Max's Musical Dynamics: The Volume of Sound

Turn the Volume Up! Master the Art of Dynamics with Max the Monkey.

■ Forte means 'strong' or 'loud'. When you see this symbol, the music should be played with plenty of energy.

■ Piano means 'soft' or 'quiet'. Use this dynamic when you want the music to sound gentle or delicate.

■ A Crescendo is a gradual increase in volume. Imagine a sound growing from a whisper to a roar.

■ A Diminuendo is a gradual decrease in volume. Think of a bouncing ball that slowly loses its energy until it stops.

■ Mezzo is a prefix meaning 'medium'. If you see 'Mezzo-forte', it means moderately loud.

Did you know? Did you know? Dynamics are written in Italian! Because music is an international language, composers from all over the world use these traditional terms so that musicians playing a piece for the first time know exactly how loud or quiet to play.

Key vocabulary: Piano · Forte · Crescendo · Diminuendo · Mezzo · Volume