

Extender lasting until the end of the note

Reinhold Kainhofer

Extender lines over melismata in lyrics usually last until the last note of the melisma. Normally, this is sufficient to indicate to the singer how long to hold a given note. However, when the last note is a very long note and other voices sing many notes during it, it is extremely important that the singers hold the melisma exactly. For this reason, in several printed scores the extender lines are then extended to the end of last note of the melisma to indicate how long to sing the note.

As an example, take the following trivial snippet. Soprano needs to hold the c for six beats, but the extender line is much shorter, thus some sopranos might be tempted to stop that note earlier!

How can I make the extender line really last until the end of the melisma (in this case until the 12th "la" of the altos?)

The image shows a musical notation snippet on a single staff in common time (C). The melody consists of a series of eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Ah" (above the first two notes), "La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la," (below the first 12 notes), and "ah" (above the 13th note). The 13th note is a half note. An extender line is drawn above the 13th note, starting from the beginning of the note and ending at the end of the note. The lyrics "la." are written below the 13th note, with a horizontal line extending to the right, indicating the end of the melisma.