

Articulation Marks & Musical Symbols

Articulations specify how individual notes are to be performed within a phrase or passage. They can be fine-tuned by combining more than one symbol over or under a note. Mark these in your music when a Conductor directs it!



Staccato

Sing the note shorter than notated, detached.



Accent

The note is played louder or with a harder attack.



Marcato Sing note much louder or with a much stronger attack. Like a combination of staccato and accent, it provides a sharp sound.



Tenuto (or "ten.")

Usually indicates that the note is played for its full value, or slightly longer. I like to think of it as "leaning in" to the note.



Fermata

An indefinitely-sustained note. Usually appears over all parts at the same metrical location in a piece, to show a halt in tempo.



Breath mark Take a breath. This pause does not usually affect the overall tempo.



Caesura or "railroad tracks" Indicates a brief, silent pause, during which time is not counted. Time resumes when so indicated by the Conductor.



1.

2.

Ties (1st example) connect two or more notes of the same pitch together, forming essentially one longer note. This can also indicate (3rd example) a note sustained over two or more measures. **Slurs** (2nd example) smoothly connect notes of different pitch. It also means to sing the notes without breaks -- **No Breath**. Also indicates *legato* (more on legato later).



Dynamics

<i>ppp</i>	Extremely soft
<i>pp</i>	Pianissimo, very soft
<i>p</i>	Piano, soft
<i>mp</i>	Mezzo-piano, moderately soft
<i>mf</i>	Mezzo forte, moderately loud
<i>f</i>	Forte, loud
<i>ff</i>	Fortissimo, very loud
<i>fff</i>	Fortississimo, extremely loud

cresc. (crescendo) – grow progressively louder



dim. (diminuendo) – grow progressively softer



poco a poco – little by little

subito - suddenly

Tempo Markings

Tempo - Indicates the velocity of a song, in beats per minute.



In this case there will be 60 quarter notes per minute – the same as seconds on a clock. This is what Metronomes are for!

rit. (ritard) - Immediately slowing down

accel. (Accelerando) - Speeding up

a tempo - Return to the original Tempo

rall (rallentando) - Gradual slowing down

rubato - Freely

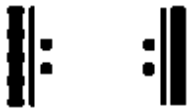
piu - more

meno - less

molto – much, very

mosso - Movement, as in “piu mosso” or “meno mosso”

Repetition, Codas and more



Repeat signs Enclose a passage that is to be played more than once. If there is no left repeat sign, the right repeat sign sends you back to the start of the piece or the nearest double bar.

- 1.
- 2.

1st and 2nd endings (Volta brackets)
Used to mark different endings for a repeat.

D.C.

Da capo Repeat from the beginning (literally, the "head".) This is followed by *al fine* - repeat to the word *fine* and stop, or *al coda*, which means repeat to the coda sign and then jump forward.

D.S.

Dal segno
Tells the performer to repeat playing of the music starting at the nearest *segno*. This is followed by *al fine* or *al coda* just as with *da capo*.



Segno
Mark used with *dal segno*. It's a sign!



Coda A closing section appended to a piece. Indicates a forward jump in the music to its ending passage, marked with the same sign. Only used after playing through a *D.S. al coda* or *D.C. al coda*.

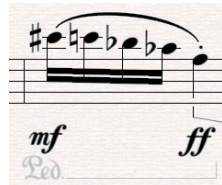
So, putting a few more elements together:

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. The first measure contains a whole rest, labeled 'Rests' in red. The second measure contains a quarter rest, also labeled 'Rests' in red. A bracket above the second measure is labeled 'One Measure' in red. The third measure contains a quarter note, followed by two eighth notes, and then two quarter notes. The first quarter note has an accent (>) above it, and the second quarter note has an accent (>) above it, both labeled 'Accents' in blue. Below the staff, the dynamic marking 'p' (piano) is written in red, with a red line underneath it, labeled 'Dynamic markings' in red. Above the staff, the tempo marking 'Allegro' is written in red, with a quarter note and '= 120' below it, labeled 'Tempo Markings' in red.

More.....



Legato can be indicated by "*leg.*" or by a slur. It literally means "tied together". Sing the notes smoothly and connected:



(not to be confused with "leggero", which means light and delicate.)

Sforzando

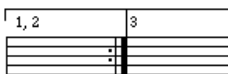
sfz

Literally "forced", denotes an abrupt, fierce accent on a single sound or chord. When written out in full, it applies to the sequence of sounds or chords under or over which it is placed.

Forte-piano

fp

A section of music in which the music should initially be played loudly (forte), then immediately softly (piano).



More terms, categorized much better than I have:

<http://www.musesrealm.net/music/terms.html>