This glossary provides definitions and translations of musical terms used in the documentation manuals for LilyPond version 2.25.8.

For more information about how this manual fits with the other documentation, or to read this manual in other formats, see Section “Manuals” in General Information.
If you are missing any manuals, the complete documentation can be found at https://lilypond.org/.

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For LilyPond version 2.25.8
1 Musical terms A-Z

Languages in this order.
- UK - British English (where it differs from American English)
- ES - Spanish
- I - Italian
- F - French
- D - German
- NL - Dutch
- DK - Danish
- S - Swedish
- FI - Finnish

1.1 A
- ES: la
- I: la
- F: la
- D: A, a
- NL: a
- DK: a
- S: a
- FI: A, a

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.

1.2 a due
Abbreviated a2 or a 2. In orchestral scores, a due indicates that:
1. A single part notated on a single staff that normally carries parts for two players (e.g., first and second oboes) is to be played by both players.
2. Or conversely, that two pitches or parts notated on a staff that normally carries a single part (e.g., first violin) are to be played by different players, or groups of players (‘desks’).

See also
No cross-references.

1.3 accelerando
[Italian: ‘speed up, accelerate’]
An increase in the tempo, abbreviated accel.

See also
No cross-references.
1.4 accent


The stress of one tone over others.

See also
No cross-references.

1.5 accessory

See also
Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.

1.6 acciaccatura


A grace note which takes its time from the rest or note preceding the principal note to which it is attached. The acciaccatura is drawn as a small eighth note (quaver) with a line drawn through the flag and stem.

See also
Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6, Section 1.146 [grace notes], page 35, Section 1.210 [mordent], page 52, Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.

1.7 accidental


An accidental alters a note by:
• Raising its pitch:
  • By two semitones—double sharp
  • By one semitone—sharp
• Lowering its pitch:
  • By one semitone—flat
  • By two semitones—double flat
• Or canceling the effects of the key signature or previous accidentals.

See also
Section 1.13 [alteration], page 4, Section 1.270 [semitone], page 67, Section 1.341 [whole tone], page 82.
1.8 adagio


[Italian: ‘comfortable, easy’]

- Slow tempo, slower – especially in even meter – than andante and faster than largo.
- A movement in slow tempo, especially the second (slow) movement of sonatas, symphonies, etc.

See also
Section 1.19 [andante], page 5, Section 1.171 [largo], page 42, Section 1.286 [sonata], page 70.

1.9 al fine

[Italian: ‘to the end’]

In an instruction such as D.C. al Fine, indicates that the performance should continue to the point marked Fine.

See also
Section 1.79 [da capo], page 20, Section 1.81 [dal segno], page 20, Section 1.130 [fine], page 32.

1.10 al niente


[Italian: ‘to nothing’] Used with decrescendo to indicate that the sound should fade away to nothing.

Al niente is indicated by circling the tip of the hairpin:

\[ \text{al niente} \]

or with the actual phrase al niente:

\[ \text{decresc.} \quad \text{al niente} \]

Since one does not crescendo to nothing, it is not correct to use al niente with crescendo. Instead, one should use dal niente (from nothing).

See also
Section 1.74 [crescendo], page 19, Section 1.80 [dal niente], page 20, Section 1.82 [decrescendo], page 21, Section 1.151 [hairpin], page 36.
1.11 alla breve


[Italian: ‘on the breve’] Twice as fast as the notation indicates.

Also called in cut time. The name derives from mensural notation, where the tactus (or beat) is counted on the semibreve (the modern whole note). Counting ‘on the breve’ shifts the tactus to the next longest note value, which (in modern usage) effectively halves all note values.

In mensural notation, breves and semibreves can have a ternary relationship, in which case alla breve means thrice (not twice) as fast. In practice, this complication may not have mattered, since Gaffurius’s system of multiplex proportions makes it easy to explicitly state which proportion is needed.

See also
Section 1.43 [ breve], page 11, Section 1.157 [ hemiola], page 38, Section 1.195 [ mensural notation], page 46, Section 1.222 [ note value], page 54, Section 1.249 [ proportion], page 61, Section 1.339 [ whole note], page 81.

1.12 allegro


[Italian: ‘cheerful’] Quick tempo. Also used as a title for pieces in a quick tempo, especially the first and last movements of a sonata.

See also
Section 1.286 [ sonata], page 70.

1.13 alteration


An alteration is the modification, raising or lowering, of a note’s pitch. It is established by an accidental.

See also
Section 1.7 [ accidental], page 2.

1.14 alto


A female voice of low range (contralto). Originally the alto was a high male voice (hence the name), which by castration or the use of falsetto reached the height of the natural female voice. This type of voice is also known as countertenor.

See also
Section 1.73 [ countertenor], page 18.

1.15 alto clef


C clef setting middle C on the middle line of the staff.
See also
Section 1.45 [C clef], page 11.

1.16 ambitus
[Latin: past participle of ambire, ‘to go around’; plural: ambitus] Denotes a range of pitches for a given voice in a part of music. It may also denote the pitch range that a musical instrument is capable of playing. Sometimes anglicized to ambit (pl. ambiits).

See also
No cross-references.

1.17 anacrusis
An anacrusis (also known as pickup or upbeat) is an incomplete measure of music before a section of music. It also refers to the initial note(s) of a melody occurring in that incomplete measure.

See also
Section 1.189 [measure], page 45, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.18 ancient minor scale
Also called ‘natural minor scale’.

See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.19 andante
[Italian: present participle of andare, ‘to walk’]
Walking tempo/character.

See also
No cross-references.
1.20 **appoggiatura**


Ornamental note, usually a second, that is melodically connected with the main note following it. In music before the 19th century appoggiature were usually performed on the beat, after that mostly before the beat. While the short appoggiatura is performed as a short note regardless of the duration of the main note the duration of the long appoggiatura is proportional to that of the main note.

![Musical notation and performance of an appoggiatura.](image1)

An appoggiatura may have more notes preceding the main note.

![Musical notation and performance of a longer appoggiatura.](image2)

**See also**

No cross-references.

1.21 **arpeggio**


[Italian: ‘harp-like, played like a harp’]

![Musical notation and performance of an arpeggio.](image3)

**See also**

No cross-references.

1.22 **articulation**


Articulation refers to notation which indicates how a note or notes should be played. Slurs, accents, staccato, and legato are all examples of articulation.
See also
No cross-references.

1.23 ascending interval
A distance between a starting lower note and a higher ending note.
See also
No cross-references.

1.24 augmentation
This is a placeholder for augmentation (wrt mensural notation).
See also
Section 1.88 [diminution], page 23, Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46.

1.25 augmented interval
See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.26 autograph
• A manuscript written in the composer’s own hand.
• Music prepared for photoreproduction by freehand drawing, with the aid of a straightedge ruler and T-square only, which attempts to emulate engraving. This required more skill than did engraving.
See also
No cross-references.

1.27 B
• ES: si
• I: si
• F: si
• D: H, h
• NL: b
• DK: h
• S: h
• FI: H, h
See also
Section 1.150 [H], page 36, Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.

1.28 backfall
See also
Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6.

1.29 bar
See also
Section 1.189 [measure], page 45.

1.30 bar line
ES: barra, línea divisoria, I: stanghetta, barra (di divisione), F: barre (de mesure), D: Taktstrich,
NL: maatstreep, DK: taktstreg, S: taktstreck, FI: tahtiviiva.
A vertical line through the staff (or through multiple staves) that separates measures. Used
very infrequently during the Renaissance (mostly in secular music, or in sacred music to indicate
congruences between parts in otherwise-unmetered music).
See also
Section 1.189 [measure], page 45.

1.31 baritone
ES: barítono, I: baritono, F: bariton, D: Bariton, NL: bariton, DK: baryton, S: baryton, FI:
baritoni, keskikorkuinen miesääni.
The male voice intermediate in pitch between the bass and the tenor.
See also
Section 1.33 [bass], page 8, Section 1.309 [tenor], page 75.

1.32 baritone clef
ES: clave de fa en tercera, I: chiave di baritono, F: clef d’ut cinquième ligne, clef de fa troisième,
D: Baritonschlüssel, NL: baritonsleutel, DK: barytonnøgle, S: barytonklav, FI: baritoniavain.
C or F clef setting middle C on the upper staff line.
See also
Section 1.45 [C clef], page 11, Section 1.124 [F clef], page 30.

1.33 bass
The lowest male voice.
Sometimes, especially in jazz music, used as an abbreviation for double bass.
See also
Section 1.295 [strings], page 72.
1.34 bass clef

A clef setting with middle C on the first top ledger line.

See also
Section 1.124 [F clef], page 30, Section 1.158 [high bass clef], page 39.

1.35 beam

Line connecting a series of notes (shorter than a quarter note). The number of beams determines the note value of the connected notes.

See also
Section 1.126 [feathered beam], page 31.

1.36 beat

Note value used for counting, most often half-, fourth-, and eighth notes. The base counting value and the number of them in each measure is indicated at the start of the music by the time signature.

See also
Section 1.318 [time signature], page 77.

1.37 beat repeat
See also
Section 1.233 [percent repeat], page 58.

1.38 bind
See also
Section 1.316 [tie], page 76.
1.39 brace

Symbol at the start of a system connecting staves.

Curly braces are used for connecting piano staves, and sometimes for connecting the staves of like instruments in an orchestral score when written on different staves (e.g., first and second flutes):

Angular brackets for connecting parts in an orchestral or choral score:

See also
No cross-references.

1.40 bracket

See also
Section 1.39 [brace], page 10.

1.41 brass

A family of blown musical instruments made of brass, all using a cup formed mouth piece. The brass instruments commonly used in a symphony orchestra are trumpet, trombone, French horn, and tuba. In marching bands, sousaphones and contrabass bugles are common.

See also
No cross-references.

1.42 breath mark

Indication of where to breathe in vocal and wind instrument parts.

See also
Section 1.48 [caesura], page 12.
1.43 breve

- US: breve, double-whole note
- ES: cuadrada, breve
- I: breve
- F: brève
- D: Brevis
- NL: brevis
- DK: brevis
- S: brevis
- FI: brevis, kaksoiskokonuotti

Note value: twice the length of a whole note (semibreve).
Mainly used in music from before 1650. In mensural notation, it was a note of fairly short duration—hence the name, which is Latin for ‘short’ or ‘of short duration’.

See also
Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54, Section 1.269 [semibreve], page 67.

1.44 C

- ES: do
- I: do
- F: ut, do
- D: C, c
- NL: c
- DK: c
- S: c
- FI: C, c

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.

1.45 C clef

ES: clave de do, I: chiave di do, F: clef d’ut, D: C-Schlüssel, NL: C-sleutel, DK: C-nøgle, S: c-klav, FI: C-avain.

