

Glossary

- a cappella** Vocal music, without instrumental accompaniment.
- a tempo** Return to the previous tempo.
- accelerando** Gradually speed up. (Abbreviated as *accel.*)
- accidental** A marking used to raise and lower the indicated pitch; sharps raise the note a half step, flats lower the note a half-step, and naturals return the note to the original pitch.
- allegro** Tempo marking for a fast, cheerful tempo.
- alto** The lowest female voice.
- aria** A solo song performed in an opera or oratorio.
- arpeggio** A chord that is broken up and played one note at a time.
- art music** Music written by a trained composer and passed on in written form.
- articulation** The manner in which notes are struck, sustained, and released. One indicates articulation by the use of markings such as legato, staccato, tenuto, and so on.
- attack** The beginning part of a sound.
- bar line** The vertical line placed on the staff between measures.
- baritone** A male voice category between bass and tenor voices; not always isolated in choral music.
- bass** The lowest male voice.
- bass clef** A clef, used by lower-pitched voices and instruments, that places middle C on the first ledger line above the staff.
- beat** Any pulsing unit of musical time.
- bel canto** Literally "beautiful singing;" Italian vocal style characterized by flowing melodic lines delivered by voices of great agility, smoothness, and purity of tone.
- belting** A style of singing that uses heavy or forced tones throughout the vocal range.
- blend (1)** The combination of voices in group singing so that individual performers are indistinguishable.
- blend (2)** Smooth transitions between the registers of the singing voice.