Musical Terms and Expressions

**Dynamics**

- **pp**
  - play at a volume of *pianissimo* (very soft)

- **p**
  - play at a volume of *piano* (soft)

- **mp**
  - play at a volume of *mezzo piano* (medium soft)

- **mf**
  - play at a volume of *mezzo forte* (medium loud)

- **f**
  - play at a volume of *forte* (loud)

- **sf**
  - play *sforzando* (loud with a strong accent)

- **ff**
  - play at a volume of *fortissimo* (very loud)

- **sff**
  - play *sforzando* (very loud with a strong accent)

- **cresc.**
  - abbreviation of the word *crescendo* (gradually get louder)

**Tempo and Rhythm**

- **Adagio**
  - slow tempo (tempo=speed at which the piece is played)

- **Andante**
  - walking tempo (somewhat slow but faster than *adagio*)

- **Andantino**
  - tempo faster than *andante*

- **Moderato**
  - medium tempo

- **Allegretto**
  - moderately fast tempo

- **Allegro**
  - fast tempo

- **Spiritoso**
  - spirited or lively tempo

- **ritard**
  - gradually slow down

- **rallentando**
  - play more and more slowly

- **a tempo**
  - return to the original tempo of the piece
Expression and Technique

cantabile
play in a singing or flowing style

doloroso
play in a sorrowful or lamenting style

 Dramatico
play in a dramatic style with a striking and exaggerated show of emotion

e
this letter is an Italian word meaning and

fluido
play in a flowing and smooth style

fourths
the distance between the right and left hand parts is an interval of a fourth
(an interval is the distance between two notes)

gioioso
play in a joyous and cheerful style

 giulivo
play in a merry, festive and joyful style

grazioso
play in a graceful and elegant style

legato
play smoothly and connected

leggiero
play lightly

marziale
play in a martial, march-like and/or military style

misterioso
play with a mysterious or secretive character

nostalgia
a longing for days gone by

parallel motion
the right hand and left hand always move in the same direction at the same distance from each other

sentimentale
play with emotion resulting from feeling rather than thinking

sempre
Italian word meaning always; it can be used with any musical term
(e.g. staccato sempre--meaning to play staccato all the time)

staccato
this word means the same as a dot placed over or under a note; let go of the note quickly as you play it detached or separated from the next note

tranquillo
play in a quiet, peaceful, and calm style

© 2007 by Ed Mascari All Rights Reserved. ed@edmascari.com
About the Author

Ed Mascari has been teaching piano privately to children and adults for three decades. He combines his extensive experience to guide students in a variety of styles as he helps them achieve their unique potential. To find out all about piano lessons, visit: http://www.edmascaripianostudio.com/

Ed also teaches group classes for piano students in the tele-class format. All of the programs at http://www.mykeyboardsuccess.com/ focus on specific topics that are designed to give participants the tools and techniques that will help them to play piano better and better.

Ed Mascari is a seasoned performer (pianist/jazz organist) of show tunes, jazz and popular music as well as a published classical composer and church musician. For more info, go to: http://www.myspace.com/edmascari.

To receive special subscriber bonuses: free sheet music and audio files for "Six Simple Songs to Make You Smile", the helpful article "The Key Is to Get to the Keys: How to Set Up and Maintain a Successful Practice Routine", a free lesson "How to Arrange a Song in 12 Easy Steps" and a subscription to our ezine "Conversations at the Piano", sign up today at: http://www.edmascaripianostudio.com/p/free_stuff.php