

From Urtext to *Your* Text: Making Sense of the Notes

A few general principles

Start with the big picture (form); proceed to smaller detail.

Start with the obvious, proceed to the ambiguous.

Treat similar material similarly; treat identical material identically.

Patterns in the music arouse our expectations as to what's coming next. How does what we expect compare with what we get?

Things we need to decide

Where to breathe

After cadences - the stronger the better

Between phrases or sequences

At points of irregularity, interruption, or surprise

In large intervals

When we are in the lower register

During rests

Articulation

Legato

skipwise motion

melodic character

resolution of appoggiaturas and suspensions

Articulated/staccato

stepwise motion

rhythmic character

Dynamics

Louder

higher register

chromatic

dissonant

wide range

disjunct motion

strong sense of direction

Softer

lower register

diatonic

consonant

narrow range

conjunct motion

weak sense of direction

These indications are sometimes in direct conflict – for example a downward sequence (diminuendo) with increasing chromaticism and strong sense of direction (crescendo).

Do they cancel each other out, or does one dominate?

Should we add ornamentation?

What makes a convincing ending?