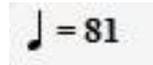


Tempo Variations

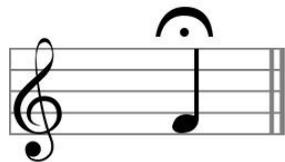
The **tempo** for a song is usually given either by a tempo marking (allegro, andante, adagio etc.) or a BPM (beats per minute) indication that is expressed in a mathematical equation such as

A musical notation showing a quarter note followed by an equals sign and the number 81, indicating a tempo of 81 beats per minute.

Tempo is not necessarily fixed. Within a piece (or within a movement of a longer work), a composer may indicate a complete change of tempo, often by using a double bar and introducing a new tempo indication. Beside that there are tempo variations that are used as expressions.

Ritardando (rit.) Rallentando (rall).

This tempo marking we find either at the end of a phrase or at the end of a piece. It means getting gradually slower. It is either followed by “a tempo” (go back to the original speed) or a Fermata.



Ritardando and Rallentando are used as synonyms. Some musical schools however make a differentiation of the two.

Accelerando

The Italian musical command accelerando (often abbreviated accel.) is an indication to gradually increase the tempo of a song until otherwise noted:

The duration of an accelerando is marked by a dashed, horizontal line.

accel.



Rubato

Rubato is an expressive shaping of **music** that is a part of phrasing. While rubato is often loosely taken to mean playing with expressive and rhythmic freedom, it was traditionally used specifically in the context of expression as speeding up and then slowing down the tempo.

While in most cases *rubato* is an expression tool it is up to the performer to use it. In rare instances it is indicated on sheet music.



Beside the above markings composers use other terms that are used once in a while, e.g.

Ma non troppo - but not too much; used to modify a basic tempo to indicate that the basic tempo should be reined in to a degree; for example, Adagio ma non troppo to mean "Slow, but not too slow", Allegro ma non troppo to mean "Fast, but not too fast"

Tempo comodo – at a comfortable (normal) speed

Tempo giusto – at a consistent speed, at the 'right' speed, in strict tempo

Tempo primo – resume the original (first) tempo

Ma non troppo - but not too much; used to modify a basic tempo to indicate that the basic tempo should be reduced in to a degree.