

ELSON'S MUSIC DICTIONARY

CONTAINING THE DEFINITION AND
PRONUNCIATION OF SUCH TERMS AND
SIGNS AS ARE USED IN MODERN MUSIC

TOGETHER WITH A LIST OF FOREIGN COMPOSERS AND ARTISTS,
WITH PRONUNCIATION OF THEIR NAMES, A LIST OF POPULAR
ERRORS IN MUSIC, RULES FOR PRONOUNCING FOREIGN
WORDS, AND A SHORT ENGLISH-ITALIAN VOCABU-
LARY OF MUSICAL WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

BY

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Elson's Music Dictionary was first published in 1905 and followed four years later in 1909 by the **Elson's Pocket Music Dictionary**. The pocket dictionary is 6" x 3.5" in size and contains 195 pages. However, the full dictionary is more than twice the size and contains 313 pages with thousands of definitions, plus so much more.

I carried the pocket dictionary with me at all times while an active performer using it while in rehearsal, but also in the teaching studio to help students gain more insight into their music studies by explaining the importance of knowing what the musical terms meant in their various languages. The "complete" musician must understand the meaning of ALL terms, whether they are in English, Italian, German, Italian and even Russian.

By knowing these terms, the musician can read deeper into the composer's head and be able to perform the music with the correct style, tempo and dynamic.

While a student of Emory Remington, the legendary Trombone pedagogue of the Eastman School of Music in the 1960's, I had prepared a study by the Russian composer Vladislav Blazhevich from his **Clef Studies for Trombone**, edited by Alan Ostrander. One study gives the Italian term "Con garbo". I hadn't looked up the term and my teacher asked me what it meant. I didn't know, so he brought out his copy of the Elson's Dictionary and I soon learned the term meant "With elegance".

That was a lesson I never forgot!

The **Elson's** is not the most comprehensive music dictionary, but now it can become the handiest, because I have digitized it and given in searchable text. Please use it and encourage your students and colleagues to carry one on their Phone, Pad or Computer.

December 15, 2019
Gordon Cherry

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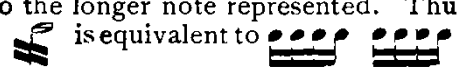
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ELSON'S MUSIC DICTIONARY

