

GLOSSARY

This glossary defines many of the musical terms used in this book, it is not intended as a comprehensive list of musical vocabulary. A fine reference work such as Don Michael Randel's *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986) makes a valuable addition to any musician's or music-lover's library.

Cross-references are indicated by **bold type**.

Aeolian mode. See Mode.

Aleatory music. A trend in avant-garde composition since the 1950s. The French composer Pierre Boulez and others wrote scores that gave performers unprecedented degrees of freedom, allowing them to choose notes, interpret graphic notation, rearrange a piece's sections, and so on. Aleatory music is somewhere between composed and improvised music.

Atonality. The absence of any feeling of **tonality** or **key**. Atonal music was pioneered by the composer Arnold Schoenberg (Austria), Charles Ives (United States), and Alexander Scriabin (Russia) in the early years of the 20th century. Atonal music characteristically makes free use of all twelve notes of the **chromatic scale**. Many later composers have experimented with atonality, and it remains a viable force in the musical world today, though largely ignored by the vast majority of active popular musicians.

Cadence. A sense of psychological pause between phrases or at the end of a piece of music. The harmonic (chord) progressions used to articulate such breaks or endings are also called cadences.

Chord. Any combination of three or more notes. Chords are the building blocks of **harmony**. In tonal music (see **Tonality**), the most common types of chords are **triads** and **seventh chords**.

Chord symbols. Letters or numbers used to indicate chords. The standard Roman numeral system is used in this book. In the key of C major:

C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi

In the key of C minor:

Cm	Eb	Fm	Gm	Ab	Bb
i	III	iv	v	VI	VII

The Roman numeral system has the advantage that it is "global" – that is, the numerals can be applied to the chords of any key. Using Roman numeral chord symbols is like thinking on the plane of one universal, abstract key.

Chromatic alteration. Raising or lowering a note by a half-step.

Chromatic scale. The set of 12 pitches within an octave: A-A#-B-C-C#-D-D#-E-F-F#-G-G#.

Common practice period of music history. Roughly 1600-1900. During this time-span, Western art-music composers created and spoke in what was felt to be a common, international, even universal musical language. Music from the common practice period constitutes the bread and butter of performances by symphonies, chamber groups, opera companies, choral ensembles, and solo recitals.

Consonance and dissonance. Perceived psychological qualities of **intervals** and **chords**. In general, intervals and chords that sound restful, euphonious, stable, or smooth are considered consonant, ones that sound tense, harsh, unstable, or scratchy are consid-