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Musical Concept #1

Tempo is the speed of a piece of music. The “pulse” is the beat in a piece of music.

The word tempo is Italian for “time.”

Tempo is measured in “Beats Per Minute (BPM).” So, for example, 60 BPM would be one beat per second.

The tempo is often indicated at the beginning of a piece of music.

A metronome is a device that produces a regular repeated sound or click to help musicians play music at a set tempo.

A tempo marking usually includes a number (the BPM) and a verbal description like “moderately” or “slowly.”

Many tempo markings are in Italian – Largo (slowly), Andante (a walking pace), Allegro (fast), Vivace (lively).

Tempo can change during a piece of music. Classical music often uses tempo changes during a piece of music to add expression and drama.

Rubato is a type of tempo marking that instructs the performer to freely and expressively speed up or slow down at certain parts of the music.