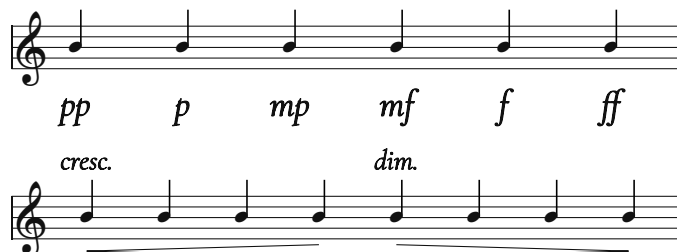


Dynamics markings chart

Softest to loudest · musictheoryprint.com



SIGN	ITALIAN	MEANING	WRITTEN IN 1,462 REAL SONGS
<i>pp</i>	<i>pianissimo</i> literally “very gentle”	Indicating that the piece is to be played very softly.	4,555 marks · 889 songs
<i>p</i>	<i>piano</i> literally “gentle”	Softly, as a dynamic in a piece of music.	10,307 marks · 1,298 songs
<i>mp</i>	<i>mezzo piano</i> literally “half-gentle”	moderately soft	397 marks · 153 songs
<i>mf</i>	<i>mezzo forte</i> literally “half-strong”	Louder than mezzo piano, but softer than forte.	3,235 marks · 746 songs
<i>f</i>	<i>forte</i> literally “strong”	Loudly, as a dynamic in a piece of music.	6,432 marks · 1,019 songs
<i>ff</i>	<i>fortissimo</i> literally “very strong”	Indicating that the piece is to be played very loudly.	1,440 marks · 347 songs
<i><</i> <i>cresc.</i>	<i>crescendo</i> literally “growing”	An instruction to play gradually more loudly, denoted by a long, narrow angle with its apex on the left (<), by musicians called a hairpin.	1,287 songs (word, abbreviation or hairpin)
<i>></i> <i>dim.</i>	<i>diminuendo</i> literally “dwindling”	A dynamic mark directing that a passage is to be played gradually more softly	1,241 songs (word, abbreviation or hairpin)
<i>></i> <i>decresc.</i>	<i>decrescendo</i> literally “shrinking”	An instruction to play gradually more softly.	17 songs (word, abbreviation or hairpin)
<i>sfz</i>	<i>sforzando</i> literally “strained”	A mark that indicates that a note is to be played with a strong initial attack.	88 marks · 42 songs
<i>fp</i>	<i>fortepiano</i>	loud, then immediately soft	206 marks · 75 songs

p is written 10,307 times, mp only 397: about 26 to 1. Composers of art songs choose between “soft” and “very soft” far more often than they write “moderately soft”.

The same scores also contain *ppp* (524 marks), *fff* (69 marks), *sf* (1,611 marks) and *fz* (232 marks). Counted from the dynamic marks in 1,462 art songs (31,148 marks, a median of 15 per song; 95 songs have none). These are art songs, not all music.

Italian words, meanings and literal translations: [Wiktionary](#) and [Wikipedia](#), CC BY-SA 4.0; shared under the same licence. Counts: [OpenScore Lieder Corpus](#) (CC0).
musictheoryprint.com/charts/dynamics-markings