

fff - even more extremely loud and vibrant than ff

fortissimo - extremely loud and vibrant with even more special intensity and importance than fmo and ff

fmo - extremely loud and vibrant with more special intensity and importance than ff

ff - extremely loud and vibrant

forte - strong and more important and more featured than f and fo and for

for - strong and more important and more featured than f and fo

fo - strong and more important and more featured than f

f - strong

poco forte - less strong than f

mezzoforte - less strong than f or poco forte

mezzopiano - more than p but less than mf

p - soft like normal speaking volume

p/ - soft with emotional intensity

p// - soft with vibrant emotional intensity

pp - very soft

pp/ - very soft with emotional intensity

pp// - very soft with vibrant emotional intensity

ppmo - very soft with vibrant emotional intensity and a greater importance in the dramatic sequence

pianissimo - very soft with vibrant emotional intensity and an even greater importance in the dramatic sequence than ppmo

ppp - extremely soft

ppp/ - extremely soft with emotional intensity

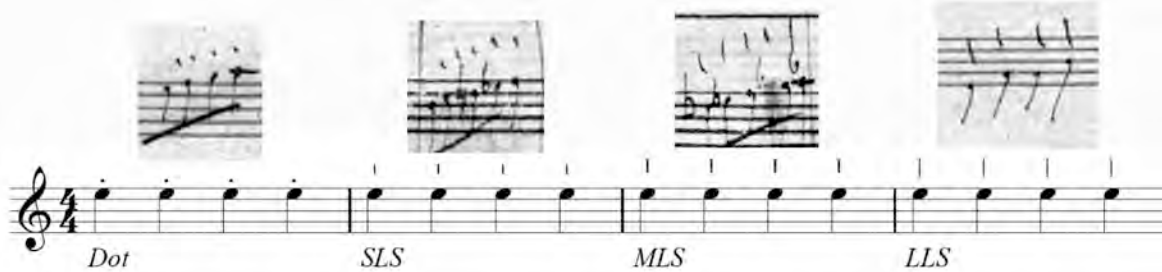
ppp// - extremely soft with vibrant emotional intensity

Long Line Staccato LLS - extreme energy in the initial articulation like PPa

Medium Line Staccato MLS - less energy in the initial articulation than LLS like Pa

Short Line Staccato SLS - less energy in the initial articulation than LLS or MLS, like Ta

Dot - most delicate in the energy of the initial articulation like ta



Staccato is basically short and detached but length can vary by context and Beethoven sometimes uses staccato to indicate some kind of energy that can happen in the middle of a long note showing that his understanding of the meaning of the staccato mark is more complicated



Diamond swell pair - a rise and then a fall in emotional intensity (usually volume also) felt as one event - "in one line"

Separated swell pair - a rise in emotional intensity (usually volume also) felt as one event followed by a fall in emotional intensity (usually volume also) felt as a second event



These swells seem to benefit from some amount of pulling back of the time at the wide part of the swell

Crescendo or diminuendo reinforcer - greater numbers during a time span in a certain part show that that part is featured in the crescendo or diminuendo



Beaming - the choice of how to beam notes together shows where Beethoven wanted to feel notes grouped in larger units and where he wanted to feel notes separated into smaller units.



Ghosts of Prior Plans:

Underneath the Cross-outs in the Manuscript of Beethoven String Quartet in Eb, Op. 74
Commentary by Nicholas Kitchen

It has been a great pleasure sharing these intimate evenings with all of you reveling in the quartet music of Beethoven! Thank you! Tonight the music will be Beethoven Op. 18, No. 6 and Op. 74. And now, as I have done in each concert, I want to take you into the workshop that is Beethoven's manuscript of Op. 74. Heartbreakingly, there is no manuscript of the Op. 18 quartets.

First, let me share an address where the Jagiellonian Library in Krakow has generously made this manuscript downloadable: <https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/publication/390222/edition/371006/content>

To any of you who have come to the previous four concerts, the material of the first two pages of this insert is familiar. It is a guide to a set of expressive markings that I and our quartet have found in Beethoven's manuscripts that we have felt compelled to respond to. The guide on the first two pages outlines the quite well defined set of expressive marks that one encounters in the manuscripts in Beethoven's works between 1802 and 1827. It also outlines our deductions about what the marks seem to tell us about how to play the section of music which where the marking appears.

We have chosen to continue to focus on this subject because doing so makes it amply clear that we are talking about marks that are made by Beethoven himself that appear in the same form in piece after piece. So far these programs have brought to your attention details about Op. 59-2, Op. 132, Op. 59-3 and Op. 131. I invite you now to a program that will be in Jordan Hall on March 26, 2022 at 8 PM which will be a concert/talk presented as part of an international Beethoven conference hosted by the Boston University Center for Beethoven Research in collaboration with NEC. In that concert the manuscripts looked at will be Op. 90, 96, 97, 95, 92 and 93. In the final concert of this series we will extend this list to Op. 135. All of these manuscripts, and many more, contain these same extended set of expressive marks.

