

# MMTA Pre-College Music History and Terminology Appendix

## Level 4

Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750): A German composer who composed all genres of music except opera. JS Bach was famous as a composer as well as a keyboard player. Many of his children were also musicians.

ACCENT (>): Emphasis on one pitch or chord.

ARPEGGIO: A chord whose pitches are sounded one after another.

BAR LINE: A vertical line drawn through the staff to mark off measures.

COMPOSER: A musician who creates and notates music.


D.C. AL FINE (Da Capo al Fine): Repeat from the beginning to Fine (the end).

DOUBLE BAR: A double vertical line that marks the end of a piece or movement

DYNAMIC MARKINGS: Indications of loudness and softness in music, such as: FORTE (*f*)(loud), PIANO (*p*)(soft), MEZZO-FORTE (*mf*)(moderately loud) and MEZZO-PIANO (*mp*)(moderately soft).

FERMATA (  ): A sign meaning to pause, or hold the note.


MEASURE: The distance between two bar lines.

REPEAT SIGN (  ): A sign that indicates to repeat a section from the last repeat sign, or from the beginning (if there is no other sign).

RHYTHM: The organization of beats or pulses in time.

RITARDANDO (ritard. or rit.): Gradually getting slower.

SKIP/LEAP: An interval greater than a second

SLUR (  ): A curved line over or under two or more different notes, meaning “play legato.”

STEP: An interval of a second (2<sup>nd</sup>).

TRIAD: A three-note chord.

## **Level 5**

**Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.**

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827): A German who composed all genres of music. He was born in Bonn, Germany, but lived in Vienna, Austria, during his adult years. During his early 30's, Beethoven began to grow deaf, and later became completely deaf. He was a concert pianist as well as a composer.

8va...7 A sign placed over notes meaning to play them an octave higher than written.

8va...J or 8va Basso: A sign placed below notes meaning to play them an octave lower than written.


FOLK MUSIC: Music that has been passed down orally for many generations before being written down. We usually do not know who wrote the melody or words. Many tell stories about work, love, or sadness; some are lullabies or patriotic songs.

HARMONY: Two or more notes sounding at the same time.

INTERVAL: The distance between two pitches (2nds, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, etc.)

LEGATO (leg.): To play smoothly, connecting the notes.

MELODY: Several notes (or tones) played or sung one after the other. Melodies are often referred to as a musical sentence.

STACCATO (stacc. or  ): To play short and detached, letting go of a note.

## **Level 6**

**Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.**

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791):** An Austrian composer who wrote all genres of music and was considered a child prodigy (genius). He began playing the harpsichord at age 4, and was composing music soon afterwards. He and his sister Nannerl performed concerts all over Europe during their childhood. He wrote over 600 compositions in his short lifetime of 35 years.

**A TEMPO:** Return to the original tempo of the composition.

**CRESCENDO** (cresc.,  ): Gradually louder.

**DECRESCENDO** (deces.  ): Gradually softer.

**DIMINUENDO** (dim., dimin.): Gradually softer.

**D.S. AL FINE** (Dal Segno al. Fine): Repeat from the sign to the place marked Fine.

**FORTISSIMO** (*ff*): Very loud.

**HARMONIC INTERVAL:** An interval between two notes written or sounded together.

**MELODIC INTERVAL:** An interval between two notes written or sounded separately.

**METRONOME:** A device that produces various beats at speeds which may be adjusted according to a tempo marking.

**PHRASE:** A small group of notes that form a unit of melody, often referred to as a “musical sentence.”

**PIANISSIMO** (*pp*): Very soft.

**PIANOFORTE** or **FORTEPIANO:** The full name of the piano.

**SONATINA:** A smaller sonata with one or more contrasting movements, often less technically demanding than a sonata.

**TEMPO:** The rate of speed of a composition. Some examples of tempo markings are:

**ALLEGRO:** Happy, fast.

**ANDANTE:** Walking speed.

**MODERATO:** Moderate speed.

**UP-BEAT, PICK-UP** or **ANACRUSIS:** One or more notes preceding the first metrically strong beat of a phrase, often an incomplete measure found at the beginning of a piece.