- A.** 1. The alphabetical name given, in the United States and England, to the sixth tone of the diatonic major scale of C; in France and Italy called *La*.
2. Upon string instruments, the name of the string which, with the open tone, gives the sixth of the natural scale. In tuning, this string is usually first brought to the requisite pitch, and from it the others are then regulated; it is the first (smallest) string of the violoncello, the second of the violin, etc.
3. The first note of the natural minor scale the relative of C major, which, as the older scale, begins on the first letter of the alphabet. See *C*.
4. The note from which the orchestra is tuned, usually sounded by the oboe. See *Oboe*.
- A.** (It.) (äh.) By, for, to, at, in, etc.
- Ab** (Ger.) Off. Used in organ music to signify the discontinuance of certain stops.
- A balláta** (It.) (ä bäl-lä-tä.) In the style of a dance. See *ballata*.
- Abandon** (Fr.) (ä-bänh-dönh.) Without restraint; with self-abandon; with ease.
- A battúta** (It.) (ä bät-too-tä.) As beaten; strictly in time.
- Abat-voix** (Fr.) (ä-ba-vvä.) A voice reflector.
- Abbacchiato** (It.) (äb-bä-kë-ä-to.) With a dejected, melancholy expression.
- Abbadare** (It.) (äb-bä-dä-rë.) Take care; pay attention.
- Abbandonássi** (It.) (äb-bän-dö-nä-zë.) Without restraint: with passionate expression.
- Abbandonataménte** (It.) (äb-bän-dö-nä-tä-men-të.) Vehemently; violently.
- Abbandóne** (It.) (äb-bän-dö-në.) Mak-
- ing the time subservient to the expression; despondingly; with self-abandonment.
- Abbandonevolménte** (It.) (äb-bän-dö-në-völ-men-të.) Violently; vehemently; without restraint as to time.
- Abbandóno** (It.) (äb-bän-dö-nö.) With passionate expression; with abandon.
- Abbassaménto di mano** (It.) (äb-bäs-sä-men-tō dē mä-nō.) The down-beat, or descent of the hand in beating time.
- Abbassaménto di vóce** (It.) (äb-bäs-sä-men-tō dē vō-tshë.) Diminishing or lowering of the voice.
- Abbelláre** (It.) (äb-bël-lä-rë.) To embellish with ornaments.
- Abbelliménti** (It.) (äb-bël-lë-men-të.) Ornaments introduced to embellish a plain melody.
- Abbelliménto** (It.) (äb-bël-lë-men-tō.) A grace note or ornament.
- Abbellire** (It.) (äb-bël-lë-rë.) To embellish with ornaments.
- Abbellitúra** (It.) (äb-bël-lë-too-rä.) An ornament, embellishment.
- Abbellitúre** (It.) (äb-bël-lë-too-rë.) Ornaments; embellishments.
- Abblasen** (Ger.) (äb-blä-z'n.) To sound or flourish the trumpet; to sound the retreat.
- Abbreuiaménti** (It.) (äb-brä-vë-ä-men-të.) Abbreviations in musical notation.
- Abbreuiáre** (It.) (äb-bre-vë-ä-rë.) To abbreviate or shorten the labor of notation.
- Abbreviation marks.** 1. Oblique strokes which distinguish the *eighth*, *sixteenth*, or *thirty-second* notes, when applied to the stem of the *quarter* or *half-note*. signify as many repetitions of the shorter note thus indicated as are equal to the longer note represented. Thus
- 

imparting to it the sentiment of the author. *Expression marks* are signs, words or phrases, written against the music to direct the performer in giving its proper expression.

Expressivo (It.) (ěx-prās-sè-vō.) See *Espressivo*.

Extempore (Lat.) (ěx-těm-pō-rě.) Un-premeditated, improvised.

Extemporize. To perform extemporaneously; without premeditation; to improvise.

Extended harmony. See *Dispensed Harmony*.

Extended phrase. Whenever, by repeating one of the feet, or by any other variation of the melody, three measures are employed instead of two, the phrase is termed *extended*, or irregular.

Extended section. A section containing from five to eight bars.

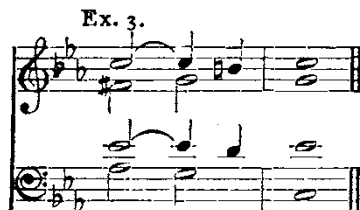
Extension pedal. The loud pedal of a pianoforte.

Extraneous. Foreign; far-fetched; belonging to a remote key.

Extraneous modulation. A modulation into some remote key, far distant from the original key and its relatives.

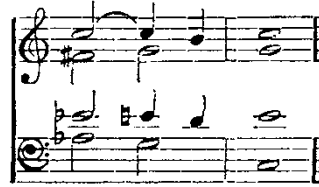
Extravagánza (It.) (ěx-trāv-ä-gánt-sä.) An extravagant and eccentric composition.

Extreme. A term referring to the most distant parts, as the treble and bass. Relating also to intervals in an augmented state; as *extreme sharp sixth*, etc. The extreme sixth is resolved as follows in minor:



or it can resolve into major as follows:

ō as in *tone*; ô as in *dove*; õ as in *not*; ů as in *up*; ü the French sound of *u*.



The first form is called the *Italian Sixth*, the second the *French Sixth*, and the last the *German Sixth*.

F

F. The fourth note in the diatonic scale of C. It was the note first used as a clef sign to give definite pitch to the mediæval notation (Neumes) because "small f" was a good medium note in the baritone voice in the chants, which were therefore almost always composed around this note. F is also the abbreviation of *Forte*; ff, *fortissimo*; fff, *fortississimo*; ffff is rarely used.

