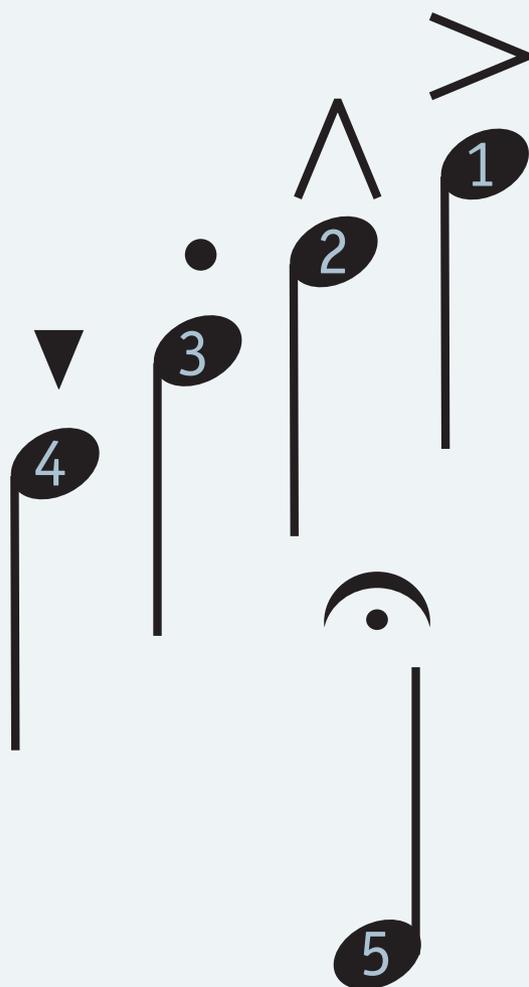


foreign ACCENT ENT

■ In a concert performance, accents and other markings are a composer's way of grabbing the audience's attention. "Hey," these notes, dots, and points cry out as they jump out of the texture of the music, "pay attention to this!" For the performer, though, following these indications is a way of organizing the piece of music and of prioritizing the most important things. Emphasizing the wrong note in the wrong place, or failing to pay attention to them at all, can lead to a flat, uninteresting performance. Accents and staccatos indicate notes that should be played with different emphasis and intensity. Added onto the individual notes of a piece of music, they are guideposts to exciting, interesting playing.



1. SFORZANDO. The most common accent, *sforzando* literally means "forced." It calls for a loud, forceful attack on a single note. It is sometimes combined with *piano* or *mezzo piano*, which indicates a loud attack and then immediately getting much softer. This articulation makes for a dramatic effect—it can make the audience think, "Where did the band go?"

2. MARCATO. Also known as the "capped" accent—*marcato* resembles a little hat. It calls for greater loudness and sharper attack than *sforzando*. Short, punchy notes in a jazz or big band setting may receive this marking.

3. STACCATO. This little dot means the note should be short, about half the original length. It literally means "separate," and the note should be completely detached from other notes. A light accent is also implied.

4. STACCATISSIMO. Shorter than *staccato*, this articulation indicates the very shortest, most brittle attack possible.

5. FERMATA. Don't rush through this important signal unless you want to make an uncredited solo performance. Any note with a *fermata* should be held longer than its normal duration. In an ensemble, until the conductor cues you to continue, or in a solo performance, until you decide to go on.

