the highest: tonic (I), supertonic (II), mediant (III), subdominant (IV), dominant (V), submediant (VI), leading tone (VII)

diatonic Belonging to a seven-note scale, and therefore not an altered or chromatic pitch.

diminished chord A three-pitch chord consisting of two minor thirds.

diminuendo Gradually quieter; used interchangeably with decrescendo.

diminution Repetition of a musical figure or phrase with smaller note values than the original statement.

dissonance The discordance of two or more sounds, and in the common practice period usually association with the intervals of the second and seventh.

divisi Literally, "divided," so that performers who had been in unison now play two or more parts. Abbreviated *div.*

dodecaphonic Twelve-tone, as with the music of the New Viennese School.

dominant The fifth tone of the diatonic scale, or dominant (V) chord.

doppio movimento Double the speed.

dot Dots have several meanings in music notation: (1) staccato: a dot above or below a notehead; (2) augmentation dot: a dot after a note or rest that increase the duration by half (a dotted half note has a duration of three beats). Double dots increase the duration by 3/4 of the note's original value.

downbeat The first beat of a measure or a work, as indicated by the downward gesture of a conductor.

duet. A generic term denoting music for two performers.

dynamics Indications of volume, including *p* (for piano, or soft), *pp* (pianissimo, for softer), *f* (for forte, for loud); *ff* (fortissimo, for louder), *fp* (forte-piano, loud then soft), and others.

E

eighth note An eighth note is half the duration of a quarter note.

enharmonic Pitches written differently but indicating the same pitch are enharmonic. An example is F-sharp and G-flat, which are the same pitch.

expression markings Notated words or signs accompanying music to assist performers to interpret the work.

F

falsetto The top register of the male voice, and not always in full voice.

fantasia A polyphonic work that can employ various contrapuntal techniques and encompass different structures. Fantasies usually take their inspiration from a familiar tune or theme.

fermata An explicitly notated hold, usually occurring at the end of a movement or an entire piece.

fifth A musical interval encompassing five tones in the diatonic scale; a perfect fifth is seven semitones, a diminished fifth six, and an augmented fifth eight.

figure Figure has several meanings: (1) figures are the indication above (or below) a continuo to indicate the pitches that must be played; and (2) figure also indicates a repeated pattern.

fine Italian for ending, as in the expression *al fine, to the end.*

flat The symbol (\flat) to lower a pitch by a half step (one semitone).

form The overall architecture of a musical work, based on length, variety, and unity. Symphonies and sonatas are two musical forms. While some use form and structure interchangeably, structure can apply to various kinds of compositional techniques that support the organization of a work.

***forte* (f)** Loud and strong.

***fortissimo* (ff)** Very loud.

fourth A musical interval encompassing four tones in the diatonic scale; a perfect fourth is five semitones, a diminished fourth four, and an augmented fourth six.

fugue A contrapuntal composition in which a theme or subject is developed by the successive entries by other parts or voices that answer it at various intervals. The answers can alter the theme in order for the passage to remain in its key. Fugues include passages of free counterpoint (episodes), but usually end with a reiteration of the subject and answers, with all the voices overlapping the theme (*stretto*) before the final cadence.

G

glissando Gliding quickly up and down the scale. It is marked *glissando* (*gliss.*) or indicated with a line.

grace note An additional note used to embellish a melody.

grave solemnly.

grazia gracefully

Gregorian chant An anachronism for plainsong believed to have its source with Pope Gregory I (ca. 590 to 604 CE), that often refers to chant in general.

ground Found with the music of the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a ground is a bass pattern that serves as a unifying element of a work through its repetition. It resembles the chaconne that developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A well-known example of a ground is “Dido’s Lament” in Purcell’s opera *Dido and Aeneas*.

H

half cadence A cadence usually within a piece that avoids the finality of a plagal (IV-I) or authentic (V-I) cadence.

half note A note with a duration that is half of a whole note.

half step One semitone.

harmonic rhythm The rate at which the harmony changes.

harmony Pertaining to the chordal structure of music or, in a sense, the study of chords and their relationships to each other.

homophony Music that is chordal, in contrast to polyphonic music.

I

I chord The I chord is the tonic chord.

improvisation Music that is performed spontaneously and not explicitly notated.

incidental music Music composed for dramas and usually performed between scenes or acts.