## Level 7

Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.


- a. Four main periods of music:

BAROQUE	1600-1750
CLASSICAL	1750-1820
ROMANTIC	1820-1900
CONTEMPORARY	1900-present
  
- b. Composers to recognize:

Baroque:	TELEMANN (Germany)
Classical:	FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (Germany)
Romantic:	ROBERT SCHUMANN (Germany), JOHANNES BRAHMS (Germany)
Contemporary:	BELA BARTOK (Hungary)

ACCIDENTALS: Sharps, flats, and naturals found in a piece, but not found in the key signature.

CHORD PROGRESSION: A succession of two or more chords.

CODA (  ): A concluding section at the end of a movement or composition.

COMMON TIME (C): Four beats to the measure (4/4).

DUET: A composition played or sung by two people.

INVERSION: An instance where the root is no longer the lowest sounding note of the chord. There are three positions of a triad; ROOT POSITION, FIRST INVERSION, SECOND INVERSION.

KEY SIGNATURE: The sharps or flats at the beginning of each staff.

POCO A POCO: Little by little.

PRESTO: A tempo marking meaning quickly, rapidly.

QUARTET: A composition played or sung by four people.

RALLENTANDO (rall.): Gradually slowing in speed.

ROOT, THIRD, and FIFTH: Names given to the notes of a triad or chord.

SCALE: A step-wise series of ascending and descending tones in a given key.

TRIO: A composition played or sung by three people.

VIVACE: A tempo marking meaning lively, animated.

FORM: The structure and design of a composition, such as: Binary (AB), a composition in two sections, and TERNARY (ABA), a composition in three sections.

The three pedals on a piano are: DAMPER PEDAL (right), SOSTENUTO PEDAL (middle), and the SOFT PEDAL, or UNA CORDA (left)

## Level 8

Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.

- a. Composers to recognize:  
Baroque: GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL (Germany)  
Classical: CARL STAMITZ (Germany)  
Romantic: FREDERIC CHOPIN (Poland); FRANZ SCHUBERT (Austria)  
Contemporary: SCOTT JOPLIN (USA), AARON COPLAND (USA)
- b. Woodwind instruments: FLUTE, PICCOLO, CLARINET, OBOE, SAXOPHONE, and BASSOON.
- c. Brass instruments: BARITONE, TRUMPET, HORN (also known as French Horn), TROMBONE and TUBA.

ACCELERANDO (accel.): Becoming faster.

ACCOMPANIMENT: The musical background for a principal or solo part.

ALLA BREVE: Cut time; two strong beats to the measure (2/2 or  $\text{C}$ ).

CADENCE: A chord progression. Two common cadences are V-I and IV-I.

CANTABILE: In a singing style.

CHROMATIC SCALE: A scale consisting of consecutive half steps.

CON MOTO: With motion, quicker.

DOLCE: Sweetly.

GLISSANDO: Playing rapid scales. Many instruments use a sliding movement.

HARPSICHORD: An ancestor of the piano. Its strings are plucked instead of struck. The organ and harpsichord were keyboard instruments of the Baroque period.

IMPROVISATION: The creation of music during the performance.

MENO MOSSO: Less motion; a slower tempo than before.

OSTINATO: A figure or phrase that is constantly repeated.

PIU MOSSO: More motion; a faster tempo than before.

RONDO: A piece in A-B-A-C-A form, often used in the final movements of sonatinas and sonatas. The 'A' section returns in the same key each time, with B & C in other keys.

SEMPRE: Always or continuously.

SFORZANDO (*sf*, *sfz*): A sudden, strong accent.

TETRACHORD: Four consecutive notes in a pattern; two tetrachords can join to form a scale.

