

Music Terms in Italian, French & German

a cappella—unaccompanied voices

accelerando—gradually faster

ad libitum (ad lib.)—at will

al fine—to the end

alla breve—implies half note unit

allargando—slowing down,
broadening

allegretto—slower than allegro

allegro—quick tempo

al segno—to the sign

alto—viola

anfang—beginning

arpa—harp

assai—very

a tempo—resume tempo

attacca—go ahead immediately

avec—with

battuta—strong beat

Becken—cymbals

bemolle—flat

ben—well

bien—very, well

Bratsche—viola

brio—spirit, vigor

caisse—drum

calando—softer and slower

campane—chimes

campanelli—orchestra bells

cantabile—singing style

carillon—orchestra bells

chitarra—guitar

cinelli—cymbals

coda—ending

col, coll, colla—with

con—with

cor—French horn

cor anglais—English horn

corda—string

corno—French horn

crescendo—increasing in loudness

crotales—antique cymbals

cuivré—brassy tone

da capo (D.C.)—from the beginning

Dämpfer—mute

decrescendo—decreasing in loudness

diesis—sharp

diminuendo—decreasing in loudness

divisi (div.)—divided, separate
instruments

dolce—soft and sweet

Dur—major

einfach—unison

espressivo—expressive

etwas—some, somewhat

Fagott—bassoon

fermata—a pause or hold

forza—force

furioso—furious

gebunden—legato

gedämpft—muted

gehalten—sustained

Geige—violin

geteilt—divided, divisi

getragen—sustained

gewöhnlich—in the ordinary way

giocoso—playful

giusto—exact, proper

gran cassa—bass drum

Griffbrett—fingerboard

hautbois—oboe

istesso tempo—the same beat duration

Klavier—piano

langsam—slow

largamente—broadly

largo—slow and broad

legato—smooth

légerment—lightly

leggiero (legg.)—light

leggio—desk or stand

lento—slow

lustig—merry, gay

maestoso—majestic

mailloche—mallet or stick

marcato—marked

meno—less

mettez—put on (as in mute)

mezzo—half

mit—with

moines—less

Moll—minor

molto—very

morendo—dying away

mosso—motion

non—not

non troppo—not too much

obbligato—a countermelody

ohne—without

ossia—otherwise, alternate version

otenz—remove (as in mute)

ottava (8va)—played an octave higher

Pauken—timpani

pesante—heavy, ponderous

piatti—cymbals

più—more

poco—little

ponticello—bridge

Posaune—trombone

pupitre—desk

quasi—almost, as if

rallentando (rall.)—slowing the tempo

risoluto—boldly, resolutely

ritenuto (rit.)—immediate slowing

Rohrenglocken—chimes

rubato—robbed, flexible tempo

ruhig—quiet

Saite—string

sans—without

Schellentrommel—tambourine

scherzando—playful

schmettern—brassy tone

schnell—quick

scordatura—other than normal tuning

secco—dry

segue—follows, continue or proceed

sempre—always

senza—without

simile—similar, continue

slentando—gradually slower

smorzando (smorz.)—dying away

sordino—a mute

sostenuto (sost.)—sustained

sotto—under

Steg—bridge of a string instrument

stretto—contracted, suddenly faster

stringendo (string.)—becoming faster

subito—suddenly

sur—on

tacet—is silent

tamburo militare—snare drum

tasto—fingerboard

tenuto (ten.)—hold to full value

timbales—timpani

tous—all

très—very

tromba—trumpet

troppo—too much

tutti—all together

umstimmen—change

vite—quickly

volti subito (v.s.)—turn page
immediately

vorbereiten—prepare

wachsend—increasing in loudness

zeitmass—tempo

ziemlich—rather

zusammen—unison