One of the most famous examples of incidental music is the pieces that Felix Mendelssohn composed for Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, including the well-known overture for the play.

intermezzo The term *intermezzo* refers to music played between acts of a stage work. An intermezzo at one time referred to short comic operatic works.

interval Interval refers to the distance between pitches and counted from the low to high.

Intervals can be major or minor and perfect, imperfect, or augmented. Distances can be figured linearly by measuring from pitch to pitch.

intonation Accuracy of pitch.

inversion An inversion refers to the presentation of a musical idea opposite its original presentation. Inversion also indicates the voicing of chords, when the lowest sound pitch is the third (first inversion or 6-chord) or the fifth (second inversion or 6-4 chord) scale degree.

K

key Key denotes the pitch of a work, and usually takes its cues from major or minor scales and is supported by the structure of functionally related chords around the central tone of the music.

key signature A key signature is the set of accidentals found at the beginning of a work to denote its pitch level.

L

largo Tempo marking. Slow and stately, slower than *andante*.

lead sheet In jazz or other forms of popular music, a copy of the melody and chords for a piece, not a full score.

leading tone The pitch a half-step (semitone) below the tonic. It should not be confused with the subtonic, which is a whole step below the tonic.

ledger line A short line placed above or below the staff for notating pitches that are too high or low to appear on the five-line staff.

legato Smooth and connected, the opposite of staccato or marcato.

Leitmotif A recurring musical idea or short phrase associate with a character or object or idea, as found in Richard Wagner's mature operas. The Leitmotif offers a shorthand for the listeners and can be used to demonstrate changes when the composer modifies the ideas.

lento Tempo marking. Very slowly

libretto The text of an opera, operetta, oratorio or other musical stage work

Lied In German an art song (plural *Lieder*) for voice and piano as well as voice and orchestra, a genre that took shape in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and became an important mode of expression for composers of the Romantic era. Significant composers of *Lieder* include Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Hugo Wolf, Richard Strauss, and Gustav Mahler.

lyrics The words of a song or aria.

M

madrigal A contrapuntal composition for three or more voices, usually sung without accompaniment. While the madrigal's origins are in the Italian culture of the late Middle Ages, the form was popular in the Renaissance, especially in Italy and England.

maestoso Majestically

major scale A diatonic scale with half steps between the third and fourth and seventh and eighth pitches

marcato Accented.

Mass The primary liturgy of the Catholic church that involves settings of the prayers that are constant for all services: (1) Kyrie; (2) Gloria; (3) Credo; (4) Sanctus; and (5) Agnus Dei. Polyphonic settings of the mass began in the late Middle Ages and continued through the Renaissance and later eras. Masses for the dead are called requiems.

measure A segment of a musical composition between two notated barlines, also called a bar.

mediant The third scale degree

melody A musical idea consisting of a series of pitches with various durations, often divided into phrases and periods.

meter Meter refers to the rhythmic groups of music, with duple and triple meter being the fundamental distinctions

mezzo Italian for half, *mezzo* modifies other terms, like soprano, with a mezzo soprano having a lower range than soprano; *mezzo voce* indicates half voice, or a quieter expression of idea than in full voice.

minor scale A diatonic scale with a half step between the second and third scale degrees. Several kinds of minor scales are possible:

- (1) natural minor: half steps between the 2nd and 3rd and between the 5th and 6th pitches;
- (2) harmonic minor: half steps between the 2nd and 3rd, between the 5th and 6th pitches and between the 7th and 8th pitches; and
- (3) melodic minor, which differs between the ascending and descending forms
 - ascending has half steps between the 2nd and 3rd and between the 7th and 8th pitches (A B C D E F-sharp G-sharp A)
 - the descending form matches the natural minor scale (half steps between the 2nd and 3rd and between the 5th and 6th pitches)

moderato Tempo marking. A moderato tempo, neither excessively fast nor slow.

modulation Modulations are the changes from one key to another.

molto *Molto* means much, with the word often modifying another, like *molto agitato* (very agitated).

monophony Music for a single melodic line, without harmonic or contrapuntal textures.

mordent A musical ornament that moves quickly above and below the main pitch.

morendo. Gradually dying away.

motet A polyphonic sacred vocal work that emerged in the Middle Ages and evolved as styles shifted during the Renaissance and subsequent eras. Taking its cue from words (French, *mot*), the texts for motets from the Proper of the mass allowed composers to create motets for specific occasions. Just as the stylistic parameters changed, the compositional techniques expanded to encompass several structural approaches, depending on the period, like the isorhythmic motet of the late medieval era.

motive A short musical idea

movement A distinct and self-contained section of a long composition, usually with tempo, key, and other elements that distinguish it from other movements in a large-scale work.