Clef symbol indicating the position of the middle C. Used on all note lines.

See also
No cross-references.
1.46 cadence

See also
Section 1.154 [harmonic cadence], page 37, Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34.

1.47 cadenza

An extended, improvisatory style section inserted near the end of movement. The purpose of a cadenza is to give singers or players a chance to exhibit their technical skill and – not last – their ability to improvise. Since the middle of the 19th century, however, most cadenzas have been written down by the composer.

See also
No cross-references.

1.48 caesura

[Latin: from the supine of caedere ‘to cut down’]

The break between two musical phrases, sometimes (but not always) marked by a rest or a breath mark.

See also
Section 1.42 [breath mark], page 10.

1.49 canon

See also
Section 1.72 [counterpoint], page 18.

1.50 cent

Logarithmic unit of measuring pitch differences. 1 cent is 1/1200 of an octave (1/100 of an equally tempered semitone).

See also
Section 1.120 [equal temperament], page 29, Section 1.270 [semitone], page 67.

1.51 central C
See also
Section 1.204 [middle C], page 51.
1.52 chord


Two or more tones sounding simultaneously. In traditional European music the base chord is a *triad* consisting of two thirds. *Major* (major + minor third) as well as *minor* (minor + major third) chords may be extended with more thirds. Four-tone *seventh chords* and five-tone *ninth major chords* are most often used as dominants (functional harmony). Chords having no third above the lower notes to define their mood are a special case called ‘open chords’. The lack of the middle third means their quality is ambivalent – neither major nor minor.

![Chord Symbols](image)

| Major | Minor | Diminished | Augmented | Seventh | Ninth |

See also

Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.163 [interval], page 40, Section 1.164 [inversion], page 41, Section 1.252 [quality], page 62, Section 1.312 [third], page 75.

1.53 chord grid

F: grille d’accords.

Chord grids notate chords in a visual way by placing them in squares. They are used for jazz music, mainly in France.

![Chord Grid](image)

See also

Section 1.52 [chord], page 13.

1.54 chromatic scale


A scale consisting of all 12 semitones.

![Chromatic Scale](image)

See also

Section 1.270 [semitone], page 67.

1.55 chromaticism


Using tones extraneous to a diatonic scale (minor, major).
See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.56 church mode
ES: modo eclesiástico, I: modo ecclesiastico, F: mode ecclésiastique, mode d’église, D: Kirchen-
tonart, NL: kerktoonladder, DK: kirketoneart, S: kyrkotonart, FI: moodi, kirkkosävelläjä.

See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.57 clef

The clef indicates which lines of the staff correspond to which pitches. The three clef symbols in common use are:

The Treble or G clef: \( \text{\textbf{G}} \)

The Bass or F clef: \( \text{\textbf{F}} \)

The Alto or C clef: \( \text{\textbf{C}} \)

Imagine a large staff of 11 lines centered on middle C, sometimes called a ‘grand staff’, with the bottom line representing low G and the top line high F:

Staves of five lines are usually used, and the clef superimposed on them indicates which five lines have been selected from this grand staff. For example, the treble or G clef indicates that the top five lines have been selected:

The ‘curl’ of the G clef is centered on the line that represents the pitch G.

In the same way, the bass or F clef indicates that the bottom five lines have been selected from the grand staff, and the alto or C clef indicates the middle five lines have been selected. This relationship is shown below, where the notes show an arpeggio on a C major chord.
1.58 **cluster**


A *cluster* is a range of simultaneously sounding pitches that may change over time. The set of available pitches to apply usually depends on the acoustic source. Thus, in piano music, a cluster typically consists of a continuous range of the semitones as provided by the piano’s fixed set of a chromatic scale. In choral music, each singer of the choir typically may sing an arbitrary pitch within the cluster’s range that is not bound to any diatonic, chromatic or other scale. In electronic music, a cluster (theoretically) may even cover a continuous range of pitches, thus resulting in colored noise, such as pink noise.

Clusters can be denoted in the context of ordinary staff notation by engraving simple geometrical shapes that replace ordinary notation of notes. Ordinary notes as musical events specify starting time and duration of pitches; however, the duration of a note is expressed by the shape of the note head rather than by the horizontal graphical extent of the note symbol. In contrast, the shape of a cluster geometrically describes the development of a range of pitches (vertical extent) over time (horizontal extent). Still, the geometrical shape of a cluster covers the area in which any single pitch contained in the cluster would be notated as an ordinary note.

See also
No cross-references.

1.59 **comma**


Difference in pitch between a note derived from pure tuning and the same note derived from some other tuning method.

See also
Section 1.85 [didymic comma], page 22, Section 1.250 [Pythagorean comma], page 62, Section 1.305 [syntonic comma], page 74, Section 1.307 [temperament], page 75.

1.60 **common meter**

Another name for Section 1.62 [common time], page 16.

See also
Section 1.62 [common time], page 16, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.
1.61 Common Practice Period


This is a stub for Common Practice Period (CPP).

See also
Section “Note names in other languages” in Notation Reference.

1.62 common time


4/4 time. The symbol, which resembles a capital letter C, comes from mensural notation.

See also
Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.63 complement


See also
Section 1.165 [inverted interval], page 41.

1.64 compound interval


Intervals larger than an octave.

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.65 compound meter


A meter that includes a triplet subdivision within the beat, such as 6/8, 9/8, 12/8.

See also
Section 1.198 [meter], page 48, Section 1.277 [simple meter], page 68.

1.66 compound time


1. A meter that includes a triplet subdivision within the beat: see Section 1.65 [compound meter], page 16.

2. A time signature that additively combines two or more unequal meters, e.g., ‘3/8 + 2/8’ instead of ‘5/8’. Sometimes called additive time signatures.
Chapter 1: Musical terms A-Z

1.65 concert pitch

ES: en Do, tono de concierto, I: intonazione reale, F: tonalité de concert, en ut, D: Kammerton, 

The pitch at which the piano and other nontransposing instruments play: such instruments 
are said to be ‘in C’. The following list includes some (but not all) instruments that play in 
contert pitch:

**Woodwinds**
- flute
- oboe
- bassoon

**Strings**
- violin
- viola
- violoncello

Instruments that play ‘in C’ but in a different octave than what is written are, technically 
speaking, *transposing instruments*:
- piccolo (plays an octave higher than written)
- celesta (plays an octave higher than written)
- classical guitar (plays an octave lower than written)
- double bass (plays an octave lower than written)

See also
Section 1.321 [transposing instrument], page 77.

1.68 conjunct movement

ES: movimiento conjunto, I: moto congiunto, F: mouvement conjoint, D: schrittweise, stufenweise 
Bewegung, NL: stapsgewijze, trapsgewijze beweging, DK: trinvis bevægelse, S: stegvis rörelse, 
FI: asteittainen liike.

Progressing melodically by intervals of a second, as contrasted with *disjunct movement*. 

\relative c' { 
\key f \major 
\compoundMeter #'((3 8) (2 8) (3 8)) 
c8 d e f4 d8 c bes 
c4 g'8 e c f4. 
\bar "||"
}

See also
Section 1.65 [compound meter], page 16, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48, Section 1.244 [poly-
metric time signature], page 60. 

1.67 concert pitch

ES: en Do, tono de concierto, I: intonazione reale, F: tonalité de concert, en ut, D: Kammerton, 

The pitch at which the piano and other nontransposing instruments play: such instruments 
are said to be ‘in C’. The following list includes some (but not all) instruments that play in 
contert pitch:

**Woodwinds**
- flute
- oboe
- bassoon

**Strings**
- violin
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Instruments that play ‘in C’ but in a different octave than what is written are, technically 
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- double bass (plays an octave lower than written)

See also
Section 1.321 [transposing instrument], page 77.

1.68 conjunct movement

ES: movimiento conjunto, I: moto congiunto, F: mouvement conjoint, D: schrittweise, stufenweise 
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FI: asteittainen liike.

Progressing melodically by intervals of a second, as contrasted with *disjunct movement*. 

\relative c' { 
\key f \major 
\compoundMeter #'((3 8) (2 8) (3 8)) 
c8 d e f4 d8 c bes 
c4 g'8 e c f4. 
\bar "||"
}
Chapter 1: Musical terms A-Z

See also
Section 1.90 [disjunct movement], page 23.

1.69 consonance

See also
Section 1.156 [harmony], page 38.

1.70 contralto

See also
Section 1.14 [alto], page 4.

1.71 copying music
A music copyist did fast freehand scores and parts on preprinted staff lines for performance. Some of their conventions (e.g., the placement of note heads on stems) varied slightly from those of engravers. Some of their working methods were superior and could well be adopted by music typesetters.

See also
No cross-references.

1.72 counterpoint

From Latin punctus contra punctum, note against note. The combination into a single musical fabric of lines or parts which have distinct melodic significance. A frequently used polyphonic technique is imitation, in its strictest form found in the canon needing only one part to be written down while the other parts are performed with a given displacement. Imitation is also the contrapuntal technique used in the fugue which, since the music of the baroque era, has been one of the most popular polyphonic composition methods.

See also
No cross-references.

1.73 countertenor

See also
Section 1.70 [contralto], page 18.
1.74 crescendo

Increasing volume. Indicated by a rightwards opening horizontal wedge (hairpin) or the abbreviation cresc.

See also
Section 1.82 [decrescendo], page 21, Section 1.151 [hairpin], page 36.

1.75 cue-notes

Notes belonging to one part printed in another to hint when to start playing. Usually printed in a smaller type.

See also
Compare: Section 1.229 [ossia], page 57.

1.76 custos

A custos (plural: custodes) is a staff symbol that appears at the end of a staff line with monophonic musical contents (i.e., with a single voice). It anticipates the pitch of the first note of the following line and thus helps the player or singer to manage line breaks during performance, which enhances the readability of a score.

Custodes were frequently used in music notation until the 16th century. There were different appearances for different notation styles. Nowadays, they have survived only in special forms of musical notation such as the Editio Vaticana, dating from the beginning of the 20th century

See also
No cross-references.

1.77 cut time

See also
Section 1.11 [alla breve], page 4.
1.78 D

- ES: re
- I: re
- F: ré
- D: D, d
- NL: d
- DK: d
- S: d
- FI: D, d

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.

1.79 da capo


Abbreviated D.C. Indicates that the piece is to be repeated from the beginning to the end or to a certain place marked Fine.

See also
Section 1.9 [al fine], page 3, Section 1.81 [dal segno], page 20, Section 1.130 [fine], page 32.

1.80 dal niente


[Italian: ‘from nothing’] Used with crescendo to indicate that the sound should gradually increase from nothing.

See also
Section 1.10 [al niente], page 3.