Fa. The name applied to F in France and Italy; the fourth of the syllables used in solfeggio. In the "fixed do" system it is always F; in the "movable do" it is the fourth note of any diatonic scale. In "tonic sol-fa" it is spelled "Fah."

Fabliau (Fr.) (*fab-lioh*.) A versified tale or romance of the *trouvères*, in vogue chiefly during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; a fable.

Faburden, Falsobordone (It.) *Faux-bourdon* (Fr.) 1. One of the early systems of harmonizing a given portion of plain song, or a *canto fermo*. As the word implies, *to faburden* signified originally to hold a *drone*. It afterwards became the primitive harmonization of a *cantus firmus* by adding the third and the sixth above, and progressing in parallel motion throughout, only the first and last chords having key note, fifth, and octave. 2. Later, the setting of a simple (note against note) counterpoint to the *cantus firmus*, the strict parallel motion of parts now being no longer retained.

Façade d'orgue (Fr.) (*fă-săd' d'örg*.) The front of an organ-case.

Partial turn. A turn consisting of the chief note and three small notes, the leading note of which may be either a large or small second above the principal.



Participating tones. Accessory tones.

Parti d'accompagnamento (It.) (pär-tē d'ak-köm-pän-yä-men-tō.) Accompanying voices.

Parti di ripieno (It.) (pär-tē dē rē-pē-äy-nō.) Parts not obbligato; supplementary parts.

Partie du violon (Fr.) (pär-tē dü vē-ō-lōnh.) A violin part.

Parties de remplissage (Fr.) (pär-tē düh ränh-plē-säzh.) Parts which fill up the middle harmony between the bass and upper part.

Partimenti (It. pl.) (pär-tē-men-tē.) Exercises for the study of harmony and accompaniment.

Partiménto (It.) (pär-tē-men-tō.) An exercise, figured bass. See *Partimenti*.

Partita (It.) (par-tee-ta.) The earliest form of the instrumental suite. The *partita* had often fewer movements than the suite and was treated in a freer manner.

Partition (Fr.) (pär-tē-sī-ōnh.)

Partitur (Ger.) (pär-tī-toor.)

Partitúra (It.) (pär-tē-too-rä.)

Partizióne (It.) (pär-tē-tsē-ō-ne.) or entire draft of a composition for voices, or instruments, or both.

Partíto (It.) (pär-tē-tō.) Scored, divided into parts.

Partitur-spiel (Ger.) (pär-tē-toor-spēl.) Playing from the score.

Part-songs. Songs for voices in parts, an unaccompanied choral composition for at least three parts; a melody harmonized by other parts more or less freely, but from which counterpoint is for the most part excluded. The part-song owes its origin to the habit prevalent among the Germans of adding simple harmonies to their folk-songs. The part-song is always simpler in construction than the glee, and is intended for chorus.

Pas (Fr.) (*pah.*) A step, or a dance in a ballet. *Pas de deux*, a dance performed by two dancers. *Pas seul*, a

solo dance. Also, not; as *pas trop lent*, not too slow.

Pas redoublé (Fr.) (pä rē-doo-blā.) A quick-step; an increased, redoubled step.

Passacaglia (It.) (päs-sä-käl-yē-a.)

Passacaille (Fr.) (päs-sä-käl.) } A species of chaconne, a slow dance with divisions on a ground-bass in triple rhythm. Rather bombastic in character. It very closely resembles the chaconne, but is more generally minor than the latter. The word is generally derived from *Pasar Calle* (Spa.), going along the streets, but its inflated character and slow tempo lead us to imagine that the Passacaglia came from *Passo Gallo* — the rooster-step! Brahms has used the Passacaglia as finale in his fourth symphony.

Passage. Any phrase, or short portion of an air, or other composition. Every member of a strain, or movement, is a *passage*.

