

1.8 adagio

ES: adagio, lento, I: adagio, F: adagio, lent, D: Adagio, Langsam, NL: adagio, DK: adagio, S: adagio, FI: adagio, hitaasti.

[Italian: ‘comfortable, easy’]

- Slow tempo, slower – especially in even meter – than *andante* and faster than *largo*.
- A movement in slow tempo, especially the second (slow) movement of sonatas, symphonies, etc.

See also

Section 1.18 [andante], page 5, Section 1.168 [largo], page 42, Section 1.282 [sonata], page 71.

1.9 al niente

ES: al niente, I: al niente, F: al niente, en mourant, D: ?, NL: ?, DK: ?, S: ?, FI: häviten olemattomiin.

[Italian: ‘to nothing’] Used with *decrescendo* to indicate that the sound should fade away to nothing.

Al niente is indicated by circling the tip of the hairpin:



or with the actual phrase *al niente*:



Since one does not crescendo *to* nothing, it is not correct to use *al niente* with *crescendo*. Instead, one should use *dal niente* (**from** nothing).

See also

Section 1.72 [crescendo], page 19, Section 1.78 [dal niente], page 20, Section 1.80 [decrescendo], page 21, Section 1.148 [hairpin], page 36.

1.10 alla breve

ES: alla breve, I: alla breve, F: alla breve, à la brève, D: Allabreve, alla breve NL: ?, DK: ?, S: ?, FI: ?.

[Italian: ‘on the breve’] Twice as fast as the notation indicates.

Also called *in cut time*. The name derives from mensural notation, where the *tactus* (or beat) is counted on the semibreve (the modern whole note). Counting ‘on the breve’ shifts the *tactus* to the next longest note value, which (in modern usage) effectively halves all note values.

In mensural notation, breves and semibreves can have a ternary relationship, in which case *alla breve* means thrice (not twice) as fast. In practice, this complication may not have mattered, since Gaffurius’s system of multiplex proportions makes it easy to explicitly state which proportion is needed.