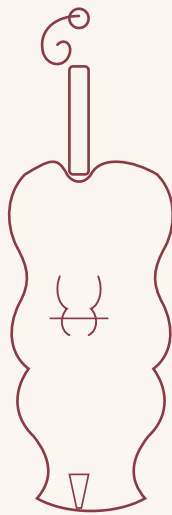


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Symbols & Terms Cheat Sheet

DYNAMICS • ARTICULATIONS • TEMPO



"Music is full of shorthand — once you know it, the page reads itself."

Dynamics



SYMBOL	TERM	MEANING
pp	Pianissimo	Very soft
p	Piano	Soft
mp	Mezzo-piano	Moderately soft
mf	Mezzo-forte	Moderately loud
f	Forte	Loud
ff	Fortissimo	Very loud
cresc.	Crescendo	Gradually louder
dim. / decresc.	Diminuendo / Decrescendo	Gradually softer

ARTICULATIONS

MARKING	MEANING
Staccato (dot over note)	Short and separated
Tenuto (dash over note)	Full value, slightly stressed
Accent (>)	Emphasized, extra weight
Slur (curved line)	Play smoothly in one bow
Fermata	Hold the note longer than its written value
Down bow (∟ shape)	Draw the bow downward, frog to tip
Up bow (V shape)	Draw the bow upward, tip to frog

S P E E D

Tempo Terms



TERM	MEANING
Largo	Very slow, broad
Adagio	Slow
Andante	Walking pace
Moderato	Moderate
Allegro	Fast, lively
Vivace	Lively, brisk
Presto	Very fast
Ritardando (rit.)	Gradually slowing
Accelerando (accel.)	Gradually speeding up
A tempo	Return to the original speed

Tempo terms are relative, not exact speeds — a good rule of thumb is to listen to recordings and match the character, not just a metronome number.



A little vocabulary goes a long way toward reading music with confidence.

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