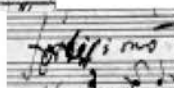
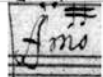


fff - even more extremely loud and vibrant than *ff*



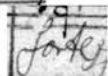
fortissimo - extremely loud and vibrant with even more special intensity and importance than *ffmo* and *ff*



ffmo - 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*



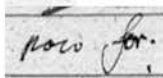
for: *for* - strong and more important and more featured than *f* and *fo*



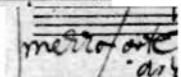
fo - strong and more important and more featured than *f*



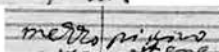
f - strong



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

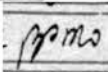


pp/ - very soft with emotional intensity

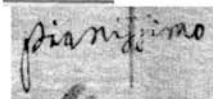


pp// - very soft with vibrant emotional intensity

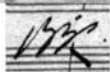
ppmo - very soft with vibrant emotional intensity and a greater importance in the dramatic sequence



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

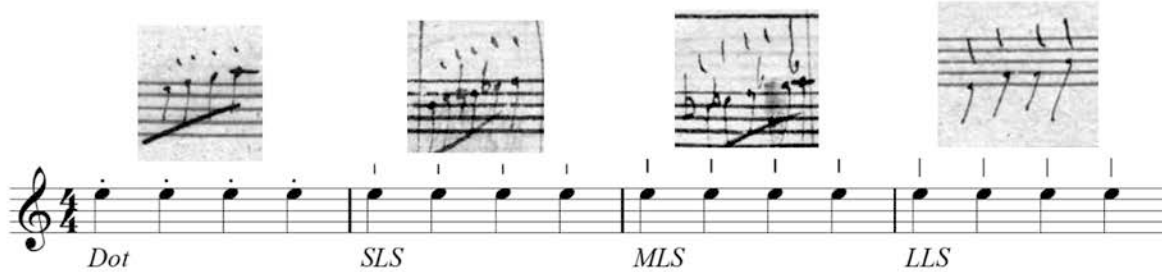


Long Line Staccato LLS - extreme energy in the initial articulation like PPa

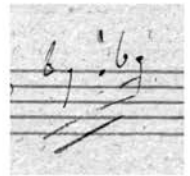
Medium Line Staccato MLS - less energy in the initial articulation than LLS like Pa

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

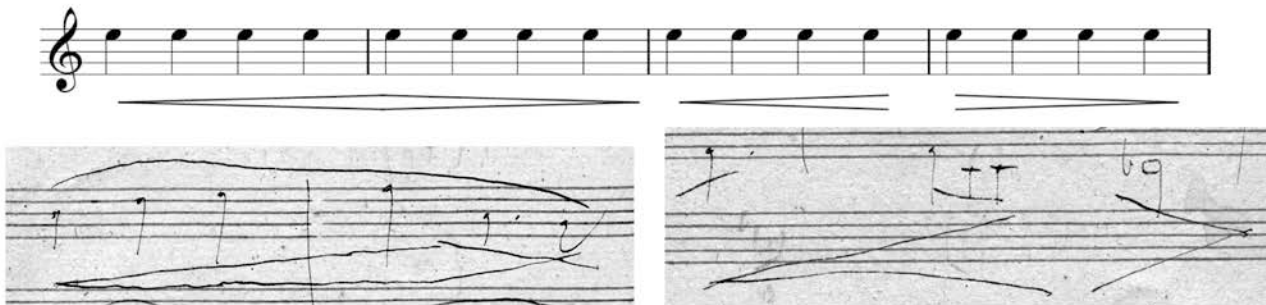


Staccato is basically short and detached but length can vary by context and Beethoven sometimes uses staccato to indicate some kind of energy that can happen in the middle of a long note showing that his understanding of the meaning of the staccato mark is more complicated



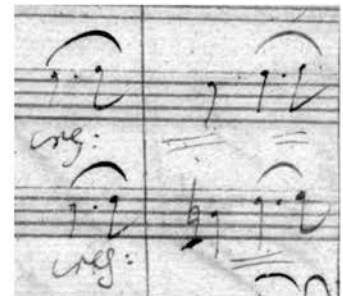
Diamond swell pair - a rise and then a fall in emotional intensity (usually volume also) felt as one event - "in one line"

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.