1.81 dal segno


Abbreviated D.S. Repetition, not from the beginning, but from another place frequently near the beginning marked by a sign (segno):

See also
Section 1.9 [al fine], page 3, Section 1.79 [da capo], page 20, Section 1.130 [fine], page 32.
1.82 decrescendo


Decreasing tone volume. Indicated by a leftwards opening horizontal wedge (hairpin) or the abbreviation decresc.

See also

Section 1.74 [crescendo], page 19, Section 1.87 [diminuendo], page 23, Section 1.151 [hairpin], page 36.

1.83 descending interval


A distance between a starting higher note and a lower ending note.

See also

No cross-references.

1.84 diatonic scale


A scale consisting of 5 whole tones and 2 semitones (S). Scales played on the white keys of a piano keyboard are diatonic. These scales are sometimes called, somewhat inaccurately, ‘church modes’).

These modes are used in Gregorian chant and in pre-baroque early music but also to some extent in newer jazz music.
From the beginning of the 17th century the scales used in European compositional music are primarily the major and the minor scales. In the harmonic minor scale type an augmented second (A) occurs between the 6th and 7th tone.

See also
Section 1.270 [semitone], page 67, Section 1.341 [whole tone], page 82.

1.85 didymic comma

See also
Section 1.305 [syntonic comma], page 74.
1.86 diminished interval

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.87 diminuendo
Abbreviated dim. It indicates a decrease in tone volume.

See also
Section 1.82 [decrescendo], page 21.

1.88 diminution
This is a stub for diminution (wrt mensural notation).

See also
Section 1.24 [augmentation], page 7, Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46.

1.89 direct

See also
Section 1.76 [custos], page 19.

1.90 disjunct movement
Progressing melodically by intervals larger than a major second, as contrasted with conjunct movement.

See also
Section 1.68 [conjunct movement], page 17.

1.91 dissonance
Another name for Section 1.92 [dissonant interval], page 24.

See also
Section 1.92 [dissonant interval], page 24, Section 1.156 [harmony], page 38.
1.92 dissonant interval


See also
Section 1.156 [harmony], page 38.

1.93 divisio


[Latin: ‘division’; pl. divisiones] In Gregorian chant, a vertical stroke through part or all of the staff that serves to structure a chant into phrases and sections. There are four types:

- divisio minima, a short pause
- divisio maior, a medium pause
- divisio maxima, a long pause
- finalis, to indicate the end of a chant, or the end of a section in a long antiphonal or responsorial chant.

TODO: musical example here?

See also
No cross-references.

1.94 doit


Indicator for an indeterminately rising pitch bend. Compare with glissando, which has determinate starting and ending pitches.

See also
Section 1.125 [fall], page 31, Section 1.145 [glissando], page 35.

1.95 dominant


The fifth scale degree in functional harmony.

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.

1.96 dominant ninth chord


See also
Section 1.52 [chord], page 13, Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34.
1.97 dominant seventh chord

See also
Section 1.52 [chord], page 13, Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34.

1.98 dorian mode

See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.99 dot (augmentation dot)

See also
Section 1.100 [dotted note], page 25, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.100 dotted note

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.101 double appoggiatura

See also
Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6.

1.102 double bar line

Indicates the end of a section within a movement.

See also
No cross-references.
1.103 double dotted note

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.104 double flat

See also
Section 1.7 [accidental], page 2.

1.105 double sharp

See also
Section 1.7 [accidental], page 2.

1.106 double time signature

See also
Section 1.244 [polymetric time signature], page 60.

1.107 double trill

A simultaneous trill on two notes, usually in the distance of a third.

See also
No cross-references.

1.108 duple meter

See also
Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.
1.109 duplet

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.110 duration

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.111 dynamics

The aspect of music relating to degrees of loudness, or changes from one degree to another. The terms, abbreviations, and symbols used to indicate this information are called dynamic marks.

See also
Section 1.238 [piano], page 59, Section 1.136 [forte], page 33, Section 1.74 [crescendo], page 19, Section 1.82 [decrescendo], page 21, Section 1.87 [diminuendo], page 23.

1.112 E
- ES: mi
- I: mi
- F: mi
- D: E, e
- NL: e
- DK: e
- S: e
- FI: E, e

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.

1.113 ecclesiastical mode

See also
Section 1.56 [church mode], page 14, Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.114 eighth note
- UK: quaver
- ES: corchea
- I: croma
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1.115 eighth rest

- UK: quaver rest
- ES: silencio de corchea
- I: pausa di croma
- F: demi-soupir
- D: Achtelpause
- NL: achtste rust
- DK: ottendedelspause
- S: åttonddelspaus
- FI: kahdeksasosatauko

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.116 elision


More properly synalepha [New Lat. > Gr. συναλλαγή, from Greek συναλλαγήν ‘to smear together’].

The singing of several syllables on a single note. Elision may be indicated by a lyric tie, which looks like (and serves the same function) as a musical tie.

See also
Section 1.183 [lyric tie], page 44.

1.117 embellishment

See also
Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.

1.118 engraving


Engraving means incising or etching a metal plate for printing. Photoengraving means drawing music with ink in a manner similar to drafting or engineering drawing, using similar tools.

The traditional process of music printing is done through cutting in a plate of metal. Now also the term for the art of music typesetting.
**1.119 enharmonic**


Two notes, intervals, or scales are enharmonic if they have different names but equal pitch.

![Example of enharmonic notes]

**See also**
No cross-references.

**1.120 equal temperament**


A tuning system that divides the octave into 12 equal semitones (each of which is precisely equal to 100 cents).

**See also**
Section 1.50 [cent], page 12, Section 1.270 [semitone], page 67, Section 1.307 [temperament], page 75.

**1.121 expression mark**


Performance indications concerning:
- volume, dynamics (for example, forte, crescendo),
- tempo (for example, andante, allegro).

**See also**
Section 1.12 [allegro], page 4, Section 1.19 [andante], page 5, Section 1.74 [crescendo], page 19, Section 1.136 [forte], page 33.

**1.122 extender line**


The generic term (in LilyPond) for a line (or dash) of arbitrary length that extends text (without indicating the musical function of that text).

Used in many contexts, for example:
- In vocal music to indicate the syllable for a melisma. Called ‘extension’ in the Dolmetsch Online Music Dictionary (https://www.dolmetsch.com/defse1.htm).
• In figured bass to indicate that:
  • The extended note should be held through a change in harmony, when applied to one figure –OR–
  • The chord thus represented should be held above a moving bass line, when applied to more than one figure.
  • These uses were not completely standardized, and some composers used a single extender line to indicate the latter case.
• In string music to indicate that all notes in the passage thus indicated should be played on the same string. On the violin, for example, a series of notes to be played on the G string would be indicated sul G, another series to be played on the D string would be indicated sul D, and so on.
• With an octave mark to indicate that a passage is to be played higher or lower by the given number of octaves.

See also
Section 1.192 [melisma], page 46, Section 1.300 [sul G], page 73, Section 1.315 [thorough bass], page 76, Section 1.225 [octave mark], page 56, Section 1.226 [octave marking], page 56.

1.123 F
• ES: fa
• I: fa
• F: fa
• D: F, f
• NL: f
• DK: f
• S: f
• FI: F, f

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.

1.124 F clef

The position between the dots of the key symbol is the line of the F below central C. Used on the third, fourth and fifth note line. A digit 8 above the clef symbol indicates that the notes must be played an octave higher (for example, bass recorder) while 8 below the clef symbol indicates playing an octave lower (for example, on the Double Bass).

\[
\text{varbaritone bass sub-bass octave up octave down}
\]

See also
Section 1.32 [baritone clef], page 8, Section 1.295 [strings], page 72.
1.125 fall

Indicator for an indeterminately falling pitch bend. Compare with glissando, which has determinate starting and ending pitches.

See also
Section 1.94 [doit], page 24, Section 1.145 [glissando], page 35.

1.126 feathered beam

A type of beam used to indicate that a small group of notes should be played at an increasing or decreasing tempo – depending on the direction of ‘feathering’ – but without changing the overall tempo of the piece.

See also

1.127 fermata

Prolonged note or rest of indefinite duration.

See also
No cross-references.

1.128 fifth

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.129 figured bass

Also called ‘thorough bass’.

A method of indicating an accompaniment part by the bass notes only, together with figures designating the chief intervals and chords to be played above the bass notes.
See also
Section 1.52 [chord], page 13, Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.130 fine
[Italian: ‘end’]
Indicates the end of the piece when it is not the written end of the music.

See also
Section 1.79 [da capo], page 20, Section 1.81 [dal segno], page 20.

1.131 fingering
ES: digitación, I: diteggiatura, F: doigté, D: Fingersatz, NL: vingerzetting, DK: fingersætning,
S: fingersättning, FI: sormitus.
Figures to the side or above the note that methodically indicate which fingers to use while
playing a passage.

See also
No cross-references.

1.132 flag
ES: corchete, I: coda (uncinata), bandiera, F: crochet, D: Fahne, Fähnchen, NL: vlaggetje, DK:
fane, S: flagga, FI: lippu, viiri.
Ornament at the end of the stem of a note used for notes with values less than a quarter
note. The number of flags determines the note value.

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.133 flageolet
An articulation for string players that means the note or passage is to be played in harmonics.
Also:
• A duct flute similar to the recorder.
• An organ stop of flute scale at 1′ or 2′ pitch.

See also
Section 1.22 [articulation], page 6, Section 1.155 [harmonics], page 37.
1.134 flat

See also
Section 1.7 [accidental], page 2.

1.135 forefall
See also
Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6.

1.136 forte

[Italian: ‘loud’]
Abbreviated f. Variants include:
• mezzo forte, medium loud (notated mf),
• fortissimo, very loud (notated ff).

See also
No cross-references.

1.137 fourth

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.138 Frenched score

A ‘condensed’ score, produced by omitting staves for instruments that are not playing at the moment, and by moving up additional systems from following pages to take up the space thus liberated, which reduces the total number of pages used to print the work.

The specific rules for ‘frenching’ a score differ from publisher to publisher. If you are producing scores for eventual publication by a commercial publisher, you may wish to procure a copy of their style manual.

See also
Section 1.139 [Frenched staff], page 33.

1.139 Frenched staff

[Pl. Frenched staves] Analogous to Frenched scores (q.v), a Frenched staff has unneeded measures or sections removed. This is useful for producing, for example, an ossia staff.
See also
Section 1.229 [ossia], page 57.

1.140 Frenched staves
Plural of Section 1.139 [Frenched staff], page 33.

1.141 fugue

See also
Section 1.72 [counterpoint], page 18.

1.142 functional harmony

A system of harmonic analysis.

It is based on the idea that, in a given key, there are only three functionally different chords: tonic (T, the chord on the first note of the scale), subdominant (S, the chord on the fourth note), and dominant (D, the chord on the fifth note). Others are considered to be variants of the base chords. A few examples among many others are the tonic, subdominant or dominant of the parallel minor scale, or the incomplete dominant seventh chord.

