

# RWCC Music Reading 101: Session 2








## Dynamics, Style Markings & Accents



### Part 1: Dynamics and Accents

Dynamics refers to the volume of a sound or note. Style Markings and Accents give us information about the tone, volume, or emphasis the notes should have.

Here are some of the most commonly used dynamic and accent markings:

Dynamic Name	Common symbol	Effect
Crescendo	 or <i>cresc.</i>	Gradually get louder
Decrescendo (Diminuendo)	 or <i>decresc.</i>	Gradually get quieter
Swell		Cresc and decresc. on a single note
Fortississimo	<i>fff</i>	As loud as you can
Fortissimo	<i>ff</i>	Really loud
Forte	<i>f</i>	Loud
Mezzo-forte	<i>mf</i>	Medium loud
Mezzo-piano	<i>mp</i>	Medium quiet
Piano	<i>p</i>	Quiet
Pianissimo	<i>pp</i>	Really quiet
Fortepiano	<i>fp</i>	Loud and immediately quiet
Accelerando	<i>accel.</i>	Gradually speed up
Ritardando	<i>rit.</i>	Gradually slow down
Fermata		Hold this note (watch the conductor!)
Tenuto		Hold this note for its full value to emphasize it
Comma	,	Breath mark
Sforzando	<i>sfz</i>	A strong, sudden accent on a note
Staccato		A short, separated note
Accent		Think "attack" note, louder with more emphasis than surrounding notes

## Part 2: In Italiano!

Many of the style markings you may see in sheet music are in Italian. Here is a glossary of commonly used style markings. Which ones have you seen in your sheet music?

**a capella:** choral music without accompaniment.

**accelerando** (accel.): gradually getting faster.

**agitato:** agitated, excited.

**animato:** with spirit.

**arpeggio:** the notes of a chord are played in succession rather than simultaneously.

**cantabile:** in a singing style.

**con:** with.

**con brio:** with brilliance or vivacity.

**con forza:** with force or strength.

**con fuoco:** with fire.

**con giusto:** with taste, fitting mood and tempo.

**con passione:** with passion.

**con spirito:** with spirit.

**crescendo:** gradually get louder.

**decrescendo:** gradually get softer.

**diminuendo:** gradually get softer.

**dolce:** sweetly.

**espressivo:** expressive.

**facilmente:** easily, without strain.

**fine:** end, close.

**furioso:** furiously.

**giocoso:** playful.

**grandioso:** grandly.

**legato:** smoothly.

**marcato:** emphasized.

**meno:** less.

**meno mosso:** less movement, slower.

**mezzo:** half.

**molto:** much, very.

**non:** not.

**parlando:** singing in speaking style.

**parlante:** singing in speaking style.

**piu:** more.

**poco:** little, a little.

**poco a poco:** little by little.

**quasi:** almost.

**rallentando** (rall.): gradually getting slower.

**risoluto:** resolutely.

**ritardando** (rit.): gradually getting slower.

**ritenuto** (riten.): suddenly slower, held back.

**rubato:** robbed time, speeding up and slowing down.

**scherzando:** playfully.

**sempre:** always.

**semplice:** simple.

**senza:** without.

**serioso:** serious.

**simile:** the same, or continue what you're doing

**sino al:** up to the...

**sonore:** sound with full tone.

**sostenuto:** sustained.

**staccato:** detached, short.

**subito:** suddenly.

**tenuto:** held, sustained.

**tranquillo:** tranquil, quiet, calm.

**troppo:** too much.

**tutti:** all.

**vivo:** lively.