

Cymbal Terminology



Describing what a cymbal sounds like can be confusing because the words used can mean different things to different people. Here are definitions of the most widely used terms to describe cymbal sounds.

SUSTAIN: How long it takes for a cymbal to stop vibrating.

WASH: Refers to the sound of little attack and long sustain.

DRY: Cymbals with little to no sustain for greater stick definition.

CUT: How clearly it can be heard through an ensemble.

WARM: Cymbal with mid to low frequency partials.

DARK: Cymbal with lower frequency partials.

BRIGHT: Cymbals with high frequency partials.

ATTACK: The amount of time it takes a cymbal to respond.

TRASHY: Raw, biting, distorted sound.