TRE CORDE (three strings): An instruction meaning to release the soft pedal (*una corda*) of the piano.

UNA CORDA (one string): An instruction meaning to use the soft pedal of the piano.

## Level 9

Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.

- a. String instruments: VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, DOUBLE BASS, GUITAR, HARP.
- b. Composers to recognize:
  - Baroque: ARCHANGELO CORELLI (Italy)
  - Classical: FRIEDRICH KUHLAU (Germany)
  - Romantic: FELIX MENDELSSOHN (Germany), EDVARD GRIEG (Norway)
  - Contemporary: DMITRI SHOSTAKOVITCH (Russia), GEORGE GERSWHIN (USA)
- c. Famous concert pianists to know: CLAUDIO ARRAU, VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, ARTHUR RUBENSTEIN, CLARA SCHUMANN, ROSALYN TURECK.  
(Students studying other instruments who take the test should learn the following☺)
- c. Famous brass performers: Trumpet – Adolph “Bud” Herseth; Horn – Philip Farkas; Trombone – Christian Lindberg; Euphonium – Brian Bowman; Tuba – Arnold Jacobs.
- d. Famous guitarist: Andres Segovia
- e. Famous vocalists: Charlotte Church; Leontyne Price; Lucian Pavorotti

**ADAGIO:** A tempo marking meaning slowly, leisurely: also a name given to a slow movement written in that time.

**ALLEGRETTO:** A tempo marking meaning moderately fast, but slower than Allegro.

**ENHARMONIC:** Notes that are named and written differently, but are the same pitch.

**IMPRESSIONISM:** A period in music history chiefly represented by Claude Debussy, and inspired by the impressionist painters of France. Impressionism is a term borrowed from painting to describe music that is intended to convey an impression rather than a specific, dramatic or narrative idea. Blurred phrases, vague rhythms, parallel chords, and whole tone scales are some characteristics of this music.

**LENTO:** A tempo marking meaning slower than Adagio.

**M.D. (mano destra, It., or main droite, Fr.):** The right hand.

**M.S. or M.G. (mano sinistra, It., or main gauche, Fr.):** The left hand.

**MODULATION:** Changing from one key to another within a movement or composition.

**PROGRAM MUSIC:** Instrumental music inspired by a non-musical idea, which is often written in the title or in descriptive remarks by the composer. In the music, the composer attempts to describe some action, scene, story or mood.

**SCHERZANDO:** Playfully.

**SONATA:** A work for one or more solo instruments, usually in several movements.

**SPIRITOSO:** Spirited.

**SYMPHONY:** An extended orchestral work, usually in several movements. Although most symphonies are for orchestra alone, composers in the late classical period on included parts for voice, chorus, or solo instruments.

**TONALITY:** The harmonic organization of music around a central tone, called the tonic.

**VIRTUOSO:** A performer who excels in technical ability.

## Level 10

Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.

- a. Percussion instruments: CYMBALS, DRUMS, MARIMBA, PIANO, TAMBOURINE, TRIANGLE, TIMPANI and XYLOPHONE.
- b. Composers to know:  
Baroque: HENRY PURCELL (England).  
Classical: CARL PHILLIP EMANUEL BACH (Germany), DOMENICO CIMAROSA (Italy).  
Romantic: PETER TCHAIKOVSKY (Russia.)  
Contemporary: CHARLES IVES (US), IGOR STRAVINSKY (Russia).
- c. Famous concert pianists to know: VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY, ALFRED BRENDEL, VAN CLIBURN, FANNY MENDELSSOHN, WALTER GIESEKING, JOSEF HOFMANN, RUTH LAREDO.

*(Students studying other instruments who take the test should learn the following:)*

Famous Brass performers: Trumpet – Herbert Clarke; Horn – Dennis Brain; Trombone – Arthur Pryor; Euphonium – Simone Mantia; Tuba – Bill Bell.