You are about to listen to Beethoven Op. 18, No. 5 and Op. 131, and as has been done in the previous Borromeo Beethoven Cycle Concerts this year, I would like in this commentary to point out to you how looking at the music as written in Beethoven's manuscript shows an even richer set of expressive markings than we see in print. I wish I could do this for Op. 18, No. 5 but the manuscripts for the Op. 18 quartets are lost. Fortunately, for Op. 131 there is a complete manuscript for the whole work, and for much of the center-piece of the work, the 14 minute Variations, there are two manuscripts, one in a "close but not complete" form, and the other in a state where all of the ideas are brought to the form in which we know them.

I am making such repeated efforts to bring these neglected manuscript expressive marks into your awareness because in our otherwise wonderful scholarly editions of Op. 131 and most of Beethoven's important works, the editions have not made these marks visible, and for me these marks provide a much more richly layered understanding of the complexity of Beethoven's vision for the expressive aim of each of the sections of the music. And the neglected Manuscript Expressive Markings do seem to be focused mainly on expression and emotional content. And at this moment, if you are not reading directly from the manuscript or reading a Manuscript Expressive Markings edition such as I have made, you will not see these markings.

Let's describe the huge 7 movement arch of Op. 131. Viewed beginning to end, we have the slow fugue of the first movement, the lilting dancing flying energy of the second movement, the brief declamations of the tiny third movement, the 14-minute central variations of the quartet which have theme, six variations and a seventh free-form concluding variation; then the fifth movement - a racing and wacky scherzo, a short but unforgettable lamenting sixth movement and final seventh movement with terrifying marches interrupted by paradise-like visions and evocative transformations of the intervals of the first movement fugue. Choosing a different, more imagistic way of envisioning the overall structure, I find myself thinking of a journey from our real world into an enchanted space and back, (as sometime happens in a Shakespeare play!) We start in the world we know, filled with the internal thoughts explored with deep emotional power by the fugue. We are then transported by the fluttering wings of the second movement up into a heavenly space. We pass the gates of the third movement to enter the enchanted space of the fourth movement variations. We are propelled back to our realm in the tumbling craziness of the scherzo fifth movement. We land and encounter the feelings of deep sadness in the sixth movement. Then we are terrifyingly caught back up in the reality of our own world in the seventh movement. In this last movement reality, we have visions of that enchanted space that interrupt the frightening scene. All comes to a close without strong resolution. The last chords of the piece are major but whatever triumph is in these major chords is flimsy compared to the terror we have just felt with overwhelming power.

Now let's go back to the variations that are the enchanted center of this work. Throughout his life Beethoven created so many masterful sets of variations. Often the theme and most of the variations are in a major key, but sometimes one of the most powerful elements Beethoven employs in his variations is when he chooses to go into the minor mode. Often this minor variation is stunning in itself and powerful in the way it alters our perception of the other major tonality variations. The variations of Op. 131 is a set of variations that never turns away from the major tonalities. There is exqui-

elevated and enchanted feeling of this movement.

But now, with the whole piece in mind, let's look at some of the details of the music and how Beethoven guides the goals of the expression, both in ways seen in print and in ways as yet only seen in the manuscript. To see a detailed representation of the special expressive markings, I include here a Manuscript Expressive Markings Edition that I made a few years ago, using a different method than I use now. Now my method is to construct an edition "from scratch" in the music notation program Sibelius. Previously, I took a Breitkopf & Haertel edition and made red marks on it to show the Manuscript Expressive Markings (MEMs).

On the first two pages of this document, I include a chart of the MEMs with a brief explanation of what I and my colleagues in the Borromeo Quartet have found to be one way to read them. And here I include the links to pdf's of the actual manuscripts online:

Beethoven Op. 131 with early incomplete version of movement 4:

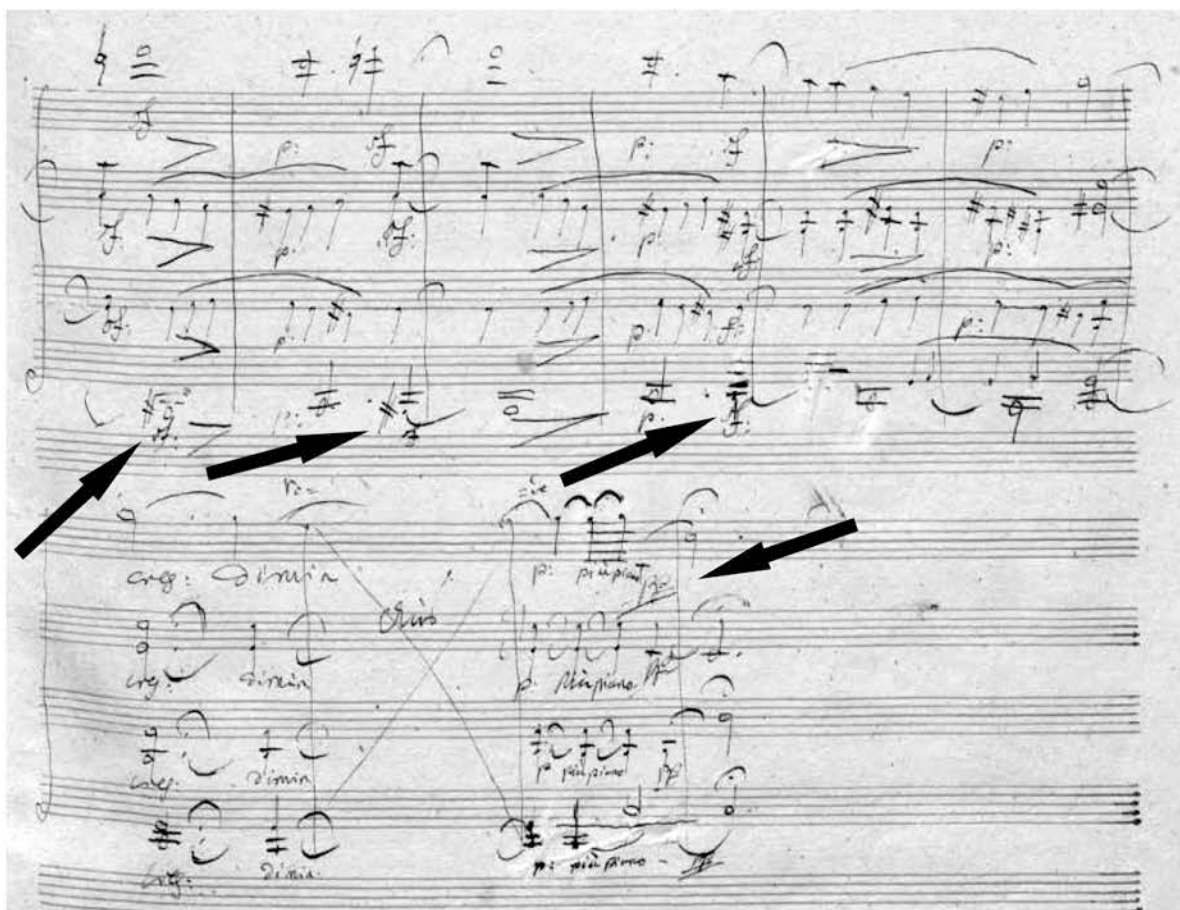
<https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/dlibra/publication/168321/edition/159978/content>

Beethoven Op. 131 IV complete manuscript:

https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht/?PPN=PPN749348062&PHYSID=PHYS_0001

So, let's not go back to the beginning of the entire work. G#-B#-C#-A - these four pitches start the journey. Beethoven chose to work with this potent interval set in prominent and significant ways in Op. 131, Op. 130-133 and Op. 133. Let's not talk in depth about this here, except to say that there is a sense of coiled power and terribly sad emotion in these pitches that start Op. 131 and are the first half of the fugue theme. In the last movement the same four pitches will be just as important and prominent and will form a kind of sigh or lament. At the beginning and end of the work a very sad and dark music is evoked by these pitches.

To work with Beethoven's special markings, let's start by looking at the transition out of the thought-filled music of the first movement fugue. In the last line the intensity hinted at in the first phrase of the movement has arrived at a crushing intensity. The Cello pulls the C String as B# while the rest of the groups creates a crushing dissonance to grind with the B#. There are three of the giant grinding events (first three arrows) and then the intensity releases and the group teeters on a C# octave leap (last arrow). Is there a special energy to this? Yes!! It is "pp//," the pianissimo with extreme special emotional intensity.



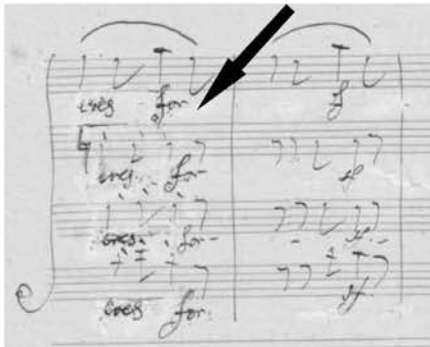
Beethoven Op. 131 I mm. 113-121

And what happens next? The group falls into dancing D Major with the mark "pp/" pianissimo with slightly less emotional intensity.