See also
Section 1.95 [dominant], page 24, Section 1.162 [incomplete dominant seventh chord], page 40, Section 1.297 [subdominant], page 72, Section 1.320 [tonic], page 77.

1.143 G
- ES: sol
- I: sol
- F: sol
- D: G, g
- NL: g
- DK: g
- S: g
- FI: G, g

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.
1.144 G clef
A clef symbol that indicates G above middle C. Used on the first and second note lines. A digit 8 above the clef symbol indicates that the notes must be played an octave higher while 8 below the clef symbol indicates playing or singing an octave lower (used most frequently to notate the tenor part in modern choral scores).

See also
No cross-references.

1.145 glissando
Letting the pitch slide fluently from one note to the other.
See also
No cross-references.

1.146 grace notes
Notes printed in small types to indicate that their time values are not counted in the rhythm of the bar.
See also
Section 1.6 [acciaccatura], page 2, Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6, Section 1.210 [mordent], page 52, Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.

1.147 grand staff
A combination of two staves with a brace. Usually used for piano music.
See also
Section 1.39 [brace], page 10.

1.148 grave
[Italian] Slow, solemn.
See also
No cross-references.

1.149 gruppetto

See also
Section 1.332 [turn], page 80.

1.150 H

- ES: si
- I: si
- F: si
- D: H, h
- NL: b
- DK: h
- S: h
- FI: H, h

Letter name used for B natural in German and Scandinavian usage. In the standard usage of these countries, B means B flat.

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86, Section 1.27 [B], page 7.

1.151 hairpin

Graphical version of the crescendo and decrescendo dynamic marks.

See also
Section 1.74 [crescendo], page 19, Section 1.82 [decrescendo], page 21.

1.152 half note

- UK: minim,
- ES: blanca,
- I: minima,
- F: blanche,
- D: Halbe, halbe Note,
- NL: halve noot,
- DK: halvnode,
- S: halvnot,
- FI: puolinuotti.

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.
1.153 half rest

- UK: minim rest,
- ES: silencio de blanca,
- I: pausa di minima,
- F: demi-pause,
- D: halbe Pause,
- NL: halve, rust,
- DK: halvnodespause,
- S: halvpaus,
- FI: puolitauko.

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.154 harmonic cadence


A sequence of chords that terminates a musical phrase or section.

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34.

1.155 harmonics


The general class of pitches produced by sounding the second or higher harmonic of a tone producer: string, column of air, and so on.

On stringed instruments, these pitches sound rather flute-like; hence, their name in languages other than English. They are produced by lightly touching the string at a node for the desired mode of vibration while it is being bowed or plucked.

For instruments of the violin family, there are two types of harmonics: natural harmonics, which are those played on the open string; and artificial harmonics, which are produced on stopped strings.

See also
No cross-references.
1.156 harmony


Tones sounding simultaneously. Two note harmonies fall into the categories consonances and dissonances.

Consonances:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{unison} \\
\text{third} \\
\text{fourth} \\
\text{fifth} \\
\text{sixth} \\
\text{octave} \\
\text{tenth}
\end{array}
\]

Dissonances:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{second} \\
\text{ninth} \\
\text{seventh}
\end{array}
\]

For harmony that uses three or more notes, see Section 1.52 [chord], page 13.

See also

Section 1.52 [chord], page 13.

1.157 hemiola


Most frequently, a proportion (q.v.) of three notes of equal value in the time normally occupied by two. The resulting rhythm can be expressed in modern terms as a substitution (for example) of a bar in 3/2 for one of 6/4, or of a bar in 3/4 for one of 6/8. During the Baroque era, hemiola is most frequently as a special effect (or affect) at cadences.

For example, this phrase in 6/4 time

may be thought of having alternating time signatures

and is therefore a polymeter (second definition) of considerable antiquity.

See also

Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48, Section 1.242 [polyrhythm], page 60, Section 1.249 [proportion], page 61.
1.158 high bass clef


Beginning in 18th century the high bass clef used in French Horn parts for the lowest pitches. This usage of the F clef was then passed down from the French Horn to the Basset Horn and then to the Bass Clarinet. It looks identical to the standard bass clef, but is pitched an octave higher – octavation indicators on clefs appeared at the beginning of the 20th Century.

In LilyPond, the most straightforward way to make a high bass clef is to print the modern version \clef "bass\^8" but without the 8;

<<
\new Staff {
  \clef treble { g4 b d' g' }
}
\new Staff \with { \omit ClefModifier }
{ \clef "bass^8" { g4 b d' g' } }
>>

See also
Section 1.124 [F clef], page 30, Section 1.34 [bass clef], page 9.

1.159 homophony


Music in which one voice leads melodically supported by the other voices in the same rhythm (more or less). In contrast to polyphony.

See also
Section 1.245 [polyphony], page 60.

1.160 hook

See also
Section 1.132 [flag], page 32.

1.161 hymn meter


A group or list of numbers that indicate the number of syllables in a line of a hymn’s verse. Different hymnals have different ways of noting the hymn meter: for example, consider a hymn that has four lines in two couplets alternating regularly between eight and seven syllables. The English Hymnal notes this as 87. 87. Other hymnals may note it as 8787, 87.87, or 8 7 8 7.

Some frequently-used hymn meters have traditional names:
- 66.86 is called Short Meter (abbreviated SM or S.M.)
• 86.86 is called Common Meter (CM or C.M.)
• 88.88 is called Long Meter (LM or L.M.)

Some hymns and their tunes are doubled versions of a simpler meter: for easier reading, a
hymn with a meter of 87.87.87.87 is usually written 87.87D. The traditional names above also
have doubled versions:
• 66.86.66.86 is Double Short Meter (DSM or D.S.M.)
• 86.86.86.86 is Double Common Meter (DCM or D.C.M.)
• 88.88.88.88 is Double Long Meter (DLM or D.L.M.)

See also
No cross-references.

1.162 incomplete dominant seventh chord
ES: ?, I: accordo di settima dominante incompleto, F: accord de septième de dominante incom-

A dominant seventh chord where the root tone is removed. The remaining three tones build
a diminished triad.

See also
Section 1.52 [chord], page 13, Section 1.97 [dominant seventh chord], page 25, Section 1.142
[functional harmony], page 34.

1.163 interval
ES: intervalo, I: intervallo, F: intervalle, D: Intervall, NL: interval, DK: interval, S: intervall, FI:
intervalli, kahden sävelen korkeusero.

Difference in pitch between two notes. Intervals may be diminished, minor, perfect, major,
or augmented. The augmented fourth and the diminished fifth are identical (or enharmonic) on
an equal-tempered twelve-tone scale and are called tritonus because they consist of three whole
tones. The addition of such two intervals forms an octave.

See also
Section 1.119 [enharmonic], page 29, Section 1.341 [whole tone], page 82.
1.164 inversion


When a chord sounds with a bass note that differs from the root of the chord, it is said to be inverted. The number of inversions that a chord can have is one fewer than the number of constituent notes. For example, triads (which have three constituent notes) can have three positions, two of which are inversions:

Root position

The root note is in the bass, and above that are the third and the fifth. A triad built on the first scale degree, for example, is marked \( I \).

First inversion

The third is in the bass, and above it are the fifth and the root. This creates an interval of a sixth and a third above the bass note, and so is marked in figured Roman notation as \( 6/3 \). This is commonly abbreviated to \( I_6 \) (or \( I_b \)) since the sixth is the characteristic interval of the inversion, and so always implies \( 6/3 \).

Second inversion

The fifth is in the bass, and above it are the root and the third. This creates an interval of a sixth and a fourth above the bass note, and so is marked as \( I_6/4 \) or \( I_c \). Second inversion is the most unstable chord position.

See also

No cross-references.

1.165 inverted interval


The difference between an interval and an octave.

See also

No cross-references.

1.166 just intonation


Tuning system in which the notes are obtained by adding and subtracting natural fifths and thirds.

See also

Section 1.307 [temperament], page 75.

1.167 key


According to the 12 tones of the chromatic scale there are 12 keys, one on c, one on c-sharp, etc.
See also
Section 1.54 [chromatic scale], page 13, Section 1.168 [key signature], page 42.

1.168 key signature

The sharps or flats appearing at the beginning of each staff indicating the key of the music.

See also
Section 1.7 [accidental], page 2.

1.169 Kievan notation
A form of medieval music notation used predominantly in the chantbooks of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as Carpatho-Russian and Ukrainian jurisdictions of Orthodoxy and Byzantine-rite Catholicism. It is characterized by the square shape of its noteheads.

1.170 laissez vibrer

[French: ‘Let vibrate’] Most frequently associated with harp parts. Marked l.v. in the score.

See also
No cross-references.

1.171 largo

[Italian: ‘wide’.] Very slow in tempo, usually combined with great expressiveness. Larghetto is less slow than largo.

1.172 leading note

The seventh scale degree, a semitone below the tonic; so called because of its strong tendency to ‘lead up’ (resolve upwards) to the tonic scale degree.

See also
Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66, Section 1.270 [semitone], page 67.

1.173 ledger line

A ledger line is an extension of the staff.
See also
No cross-references.

1.174 legato


To be performed (a) without any perceptible interruption between the notes, unlike (b) leggiero or non-legato, (c) portato, or (d) staccato.

See also
Section 1.290 [staccato], page 71.

1.175 legato curve

See also
Section 1.284 [slur], page 70, Section 1.174 [legato], page 43.

1.176 leger line

See also
Section 1.173 [ledger line], page 42.

1.177 ligature


A ligature is a coherent graphical symbol that represents at least two distinct notes. Ligatures originally appeared in the manuscripts of Gregorian chant notation around the 9th century to denote ascending or descending sequences of notes. In early notation, ligatures were used for monophonic tunes (Gregorian chant) and very soon denoted also the way of performance in the sense of articulation. With the invention of the metric system of the white mensural notation, the need for ligatures to denote such patterns disappeared.

See also
Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46.

1.178 lilypond


A pond with lilies floating in it.

Also, the name of a music typesetting program.

See also
No cross-references.
1.179 line

See also
Section 1.291 [staff], page 71.

1.180 loco

[Italian: ‘place’] Instruction to play the following passage at the written pitch. Cancels octave mark (q.v.).

See also
Section 1.225 [octave mark], page 56, Section 1.226 [octave marking], page 56.

1.181 long appoggiatura

See also
Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6.

1.182 longa
• US: long, longa,
• ES: longa,
• I: longa,
• F: longa, longue,
• D: Longa,
• NL: longa,
• DK: longa,
• S: longa,
• FI: longa.

Note value: twice the length of a breve.