Famous Guitarist: Julian Bream

Famous Vocalists: Placido Domingo; Marian Anderson, Beverly Sills

ALLARGANDO: Broadening, becoming slower.

ANDANTINO: A tempo marking meaning a little quicker than Andante.

BAGATELLE: A name sometimes given to short, light pieces of music.

CADENZA: A virtuoso passage in improvisational style. Its traditional place is near the end of a concerto movement; many times it ends with a trill.

CON BRIO: With spirit, vigor.

CONCERTO: A piece for soloist and orchestra, usually in three movements. The cadenza section highlights the virtuosity of the performer.

GRAZIOSO: Gracefully.

IMITATION: A repetition of a motive in different voices.

LARGO: A tempo marking meaning broad and slow.

LOCO: In normal location or pitch register, used after 8va sign.

MORENDO: Dying away by degrees, gradually slower and softer.

MOTIVE: A musical “idea”; a short group of tones (generally one to two measures) arranged in a definite rhythmic pattern

PARALLEL KEYS: Keys with the same tonic, such as C Major and c minor.

REPETITION: A repeat of a motive; notes used may be the same or slightly different.

RELATIVE KEYS: Keys with the same key signature, but a different tonic. Ex: C Major and A minor.

SCALE DEGREES: Special names for the tones of the scale: TONIC (first or main note), SUPER-TONIC (above the tonic), MEDIANT (midway between first and fifth tones), SUB-DOMINANT (the fourth tone of the scale), DOMINANT (fifth tone), SUB-MEDIANT (sixth tone), LEADING TONE (“leads to” tonic, also called SUB-TONIC; seventh tone).

SENZA: Without.

SEQUENCE: A repetition of a motive on a different pitch, either higher or lower.

SIMILE: Continue performing in the same way or a similar manner.

STRINGENDO: Pressing, accelerating the tempo.

SUBITO: Suddenly, at once.

THEME AND VARIATIONS: A type of composition in which a theme (usually a simple tune) is changed in different ways.

TEXTURE: The horizontal (melodic) and vertical (harmonic) elements of music. There are three basic kinds of musical texture: 1) MONOPHONIC, a single melodic line without accompaniment; 2) HOMOPHONIC, a single melodic line with chordal accompaniment; 3) POLYPHONIC (CONTRAPUNTAL), two or more independent melodic lines.

## Level 11

**Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.**

a. Composers:

Baroque: FRANCOIS COUPERIN (France)

Classical: JOHANN CHRISTIAN BACH (Germany)

Romantic: SERGEI RACHMANINOV (Russia), EDWARD MACDOWELL (USA)

Impressionistic Style: CLAUDE DEBUSSY (France)

Contemporary: ROBERT MUCZYNSKI (US), VINCENT PERSICHETTI (USA), SERGEI PROKOFIEV (Russia), ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (Austria)

b. Concert pianists: MARTHA ARGERICH, HANS von BULOW, EMIL GILELS.

*(Students studying other instruments who take the test should learn the following:)*

c. Famous Brass performers; Trumpet – Miles Davis; Horn – Tom Bacon; Trombone – J.J. Johnson

d. Famous Guitarist: John Williams, David Russell

e. Famous Vocalists: Joan Sutherland: Maria Callas, Robert Merrill

**SONATA FORM:** A form which became prevalent in the Classical period, and is found in most first movements of sonatas, symphonies, and other works. It consists of three main sections: EXPOSITION, DEVELOPMENT, RECAPITULATION. Sometimes there is an INTRODUCTION and/or CODA. The (1) EXPOSITION contains the first theme in the tonic key and second theme in a contrasting key. The Exposition is followed by the (2) DEVELOPMENT, which uses material from the exposition, or entirely new material, and usually modulates. The (3) RECAPITULATION repeats the exposition, except that both the themes are now in the tonic key. The basis of Sonata form is key relationships.