Beethoven Op. 131 II mm. 1-3

Now, just notice the distinct use of two lines "pp//\" and one line "pp//\", right next to each other! From the soft dancing a more boisterous off-beat music evolves. Beethoven shows us how much energy he wants in this off-beat music by taking the group's first off-beat accent together, scraping out an old marking and replacing it with "for" in all four parts - giving it a special importance and energy!



Beethoven Op. 131 II mm. 66-67

Then we go into Variation 3, with it fawning "lusinghiere" followed by its strutting staccato leaps. This leads us into Variation 4, the beautiful Adagio that keeps being interrupted by irreverent pizzicatos. So: teasing, prancing, fawning, irreverent - I almost feel we are under the spell of one of Shakespeare's jesters, or maybe Puck himself! The conclusion of Variation 4 reaches to the sky and then falls back into a cascade of dolce syncopations that is variation 5, and variation 5 ends with an expressive swell up that sets up the "sotto voce" of Variation 6.



Beethoven Op. 131 IV mm. 64-65

This variation is one of Beethoven's greatest creations - its hushed potential energy gives space for astounding harmonic transformations. The cello seems to "wiggle" in reaction to the whisperings with its "non troppo marcato" commentary and that wiggle-waggle cello figure eventually becomes large and loud. Once loud, in the Cello's wake the rest of the group makes marvelous mysterious harmonies. And what do you think Beethoven marks these mysterious harmonies? "pp//\"

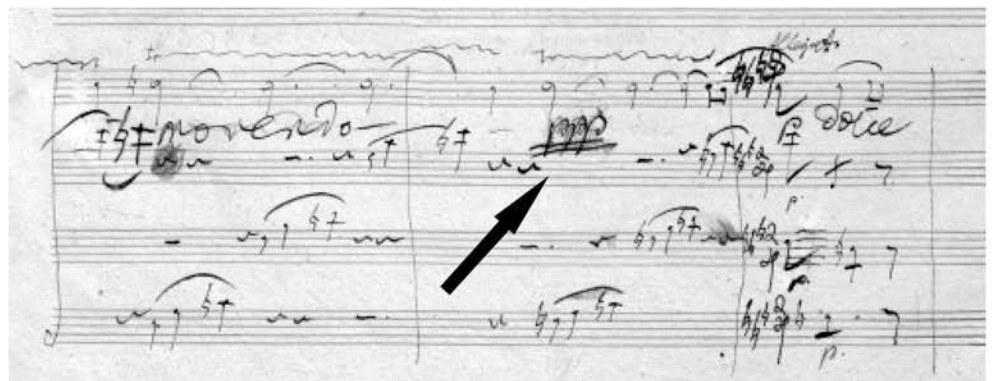


Beethoven Op. 131 IV m. 203

The first violinist becomes like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat! The Cheshire Cat in Alice in Wonderland disappears totally, EXCEPT his smile. Only the smile remains! Well, this is what happens with the trill of the first violin! It diminuendos until it is marked vividly "ppp//\" as if only the energy of the trill remains with nearly no sound and only the extra energy of the two lines!

So six variations have presented themselves. What happens with Variation 7? First of all let's consider this. In the incomplete manuscript of the fourth movement it is at variation 7 that the manuscript trails off with a few abandoned streams of thought. Beethoven was giving a lot of consideration to what was going to happen here! So what does he choose to do? He enters an arena of ornaments in dialogue. Each instrument of the quartet comments on the other's large ornament, and then the first violin falls into a trill and the others arpeggiate in anticipation of some new event. As the arpeggios meander the first violin gets softer, softer and softer - "morendo".

And this trilling leads to one of my absolute favorite moments, and this is the "Pivot on PPP//\" where the piece turns towards its conclusion!



Beethoven Op. 131 IV mm. 229-231

And that sets the stage for a kind of jester "dance-band" version of part the original theme. And finally we return to the tempo of the beginning of the variations and a town-square-band version of the theme that dissolves into trills and arpeggios again. Then one more jester version of the theme! And then after an audacious scale in first Violin we have a rich resetting of the cadences of the original theme, each transformed on more level until the movement elegantly ascends to its closing pizzicatos.