Passages, pedal. Those parts of a composition in which the pedals are used.

Passaggio (It.) (päs-säd-jē-ō.) A passage, or series of notes.

Passamézso (It.) (päs-sä-met-sō.) An old slow dance, little differing from the *Pavane*, but somewhat more rapid. Generally in $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm.

Passepied (Fr.) (pass-pi-ay.) A sort of jig; a lively old French dance in $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, or $\frac{6}{8}$ time; a kind of quick minuet, with three or more strains, or reprises. A *Paspy*.

Pas seul (Fr.) (pä sül.) A dance by one performer.

Passing modulation. A transient modulation.

Passing-notes. Notes which do not belong to the harmony, but which serve to connect those which are essential, and carry the ear more smoothly from one harmony to another.

Passionáta (It.) (päs-sē-ō-nä-tä.)

Passionataménte (It.) (päs-sē-ō-nä-tä-men-tē.)

Passionáte (It.) (päs-sē-ō-nä-tē.)

Passionáto (It.) (päs-sē-ō-nä-tō.) Passionate; impassioned; with fervor and pathos.

ö as in *tone*; ô as in *dove*; õ as in *not*; ů as in *up*; ü the French sound of *u*.

mode; the custom was supposed to have originated in Picardy, and formerly was quite common. It will be found in the final cadence of very many of Bach's compositions in minor.

Tierce maxime (Fr.) (tērs mǎx-ēm.) *Augmented third*, containing five semitones; as, from F to A ♯.

Tiercet (Gr.) (tēr-sēt.) A triplet.

Timbal (Spa.) (tim-bäl.) } A
Timbale (Fr.) (tǎnh-bäl.) } kettle-
Timbällo (It.) (tēm-bäl-lō.) } drum.
Timballes (Fr. pl.) (tǎnh-bäl.) Kettle-
 drums.

Timbre (Fr.) (tǎnhbr.) *Quality* of tone, or sound.

Timbrel. An ancient Hebrew instrument, supposed to have been like a tambourine.

Time. The measure of sounds in regard to their continuance, or duration. The speed of the rhythm. The rapidity with which the natural accents follow each other. This is the correct meaning of *time*. (See *Tempo*.) Never-

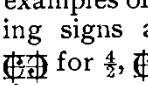
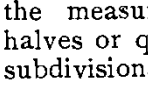



a fitting word, but this would lead to confusion with hymns and poetical meters. As the word *time* is almost always used to denote the divisions of the measure, we present the divisions under this head. They are classified as even, triple, and peculiar. Even times are those where the measure divides naturally into halves. $\frac{2}{1}$, $\frac{2}{2}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{2}{8}$, $\frac{4}{1}$, $\frac{4}{2}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{4}{8}$, and $\frac{8}{8}$ are examples of such rhythms. The following signs are also employed:  or  for $\frac{4}{2}$,  for $\frac{2}{2}$, and  for $\frac{4}{4}$. When the measure divides naturally into halves or quarters and each of these subdivisions into thirds, the result is compound even time, as follows: $\frac{6}{2}$, $\frac{6}{4}$, $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{6}{16}$, $\frac{12}{4}$, $\frac{12}{8}$, $\frac{12}{16}$, and even $\frac{24}{8}$. Triple times occur when the measure divides itself naturally into thirds, as, $\frac{3}{1}$, $\frac{3}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{3}{16}$, and compound triple rhythms are those where the measure divides into thirds, and each of these thirds again subdivides into thirds, as $\frac{9}{4}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{9}{16}$; even $\frac{18}{8}$ has been used. Septuple or quintuple times are where the meas-

TABLE OF PRINCIPAL RHYTHMS.