So, what is exciting about these expressive marks? They add more layers of distinction to the already rich map of expression that Beethoven has given to each of his works. And it is indeed surprising that because these marks are not shown in print, they have not been considered by players, scholars and music lovers. Our continued explorations aim to change that and make it so that we can discuss these marks, whatever different conclusions might be reached by each person that looks at them.

So, into Op. 74. I would love to go in reverse in considering some of the choice markings. The work ends with two very witty soft notes, but right before that is perhaps my favorite burst of "ffmo".

The last variation creates a beautifully mysterious start to the coda, and in the end it accelerates into a flurry-ous version of the passage variation on the theme (variation 3), and to top it off Beethoven finishes with this wonderful flourish in Violin 1 right before the witty last notes:



Beethoven Op. 74 IV mm. 191-195

Now to get a delicious version of the theme with the whole group dancing around with theme fragments, let's back up to the middle of this Coda. Beethoven did a first version, did not like it, and then on an extra page put the version we play. And though he only marks it once, he gives the section the mark of the heightened-excitement pianissimo - "pp//". Perfect!



Beethoven Op. 74 IV mm. 170-176

As we move backward in this set of variations, I want you to see just how much variety Beethoven is capable of envisioning even in what seems a very blended sonority. In variation 6 the cello creates a kind of undertow with repeated triplets. Then on top of this, the other three instruments weave eighth notes in pianissimo - so 2's and 3's layered together. Just look closely and you see that Beethoven puts completely heterogeneous slurrings in the upper instruments. Also notice that he has no hesitation at putting a slur across the repeat of a note, all this in a texture that most people would think of as rather homogeneous!



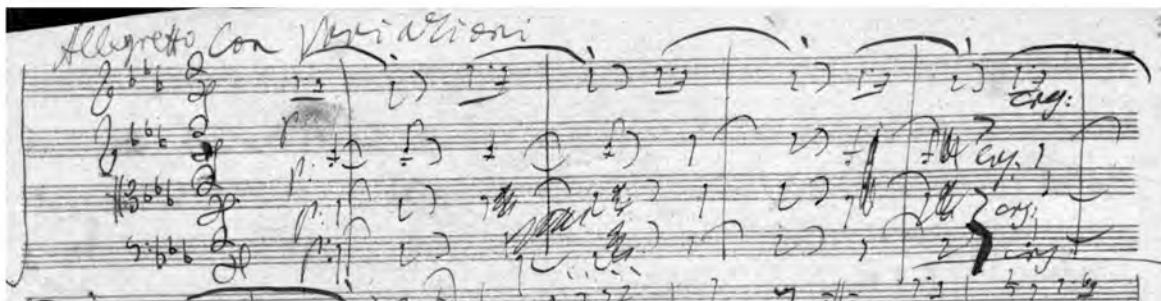
Beethoven Op. 74 IV mm. 120-127

On page two of our guide to manuscript expressive markings there is an outline of different types of staccato. If we just glance at variation 1, the largest category of staccato literally leaps from the page in the first violin part.



