

THE COOL CLEAR GUIDE TO

Music

CLASSICAL

POPULAR

JAZZ

Wendy Jordan

The *Cool Clear* Guide to MUSIC

(Classical | Popular | Jazz)

**Compiled by: Wendy Jordan
Edited by: Mal Jordan**

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About the Author



Wendy is an experienced educator in music and media at university and sixth-form levels. She also finds time to pursue her interests in creative writing and musical composition.

Wendy's first degree was in Music and English from Edinburgh University, where she studied with concert pianist, Susan Tunnell. She went on to teach Music and Media Studies in secondary schools in Edinburgh. In 2003 Wendy moved to London, where she studied for a Masters degree and PhD at Goldsmiths College. This experience gave her the opportunity to explore continuing interests in popular music, film studies and cultural divides. Her PhD examines the contemporary Hollywood Film Score.

Wendy has always enjoyed the creative process. She has written five books on music, and each represents her belief that all kinds of music have meaning, power and value. *The Cool Clear Guide to Music (2015)* offers a unique resource,

providing an accessible A-to-Z of musical forms and definitions across the classical, popular and jazz genres.

Since her time as a student pianist, Wendy has composed an eclectic mix of music, including themes for TV and radio, and film documentaries. In addition, show songs (co-written with lyricist husband Mal Jordan for the Edinburgh Festival) have been performed at The Waterfront in Belfast, The Playhouse in Edinburgh and on BBC Television in Northern Ireland.

Wendy has recently completed her first novella, which is currently being edited for publication. She is also arranging the songs for Da Capo, a new musical co-written with Mal Jordan ([see his author page](#)).

Introduction

This easy-to-use guide provides clear definitions of the most frequently used musical terms, from '**baroque**' to '**blues**', '**fugue**' to '**funk**', and '**polyphony**' to '**punk rock**'. A sound knowledge of musical forms and styles is the key to understanding the whole field of music, and a special feature of this guide is the inclusion of styles central to the development and interpretation of popular music and jazz. However, this guide is not written for the music specialist alone, but for anyone who has even a passing interest in music and wants to know more about this deeply satisfying subject.

The definitions are in alphabetic order, and every headword is in bold type – e.g. **ragtime** or **concerto grosso**. Within the entries there may be other terms in bold type, which indicates that there is more information available under that particular term.

Italics are used for titles of works and songs, and there are very few abbreviations (see below). Normally, the headword is in the most generally accepted form, e.g. **musique concrète** (French) as opposed to the English form 'concrete music'. Similarly, the titles of works are mainly given in their language of origin.

I hope you enjoy using this guide as much as I enjoyed researching and compiling it.

Wendy Jordan

List of Abbreviations

A&R	Artists and Recordings
a.k.a.	also known as
Am.	American
BPM	beats per minute
Brit.	British
Czech.	Czechoslovakian
Eng.	English
Fr.	French
Gael.	Gaelic
Ger.	German
Gk.	Greek
Hung.	Hungarian
It.	Italian
Lat.	Latin
Pol.	Polish
Port.	Portuguese
Prov.	Provençal
R&B	Rhythm and Blues
Russ.	Russian
Sp.	Spanish

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A

absolute music

The opposite of **programme music**, having no reference to any other art forms or emotions, e.g. literature, painting, etc. Most music is absolute, being written purely as music.

abstract music

Essentially the same as **absolute music**. However, *abstrakte musik*, as used by German composers, indicates dry and rather insensitive music.

a capella

See **cappella**.

acid house

See **house**.

acid jazz

A popular **dance** genre of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which combines elements of **jazz**, **hip-hop**, **funk** and **R’n’B**.

acid rock

See **psychedelic rock**.

action song

Usually a young children’s song, involving dramatic movement while singing.

act tune

A 17th and 18th century term to describe music played between the acts of a play. This music was often published independently. The modern term is **entr’acte**.

ad libitum or **ad lib** (Lat. 'at will')

This term indicates that the performer may, according to the context, do one of several things: (a) alter the strict rhythm or tempo, (b) omit or include an instrumental or vocal part, (c) omit or include an entire passage, such as a **cadenza**, or (d) include a cadenza and play what and how he or she pleases. See also **improvisation**.

aeolian mode

One of a series of twelve ancient modes, this one being based on a scale of 'A to A', which uses only the white notes of a piano. See **modes**.

agogic

In general, this term describes the natural musical expression one would use to play well, e.g. by pausing, by accenting, and by varying the tempo.

air

This may describe either the melodic top part of a composition, or a highly melodic entire composition, e.g. J.S. Bach's *Air on a G String*.

air with variations

A highly popular form since the 16th Century, in which a melody or subject is stated, and is then played over several times with slight changes on each repetition, with the original identity of the melody never being lost.

alalà

Spanish folk song in the **plainsong** mould. Usually in four-line verses with a melody that is highly decorated by the singer.