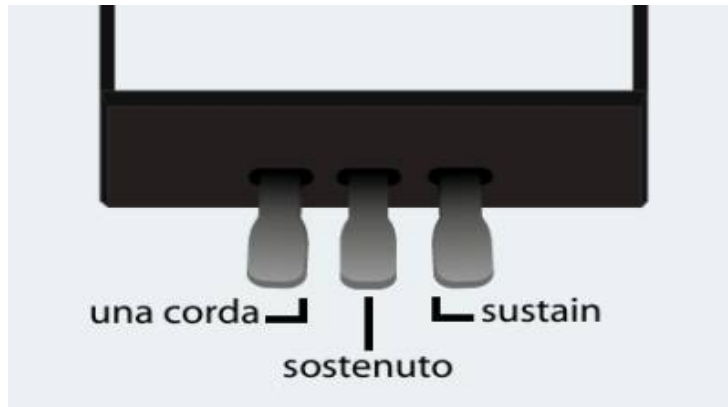


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Piano Foot Pedals



The Three Piano Foot Pedals

There are two standard foot pedals on the piano: the una corda and the sustain.

The middle pedal is only standard on the American grand piano, and is very rarely used.

Una Corda Pedal



Position of the Una Corda Pedal: Left pedal

The Una Corda is Played With: Left foot

Also Called: Soft pedal, 'piano' pedal

Effects of the Una Corda Pedal:

The una corda pedal is used to enhance the timbre of softly played notes, and exaggerate a low volume. The soft pedal should be used with notes that are already played softly, and will not produce the desired effect on louder notes.

How the Una Corda Pedal Works:

Most treble keys are attached to two or three strings. The una corda shifts the strings so that the hammers only strike one or two of them, creating a softened sound.

Some bass keys are only attached to one string. In this case, the pedal creates a shift so that the hammer strikes on a lesser-used portion of the string.

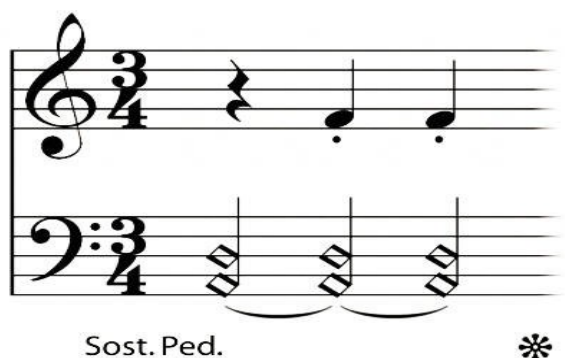
Una Corda Pedal Marks:

In piano notation, use of the soft pedal begins with the words *una corda* (meaning “one string”), and is released by the words *tre corde* (meaning “three strings”).

Facts About the Una Corda Pedal:

- Most upright pianos use a “piano” pedal instead of a true una corda pedal. The piano pedal moves the hammers closer to the strings, preventing them from striking with full force. This produces a similar affect on volume as the original una corda.

Sostenuto Pedal



Position of the Sostenuto Pedal: Usually the middle pedal, but is often omitted.

The Sostenuto is Played With: Right foot

Originally Called: Tone-sustaining pedal

Effects of the Sostenuto Pedal:

The sostenuto pedal allows certain notes to be sustained while other notes on the keyboard are unaffected. It is used by hitting the desired notes, then depressing the pedal. The selected notes will resonate until the pedal is released. This way, sustained notes can be heard alongside notes played with a staccato effect.

How the Sostenuto Pedal Works:

When the sostenuto pedal is depressed, it keeps the dampers off the selected strings, allowing them to resonate while the rest of the keys’ dampers remain down.

Sostenuto Pedal Marks:

In piano music, use of the sostenuto pedal begins with *Sost. Ped.*, and ends with a large asterisk. Notes meant to be sustained are sometimes marked by hollow, diamond-shaped notes, but there are no strict rules for this pedal since it is hardly ever used.

Facts About the Sostenuito Pedal:

- Sostenuto is Italian for “sustaining,” although this incorrectly describes the pedal’s function.
- On some pianos, the sostenuto pedal only affects the bass notes.
- The middle pedal is sometimes built as a “practice rail” pedal instead of a sostenuto. A practice rail muffles notes with felt dampers, allowing for quiet play.
- Sostenuto pedal markings are rarely seen in sheet music, but can be found in the works of Claude Debussy.

Sustain Pedal



Position of the Sustain Pedal: Right pedal

The Sustain Pedal is Played With: Right foot

Also Called: Damper pedal, forte pedal, loud pedal

Effects of the Sustain Pedal:

The sustain pedal allows all of the notes on the piano to resonate after the keys have been lifted, for as long as the pedal is depressed. It creates a legato effect, forcing all of the notes to echo and overlap.

How the Sustain Pedal Works:

The sustain pedal lifts the dampers off of the strings, allowing them to vibrate until the pedal is released.

Sustain Pedal Marks:

In piano notation, use of the sustain pedal begins with Ped., and ends with a large asterisk.

Variable pedal marks, seen as $_\wedge_\wedge_\$, are placed under notes, and define the precise pattern in which the sustain pedal is depressed and released.

- Horizontal lines show when the sustain pedal is depressed.
- Diagonal lines indicate a quick, temporary release of the sustain pedal.