See also
Section 1.43 [breve], page 11, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.183 lyric tie

See also
Section 1.116 [elision], page 28.
1.184 lyrics

See also
No cross-references.

1.185 major

See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.186 major interval

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.187 maxima

Note value: twice the length of a longa.

The maxima is the largest duration in use during the 15th and 16th centuries. Like the longa, the maxima can be either two or three times as long as the longa (called binary and ternary, respectively). By the late 15th century, most composers used the smaller proportion by default.

See also
Chapter 2 [Duration names notes and rests], page 83, Section 1.182 [longa], page 44, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.188 meantone temperament

Temperament yielding acoustically pure thirds by decreasing the natural fifth by 16 cents. Due to the non-circular character of this temperament only a limited set of keys are playable. Used for tuning keyboard instruments for performance of pre-1650 music.

See also
Section 1.50 [cent], page 12, Section 1.307 [temperament], page 75.

1.189 measure

A group of beats (units of musical time) the first of which bears an accent. Such groups in numbers of two or more recur consistently throughout the composition and are separated from each other by bar lines.
See also
Section 1.30 [bar line], page 8, Section 1.36 [beat], page 9, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.190 measure repeat

See also
Section 1.233 [percent repeat], page 58.

1.191 mediant

- The third **scale degree**.
- A **chord** having its base tone a third from that of another chord. For example, the tonic chord may be replaced by its lower mediant (variant tonic).

See also
Section 1.52 [chord], page 13, Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.258 [relative key], page 64.

1.192 melisma


A melisma (Greek: plural *melismata*) is a group of notes or tones sung on one syllable, especially as applied to liturgical chant.

See also
No cross-references.

1.193 melisma line


See also
Section 1.122 [extender line], page 29.

1.194 melodic cadence

See also
Section 1.47 [cadenza], page 12.

1.195 mensural notation


A system of duration notation whose principles were first established in the mid-13th century, and that (with various changes) remained in use until about 1600. As such, it is the basis for the notation of rhythms in Western musical notation.
Franco of Cologne (ca. 1250) is credited with the first systematic explanation of the notation’s principles, so the notation of this earliest period is called ‘Franconian’. Franco’s system made use of three note values – long, breve, and semibreve – each of which was normally equivalent to three of the next lower note value.

Then, in the first half of the 14th century, Philippe de Vitry and Jehan de Murs added several note values (the minim, semiminim and fusa) and extended Franco’s principles to govern the relationship between these values. They also put the duple division of note values on an equal footing with the earlier (preferred) triple division.

TODO: continue description of French and Italian black notation, and the relationship betwixt them.

**White or void mensural notation**

In the 15th century, hollow (or void) notes began to substitute for the earlier solid black ones, which were then free to assume the function of red (or colored) notes in the earlier notation. ...

TODO: add to definition (including summary info on proportional notation)

**See also**

Section 1.24 [augmentation], page 7, Section 1.88 [diminution], page 23, Section 1.177 [ligature], page 43, Section 1.249 [proportion], page 61.

### 1.196 mensuration sign


The ancestor of the time signature, mensuration signs were used to indicate the relationship between two sets of note durations—specifically, the ratio of breves to semibreves (called *tempus*), and of semibreves to minims (called *prolatio*).

Each ratio was represented with a single single sign, and was either three-to-one (ternary) or two-to-one (binary), as in modern music notation. Unlike modern music notation, the ternary ratio was the preferred one—applied to the *tempus*, it was called *perfect*, and was represented by a complete circle; applied to the *prolatio*, it was called *major* and was represented by a dot in the middle of the sign. The binary ratio applied to the *tempus* was called *imperfect*, and was represented by an incomplete circle; applied to *prolatio*, it was called *minor* and was represented by the lack of an internal dot. There are four possible combinations, which can be represented in modern time signatures with and without reduction of note values. (These signs are hard-coded in LilyPond with reduction.)

**perfect tempus with major prolatio**

Indicated by a complete circle with an internal dot. In modern time signatures, this equals:

- 9/4, with reduction or
- 9/2, without reduction

**perfect tempus and minor prolatio**

Indicated by a complete circle without an internal dot. In modern time signatures, this equals:

- 3/2, with reduction or
- 3/1, without reduction

**imperfect tempus and major prolatio**

Indicated by an incomplete circle with an internal dot. In modern time signatures, this equals:

- 6/4, with reduction or
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6/2, without reduction

imperfect tempus and minor prolatio

Indicated by an incomplete circle without an internal dot. In modern time signatures, this equals:
• 4/4, with reduction or
• 2/1, without reduction

The last mensuration sign looks like common-time because it is, with note values reduced from the original semibreve to a modern quarter note. Being doubly imperfect, this sign represented the (theoretically) least-preferred mensuration, but it was actually used fairly often.

This system extended to the ratio of longer note values to each other:
• maxima to longa, called:
  • modus maximorum,
  • modus major, or
  • maximodus
• longa to breve, called:
  • modus longarum,
  • modus minor, or
  • modus

In the absence of any other indication, these modes were assumed to be binary. The mensuration signs only indicated tempus and prolatio, so composers needed another way to indicate these longer ratios (called modes). Around the middle of the 15th century started to use groups of rests at the beginning of the staff, preceding the mensuration sign.

Two mensuration signs have survived to the present day: the C-shaped sign, which originally designated tempus imperfectum and prolatio minor now stands for common time; and the slashed C, which designated the same with diminution now stands for cut time (essentially, it has not lost its original meaning).

See also
Section 1.88 [diminution], page 23, Section 1.249 [proportion], page 61, Section 1.318 [time signature], page 77.

1.197 mensurstrich


A bar line drawn between staves.

See also
Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46.

1.198 meter


The pattern of note values and accents in a composition or a section thereof. There are a couple ways to classify ‘traditional’ meter (i.e., not polymeter): by grouping beats and by subdividing the primary beat.

By grouping beats:
• duple: groups of two.
• **triple**: groups of three.
• **quadruple**: groups of four. A special case of duple meter.
• **quintuple**: groups of five beats.
• **sextuple** meter: groups of six. A special case of:
  • duple meter, subdivided in three; or
  • triple meter, subdivided in two.
• **septuple** meter: groups of seven.
• and so on.

Other than triple meter and its subdivided variants (see below), meters that feature odd groupings of beats (e.g., quintuple or septuple meter) are not frequently used prior to the 20th Century.

**By subdividing the primary beat:**
• simple: subdivided in groups of two.
  • duple: 2/2, 2/4, 2/8
  • triple: 3/2, 3/4, 3/8
  • quadruple: 4/2, 4/4 (also called common time), 4/8
• compound: subdivided in groups of three.
  • duple: 6/8
  • triple: 9/8
  • quadruple: 12/8

Time signatures are placed at the beginning of a composition (or section) to indicate the meter. For instance, a piece written in simple triple meter with a beat on each quarter note is conventionally written with a time signature of 3/4. Here are some combinations of the two classifications above:

Simple duple meter (F.J. Haydn, 1732-1809; or a Croatian folk tune):

Simple triple meter:

Simple quadruple meter (French folk tune, *Au clair de la lune*):

Simple quintuple meter (B. Marcello, 1686-1739):

(Aside: this is an example of *Augenmusik*: the accidentals are thus in the source, with sharps in the accompaniment where the voice has flats and *vice versa.*)
Compound duple meter (unknown):

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\end{align*} \]

Compound triple meter (J.S. Bach, 1685-1750):

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\end{align*} \]

Compound quadruple meter (P. Yon, 1886-1943):

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} & \quad \text{\( \frac{3}{4} \)} \\
\end{align*} \]

See also

Section 1.4 [accent], page 2, Section 1.157 [hemiola], page 38, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54, Section 1.318 [time signature], page 77.

1.199 metronome


Device used to indicate the exact tempo of a piece.

Invented ca. 1812 by Dietrich Nikolaus Winkler of Amsterdam, but takes its name from Johann Nepomuk Mälzel, who copied the device, added a scale of tempo divisions, and patented it as a ‘metronome’. The inevitable lawsuit that followed acknowledged Winkler as the creator, but by then Mälzel had already sold many of them, and people had taken to calling it a Mälzel Metronome.

See also

Section 1.200 [metronome mark], page 50.

1.200 metronome mark


Exact tempo indication (in beats per minute). Abbreviated M.M. or MM, which is short for Mälzels Metronom (or Mälzel’s Mark, anglice).

See also

Section 1.199 [metronome], page 50.
1.201 metronomic indication

See also
Section 1.200 [metronome mark], page 50.

1.202 mezzo


[Italian: ‘medium’]

Used to qualify other indications, such as:

- Dynamics
  - *mezzo piano* is ‘medium quiet’ (that is, not as quiet as *piano*)
  - *mezzo forte* is ‘medium loud’ (that is, not as loud as *forte*)
- Voice
  - Pitchwise, a mezzo-soprano’s voice lies between that of contraltos and sopranos

See also
No cross-references.

1.203 mezzo-soprano


The female voice between soprano and contralto.

See also
Section 1.289 [soprano], page 71, Section 1.70 [contralto], page 18.

1.204 middle C

ES: do central, I: do centrale, F: do central, do 3, D: eingestrichenes c, NL: centrale c, DK: enstreget c, S: ettstruket c, FI: keski-C.

First C below the 440 Hz A.

See also
No cross-references.

1.205 minor


See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.
1.206 minor interval

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.207 mixolydian mode

See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.208 mode

See also
Section 1.56 [church mode], page 14, Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.

1.209 modulation

Moving from one Section 1.167 [key], page 41, to another. For example, the second subject of a Section 1.287 [sonata form], page 70, movement modulates to the dominant key if the key is major and to the Section 1.258 [relative key], page 64, if the key is minor.

See also
No cross-references.

1.210 mordent

See also
Section 1.6 [acchiaccatura], page 2, Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6, Section 1.146 [grace notes], page 35, Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.

1.211 motif

See also
Section 1.212 [motive], page 52.

1.212 motive

The briefest intelligible and self-contained fragment of a musical theme or subject.
1.213 movement

Greater musical works like Section 1.303 [symphony], page 74, and Section 1.286 [sonata], page 70, most often consist of several – more or less – independent pieces called movements.

See also
No cross-references.

1.214 multi-measure rest

Multi-measure rests are conventionally typeset with a combination of longa, breve and whole rests for shorter and a long horizontal bar for longer spans of rest, with a number above to indicate the duration (in measures) of the rest. The former style is called ‘Kirchenpausen’ in German, as a reminiscence of its use in Renaissance vocal polyphony.

See also
Section 1.182 [longa], page 44, Section 1.43 [breve], page 11.

1.215 natural

See also
Section 1.7 [accidental], page 2.

1.216 neighbor tones

See also
Section 1.6 [acciaccatura], page 2, Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6, Section 1.146 [grace notes], page 35, Section 1.210 [mordent], page 52, Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.
1.217 ninth

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.218 non-legato
See also
Section 1.174 [legato], page 43.