The Cello blurts an arpeggio! And off we go! Zaniness has never been so exquisite as what happens in movement five! There are many wonderful MEM marks but let's put our attention at the end. After fabulous twists and turns we have little fragments that lunge into silence. Then pizzicato takes us to one last visit with the opening material of this movement. The cello's original blurt is now marked "for" (speezed into a small area) for the special energy, and others quickly imitate as the group slithers back to the extremely charged pianissimo "sempre pppo" and "ppmo".



Beethoven Op. 131 IV mm. 469-472

This is as high a level of electricity as is possible. Now here is what is incredible: What Beethoven gave this is "ppmo", but that wasn't enough!!! He decided this special energy had to actually enacted further by having the group play "ponti-cello" - with the glassy energy that comes from playing on the bridge of the instrument! "Ponticello" was put in after the manuscript but actually represents a perfect further amplification of the extra energy of "ppmo"!

In the sixth movement we have a wonderful illustration that Beethoven used expressive accents ">" and "dimin" in different ways.

Each of the sad phrases rises to a turning point where there is the expressive accent ">" (first without "sf" and then with it). Immediately following that is "dimin:" If one reads ">" simply as diminuendo then this does not really make sense, but if ">" speaks more to an expressive surge these expressive dynamics are easy to follow!



Beethoven Op. 131 VI mm. 24-28 and VII mm. 1-2

Now Beethoven made a very energetic use of the marks to reinforce a crescendo or diminuendo. If anyone should doubt the intentionality of the specific numbers of these marks, I would urge them to look at the last bar of movement 6 (second arrow on the last example). Here in the time span of two 16th-notes are two reinforcers!!! How can one do this by accident!

There are so many details in the last movement that are wonderful to notice but let's focus our attention on one event in the middle of the movement and then what happens at the end. We have had the terrifying marches, the short laments and the enchanted visions. But to appreciate the moment we look at now, I want to go back to those four pitches at the very beginning of the whole work - G#-B#-C#-A. Now take the first and last pitches: G# and A. Now stand back from the whole composition and realize that the enchanted space in the middle of the work is in A major and the theme's first bar moves from A to G#. Well, one can follow through the entire piece a thread of what happens to these pitches, but in the middle of the last movement, they are employed in the most terrifying way, both soft and loud in order to give a riveting intensity to the return of the opening material of the movement. Look at this score and what you are seeing insistently in the first violin is NOTHING but the pitches G# and A, over and over. And as this momentous return comes into position, this terrifying oscillation is taken from pp// to ff!



Beethoven Op. 131 VII mm. 145-159



Beethoven Op. 131 VII mm. 160-163

So there is this overwhelming return, and each twist and turn of this movement deserves to be studied and absorbed in such depth, but in our discussion now let's go forward to look at how Beethoven wraps up all of these segments at the end of the movement. It is stunning. The short laments seem to disintegrate and then the fugue theme thunders back. Now what had been short sequences earlier in the movement become long sequences building devastating excitement. Scales that had been small are huge, single bar declamations are now charging sequences. There is an electrifying detour to D major marked in various ways with "pp//!" that prepares the last huge cadence in C# minor.



Beethoven Op. 131 VII mm. 328-332

Then all diverts and is halted on a surprise diminished chord. It is like bringing a gigantic force to at stop in an instant. And what is marked? "p//!!"

Then the lament is turned into the longest sigh, twice, and again the group halts on a diminished chord marked with diamond hairpins, twice. Tentatively the group emerges from this into a hushed version of the march and here it is "pp//".



Beethoven Op. 131 VII mm. 346-347



Beethoven Op. 131 VII mm. 363-367

C#s reach to F#s over and over until finally what would be a resolution to E# becomes an entire rocket to the end of the work in C#major.

All of the features I have described are musically potent events with or without the Manuscript Expressive Markings. But what is so exciting is that just at these exact moments which emerge as the most crucial ones - that is exactly where Beethoven has painted in a special energy by the use of the MEMs. What could be more thrilling than to feel a special energy called for in a welcome place by the momentous creator of the actual work, Ludwig van Beethoven.

So I encourage you, benefit from the manuscripts! In a few computer clicks they can be in front of you in their entirety! I have every expectation you will find things that are truly inspiring to you in your relation to Beethoven's great works! But for now, simply allow your ears to enter the journey that is Op. 131.