

fabulous friday flyer

HOUSTON
AREA
SUZUKI
STRINGS
ASSOCIATION

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Fiesta Friday, May 9, 2014

DYNAMICS *dynamics*

An early history of dynamics.

quoted from Wikipedia.org

The Renaissance composer Giovanni Gabrieli was one of the first to indicate dynamics in music notation, but dynamics were used sparingly by composers until the late 18th century. Bach used some dynamic terms, including forte, piano, più piano, and pianissimo (although written out as full words), and in some cases it may be that ppp was considered to mean pianissimo in this period.

The fact that the harpsichord could play only "terraced" dynamics (either loud or soft, but not in between), and the fact that composers of the period did not mark gradations of dynamics in their scores, has led to the "somewhat misleading suggestion that baroque dynamics are 'terraced dynamics'," writes Robert Donington. In fact, baroque musicians constantly varied dynamics. "Light and shade must be constantly introduced... by the incessant interchange of loud and soft," wrote Johann Joachim Quantz in 1752. In addition to this,

the harpsichord in fact becomes louder or softer depending on the thickness of the musical texture (four notes are louder than two). This allowed composers such as Bach to build dynamics directly into their compositions, without the need for notation.

Next Class:

September, 2014

Check with your teacher and watch your email for registration info!



on the
web at
hassa.org

"The changes in sound are created by changes in motions, or in other words, changes in the physical movement are translated into sound and musical expression... I teach different bow speeds and dynamics using the easiest of pieces."
-Shinichi Suzuki

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May 9
FABULOUS FRIDAY
GROUP CLASS
Fiesta Friday!

Summer Community
Service Concert

more info at hassa.org

Extreme dynamics by the great composers!



The two basic dynamic indications in music are: p or piano, meaning "soft" and f or forte, meaning "loud". More subtle degrees of loudness or softness are indicated by: mp, standing for mezzo-piano, meaning "moderately soft", and mf, standing for mezzo-forte, meaning "moderately loud". Beyond f and p, there are also pp, standing for "pianissimo" and meaning "very soft", and ff, standing for "fortissimo" and meaning "very loud". To indicate an even softer dynamic than pianissimo, ppp is marked, with the reading "piano pianissimo" or pianissimo possibile ("softest possible"). The same is done on the loud side of the scale, with fff being "forte fortissimo" or fortissimo possibile ("loudest possible").

Few pieces contain dynamic designations with more than three f's or p's. In Holst's *The Planets*, ffff occurs twice in *Mars* and once in *Uranus*. It also appears in Hector Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 4 (Prelude)*. The Norman Dello Joio *Suite for Piano* ends with a crescendo to a ffff, and Tchaikovsky indicated a bassoon solo pppppp in his *Pathétique*

Symphony and ffff in passages of his 1812 *Overture* and the 2nd movement of his *Fifth Symphony*. Igor Stravinsky used ffff at the end of the finale of the *Firebird Suite*. ffff is also found in a prelude by Rachmaninoff, op.3-2.

Shostakovich even went as loud as fffff in his fourth symphony. Gustav Mahler, in the third movement of his *Seventh Symphony*, gives the celli and basses a marking of fffff, along with a footnote directing 'pluck so hard that the strings hit the wood.' On another extreme, Carl Nielsen, in the second movement of his *Symphony No. 5*, marked a passage for woodwinds a diminuendo to ppppp. Another more extreme dynamic is in György Ligeti's *Études No. 13 (Devil's Staircase)*, which has at one point a fffffff and progresses to a fffffff. In Ligeti's *Études No. 9*, he uses pppppppp. In music for marching band, passages louder than fff are sometimes colloquially referred to by descriptive terms such as "blastissimo".

Dynamic indications are relative, not absolute. mp does not indicate an exact level of volume, it merely indicates that music in a passage so marked should be a little louder than p and a little quieter than mf. Interpretations of dynamic levels are left mostly to the performer.

Article courtesy of Wikipedia.

The Music Mind Games Corner

MMG Cornerstones

These are the final two on the list of Music Mind Games Cornerstones. 16 thoughts to improve attitudes for the best learning experience possible!

15. Can't remember yet? No worries, just play a game again and again.

We know that children learn by repetition. This is true for adults too. The more you repeat a concept or idea, the more it will stay in your short-term and long-term memory.

16. Your teacher wants to help you learn and learn for keeps.

When students know that their teacher is "on their team", they can really benefit from the understanding that the teaching is coming from a place of helpfulness and not judgment. This goes for the home teacher (the parent) too!