1.219 note

Notes are signs by means of which music is fixed in writing. The term is also used for the sound indicated by a note, and even for the key of the piano which produces the sound. However, a clear distinction between the terms tone and Section 1.219 [note], page 54, is strongly recommended. Briefly, one sees a note, and hears a tone.

See also
No cross-references.

1.220 note head

A head-like sign which indicates pitch by its position on a staff provided with a clef, and duration by a variety of shapes such as hollow or black heads with or without stems, flags, etc. For percussion instruments (often having no defined pitch) the note head may indicate the instrument.

See also
Section 1.57 [clef], page 14, Section 1.132 [flag], page 32, Section 1.291 [staff], page 71, Section 1.293 [stem], page 72.

1.221 note names
See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.

1.222 note value

Note values (durations) are measured as fractions—in modern usage, one-half—of the next higher note value. The longest duration in current use is the breve (equal to two whole notes), but sometimes (especially in music dating from the Baroque era or earlier) the longa (four whole notes) or maxima (eight whole notes) may be found.

As used in mensural notation, this fraction was more flexible: it could also be one-third the higher note value. Composers indicated which proportions to use with various signs—two of
which survive to the present day: the C-shaped sign for common time, and the slashed C for \textit{alla breve} or cut time.

An augmentation dot after a note increases its duration by half; a second dot increases it by half of the first addition (that is, by a fourth of the original duration). More dots can be used to add further halved fractions of the original note value (1/8, 1/16, etc.), but they are not frequently encountered.

Alternatively note values may be subdivided by other ratios. Most common is subdivision by 3 (triplets) and 5 (quintuplets). Subdivisions by 2 (duplets) or 4 (quadruplets) of dotted notes are also frequently used.

See also
Section 1.62 [common time], page 16.

\textbf{1.223 octavation}

See also
Section 1.226 [octave marking], page 56.

\textbf{1.224 octave}


The interval of an octave, sometimes abbreviated 8ve.

For uses like \textit{all’ottava} or 8va with an extender line or bracket, or \textit{loco} see octave marking.

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40, Section 1.226 [octave marking], page 56.
1.225 octave mark

The phrase, abbreviation, or other mark used (with or without an extender line or bracket) to indicate that the music is to be played in a different octave:

- **15ma**: play two octaves higher
- **8va**: play one octave higher
- **8vb**: play one octave lower
- **8va** (written below the passage): unusual, same as **8vb**
- **15vb**: play two octaves lower
- **15va** (written below the passage): unusual, same as **15vb**

For longer passages, it may be more practical to mark the octave change at the beginning with a phrase (see the list below for examples), but without a bracket or extender line. Then, when the music returns to the written pitch, the octave change is canceled with the word **loco** (q.v.).

To parallel the list above:

- **15ma**: *alla quindicesima* (alta)
- **8va**: *all’ottava* or *ottava sopra*
- **8vb**: *all’ottava bassa*, *ottava sotto*
- **15vb**: *alla quindicesima* (bassa)

In the phrases above, *quindicesima* is sometimes replaced with *quindecima*, which is Latin.

The music on an entire staff can be marked to be played in a different octave by putting a small 8 or 15 above or below the clef at the beginning. This octave mark can be applied to any clef, but it is most frequently used with the G and F clefs.

**See also**

Section 1.124 [F clef], page 30, Section 1.144 [G clef], page 35, Section 1.180 [loco], page 44, Section 1.226 [octave marking], page 56.

1.226 octave marking

The practice of marking music – an entire staff, a passage, etc. – to indicate that it is to be played in a different octave. If applied to the clef at the beginning of the staff, all music on that staff is to be played at the indicated octave.

For a list of the specific marks used, see Section 1.225 [octave mark], page 56.

**See also**

Section 1.163 [interval], page 40, Section 1.180 [loco], page 44, Section 1.224 [octave], page 55, Section 1.225 [octave mark], page 56.

1.227 octave sign

**See also**

Section 1.225 [octave mark], page 56.
1.228 ornament


Most commonly used is the trill, the rapid alternation of a given note with the diatonic Section 1.268 [second], page 66, above it. In the music from the middle of the 19th century and onwards the trill is performed with the main note first while in the music from the preceding baroque and classic periods the upper note is played first.

![Trill Example]

Other frequently used ornaments are the turn, the mordent, and the prall (inverted mordent).

![Ornament Examples]

See also
Section 1.6 [acciaccatura], page 2, Section 1.20 [appoggiatura], page 6, Section 1.146 [grace notes], page 35, Section 1.210 [mordent], page 52.

1.229 ossia


Ossia (otherwise) marks an alternative. It is an added staff or piano score, usually only a few measures long, which presents another version of the music, for example for small hands.

See also
Compare: Section 1.75 [cue-notes], page 19.

1.230 part


- In instrumental or choral music, the music for a single instrument or voice.
- in contrapuntal music, a single melodic line in the contrapuntal web.

See also
Section 1.72 [counterpoint], page 18.
1.231 pause

See also
Section 1.127 [fermata], page 31.

1.232 pennant

See also
Section 1.132 [flag], page 32.

1.233 percent repeat

LilyPond-specific term to indicate the repetition of a musical expression on a single staff, as opposed to the more usual definition of repeat, which affects all parts. The musical expression can be anything from a single note or note pattern to one or more measures. There are other names for this symbol:

- simile mark
- slash mark, or slash repeat
- beat repeat
- measure (or multi-measure) repeat

See also
Section 1.259 [repeat], page 64, University of Vermont Music Dictionary (http://www.music.vt.edu/musicdictionary/textr/Repeat.html).

1.234 percussion


A family of musical instruments which are played on by striking or shaking. Percussion instruments commonly used in a symphony orchestra are kettledrums (I: timpani, D: Pauken), snare drum, bass drum, tambourine, cymbals, Chinese gong (tam-tam), triangle, celesta, glockenspiel, and xylophone.

See also
No cross-references.

1.235 perfect interval

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.236 phrase

A natural division of the melodic line, comparable to a sentence of speech.

See also
Section 1.48 [caesura], page 12.

1.237 phrasing

The clear rendering in musical performance of the phrases of the melody. Phrasing may be indicated by a slur.

See also
Section 1.236 [phrase], page 59, Section 1.284 [slur], page 70.

1.238 piano

\textit{piano} (p) soft, \textit{pianissimo} (pp) very soft, \textit{mezzo piano} (mp) medium soft.

See also
No cross-references.

1.239 pickup

See also
Section 1.17 [anacrusis], page 5.

1.240 pitch

1. The perceived quality of a sound that is primarily a function of its fundamental frequency.
2. [FR. ton; DE. Ton; ES. tono] Any point on the continuum of musical pitch.
3. [FR. diapason; DE. Kammerton, Stimmung; ES. diapasón] The standardized association of a particular frequency with a particular pitch name, e.g., $c' = 256$ Hz.

See also
Chapter 3 [Pitch names], page 86.
1.241 pizzicato


A technique for stringed instruments, abbr. pizz. To play by plucking the strings.

See also
No cross-references.

1.242 polymeter


- The *simultaneous* use of two or more meters, in two or more parts.
- The *successive* use of different meters in one or more parts.

See also
Section 1.243 [polymetric], page 60, (adjective).

1.243 polymetric


Characterized by *polymeter*: using two or more metric frameworks simultaneously or in alternation.

See also
Section 1.242 [polymeter], page 60, (noun).

1.244 polymetric time signature


A time signature that indicates regularly alternating polymetric time.

See also
Section 1.243 [polymetric], page 60.

1.245 polyphony


Music written in a combination of several simultaneous voices (parts) of a more or less pronounced individuality.

See also
Section 1.72 [counterpoint], page 18.

1.246 portato

[Italian: past participle of *portare*, ‘to carry’]

A stroke in which each of several notes is separated slightly within a slur, without changing the bow’s direction. It is used for passages of a *cantabile* character.
1.247 **power chord**

A chord containing only the root and the fifth (possibly in multiple octaves). Commonly used in guitar music, particularly with electric guitar and high distortion.

See also

Section 1.52 [chord], page 13.

1.248 **presto**


[Italian]

Very quick, i.e., quicker than Section 1.12 [allegro], page 4; *prestissimo* denotes the highest possible degree of speed.

See also

No cross-references.

1.249 **proportion**


[Latin: *proportio*] Described in great detail by Gaffurius, in *Practica musicae* (published in Milan in 1496). In mensural notation, proportion is:

1. A ratio that expresses the relationship between the note values that follow with those that precede;
2. A ratio between the note values of a passage and the ‘normal’ relationship of note values to the metrical pulse. (A special case of the first definition.)

The most common proportions are:

- 2:1 (or simply 2), expressed by a vertical line through the mensuration sign (the origin of the *alla breve* time signature), or by turning the sign backwards
- 3:1 (or simply 3)
- 3:2 (*sesquialtera*)

To ‘cancel’ any of these, the inverse proportion is applied. Thus:

- 1:2 cancels 2:1
- 1:3 cancels 3:1
- 2:3 cancels 3:2
- and so on.

Gaffurius enumerates five basic types of major:minor proportions and their inverses:

1. Multiplex, if the major number is an exact multiple of the minor (2:1, 3:1, 4:2, 6:3); and its inverse, Submultiplex (1:2, 1:3, 2:4, 3:6)
2. Epimoria or Superparticular [orig. *Epimoria seu Superparticularis*], if the major number is one more than the minor (3:2, 4:3, 5:4); and its inverse, Subsuperparticular (2:3, 3:4, 4:5)
3. Superpartiens, if the major number is one less than twice the minor (5:3, 7:4, 9:5, 11:6); and its inverse, subsuperpartiens (3:5, 4:7, 5:9, 6:11)
4. Multiplexsuperparticular, if the major number is one more than twice the minor (5:2, 7:3, 9:4); and its inverse, Submultiplexsuperparticular (2:5, 3:7, 4:9)

5. Multiplexsuperpartiens, if the major number is one less than some other multiple (usually three or four) of the minor (8:3, 11:4, 14:5, 11:3); and its inverse, Submultiplexsuperpartiens (3:8, 4:11, 5:14, 3:11)

He then continues to subdivide each type in various ways. For the multiplex proportions, for example, he indicates how many times greater the major number is than the minor:

- If two times greater, the proportion is *dupla*. If inverted, it’s called *subdupla*. Examples: 2:1, 4:2, and 6:3.
- If four, *quadrupla*; and its inversion, *subquadrupla*. Example: 4:1, 8:2, and 12:3

Other proportions were possible, but whether they were frequently used is another question:

- 33:9, *triplasuperbipartientetertias*
- 51:15, *triplasuperbipartientequintas*

See also

Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46.

