

Section 1.9

DYNAMICS, ARTICULATIONS, SLURS, TEMPO MARKINGS

Dynamics

Dynamics are used to indicate relative loudness:

ppp = **pianississimo** = very, very soft

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p = **piano** = soft

mp = **mezzo-piano** = medium-soft

mf = **mezzo-forte** = medium-loud

f = **forte** = loud

ff = **fortissimo** = very loud

fff = **fortississimo** = very, very loud

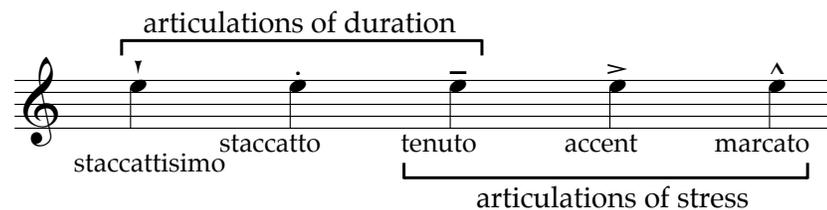
fp = forte followed suddenly by piano; also ***mfp***, ***ffp***, etc.

sfz = **sforzando** = a forceful, sudden accent

fz is forceful but not as sudden as ***sfz***

Articulations

Articulations specify how notes should be performed, either in terms of duration or stress. **Staccatissimo** means extremely shortened duration. **Staccato** means shortened duration. **Tenuto** has two functions: it can mean full **duration** OR a **slight stress** or emphasis. **Accent** means stressed or emphasized (more than **tenuto**). **Marcato** means extremely stressed. An articulation of **duration** (**staccatissimo**, **staccato**, or **tenuto**) may combine with one of **stress** (**tenuto**, **accent**, or **marcato**).



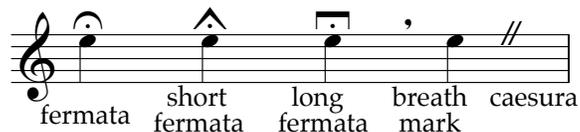
Slurs Bowings

Slurs are curved lines connecting different pitches. **Slurs** can mean: (1.) connect the notes as a phrase; (2.) for string instruments: play with one motion of the bow (up or down); (3.) for voice: sing with one syllable, or (4.) for wind instruments: don't tongue between the notes.



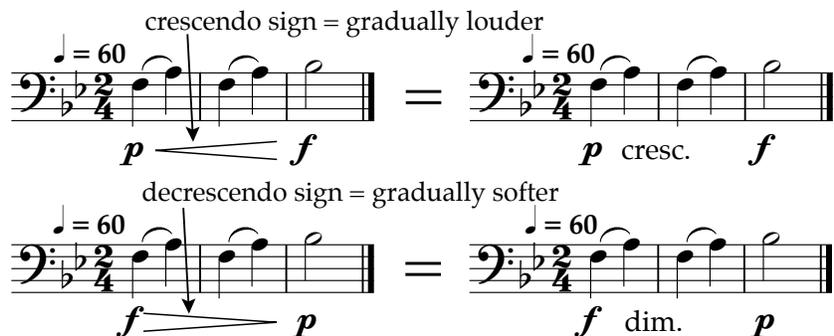
Fermatas
Breath marks
Caesura
Grand pause

Fermatas indicate that the music stops and holds the note until the conductor or soloist moves on. Musical context, style, and taste determine how long a fermata actually lasts. **Breath marks** indicate a quick break, or for a wind instrument like trumpet or voice, a breath. The **caesura** (sometimes “**grand pause**” or **G.P.**) indicates a full stop and pause before the music continues.



Crescendo
Diminuendo
Decrescendo

Crescendo signs and **diminuendo signs** indicate a gradual **increase** or **decrease** in loudness, respectively. The words **crescendo** (**cresc.**), **diminuendo** (**dim.**), or **decrescendo** (**decresc.**) are sometimes written instead.



Tempo
BPM / M.M.

Tempo is the speed of the beat, usually given in **beats per minute** (BPM). Sometimes BPM is labeled M.M. for Maelzel’s metronome. (Johann Maelzel promoted and improved the metronome in the 1800s.) The crescendo/diminuendo examples above show a tempo label of 60 quarter notes per minute, or one quarter note each second.

Italian tempo indications

Musicians use many Italian terms for tempo. Some of the more common, in order from slowest to fastest, are: **Grave** (solemn), **Largo** (very slow and broad), **Lento** (very slow), **Adagio** (slow), **Andante** (walking pace, moderately slow), **Moderato** (moderate), **Allegro** (fast), **Vivace** (lively), and **Presto** (very fast).