

MUSICAL TERMS

To enhance the performance of a piece of music, dynamic markings are added to the score by the composer or arranger. These may relate to the speed, intensity of sound, manner of performance, tonal quality and effects, required style and interpretation. Most of the terms used come from the Italian language. The following are a selection of the most commonly used:

SPEED

Adagio	slowly, leisurely
Allegro	fast, lively
Allegretto	not so fast as Allegro
Andante	moderate pace
Andantino	not so slow as Andante
Grave	grave, solemn
Largamente	broad, slow
Largo	broad, slow
Larghetto	not so slow as Largo
Lento	very slow
Moderato	moderate pace
Presto	quick
Prestissimo	very quick
Sotto	below, under
Tempo comoda	in convenient time
Tempo primo	at the original speed
Vivace	lively, quickly

INTENSITY OF SOUND

Crescendo	getting louder <
Decrescendo	getting softer >
Diminuendo	getting softer >
Forte (f)	loud
Fortissimo (ff)	very loud
(fff)	as loud as possible
Messo-forte (mf)	moderately loud
Messo-piano (mp)	moderately soft
Piano (p)	soft
Pianissimo (pp)	very soft
(ppp)	as soft as possible
Dolce	sweetly & softly
Calando	decreasing
Morendo	dying away
Smorzando	extinguishing
Forte-piano (fp)	loud then soft *
Sforzando	forcing < or ^ *

* used on single note or chord

MODIFICATIONS OF SPEED

Allargando	broadening/slowing
A tempo	in time
A piacere	at pleasure
Meno allegro	less fast
Meno mosso	slower
Piu mosso	quicker
Ritardando	holding back
Rallentando	slackening pace
Ritenuto	slower, held back
Accelerando	getting faster
Stringendo	pressing onwards

MANNER OF PERFORMANCE

A capella	in church style
Attacca	go on at once
Cantabile	in singing style
Con moto	with movement
Da capo (D.C.)	from the beginning
Dal segna (D.S.)	from the sign
Legato	smoothly
Leggiero	lightly
Maestoso	majestically
Molto	much or very
Mosso or Moto	movement
Poco a poco	little by little
Segue	follow on at once
Semplice	simply
Sempre	always
Sostenuto	sustained
Tacet	be silent
Non troppo	not too much