

General knowledge – Useful in so many ways



Italian especially, is the international language of music. Knowledge of the meanings of the terminology can not only enable musicians to communicate through their musical language in music making situations all over the world, but also come in handy in other ways. Many students learn the translation of the terminology in music but do not know the actual word in the language – that *mf* = *mezzo forte*.

Holidaying in rural Italy a few years ago, a friend fell spectacularly down some stone stairs, shattering her knee. My knowledge of Italian is minimal, however through the musical terms like *presto presto*, *la donna e non mobile*, *doloroso molto* – I was able to call an ambulance and describe the urgency of the situation and where we were situated.

My most recent amusing answer to a question about key signature sharp symbol # in a Grade 2 exam resulted in the answer that was prompt, produced with utter conviction and very 21st Century – ‘that is a hash tag’. Correct but not quite what I was looking for.

There is nothing that inspires an examiner more than seeing a student with flashing eyes telling us of their interest in their music, especially in later Grades. Knowledge of the historical context of the pieces and their association with other art forms of the time enriches our appreciation of music, hence encouraging students to visit the Art Gallery in order see art works from similar periods will give them something really tangible to enhance their own musical expression.

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