**AUTHENTIC CADENCE:** The harmonic progression of V-I.

**BITONALITY:** Contemporary compositional technique; using 2 keys simultaneously

**ETUDE:** A piece written to help master a specific technical skill.

**FUGUE:** A contrapuntal composition for several parts or “voices” (usually 3 or 4), based on one melodic theme or motive (subject).

**GIOCOSO:** Playfully, humorously.

**LEGGIERO:** Light, nimble, quick.

**NOCTURNE:** “Night piece”; a quiet, sentimental or romantic composition written in a melancholy style. The title “nocturne” was first used in 1812 by composer John Field.

**OPERA:** A drama set entirely to music; the text is sung with orchestral accompaniment.

**PIANO TRIO:** A composition typically written for violin, cello and piano.

**PLAGAL CADENCE:** The harmonic progression of IV-I.

**STRETTO:** Contracted, quicker. In fugal writing, stretto is a section where a ‘subject’ and its ‘answer’ overlap.

**SUITE:** An instrumental form of the Baroque period consisting of several movements based on dances. The 4 main dances are: ALLEMANDE, COURANTE, SARABANDE, and GIGUE; optional dances are often included, some are GAVOTTE, MINUET, BOURREE, POLONAISE. Dances in each suite are in the same key, and are usually in Binary form.

**TENUTO** (ten. or -): Hold for full value.



## Level 12

Students who take the MMTA Written Theory Exam are responsible for knowing the information in the grade level they enter and ALL previous grade levels.

- a. Composers:  
Baroque: JEAN PHILIPPE RAMEAU (France)  
Classical: KARL CZERNY (Germany), C.W. von GLUCK (Germany)  
Romantic: RICHARD WAGNER (Germany), FRANZ LISZT (Hungary)  
Impressionistic Style: MAURICE RAVEL (France)  
Twentieth Century: ALBERTO GINASTERA (Argentina), PAUL HINDEMITH (Germany), ARAM KHACHATURIAN (Russia), FRANCIS POULENC (France), W.M. GRANT STILL (USA, Mississippi).
- b. Concert pianists: LEON FLIESCHER, DAME MYRA HESS, ALICIA DE LARROCHA.  
(Students studying other instruments who take the test should learn the following)
- c. Famous Brass Performers: Trumpet – Allen Vizzutti; Horn – Froydis von Wekre; Trombone - Joe Alessi; Euphonium – Steven Mead; Tuba – Daniel Perantoni
- d. Famous Guitarists: Manuel Barrucco; Sharon Isbin
- e. Famous Vocalists: Bryn Terfel; Renee Fleming; Dawn Upshaw

ANIMATO: A tempo marking meaning animated, with spirit.

ATONALITY: Absence of tonality, i.e., music with no key center; occurs in Contemporary music, especially that of Arnold Schoenberg.

CALANDO: Gradually slower and more subdued.

CHAMBER MUSIC: Instrumental music performed by one player on each part instead of many players on each part. Combinations include: Trio (3), Quartet (4), Quintet (5), Sextet (6), Septet (7), and Octet (8), Nonet (9).

CON: With.

DOPPIO MOVIMENTO: Twice as fast as the previous tempo.

MAESTOSO: A tempo marking meaning majestic, dignified.

MAZURKA: A Polish folk dance in triple meter; characteristically, the weak beats (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats) of the measure are accented. Chopin wrote many mazurkas for the piano.

NON TROPPO: Not too much.

PESANTE: Heavily, weighty.

POLONAISE: Polish folk dance of a stately and festive character; it is usually in a moderate triple meter. Chopin's polonaises symbolize Polish heroism.

POLYTONALITY: The simultaneous use of 2 or more keys; most often occurs in the Contemporary period.

RUBATO: A flexibility of tempo utilizing slight accelerandos and ritardandos for musical expression.

TOCCATA: A virtuosic composition for keyboard or plucked string instrument featuring sections of brilliant passagework.

WHOLE TONE SCALE: A scale consisting only of whole steps/tones.