English	German	French
Two-two (alla breve) Two-four Four-two Four-four (common)	Zweizweiteltakt Zweivierteltakt Vierzweiteltakt Viervierteltakt	Deux-deux Deux-quatre Quatre-deux Quatre-quatre
Six-four Six-eight Six-sixteen Twelve-eight	Sechsvierteltakt Sechsstachteltakt Sechssechzehnteltakt Zwolfachteltakt	Six-quatre Six-huit Six-seize Douze-huit
Three-two Three-four Three-eight	Dreizweiteltakt Dreivierteltakt Dreiachteltakt	Mesure à trois deux Mesure à trois quatre Mesure à trois huit
Nine-eight	Neunachteltakt	Mesure à neuf huit
Five four Five-eight	Fünfvierteltakt Fünfahteltakt	Mesure à cinq quatre Mesure à cinq huit

theless, an almost universal custom prevails of using the word *time* to express the *division* of the measure as well as the speed. Such division should properly be called either *rhythm*, or *measure*. There could be no possibility of being misunderstood if a composition marked  were described as being in $\frac{4}{4}$ *rhythm* or in $\frac{4}{4}$ *measure*, instead of *common time*. An eminent American teacher has suggested *meter* as

ure divides into fifths, or sevenths, as, $\frac{5}{2}$, $\frac{5}{4}$, $\frac{5}{8}$, $\frac{5}{16}$, $\frac{7}{2}$, $\frac{7}{4}$, $\frac{7}{8}$, $\frac{7}{16}$. Sometimes when these rhythms are employed they are only an alternation of even and triple times. There are also compound derivations from these, and Scriabine has written on etude in $\frac{15}{8}$ time, being merely a $\frac{5}{4}$ time subdivided into triplets. Instead of the words *even* and *triple*, the English often use *duple*, or *binary* and *ternary*. We hope yet to see the whole of the misleading nomenclature

ō as in *one*; ô as in *dove*; ð as in *not*; ũ as in *up*; ü the French sound of *u*.

A LIST OF PROMINENT FOREIGN COMPOSERS, ARTISTS, ETC.

Giving the pronunciation of their names and their *chief* works or claims to fame

- Abt, Franz** (Ahbt.) Eilenburg, 1819 — Wiesbaden, 1885. Songs. "When the Swallows Homeward Fly."
- Adam, Adolph Charles** (Ah-dam.) Paris, 1803-1856. Light operas. "Postillon de Longjumeau."
- Alard, J. Delphin** (Ah-lahr.) Bayonne, 1815 — Paris, 1888. Violinist and composer of violin works.
- Albani, Emma** (Ah-l-bahn-ee.) Canada, 1850. Singer.
- Amati, Nicolo** (Ah-mah-tee.) Italy, 1596-1684. Violin-maker.
- Arditi, Luigi** (Ahr-dee-tee Loo-ee-gee.) Conductor. Italy, 1822. — Brighton, Eng., 1903.
- Arensky, Anton Stepanovitch** (Ah-ren-schkee.) Novgorod, Russia, 1862 — Terioki, Finland, 1906. Composer. Orchestral and operatic works.
- Arne, Dr. Thomas Augustine.** London, 1710-1778. Much vocal music. Many celebrated songs.
- Artchiboucheff, Nicolas V.** (Ahr-tschee-boo-shef.) Tsarskoe-Sielo, Russia, 1868. Pianist and composer.
- Auber, Daniel, F. E.** (Oh-behr.) Caen, France, 1782 — Paris, 1871. Operas. "Masaniello."
- Audran, Edmond** (Oh-drahng.) Lyons, 1842 — Tierceville, 1901. Light operas. "La Mascotte."
- Aus der Ohe, Adele** (Ous-der-oh-eh.) Classical pianist and composer.
- Bach, Johann Sebastian** (Bahchh.) Eisenach, 1685 — Leipsic, 1750. "Passion Music," B minor Mass, "Well-tempered Clavichord," Two and three-part inventions. Organ works.
- Bach, Karl Philipp Emanuel.** Weimar, 1714 — Hamburg, 1788. Third son of above. One of the founders of piano-technique. First good piano method, 1753.
- Backer-Gröndahl, Agathe** (Bakker-Gren-dahl.) Norway, 1847-1907. Pianist and composer.
- Baermann, Carl** (Bair-mann.) Munich, 1839. Classical pianist.
- Balakirew, Milly A.** (Bah-lah-kee-reff) Nijni-Novgorod, Russia, 1836. Composer in all large forms. Symphony, overture, etc. Very difficult piano piece — "Islamey."
- Balfe, Michael Wm.** Dublin, 1808 — England, 1870. Lyric operas. "The Bohemian Girl."
- Bantock, Granville.** London, 1868. Composer in large and small forms.
- Bargiel, Woldemar** (Bahr-geel.) Berlin, 1828-1897. Composer in large and small forms.
- Barnby, Sir Joseph** York, England, 1838 — London, 1896. Organist, conductor, and composer of much sacred music, hymns, etc.
- Bauer, Harold** (Bow-er.) Pianist. London, 1873.
- Beethoven, Ludwig van** (Bay-toh-ven, not Bay-toh-ven, and van not von.) Bonn, 1770 — Vienna, 1827. Nine great symphonies, thirty-eight sonatas for the piano, ten for violin and piano, five piano concertos, one violin concerto, eleven overtures, sixteen string quartets, one opera — "Fidelio" — a great contrapuntal Mass, an oratorio, etc. The composer who best combined intellectual and emotional qualities in his music.
- Behr, Franz** (Bare.) Germany, 1837. Light piano pieces.
- Bellini, Vincenzo** (Bell-leen-ee.) Cata-

