



# GLOSSARY

## DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

### Accidental

One of three modifiers of the seven musical letter names (A to G): Sharp (#), Flat (*b*), or Natural (♮). These are usually referred to as accidentals when they alter what is established by the key signature. Accidentals traditionally apply to all octaves of the letter name they precede for the duration of the bar or tied note.

### Action

Refers to the height of the strings in relation to the crown (top) of the frets, and is part of an overall setup that is best executed by a professional guitar technician.

### Arpeggio

Broken chord. The notes of a chord are sounded consecutively in an ascending or descending direction. The Italian translation is “in the manner of a harp”.

### Artificial harmonic

A harmonic related not to the open strings but transpositions of the open strings, requiring additional technique to natural harmonic playing.

### Augmentation

Increasing size. Refers to changes in the duration of rhythms as a technique of motivic development.

### Augmented

Larger. Refers to raised (sharpened) perfect intervals (usually 4ths and 5ths).

### Balun

Short form for balanced-unbalanced transformer. A device that converts three-conductor XLR cables to two-conductor guitar cables is a type of balun. See D.I.

### Barring

Technique that, like on the guitar, requires the strings to be fretted by the underside of the fingers of the left hand, not the finger tips. Used mostly for chords, harmonic chords or rapid alternation of notes on adjacent strings.

### Beat

Regular groupings of pulse that combine and repeat to create a dominant “pulse” or “step” to every bar or phrase in the music. It’s usually the beat that we’ll tap our foot to!



### Bearing surface

The point where the strings contact the nut.

### Beating

In tuning or comparing two notes, “beating” occurs when their frequencies don’t match precisely. Also known as destructive interference. See Zero-Beat.

### Bobbin

A coil in a pickup.

### Bridge

The point where the strings contact and terminate on the body of the bass (opposite to the nut). May also refer to a contrasting ‘B’ section in a composition.

### Cable

Cord or lead. Usually refers to the conductor which carries signal from your bass to the next stage in the signal chain. Consists of a central insulated conductor inside an outer braided conductor, known as the “shield”. Technically, this is unbalanced cable and is terminated with quarter-inch phono plugs/jacks. Speaker cable is unshielded and is not interchangeable. It is sometimes terminated differently, with banana jacks.

### Cannon

See XLR.

### Chart

A piece of music.

### Chromatic

Refers to the 12 steps in an octave, which yield all the *chroma* or colours possible (at least in Equal Temperament). A chromatic scale is this twelve-note scale.

### Compound radius

A contemporary innovation where the radius changes over the course of the neck. The radius of such an instrument will decrease as you ascend in register, creating more curve, and allowing for more pitch bending. See Radius.

### Concert pitch

Standard of tuning which sets A4 (the A above middle C) at 440Hz.

### Cumulative rhythm

A periodic rhythmic phrase which represents the combination of two or more rhythmic layers in a poly-rhythm. It merges all of the *hits* into a single line. Also referred to as a *resultant rhythm*.