

## ***Italian Musical Terms***

### **Musical Dynamic**

Term (Italian)	Abbreviation	Meaning
Forte	<i>f</i>	Loud, strong
Piano	<i>p</i>	Soft, quiet
Mezzo Forte	<i>mf</i>	Moderately loud
Mezzo Piano	<i>mp</i>	Moderately quiet
Fortissimo	<i>ff</i>	Very loud
Pianissimo	<i>pp</i>	Very quiet
Forte-Fortissimo	<i>fff</i>	Extremely loud
Piano-Pianissimo	<i>ppp</i>	Extremely quiet

<i>crescendo</i>	<b>cresc.</b> or <	gradually increasing (getting louder)
<i>diminuendo</i>	<b>dim.</b> or >	gradually decreasing (getting softer)
<i>fortepiano</i>	<b>fp</b>	loud, then immediately soft
<i>sforzando, forzando, sforzato</i>	<b>sfz, sf</b> or <b>fz</b>	sudden emphasis (applied to a note or chord)
<i>rinforzando</i>	<b>rfz</b> or <b>rf</b>	strengthening (applied to a note, chord, or phrase)

## Musical Tempos

Term (Italian)	Meaning (English)	Typical BPM Range
<b>Laghissimo</b>	Very, very slow	24 bpm and under
<b>Grave</b>	Very slow	25–45 bpm
<b>Largo</b>	Broadly	40–60 bpm
<b>Lento</b>	Slowly	45–60 bpm

<b>Larghetto</b>	Rather broadly	60–66 bpm
<b>Adagio</b>	Slow and stately (literally, 'at ease')	66–76 bpm
<b>Adagietto</b>	Slower than Andante	72–76 bpm
<b>Andante</b>	At a walking pace	76–108 bpm
<b>Andantino</b>	Slightly faster than Andante	80–108 bpm
<b>Marcia moderato</b>	Moderately, in the manner of a march	83–85 bpm
<b>Andante moderato</b>	Between Andante and Moderato	92–112 bpm
<b>Moderato</b>	Moderately	108–120 bpm
<b>Allegretto</b>	Moderately fast	112–120 bpm
<b>Allegro moderato</b>	Close to but not quite Allegro	116–120 bpm
<b>Allegro</b>	Fast, quickly, and bright	120–168 bpm
<b>Vivace</b>	Lively and fast	168–176 bpm

<b>Vivacissimo</b>	Very fast and lively	172–176 bpm
<b>Allegressimo</b> (Allegro vivace)	Very fast	172–176 bpm
<b>Presto</b>	Very, very fast	168–200 bpm
<b>Prestissimo</b>	Even faster than Presto	200 bpm and over

## Musical Tempo Changes

Term	English	Meaning
<i>a piacere</i>	<b>at pleasure</b>	the performer may use their own discretion regarding tempo and rhythm.
<i>a tempo</i>	<b>in time</b>	return to the original previous speed (usually after a <i>rit.</i> or <i>accel.</i> ).
<i>rallentando,</i> <i>rall.</i>	<b>broadening</b>	gradually slowing down (often with a sense of getting heavier).
<i>ritardando,</i>	<b>delaying</b>	gradually slowing down.

<i>rit.</i> , <i>ritard</i>		
<i>ritenuto</i> ,  <i>riten.</i>	<b>held back</b>	an immediate reduction in speed (faster and more sudden than <i>ritardando</i> ).
<i>rubato</i> ,  <i>rob.</i> (rare)	<b>stolen time</b>	flexible tempo; rhythmic freedom for expressive purposes.
<i>stringendo</i> ,  <i>string.</i>	<b>pressing forward</b>	gradually getting faster (literally "tightening").
<i>accelerando</i> ,  <i>accel.</i>	<b>accelerating</b>	gradually increasing the speed.

## Musical Articulation and Technique

Term	Abbreviation	Meaning
<i>arpeggio</i>	<b>arp.</b>	the chord should be played one note at a time, rather than all at once
<i>glissando</i>	<b>gliss.</b>	a smooth slide from one sound to another

<i>legato</i>		smoothly, connecting one sound to the next
<i>mano destra</i>	<b>m.d.</b>	with the right hand
<i>mano sinistra</i>	<b>m.s.</b>	with the left hand
<i>con sordino</i>		play with a mute
<i>senza sordino</i>		play without a mute
<i>pizzicato</i>	<b>pizz.</b>	play by plucking on bowed string instruments
<i>portamento</i>	<b>port.</b>	a smooth transition from one note to another
<i>tutti</i>		performed by the entire ensemble
<i>staccato</i>	<b>stacc.</b>	short and detached sounds
<i>staccatissimo</i>	<b>staccatiss.</b>	short and extremely detached sounds
<i>vibrato</i>		frequent, small changes in pitch

## Musical Character and Mood Markings

Term	Meaning
<i>agitato</i>	agitated, excited
<i>animato</i>	lively
<i>cantabile</i>	in a singing style
<i>con amore</i>	with love
<i>con brio</i>	with spirit/vigor
<i>con fuoco</i>	with fire
<i>con moto</i>	with motion
<i>dolce</i>	gently

<i>doloroso</i>	sorrowfully, mournfully
<i>energico</i>	energetically
<i>espressivo</i>	expressively
<i>grazioso</i>	gracefully, elegantly
<i>leggiero</i>	lightly, nimbly
<i>maestoso</i>	majestically
<i>marcato</i>	marked, clearly accented
<i>risoluto</i>	resolutely, firmly
<i>scherzando</i>	playfully
<i>sostenuto</i>	sustained, restrained
<i>tenuto</i>	held, sustained
<i>tranquillo</i>	quietly, calmly

## General Musical Terms

Term	Meaning
<i>ad libitum</i>	at will (often referring to tempo and style)
<i>assai</i>	very
<i>con</i>	with
<i>ma</i>	but
<i>ma non tanto</i>	but not so much
<i>ma non troppo</i>	but not too much
<i>meno</i>	less
<i>molto</i>	very

<i>non</i>	not, no
<i>più</i>	more
<i>poco</i>	little
<i>poco a poco</i>	little by little
<i>senza</i>	without
<i>simile</i>	in a similar way
<i>subito</i>	suddenly, immediately