1.250 Pythagorean comma


Originally, the interval by which the sum of six whole tones exceeds the octave – \((9:8)^6 \cdot 2:1 = 531441:524288\), or 23.5 cents.

Modern acoustical theory defines it as the interval by which twelve fifths exceed seven octaves. To put it another way: A sequence of fifths that starts on C eventually circles back to C. However, this C is 23.5 Section 1.50 [cent], page 12 s higher than the C obtained by adding 7 octaves. The difference between those two pitches is the Pythagorean comma.

See also

Section 1.50 [cent], page 12, Section 1.307 [temperament], page 75.

1.251 quadruplet


See also

Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.252 quality


The quality of a triad is determined by the precise arrangement of its intervals. Tertian triads can be described as a series of three notes. The first element is the root note (or simply ‘root’) of the chord, the second note is the ‘third’ of the chord, and the last note is the ‘fifth’ of the chord. These are described below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chord name</th>
<th>Component intervals</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>major triad</td>
<td>major third/perfect fifth</td>
<td>C-E-G</td>
<td>C, CM, Cma, Cmaj, CΔ</td>
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<tr>
<td>minor triad</td>
<td>minor third/perfect fifth</td>
<td>C-E♭-G♭</td>
<td>Cm, Cmi, Cmin, C♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>augmented triad</td>
<td>major third/augmented fifth</td>
<td>C-E-G♯</td>
<td>C+, C~+, Caug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diminished triad</td>
<td>minor third/diminished fifth</td>
<td>C-E♭-G♭</td>
<td>Cm(♭5), C♭, Cdim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are various types of seventh chords depending on the quality of the original chord and the quality of the seventh added.

Five common types of seventh chords have standard symbols. The chord quality indications are sometimes superscripted and sometimes not (e.g. Dm7, Dm7, and Dm7 are all identical). The last three chords are not commonly used except in jazz.

**See also**
Section 1.52 [chord], page 13.

### 1.253 quarter note
- UK: crotchet
- ES: negra
- I: semiminima, nera
- F: noire
- D: Viertel, Viertelnote
- NL: kwartnoot
- DK: fjerdedelsnode
- S: fjärdedelsnot
- FI: neljäosanuotti

**See also**
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

### 1.254 quarter rest
- UK: crotchet rest
- ES: silencio de negra
- I: pausa di semiminima
- F: soupir
- D: Viertelpause
- NL: kwarprepare
- DK: fjerdedelspause
- S: fjärdedelspaur
- FI: neljäsosatauko

**See also**
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.
1.255 quarter tone


An interval equal to half a semitone.

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.256 quintuplet


See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.257 rallentando


[Italian: ‘slowing down’]

Slackening in speed, more gradual than Section 1.262 [ritardando], page 65. Abbreviated to rall.

See also
Section 1.262 [ritardando], page 65.

1.258 relative key


Major and minor keys that have the same key signature.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{e flat major} & \quad \text{c minor}
\end{align*}
\]

See also
Section 1.167 [key], page 41, Section 1.168 [key signature], page 42, Section 1.185 [major], page 45, Section 1.205 [minor], page 51.

1.259 repeat

See also
No cross-references.

1.260 rest

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.261 rhythm
- Metrical rhythm in which every time value is a multiple or fraction of a fixed unit of time, called beat, and in which the normal accent recurs in regular intervals, called measure. The basic scheme of time values is called meter.
- Measured rhythm which lacks regularly recurrent accent. In modern notation such music appears as a free alternation of different measures.
- Free rhythm, i.e., the use of temporal values having no common metrical unit (beat).

See also
Section 1.4 [accent], page 2, Section 1.36 [beat], page 9, Section 1.189 [measure], page 45, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.262 ritardando
Gradual slowing down, more pronounced than Section 1.257 [rallentando], page 64. Mostly abbreviated to rit. or ritard.

See also
Section 1.257 [rallentando], page 64.

1.263 ritenuto
Immediate reduction of speed.

See also
No cross-references.

1.264 scale

See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21.
Chapter 1: Musical terms A-Z

1.265 scale degree

Names and symbols used in harmonic analysis to denote tones of the scale as roots of chords. The most important are degrees I = tonic (T), IV = subdominant (S) and V = dominant (D).

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T I II III IV V VI VII I

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34.

1.266 scordatura

[Italian: scordare, ‘to mistune’] Unconventional tuning of stringed instruments, particularly lutes or violins. Used to:

- facilitate pitch combinations that would otherwise be difficult or impossible
- alter the characteristic timbre of the instrument, for example, to increase brilliance
- reinforce certain sonorities or tonalities by making them available on open strings
- imitate other instruments
- etc.

Tunings that could be called scordatura first appeared early in the 16th Century and became commonplace in the 17th.

See also
No cross-references.

1.267 score
ES: partitura, I: partitura, F: partition, conducteur (full score), D: Partitur (full score), Klavierauszug (vocal score), NL: partituir, DK: partitur, S: partitur, FI: partituuri.

A copy of orchestral, choral, or chamber music showing what each instrument is to play, each voice to sing, having each part arranged one underneath the other on different staves Section 1.291 [staff], page 71.

See also
No cross-references.

1.268 second

The interval between two neighboring tones of a scale. A diatonic scale consists of alternating semitones and whole tones, hence the size of a second depends on the scale degrees in question.
See also
Section 1.84 [diatonic scale], page 21, Section 1.163 [interval], page 40, Section 1.270 [semitone], page 67, Section 1.341 [whole tone], page 82.

1.269 semibreve
- US: whole note,
- ES: redonda,
- I: semibreve,
- F: ronde,
- D: Ganze, ganze Note, Semibrevis,
- NL: hele noot,
- DK: helnode,
- S: helnot,
- FI: kokonuotti.

Note value: called whole note in the US.

The semibreve is the basis for the tactus in mensural notation (i.e., music written before ca. 1600).

See also
Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.270 semitone

The interval of a minor second. The (usually) smallest interval in European composed music. The interval between two neighboring tones on the piano keyboard – including black and white keys – is a semitone. An octave may be divided into 12 semitones.

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40, Section 1.54 [chromatic scale], page 13.

1.271 seventh

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.272 sextolet

See also
Section 1.273 [sextuplet], page 68, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.
1.273 sextuplet

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.274 shake
See also
Section 1.326 [trill], page 79.

1.275 sharp

See also
Section 1.7 [accidental], page 2.

1.276 simile
   [Italian: ‘in the same manner’] Performance direction: the music thus marked is to be played in the same manner (i.e., with the same articulations, dynamics, etc.) as the music that precedes it.

See also
TODO: Where else could I refer the reader?

1.277 simple meter
   A meter in which the basic beat is subdivided in two: that is, a meter that does not include triplet subdivision of the beat.

See also
Section 1.65 [compound meter], page 16, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.278 sixteenth note
- UK: semiquaver
- ES: semicorchea
- I: semicroma
- F: double croche
- D: Sechzehntel, Sechzehntelnote
- NL: zestiende noot
- DK: sekstendedelsnode
- S: sextondelsnot
- FI: kuudestoistaosanot
1.279 sixteenth rest

- UK: semiquaver rest
- ES: silencio de semicorchea
- I: pausa di semicroma
- F: quart de soupir
- D: Sechzehntelpause
- NL: zestiende rust
- DK: sekstenedelspause
- S: sextondelspaus
- FI: kuudestoistaosatauko

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.280 sixth


See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.281 sixty-fourth note

- UK: hemidemisemiquaver
- ES: semifusa
- I: semibiscroma
- F: quadruple croche
- D: Vierundsechzigstel, Vierundsechzigstelnote
- NL: vierenzestigste noot
- DK: fireogtredsindstyvedelsnode
- S: sextofjärdedelsnot
- FI: kuudeskymmenesneljäsosanuotti

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.282 sixty-fourth rest

- UK: hemidemisemiquaver rest
- ES: silencio de semifusa
- I: pausa di semibiscroma
- F: sezième de soupir
- D: Vierundsechzigstelpause
- NL: vierenzestigste rust
• DK: fireogtredsindstyvendedelspause
• S: sextiofjärdedelspaus
• FI: kuudeskymmenesneljäsosatauko

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.283 slash repeat

See also
Section 1.233 [percent repeat], page 58.

1.284 slur


A slur above or below a group of notes indicates that they are to be played Section 1.174 [legato], page 43, e.g., with one stroke of the violin bow or with one breath in singing.

See also
No cross-references.

1.285 solmization


General term for systems of designating the degrees of the scale, not by letters, but by syllables (do (ut), re, mi, fa, sol, la, si (ti)).

See also
Section 1.264 [scale], page 65, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.

1.286 sonata


In its present-day meaning a sonata denotes an instrumental composition for piano or for some other instrument with piano accompaniment, which consists of three or four independent pieces, called movements.

See also
No cross-references.

1.287 sonata form


A form used frequently for single movements of the sonata, symphony, quartet, etc. A movement written in sonata form falls into three sections called exposition, development and recapitulation. In the exposition the composer introduces some musical ideas, consisting of a number of themes; in the development section the composer develops this material, and in the
recapitulation the composer repeats the exposition, with certain modifications. The exposition
contains a number of themes that fall into two groups, often called first and second subject.
Other melodies occurring in each group are considered as continuations of these two. The
second theme is in another key, normally in the key of the dominant if the tonic is major, and
in the relative key if the tonic is minor.

See also
Section 1.95 [dominant], page 24, Section 1.185 [major], page 45, Section 1.205 [minor],
page 51, Section 1.258 [relative key], page 64, Section 1.286 [sonata], page 70, Section 1.303
[symphony], page 74, Section 1.320 [tonic], page 77.

1.288 song texts
See also
Section 1.184 [lyrics], page 45.

1.289 soprano
The highest female voice.
See also
No cross-references.

1.290 staccato
ES: picado, I: staccato, F: staccato, piqué, détaché, D: staccato, NL: staccato, DK: staccato, S:
staccato, FI: staccato, lyhyesti, terävästi.
Playing the note(s) short. Staccato is indicated by a dot above or below the note head.

See also
No cross-references.

1.291 staff
UK: stave, ES: pentagrama, pauta, I: pentagramma, rigo (musicale), F: portée, D: Notensystem,
Notenzeile, NL: (noten)balk, partij, DK: nodesystem, S: notsystem, FI: mottiviivasto.
A staff (plural: staves) is a series of (normally five) horizontal lines upon and between which
the musical notes are written, thus indicating (in connection with a Section 1.57 [clef], page 14)
their pitch. Staves for Section 1.234 [percussion], page 58, instruments may have fewer lines.

See also
Section 1.306 [system], page 74.
1.292 staves

See also
Section 1.291 [staff], page 71.

