

fabulous friday  
flyer

HOUSTON  
AREA  
SUZUKI  
STRINGS  
ASSOCIATION  
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## FORTE Friday, February 21, 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:**  
**March 14, 2014**

Familiar Friday. Get ready to revisit those familiar favorites and familiarize yourself with all your review pieces!



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

## Check out these upcoming HASSA events!

February 21  
FABULOUS FRIDAY  
GROUP CLASS  
Forte Friday!

March 14  
FABULOUS FRIDAY  
GROUP CLASS  
Familiar Friday!

March 29  
Spring Musicale

April 12  
Ribbon Festival  
A wonderful opportunity to receive a written critique of a solo performance.

April 25  
FABULOUS FRIDAY  
GROUP CLASS  
Favorite Friday!

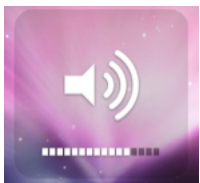
April 26  
HASSA Graduation Concert.

May 3-4  
Spring Workshop with Doris Preucil

May 9  
FABULOUS FRIDAY  
GROUP CLASS  
Fiesta Friday!

more info at [hassa.org](http://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



Saying the cornerstones out loud in the first person before your practice session begins is a good way to start your work with a good attitude.

### 6. It's easier to learn when you're happy.

Successful practice sessions start with a smile! Suzuki said "Children learn to smile from their parents."

### 7. Do it yourself and you'll remember the best.



reading notes on the staff

Take advantage of kinesthetic learning by doing and feeling each activity. Using all your senses strengthens your memory.

### 8. Be kind to other students.

In class, we are a team. Kindness and understanding help everyone learn together. We learn more when we help each other too!

More MMG Cornerstones next time...