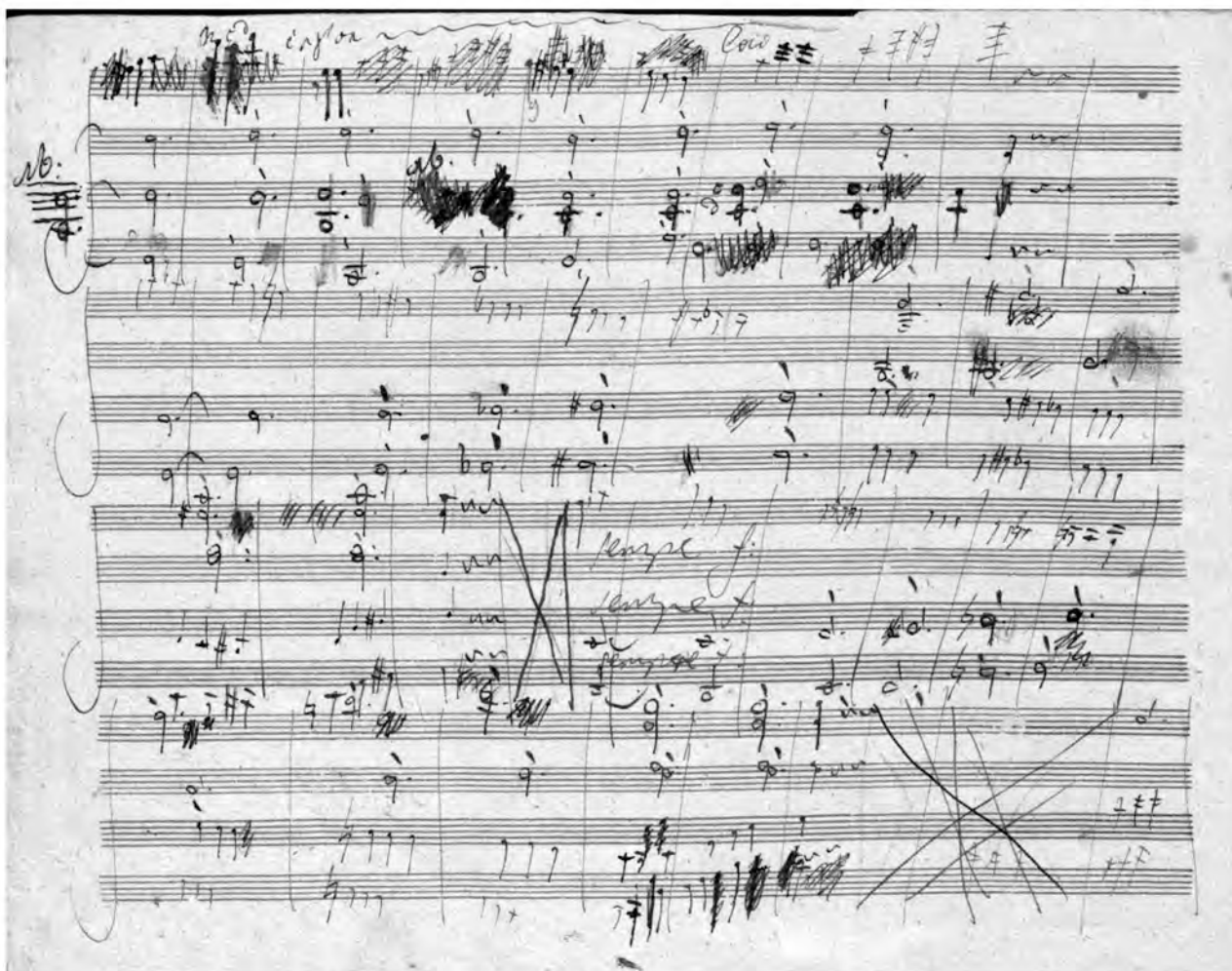
Beethoven Op. 74 IV mm. 20-24

Energetic staccati also leap from the page in the variation theme itself at the opening of the fourth movement. Seeing staccati with this much energy results in a very different way of playing this theme than what is inspired by some printed editions where the marks are gentle dots!



Beethoven Op. 74 IV mm. 1-4

If we now back up into the third movement, there is yet another page where the staccati leap from the page. Look here at the middle section "Più Presto quasi Prtissimo"!



Beethoven Op. 74 III mm. 105-138

But now let's back up to the opening of the third movement. Looking at the music shown on the next page, one finds a curious set of conflicting expression marks!

Beethoven clearly wants to communicate something about the energy and importance of this opening, so he uses one of his special marks and with a different pen puts in "forte" for all the instruments. Now the amusing paradox is that though he does this, perhaps he fears it could be too much, so he then marks *leggiermente* meaning "extremely light". It is almost like Brahms, who is so fond of giving a robust instruction, and then writing "but not too much".



Beethoven Op. 74 III mm. 1-5

The second movement resulted in the title of this discussion. What you see on this page is an old plan where the first "piano" on the page is moved earlier, and at the end of the line, the crescendo is also moved one bar earlier. Also, instead of the subito piano that is now at the beginning of the second line, the old crescendo continued. At the end of this line it is hard to tell what was crossed out, but in the old form there was a piano on the third line, so perhaps the end of the second line was something fuller? So underneath the cross-outs, one sees a quite different original plan. Then Beethoven re-evaluated the musical content, and he completely removed the old plan and put in the one that we play now. It is marvelous to feel how fluid his vision of what could happen must have been at this stage.



Beethoven Op. 74 II mm. 142-157

A related change is the change that he made at the opening of the second movement. It seems at first he put "cantabile" in the tempo heading for the movement.

Perhaps he decided that was too strong an indication? So, he crosses the word out in the tempo mark and instead puts "cantabile" in Violin 1. Further, to give it a special character and perhaps to make sure that Violin 1 is not forced to play in too outgoing a way, he puts "mezza voce" or half voice, in Violin 2, Viola and Cello.



Beethoven Op. 74 II mm. 1-5

With the first movement I want to share with you one page that has earned a place in the story of what it means to play first violin. This is such a beautiful movement, and it embodies such a successful balance of every attractive thing about quartet playing and music in general. Well, there is one place at the end of the movement where it goes a little wild, and every first violinist is given pause by the passage that unfolds here.



Beethoven Op. 74 I mm. 219-235

It is brilliant and of course quite amazing in that all of this fireworks is just accompanying the pizzicato dialogue and eventually the glorious soaring melody of Violin 2! The dialogues in pizzicato here and elsewhere in the movement are the features which caused this piece to earn the nick-name "the Harp". I might try to give a specific description of all that happens here, but I think the best is just to let you see once again what the page looks like. I will be reading from the manuscript tonight, and I have to admit, this page calls for a little acrobatics from the eyes as well as the fingers!



Beethoven Op. 74 I mm. 219-235

And just to wrap up this brief commentary about this wonderful work, let's look at the opening of the entire work. This "sotto voce" quartet writing could not be a more eloquent probing of how harmony can create magic and mystery. Again and again, thank you Beethoven!!



Beethoven Op. 74 I mm. 1-6