



Lesson Plan: Musical Language in *Deep Dish*

OVERVIEW

Composer James Stephenson had fun creating the imaginative musical terminology used in the score for *Deep Dish*. Do students really know what the original term is? What it means? Or how he connects similar terminology to language used in the world of pizza making? Investigating Stephenson's musical directions will not only help them appreciate the humor; they will be more knowledgeable musicians.

LEARNING GOAL

After scanning their scores and defining **musical terminology** for directions, students will demonstrate their understanding of the musical language in *Deep Dish* through original illustrations and a performance of sectional exercises.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- *Deep Dish* scores
- Copies of the [student organizer](#)
- Writing and sketching art materials

PROCESS

1. Ask students to tap into their prior knowledge about music as you pose the question:

Why are most musical directions given in Italian?

Add information from the article on the right, the student responses, and your own musical knowledge.

2. Organize students in pairs, then distribute the graphic organizers to each pair. As a class, use the score to decide what goes in the first column (the list of the terms from *Deep Dish*). They can include both the Italian version and those invented by Stephenson.
 - Students then search for a precise definition for each term using a variety of resources (the web, print media, prior knowledge, etc.).

Why Are Musical Terms Italian?

Most of the musical directions and terms printed in scores, music reviews, program notes, and textbooks are in Italian. Looking at the history of Western music explains why this is so. Italy was the home of early musical innovators. Guido de Arezzo invented the use of the musical staff to organize notation in the 10th century. And many of the important composers from the Renaissance and Baroque eras, the time periods when musical indicators were first included in a score, were Italian. So Italian became the language of music.

But non-Italian terms are also used. French and German, and a few Latin, Spanish, Portuguese, and Polish terms are part of the pool of musical terminology.

The list will change over time as new ones are added and others fall away. Composers will also impact this language because in the Modern Era, some composers prefer to communicate in their own language rather than using terms from the standard list.

- They demonstrate understanding of each term by adding illustrations and captions in the final column of the organizer.
3. Ask each section to practice one of their warm-up exercises in a way that exemplifies (exaggerates) one of the terms from the list. Perform the exaggerated exercise for the whole band.

ASSESSMENT

- Observe and assess students' ability to apply both the real Italian, and the humorous terms to a warm-up exercise.
- Informally assess student responses on the graphic organizer which provides evidence of the ability to define and interpret musical terms.

EXTENSIONS

- Have a discussion about why composers and musicians developed this set of terms over many years. Why write them in a score, what do they do for the composer, the musicians, and the music itself. Why are they there? What would happen if they disappeared?
- Ask students to examine another piece which they are currently rehearsing and find the specific terms used to guide the performers.
- For further exploration of musical language, try this website:
<http://www.musictheory.org.uk/res-musical-terms/italian-musical-terms.php>. It includes a good dictionary AND **pronunciation of all terms via sound files!**

Teacher Resource:

Terms used by James Stephenson

Here are the terms used in the score. Students may find others within their parts. Locations and possible definitions provided to save “teacher time,” but feel free to guide students into finding more original definitions and meanings.

Term from the score	Definition & Some Notes about the Meaning
m. 1 Moderato, no knead to rush	Moderate tempo. Knead is a cooks term for working bread dough. It is a substitute for ‘need’.
m. 22, Letter B <i>Formaggio, poco con brio</i>	<i>Formaggio</i> is Italian for cheese, but can also mean cheesy. Brie is a French cheese – a soft cow’s milk cheese from the region of Brie. <i>Poco</i> means ‘a little’ and <i>con brio</i> in Italian means with lightness and spirit. The term being spoofed is probably <i>Allegro con brio</i> . <i>Allegro</i> for fast and <i>Con brio</i> for lightness and spirit.
m. 42, Letter D <i>Poco pepperoni</i>	<i>Poco</i> means ‘a little’ – as in a little pepperoni on the pizza
m. 63, Letter F <i>Allegro marinara piu mosso</i>	<i>Allegro</i> = fast <i>Marinara</i> = tomato sauce with seasonings <i>Piu</i> = more <i>Mosso</i> – movement Fun to make up a sentence from these words such as: “Play with a faster tempo, saucy spirit, and with more movement in the music.”
m. 91, Letter I <i>Con fuoco</i>	<i>Con</i> means with. <i>Fuoco</i> means fire. The direction likely means to play the music with energy or deep emotion - with fire, or in a fiery manner
m. 111 Turn it up a notch (not a musical term)	Kick it up with more energy, focus, and sizzle.
m. 145 Much slower, add some bite. (not related to an Italian musical term)	Time to eat the pizza!