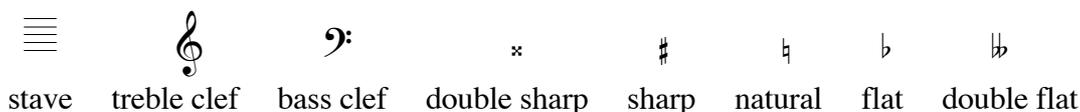


Common Musical Signs and Terms

Pitch

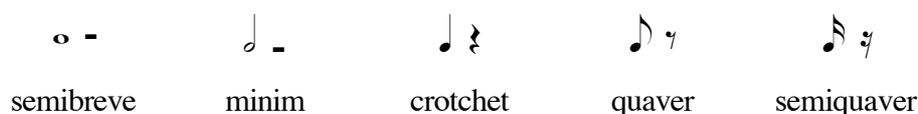


The small lines for notes above or below the stave are called *leger lines*.

8va means play an octave higher than written; *8ba* means play an octave lower than written.

15ma means play two octaves higher than written; *15ba* means play two octaves lower.

Time and rhythm



Half of a *semiquaver* is a *demisemiquaver*; half of a *demisemiquaver* is a *hemidemisemiquaver*.

Dots: ♪. = ♪ + ♪ ♪.. = ♪ + ♪ + ♪ ♪... = ♪ + ♪ + ♪ + ♪

Ties join two notes of the same pitch into one longer note.

A *triplet* is three notes played in the time of two; a *quintuplet* is five notes in the time of four.

A *pause* or *fermata* (∩) means hold the note or rest for longer than its written value.

An *anacrusis* is an incomplete bar (or unstressed beat, or upbeat) at the start of a piece. The anacrusis bar is not numbered; bar 1 is always the first complete bar.

♩ (common time) means 4 crotchet beats per bar; ♩ (alla breve) means 2 minim beats per bar.

Dynamics and articulation

Forte (*f*) means loud; *mezzo forte* (*mf*) is moderately loud, *fortissimo* (*ff*) is very loud.

Piano (*p*) means soft; *mezzo piano* (*mp*) is moderately soft, *pianissimo* (*pp*) is very soft.

Fortepiano (*fp*) means loud then immediately soft.

Crescendo (*cresc.*) means gradually becoming louder.

Diminuendo (*dim.*) or *decrescendo* (*decresc.*) means gradually becoming softer.

Slurs indicate *legato*, which means smooth and well connected.

· (above or below a note) indicates *staccato*, which means short and detached.

- (above or below a note) indicates *tenuto* (*ten.*), which means held and slightly stressed.

⌣ or ⌣ (mezzo staccato) means moderately short and detached.

Mezzo staccato can also be indicated by staccato dots combined with a slur.

Non legato means not connected (though not as detached as *staccato*).

> indicates an accent (to emphasise the note); ^ indicates a strong accent.

Forzando (*fz*) or *sforzando* (*sf* or *sfz*) indicate strong accents, *ffz* or *sff* are very strong accents.

Tempo

The suggested tempo is indicated in beats per minute: ♩ = 60 means 60 ♩ beats per minute.

The abbreviation *ca* (for *circa*) is used when the suggested tempo is approximate.

Adagio or *Lento* means slowly. *Largo* means broadly (unhurried).

Andante means at an easy walking pace. *Andantino* usually means a little faster than *Andante*.

Allegro means fast and lively. *Allegretto* means moderately fast. *Presto* means very fast.

Accelerando (*accel.*) means gradually becoming faster.

Rallentando (*rall.*) or *ritardando* (*ritard.*) means gradually becoming slower.

Ritenuto (*rit.* or *riten.*) means immediately slower, or held back.

A tempo means return to the former speed; *Tempo Primo* means return to the original tempo.

Ornamentation

						
lower mordent	upper mordent	trill	trill (pralltriller)	turn	acciaccatura (crushed note)	appoggiatura

Commonly used terms

Ad libitum (*ad lib.*) or *a piacere* means at the performer's discretion (with artistic licence).

Cantabile or *cantando* means in a singing style.

Da Capo (*D.C.*) *al Fine* means play from the beginning until the word "fine" (the finish).

Dal Segno (*D.S.*) *al Coda* means play from the % sign to the ⊕ sign, then play the Coda.

Con means with; *con brio* means with a bright (brilliant) sound; *con grazia* means with grace.

Dolce means sweetly; *dolcissimo* (*dolciss.*) means very sweetly.

Espressivo or *con espressione* means expressively.

Leggiero means lightly; *leggierissimo* means very lightly.

Marcato means marked (clear, strong, distinct); *ben marcato* means well marked.

Meno means less; *Meno mosso* means slower (less movement).

Molto means very or much. *Assai* also means very.

Opus (*Op.*) means a work or group of works; the opus number identifies the piece.

Più means more; *Più mosso* means quicker (more movement).

Poco means a little; *poco a poco* means little by little.

Sempre means always.

Simile (*sim.*) means similarly; it can refer to fingering, pedalling, phrasing, staccato, etc.

Sostenuto means sustained.

Subito (*sub.*) means suddenly.

Vivace or *vivo* means lively.

:|| indicates a *repeat* (go back to the previous repeat sign ||:, or back to the beginning).