N

natural An accidental that negates a flat or sharp.

ninth A nine-step tonal interval, encompassing an octave and a second.

nocturne A genre of romantic music without a strict formal structure that suggests nominally associations with the night.

nonet A generic term for a work for nine parts.

O

octatonic scale An eight-note scale of alternating whole and half steps; three distinct types of octatonic scale are possible within the twelve notes of the chromatic pitch collection.

octave A musical interval encompassing the eight pitches of the diatonic scale.

octet A generic term for a composition in eight parts, as with the well-known octets by Schubert and Mendelssohn. The instrumentation of octets can vary.

opera A stage work that is almost entirely sung and often involves recitative when dialogue occurs in the libretto.

opera buffa A term that came into use during the eighteenth century to distinguish comic operas from tragic ones.

opéra comique The term *opéra comique* arose in the nineteenth century to denote operas with spoken dialogue instead of sung recitative.

opera seria A term that emerged in the eighteenth century to distinguish serious works, often tragic ones, from lighter, comic ones (*opera buffa*).

operetta Light opera with popular elements, often based on a comic libretto.

oratorio A large-scale, often multi-movement work for voices and orchestra based on a sacred story. While the musical elements can be operatic, an oratorio is often unstaged. The chorus often figures significantly into the structure of the work, as in Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

orchestra A large ensemble used to accompany opera or perform symphonies and concertos. With the complement of strings at its core (usually violin 1, violin 2, viola, cello, and bass), the orchestra includes woodwinds, brass, and percussion, and can include harps and, depending on the scoring of the piece, other instruments.

ordinary of the mass The sacred texts found in all masses: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei

overture A single-movement piece at the beginning of an opera or other stage work. Concert overtures also exist, like Brahms's *Academic Festival Overture*.

P

parallel motion The simultaneous movement of two or more melodies in consistent intervals.

parody Parody refers to the reworking of an existing piece and does not connote the ironic tone that accompanies modern uses of the term. In parody masses a Renaissance composer would revise a motet or madrigal as the vehicle for setting the ordinary of a Mass.

part song A work for two or more voice parts, often unaccompanied. Part songs are less contrapuntally oriented than madrigals.

passing note (sometimes **passing tone**) A nonharmonic tone-played between chords to connect the pitches melodically.

pause A sign indicating a rest of indeterminate length. The notation G.P. indicates a grand pause, which denotes a complete stop in the ensemble before the music resumes.

pentatonic A five-tone scale that usually omits the fourth and seventh scale degrees (the ones that involve half steps), so comprised of whole tones.

phrase A distinct section of a melody.

piano Dynamic marking. Softly.

pianissimo Dynamic marking. Very softly.

pizzicato A term indicating that an instrument's strings should be plucked, not bowed.

plagal cadence A chord progression that denotes the conclusion of an idea by the movement from the subdominant (IV) to the tonic (I). The association of the progression with hymnody prompts some to refer to the chord movement as an "Amen" cadence.

plainsong Monophonic sacred music that is unmeasured. Synonymous with chant.

poco Italian for little. *Poco* is often used to modify other terms, like *poco allegro* (a little fast).

polyphony Music with two or more simultaneous melodies, in contrast to the chordal character of homophony.

prelude Prelude denotes an open work, as in a free-form prelude that precedes a fugue; prelude can be used to indicate the instrumental pieces that occur before an act of an opera, like the preludes Wagner composed for his operas.

presto Tempo marking. Very fast.

prologue A prologue is often a self-contained section of a dramatic work that precedes the main action.

program music Works that include a narrative or descriptive prose to explain the structure of the score.

progression An aural succession of pitches or chords.

Q

quarter note A note with a duration of one-quarter of a whole note.

quartet A generic term for any composition in four parts. A piano quartet includes a piano, violin, viola and cello, while a string quartet consists of first and second violins, a viola and a cello.

quintet A generic term for a composition in five parts. A piano quintet comprises a string quartet plus a piano.

