

## Our Theory on Sound

Sound Waves - are produced by the vibration of some source, such as a tuning fork or the **human vocal cords**.

Timbre - describes the *quality* of the sound. When we describe timbre of voice, we use terms such as nasally, raspy, punchy, breathy, thin, and twangy. These are common but voice timbre is not limited to those sounds.

### Vocal Ranges:

Soprano = high female

Tenor = high male

Mezzo soprano = medium female

Baritone = medium male

Alto = low female

Bass = low male

Melody - pitched sounds arranged in musical time." A melody is the song/piece's 'tune,' which is, generally speaking, the most prominent part of a piece of music. It is the musical (not text/lyrics) part of the song or piece that you are most likely to sing/hum/whistle.

Dynamics: "The intensity of volume with which notes and sounds are expressed. In the twentieth century, dynamics came to be seen as one of the fundamental parameters of composition which function interdependently to create musical meaning and structure." Dynamic markings are:

- pp: pianissimo (very soft)
- **p: piano (soft)**
- mp: mezzo piano (moderately soft)
- mf: mezzo forte (moderately loud)
- **f: forte (loud)**
- ff: fortissimo (very loud)
- **Crescendo:** Italian for "growing," "becoming louder." While 'crescendo' has increasingly been used to mean a climactic point, even in music publications, this is not the proper usage in a formal music discussion. **Do not use "crescendo" to reference the peak dynamic level of a piece of music. Do not write "the section builds to a crescendo" because the crescendo is the**

**"building."** Instead, you could write something like, "the section crescendos to mezzo forte in measure 89, then . . ."

- **Diminuendo** (sometimes 'decrecendo'): Italian for "to diminish," "become softer." The opposite of crescendo.