

Musical Concept #6

In music, dynamics tell us how loudly or softly the music should be played or sung.

We use Italian terms to indicate dynamics because the concept of writing music as we know it today was developed in Italy.

"Piano" means to play softly and is indicated with this: *p*

"Mezzo (MET-so) Piano" means to play moderately (medium) softly and is indicated with this: *mp*

"Mezzo Forte" (FOR-tay) means to play moderately (medium) loudly and is indicated with this: *mf*

"Forte" means to play loudly and is indicated with this: *f*

"Fortissimo" (for-TEE-see-mo) means to play very loudly and is indicated with this: *ff*

"Pianissimo (pee-ah-NEE-see-mo)" means to play very quietly and is indicated with this: *pp*

"Crescendo" (creh-SHEN-doe) means to get gradually louder.

"Decrescendo" (DAY-creh-shen-doe) means to get gradually softer. It can also be called "diminuendo" (deh-min-u-EN-doe).

To indicate a crescendo or decrescendo, we use what's sometimes called a "hairpin."



Dynamics can't be measured exactly. They are "subjective" and left to the interpretation of the performer or conductor.