R

recitative A musical vocal style, common to cantata, opera, and oratorio, that imitates speech.

recitativo Italian for recitative. Distinctions exist for recitative with keyboard accompaniment (*recitativo secco*) and recitative accompanied by the orchestra (*recitativo accompagnato*).

reed A woodwind instrument, often with a reed (oboes, clarinets, English horns, bassoon), and including instruments with a mouthpiece, like flutes.

refrain A musical phrase or melody that recurs, often after the verses of a song.

Requiem A mass for the dead. The requiem omits the Gloria and often includes the sequence “Dies irae” (the apocalyptic “day of wrath” evoking the last judgment) and a setting of the “Libera me” (free me of sin), that reflects the soul’s remorse for failings that might keep it from eternal rest. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Requiems moved away from Catholic liturgy, and used various kinds of sacred texts, as with the pieces in this genre by Brahms and Britten.

rest Notation used to indicate measured silence in a score.

rhapsody A free-form work, usually instrumental, in a single movement, like the Hungarian rhapsodies of Liszt or Brahms.

rhythm A distinct pattern of beats.

***rinforzando* (rfz)** An accent sometimes followed by a short but strong crescendo.

ritardando Becoming slower. Often used at the ends of sections or the conclusion of a work.

ritornello Ritornello has several meanings; (1) A recurring instrumental passage in a vocal work, particularly the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and (2) the tutti passage of a concerto.

rondeau One of the medieval *formes fixes*, along with *ballade* and *virelai*, that used a repeated section that connects to the rondo of later eras. The verse structure follows the pattern AB aAab AB and can expand to accommodate additional content.

rondo An instrumental composition with a recurring section that acts like a refrain. Rondo structures may be organized around episodes, like ABACABA.

root The pitch that forms the basis of a chord.

round A canon for three or more voices, in which each singer enters at a different time like the medieval “Sumer is icumen in”

S

scale A set of ascending or descending notes that progress in whole steps or half steps consistent with that scale (i.e., major/minor, etc.) and vary in pitch and interval.

scherzo Italian for “joke” and used to denote a movement lighter in character than the outer ones of a symphony, string quartet, or other multi-movement work. The tempo is usually quicker than slow movement that usually precedes it. During the nineteenth century the movement order allowed placement of the slow movement and scherzo to be interchangeable.

second In a diatonic scale, the interval between two adjacent notes.

semitone Half of a whole tone, a half step.

septet A generic term for a work in seven parts without a set instrumentation. A representative septet is Beethoven’s Septet in E-flat Major, Opus 20.

sequence Sequence has several meanings in music: (1) sequence denotes a repeated pattern, as found in some of Vivaldi’s music; (2) sequence refers to the liturgical poetry that accentuates major feats of the Christian liturgy, like Easter (with its sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*)

serenade A work that has association with the outdoors that can be in several movements.

seventh A musical interval encompassing seven tones in the diatonic scale; also, the term seventh denotes the leading tone of a scale.

sextet A generic term for a work in six parts, without necessarily a set instrumentation.

sharp The symbol (#) that indicates raising the pitch by a semitone.

signature Symbols inscribed at the beginning of the staff to indicate the key (key signature) and tempo (time signature).

Singspiel A German term for a stage work with musical numbers, along with spoken dialogue. Examples of Singspiel include Mozart’s *Entführung aus dem Serail* and his *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*).

sixth A musical interval encompassing the first and sixth tones in the diatonic scale.

slur A curved line that joins two or more notes to indicate playing them continuously, rather than articulated separately.

solo Italian for along (sole). *Solo* indicates one player on a part (in contrast to a duet (two) or tutti (all)).

sonata The term sonata has several meanings. An instrumental composition that emerged in the eighteenth century with a structure consisting of three sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation, also called sonata form. Sonata also designates a multi-movement work that begins with a movement in sonata form, and usually includes two or three additional movements.

soprano The highest female voice, which is notated above the alto. The soprano part also can be sung by boys.

sostenuto Sustained.

staccato Short, separated, denoted by the explicit word or a dot centered by the notehead.

staff In music notation, the staff is the set of five lines and four spaces used to inscribe musical ideas graphically.

stretto Stretto occurs near the conclusion of a fugue and is characterized by overlapping entrances of the subject, but without the answer.

subdominant The fourth scale degree.

subito Suddenly.

subject. The main idea of a fugue, which has its counterpart in the answer that follows it.

submediant The sixth scale degree.

subtonic The pitch a whole tone below the tonic, as with the seventh scale degree of the natural minor scale.