1.293 stem


Vertical line above or below a Section 1.220 [note head], page 54, shorter than a whole note.

See also
Section 1.35 [beam], page 9.

1.294 stringendo


[Italian: ‘pressing’] Pressing, urging, or hastening the time, as to a climax.

See also
Section 1.3 [accelerando], page 1.

1.295 strings


A family of stringed musical instruments played with a bow. Strings commonly used in a symphony orchestra are violin, viola, violoncello, and double bass.

See also
No cross-references.

1.296 strong beat


See also
Section 1.36 [beat], page 9, Section 1.4 [accent], page 2, Section 1.189 [measure], page 45, Section 1.261 [rhythm], page 65.

1.297 subdominant


The fourth scale degree.
See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.

1.298 submediant

The sixth scale degree.

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66,
Section 1.301 [superdominant], page 73.

1.299 subtonic

The seventh Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.

1.300 sul G

Indicates that the indicated passage (or note) should be played on the G string.

See also
No cross-references.

1.301 superdominant

The sixth Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66. Equivalent to the submediant, q.v.

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66,
Section 1.298 [submediant], page 73.

1.302 supertonic

The second Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.
1.303 symphony

A symphony may be defined as a *sonata* for orchestra.

See also
Section 1.286 [sonata], page 70.

1.304 syncopation

Any deliberate upsetting of the normal pulse of Section 1.198 [meter], page 48, Section 1.4 [accent], page 2, and Section 1.261 [rhythm], page 65. The occidental system of musical rhythm rests upon the grouping of equal beats into groups of two or three, with a regularly recurrent accent on the first beat of each group. Any deviation from this scheme is felt as a disturbance or contradiction between the underlaying (normal) pulse and the actual (abnormal) rhythm.

See also
No cross-references.

1.305 syntonic comma

Named after Ptolemy’s syntonic diatonic genus. Originally, the difference by which the ditone exceeds the pure major third obtained by Pythagorean tuning – \( (9:8)^2 - 5:4 = 81:80 \), or 21.5 cents.

Modern acoustical theory defines it as the interval by which four fifths exceed the sum of two octaves plus a major third. \( (3:2)^4 - (2:1)^2 + (5:4) \)

This comma is also known as the comma of Didymus, or didymic comma.

See also
Section 1.250 [Pythagorean comma], page 62.

1.306 system

One ‘line’ of music on the page, consisting of one or more staves grouped vertically. A line break is a switch to the next system.

For example, a piano music score often contains five to six systems per page (with normally two staves per system), while a full orchestral score usually contains only one or two systems per page.

See also
Section 1.291 [staff], page 71.
1.307 temperament

Systems of tuning in which the intervals deviate from the acoustically pure intervals.

See also
Section 1.188 [meantone temperament], page 45, Section 1.120 [equal temperament], page 29.

1.308 tempo indication

The rate of speed of a composition or a section thereof, ranging from the slowest to the quickest, as is indicated by tempo marks as largo, adagio, andante, allegro, and presto.

See also
Section 1.8 [adagio], page 3, Section 1.12 [allegro], page 4, Section 1.19 [andante], page 5, Section 1.171 [largo], page 42, Section 1.248 [presto], page 61.

1.309 tenor

The highest ‘natural’ male voice (apart from countertenor).

See also
Section 1.73 [countertenor], page 18.

1.310 tenth

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.311 tenuto

An indication that a particular note should be held for the whole length, although this can vary depending on the composer and era.

See also
No cross-references.

1.312 third

See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.
1.313 thirty-second note

- UK: demisemiquaver
- ES: fusa
- I: biscroma
- F: triple croche
- D: Zweiunddreissigstel, Zweiunddreissigstelnote
- NL: tweeendertigste (32e) noot
- DK: toogtredivtedelsnode
- S: trettiotvåöndelsnot
- FI: kolmaskyimmeneskahdesosanuotti

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.314 thirty-second rest

- UK: demisemiquaver rest
- ES: silencio de fusa
- I: pausa di biscroma
- F: huitième de soupir
- D: Zweiunddreissigstelpause
- NL: tweeendertigste (32e) rust
- DK: toogtredivtedelspause
- S: trettiotvåöndelspaus
- FI: kolmaskyimmeneskahdesosatauko

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.315 thorough bass

See also
Section 1.129 [figured bass], page 31.

1.316 tie


A curved line, identical in appearance with the Section 1.284 [slur], page 70, which connects two successive notes of the same pitch, and which has the function of uniting them into a single sound (tone) equal to the combined durations.
1.317 time

See also
Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.318 time signature


The sign placed at the beginning of a composition to indicate its meter. It most often takes the form of a fraction, but a few signs derived from mensural notation and proportions are also employed.

See also
Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46, Section 1.196 [mensuration sign], page 47, Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.319 tone


A sound of definite pitch and duration, as distinct from noise. Tone is a primary building material of music.

See also
No cross-references.

1.320 tonic


The first scale degree.

See also
Section 1.142 [functional harmony], page 34, Section 1.265 [scale degree], page 66.

1.321 transposing instrument


Instruments whose notated pitch is different from their sounded pitch. Except for those whose notated and sounding pitches differ by one or more octaves (to reduce the number of ledger lines needed), most such instruments are identified by the letter name of the pitch class of their fundamental. The pitch class is the note that sounds (disregarding the octave in which it sounds) when the instrument plays a notated C.

For example: when played on the B-flat clarinet, the note middle C sounds the B-flat one tone lower. If played on the A clarinet, the same written note sounds the A (one and half tones – a minor third – lower).

Not all transposing instruments include the pitch class in their name:
- Alto flute (in G)
- English horn (in F)
- Saxophones (in B-flat or E-flat)
See also
Section 1.67 [concert pitch], page 17.

1.322 transposition

Shifting a melody up or down in pitch, while keeping the same relative pitches.

See also
No cross-references.

1.323 treble clef

See also
Section 1.144 [G clef], page 35.

1.324 tremolo

On stringed instruments:
1. The quick reiteration of the same tone, produced by a rapid up-and-down movement of the bow.
2. Or, the rapid alternation between two notes of a Section 1.52 [chord], page 13, usually in the distance of a third (Section 1.163 [interval], page 40).

See also
Section 1.295 [strings], page 72.

1.325 triad

See also
Section 1.52 [chord], page 13.
1.326 trill


See also
Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.

1.327 triple meter


See also
Section 1.198 [meter], page 48.

1.328 triplet


See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.329 tritone


See also
Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.330 tuning fork


A two-pronged piece of steel used to indicate an absolute pitch, usually for A above middle C (440 cps/Hz), which is the international tuning standard. Tuning forks for other pitches are available.

See also
Section 1.204 [middle C], page 51.

1.331 tuplet


A non-standard subdivision of a beat or part of a beat, usually indicated with a bracket and a number indicating the number of subdivisions.

See also
Section 1.328 [triplet], page 79, Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.
1.332 turn

See also
Section 1.228 [ornament], page 57.

1.333 unison

Playing of the same notes or the same melody by various instruments (voices) or by the whole orchestra (choir), either at exactly the same pitch or in a different octave.

See also
No cross-references.

1.334 upbeat

See also
Section 1.17 [anacrusis], page 5.

1.335 voice

• Human voices:
  • Section 1.289 [soprano], page 71,
  • Section 1.203 [mezzo-soprano], page 51,
  • Section 1.70 [contralto], page 18,
  • Section 1.309 [tenor], page 75,
  • Section 1.31 [baritone], page 8,
  • Section 1.33 [bass], page 8,
• A melodic layer or part of a polyphonic composition.

See also
No cross-references.

1.336 volta

[Italian: ‘time’ (instance, not duration)] An ending, such as a first or second ending. LilyPond extends this idea to any number, and allows any text (not just a number) – to serve as the volta text.

See also
No cross-references.
1.337 vowel transition


A gradual change of vowel or sustained consonant, usually indicated by an arrow between syllables (see Gould, pp. 452–453).

See also
No cross-references.

1.338 weak beat


See also
Section 1.36 [beat], page 9, Section 1.189 [measure], page 45, Section 1.261 [rhythm], page 65.

1.339 whole note

- UK: semibreve
- ES: redonda
- I: semibreve
- F: ronde
- D: Ganze, ganze Note
- NL: hele noot
- DK: helnode
- S: helnot
- FI: kokonuotti

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.

1.340 whole rest

- UK: semibreve rest
- ES: silencio de redonda
- I: pausa di semibreve
- F: pause
- D: ganze Pause, ganztaktige Pause
- NL: hele rust
- DK: helnodespause
- S: helpaus
- FI: kokotauko

See also
Section 1.222 [note value], page 54.
1.341 whole tone


The interval of a major second. The interval between two tones on the piano keyboard with exactly one key between them – including black and white keys – is a whole tone.

See also

Section 1.163 [interval], page 40.

1.342 woodwind


A family of blown wooden musical instruments. Today some of these instruments are actually made from metal. The woodwind instruments commonly used in a symphony orchestra are flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, and bassoon.

See also

No cross-references.
2 Duration names notes and rests

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<td>soupir*</td>
<td>croche*</td>
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* About the French naming system: croche refers to the note's 'hook'. Therefore, from the eighth note on, the note names mean 'hook', 'doubled hook', 'trebled hook', and so on.

The rest names are based on the soupir, or quarter rest. Subsequent rests are expressed as fractions thereof: half a soupir, a quarter of a soupir, and so on.
Each of the following tables contains one type of note and its matching rest, with abbreviations that apply to both notes and rests. Just switch the part that means ‘note’ with the part that means ‘rest’, for example:

- English: 16th note, 16th rest
- German: 32tel-Note, 32tel-Pause
- Finnish: 64-osanuotti, 64-osatauko

Editor’s note: I put a dash ‘-’ when I could not find a language-specific abbreviation for a duration name. If you know of one that I missed, please send it to me, care of the Lilypond-user discussion list.

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See also

Section 1.195 [mensural notation], page 46.
### 3 Pitch names

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4 Non-Western terms A-Z

4.1 bayati
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See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.

4.2 iraq
This is a stub for iraq.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.

4.3 kurd
This is a stub for kurd.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.

4.4 makam
This is a stub for makam.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Turkish classical music” in Notation Reference.

4.5 makamlar
This is a stub for makamlar.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Turkish classical music” in Notation Reference.

4.6 maqam
This is a stub for maqam.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic music” in Notation Reference, Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.

4.7 rast
This is a stub for rast.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.
Chapter 4: Non-Western terms A-Z

4.8 semai
This is a stub for semai.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.

4.9 sikah
This is a stub for sikah.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.

4.10 taqasim
This is a stub for taqasim.

See also
Notation Reference: Section “Arabic key signatures” in Notation Reference.
Appendix A Literature used

Appendix B GNU Free Documentation License

Version 1.3, 3 November 2008

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