ENGLISH MUSICAL TERMS OF TEMPO OR EXPRESSION, WITH THEIR ITALIAN EQUIVALENTS.

(In this table it has been deemed best to give Italian equivalents only. Although Schumann and Wagner use German terms in their works, and Berlioz and the César Franck school, French, Italian is the preferable tongue for musical terms, for the following reasons: 1st. It has priority. It was the first language used in this field, and has been in almost universal use for three centuries. 2d. It is impossible to allow each composer the use of his native language. If Liszt had used Hungarian, Tchaikowsky Russian, Dvořák Bohemian, Grieg Norwegian, etc., we should find many more difficulties in the matter than in the use of a single language. 3d. Musical notation is a single, universal, written language. Such a language requires an equally universal set of tempo or expression-marks. Exactly as in affairs of state, diplomats have chosen the French language as the universal tongue, music has chosen Italian as her language of tempo and expression-marks; and we urge upon every composer to further this unity by discarding English, French, or German markings, and using Italian only.)

A	
Abandonment. Abbandonamento.	Below. Sotto.
Abrupt. Subito.	Boat-Song. Barcarolla; Gondoliera.
Accompaniment. Accompagnamento.	Boldly. Coraggioso; con abbandono con bravura; intrepido.
Affectionately. Affettuoso.	Bound. Legato.
Afflicted. Con afflizione.	Bow. Arco (of a violin).
Against. Contro.	Breath. Fiato; respiro.
Agility. Agilita.	Bridge (of violin, etc.) Ponticello.
Agitated. Agitato.	Brilliant. Brillante.
Agreeable. Piacevole.	Broader Growing. Allargando.
Air. Aria. Canto. Melodia.	Broadly. Largamente.
All together. Tutti.	But. Ma.
Almost. Quasi.	By. Da; per.
Always. Sempre.	By Degrees. Poco a poco.
And. E, before a consonant, Ed, before a vowel.	C
Anguished. Angosciamente.	Calm. Calmato; tranquillo; placido
Animated. Animato.	Canon. Canone.
Artless. Semplice.	Caprice. Capriccio.
As. Come.	Carried Over. Portamento.
B	Chorus. Coro.
Begin. Attacca. Cominciare.	Clear. Chiaro; distinto.
Bell. Campana. A Little Bell, Campanella.	Coaxingly. Lusingando.
	Coquettishly. Con civetteria.
	Continually. Sempre.