suite A multi-movement instrumental work, usually associated with music of the Baroque era, specifically the dance suite that usually involved four movements: allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue. Other dance movements are possible, depending on the composer's choices. In later music, especially the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, suites are derived from large scores, like those for opera or films.

supertonic The second pitch of the diatonic scale.

symphonic poem An instrumental work in a single movement that follows a descriptive title or narrative to suggest extramusical elements in the structure.

symphony An orchestral work typically consisting of four movements. The form developed in the eighteenth century and continues through the twenty-first. Models in the genre include works by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Dvořák, Mahler, Sibelius, and Shostakovich. Symphonies can exist in three movements (as with the **[Incomplete]**)

syncopation A shift in accent to the weak, rather than strong beat.

T

Tablature Notation that represents that instrument graphically, as found with lute and other string notation. Tablature represents the strings (or other sound media), and not necessarily the pitch values involved.

tempo The rate of speed for performance.

tenor The male voice higher than baritone and bass.

tenuto Prolonged.

ternary Ternary denotes three, with the term ternary form involving three sections.

tetrachord Derived from Greek treatises of antiquity, the tetrachord consists of four notes that span a perfect fourth.

theme and variations Theme and variations emerged in the Renaissance with keyboard music that involved the presentation of the theme followed by sections in which the composer varied its presentation by altering the music elements. Variations can involve rhythms, pitches, harmony, accompaniment patterns and supporting voices. A theme and variations is usually presented as a set of sections, and often reprises the original theme at the conclusion.

third A musical interval between three pitches; a third may be major (two whole steps) or minor (a whole step and a half-step).

thoroughbass Thoroughbass can be used interchangeably with the terms continuo and basso continuo.

through-composed Compositions that do not use conventional forms, but have a loose, almost free-form presentation. The term is often used to distinguish songs which do not repeat the music for subsequent verses from those which do (called strophic).

tonality The key of a musical composition (the arrangement of tones in relation to the tonic key).

tone A sound of definite pitch and duration; a musical note; the character or emotion of a sound; a step.

tone poem A term synonymous with symphonic poem.

tonic Tonic denotes the first tone of a diatonic scale, that is, the keynote.

transpose To change the pitch level or key of a composition.

treble The highest part, whether of voice or instrument, of a musical composition; also, soprano.

The treble clef indicates the upper staff in sheet music. Contrasts with bass.

treble clef The G clef that sits on the second line of the staff, locating G above middle C.

tremolo An effect in music that suggests trembling. The figure is frequently found in opera, where the effect often precedes a startling revelation or turn of events.

triad. A sonority of three pitches separated by a third, with the lowest pitch called the root, the next higher pitch the third, and the top one the fifth.

trio A generic term for a work in three parts. Also used to designate the third section of a march or the second section of a scherzo or minuet.

triplet A three-note figure played on a single beat

triple meter Meters based on units of three beats.

turn An ornament consisting of several pitches in succession that move above and below the principal pitch.

tutti Italian for all; tutti indicates a return to the full ensemble after a passage that involves a soloist or a small group of players. A tutti section in a concerto contrasts the chamber-like textures of the ritornelli.

twelve-tone Twelve-tone music is associated with the New Viennese School and the efforts of Arnold Schoenberg to create works in which the twelve pitches of the chromatic scale do not have the structured relationships associated with the scales used with diatonic music.

U

unison Played together, in contrast to *divisi* (divided). Abbreviated unis.

upbeat A weak beat within a bar, especially the last beat of a measure, indicated by the conductor's upward hand or baton motion.

V

vamp A repeated accompaniment figure that usually precedes a vocal line.

variation Systematic changes of thematic material, including alterations of pitch, rhythm, harmony, and structure of a theme by changes in rhythm, harmony, key and the like.

veloce Rapidly.

virelai One of the *formes fixes* of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the overall structure of the *virelai* is AAB, which corresponds to bar form (two *Stollen* and an *Abgesang*).

vivace Lively, often fast.

volume The loudness or intensity of sound

W

whole note In common time, a note containing four beats, also referred to as a semi-breve.

whole tone An interval of two half-steps, as in the distance between C and D.

whole tone scale A scale consisting of six pitches separated by whole steps, unlike the conventional seven-note major and minor scales. There are two different whole-tone scales possible within the twelve notes of the chromatic pitch collection. Whole-tone scales are associated with Impressionism, and some of Stravinsky's music makes prominent use of the whole-tone scale.